

LILITH'S LEGACY

The book cover features a central illustration of a man and a woman in a sensual pose. The woman, with long dark hair, is leaning back against the man, her hands resting on his chest. The man, with long dark hair, is leaning forward, his hands resting on her hips. They are both nude. The background is a dark, gothic-style interior with stone arches and columns. Two braziers with bright orange and yellow flames are positioned on either side of the couple. The overall tone is sensual and mysterious.

AUBREY ROSS
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CONTENTS

[Lilith's Legacy](#)
[The Wooing](#)
[Chapter One](#)
[Chapter Two](#)
[Chapter Three](#)
[Chapter Four](#)
[Chapter Five](#)
[The Seduction](#)
[Chapter One](#)
[Chapter Two](#)
[Chapter Three](#)
[Chapter Four](#)
[Chapter Five](#)
[The Claiming](#)
[Chapter One](#)
[Chapter Two](#)
[Chapter Three](#)
[Chapter Four](#)
[Chapter Five](#)
[Chapter Six](#)
[Aubrey Ross](#)

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Lilith's Legacy

Aubrey Ross

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by Aubrey Ross

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Lilith's Legacy

Aubrey Ross

The Wooing: Devastated by her mate's betrayal, Lilith flees the Realm of Darkness and begins her adventures in the Light. She doesn't get far before she encounters Jetrel, the mysterious Shadow Clan spy she has yearned for all her life.

The Seduction: Never before has a female won the right to rule a demonic clan—Lilith swears she'll be the first. Will the passionate bond she shares with Jetrel be enough to help her resist the insidious seduction of ultimate power?

The Claiming: Unaware of the pact her mother made with the head of Serpent Clan, Verrine explores her sensual nature with the seductive leader of Shadow Clan. Will the clash of two powerful brothers shake the foundation of the Realm of Darkness? Or does this spirited female possess the key to lasting unity?

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

The Wooing

Chapter One

Realm of Darkness

Rage twisted through Lilith. She stood in the open archway, her fingers crushing the delicate fabric of her gown. A red haze swam before her vision, lending the scene a surreal air. Still, she had to look away.

She inhaled deeply, but the air was smoky, cloying. It did nothing to ease the fury buffeting her composure.

Damn him!

Fortifying herself, she turned back to the tableau playing out in the ceremonial chamber.

Gloriously naked, her mate, Sammael, stood at the foot of a stone altar. His brutal features contorted with lust. The way his eyes were closed, lips drawn back from razor-sharp teeth, another might see fury or excruciating pain, but Lilith recognized rapture.

A slender gray demon sprawled upon the altar. Her hands clasped the backs of her knees, spreading her legs wide in brazen invitation. From her position in the archway, Lilith couldn't help but see how much they were enjoying each other. Unlike the rest of her drab body, the demon's cunt was bright red and stretched tightly around Sammael's massive cock. Pearly juices coated her folds, easing the way for his frantic thrusting.

Lilith clasped the archway for support, her legs trembling beneath her. Her breasts ached and the burning emptiness in her core made her want to howl.

How could he do this to me?

Run.

Scream!

Do something!

She just stood there, paralyzed by his betrayal. Each powerful movement jostled the demon's large breasts. Sammael bent to suck one gray nipple and the demon gasped. She was hairless, her entire body smooth and gleaming in the firelight.

They moved together, locked in Splendor's Dark Dance. The female's back arched. Sammael's hips pumped. Lilith watched his massive cock appear at the end of each stroke, before he drove back into her quivering body.

He'd promised. He'd vowed never again to share this secret Splendor with anyone but *her*.

Lilith stumbled beyond the archway, undetected.

Devastated.

Anger dissipated, but the emptiness left in its wake was far worse. She choked back the need to scream. She dug her long nails into her palms, welcoming the pain. Her whole body throbbed. She felt hollow and cold. Darkness pressed in, suffocating. She needed air. She needed—

Light.

Her spirit trembled. It was forbidden.

And it was the one place Sammael would never think to look. Despite his hulking size and ferocious snarls Sammael was terrified of the Light.

Satan came and went as he pleased, while her mate stayed below in his self-imposed prison. Perhaps she had chosen poorly. They were each powerful, compelling entities, rapidly gathering followers to their clan. She had sensed an uncompromising intensity in Satan that frightened her, so she'd chosen not to offer herself as his mate.

But she'd fared no better with Sammael!

Diving into the blood red water, she swam beyond the steep rocky rim, the physical barrier surrounding the Lake of Fire. The water cooled and cleared, turning pink, then gray, and finally blue. She propelled herself upward with strong, sure strokes. Her lungs burned. Her muscles ached.

Light undulated on the surface far above. She fixed her sights on the shimmer and pushed on. Her arms screamed in protest. Her legs felt leaden. She could mend some injuries by shifting from one form to another. But her cat-self hated water, and shifting might only weaken her further.

Black spots danced before her eyes and she couldn't focus or coordinate her movements. The spots expanded. All she could see was darkness.

Roaring erupted in her ears.

Her mate was the cheating bastard! Why should *she* be the one to die?

* * * *

Adam released the *sea gull* into the predawn sky and smiled as it flew from sight. Naming all of God's creations had been exciting for a time, however he was running out of ideas. The beasts were so incredible. He could never hope to choose names worthy of the creativity and skill the Lord displayed so effortlessly. He was doing his best, but—

Something floundered beneath the water, drawing Adam's attention. The river Pishon was wide here. Adam had seen few fish, certainly none so large. He peered through the gently flowing water and tried to discern what was moving in the depths. The sun had yet to rise, still the shape appeared pale, almost ... flesh-colored? How could that be?

He waded into the water, cautious, yet concerned. This creature didn't belong in the water. God had entrusted him with the care of all living things and this one was obviously in trouble.

Diving toward the unknown shape, Adam frantically searched, wishing there was more light. One of his hands found smooth, slick flesh, the other tangled in long flowing—hair! He pulled the body toward him and kicked forcefully for the surface. The creature lay limply in his arms and panic jolted Adam.

Am I too late? Did I hesitate too long on the shore?

He laid the creature gently on the grassy riverbank and brushed its long black mane away from its face. It made a soft moaning sound assuring him it was still breathing. Thank God! He hadn't been too late!

So, what was this creature? He'd never seen anything so ... It was female, he corrected. Even in the moonlight her full

round breasts and tightly drawn nipples revealed her gender. Her limbs were long, shapely and—hairless. Despite her thick black tresses, which fanned out across the grass, the rest of the female's body was smooth.

An odd tension swirled deep in Adam's belly and his penis swelled. Fascinated he watched it thicken and lengthen. It throbbed. His heart raced. This happened to the stallion right before he mounted his mare. Covering himself with his hand he looked more closely at the woman. Was this *his* mate? The animals all had companions. Had God created this female for him?

Her lips and eyelids were tinted blue. The tops of her ears were rippled and also blue. Could this be a trick of the twilight? The rest of her features were very much like his. She had to be his mate. He *wanted* her to be his mate.

But why had she been in the river?

The pressure in his loins increased and Adam groaned. He closed his fingers around his sex and moved his hips, gasping. It jerked against his palm. Hesitantly, he reached out and covered one of her breasts while he continued to slide his fist along his aching length. Her skin was so soft, her flesh so different from his. Heat infused his shaft, searing the sensitive head. He needed to put it inside her!

He needed to *mate*!

She moaned, shifting restlessly in the grass. Her nipple hardened against his palm. He moved his hand and examined the change his touch had wrought. Her soft, dusky nipple had tightened into a puckered point. He touched the very tip and she arched her back. Adam smiled. She enjoyed this

touching. He moved his fingers to her other nipple gently pulling on it, so he could watch the transformation.

"Where am I?"

Husky and oddly accented, her words sent shivers down his spine. He started to release her nipple, but she caught his wrist and opened her eyes. Her eyes were so bright a blue, they glowed in the murky light. Adam could only stare.

"Who are you?" She released his wrist, struggling to sit up.

"No." Cupping her shoulders, he eased her back into the grass. "Rest. You nearly drowned in the river. If I hadn't pulled you out ... Did God create you for me?"

The unmistakable hope in his question took Lilith by surprise. Her heart thudded madly. She had survived.

I am in the Light.

This beautiful creature had saved her.

She was naked. Had he undressed her? He'd been fingering her nipple when she awakened. What else had he done while she was unconscious? Would he fuck her now, demand that she take his cock into her mouth or up her ass in exchange for her life? Her pussy ripened at the thought, while laughter bubbled within her. Those were Dark thoughts, Dark concerns. There was no cruelty in him. His touch had been curious and gentle.

She stared into his guileless amber eyes, fascinated by the innocence she saw there. Had she *ever* been this pure? His features were masculine perfection—strength, tempered by tenderness. Oh, to defile one such as this!

Did she dare?

Hell yes, she dared! Blindly deferring to the judgment of males had gained her nothing. It was past time she set her own course.

"Yes," she whispered. "You are male. I am female. I was made for you."

"Am I to name you as I named the others?"

She smiled. "No. This will be different, my golden one. *I* will share my knowledge with *you*."

He hesitated, then moved his hand, revealing his thick, hard cock. "Do you understand what to do with this?"

Lilith licked her lips and smiled. "Yes. Oh, yes."

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Two

Lilith stretched in the grass, cupping her breasts and glorying in the purple pre-dawn. His warm hand touched her knee. "I've seen the beasts in the field. I understand what must be done."

Lilith's mind filled with unwanted images. Sammael's contorted features, his rippling muscles, his mighty cock stretching the gray demon's bright red cunt. "You understand nothing." The golden male's enthusiasm melted into shame and Lilith softened her tone. "You're eager to learn and that's good. But you must be patient."

His gaze moved over her naked body, his fingers tracing lazy circles on her kneecap, while he waited for her next command.

Lilith watched him as he watched her. He was so innocent. "I will make the Splendor come upon you, but you—"

"Come?"

He'd fixated on the wrong word. She liked it even better. "Yes. I'll make you come, but only *after* you've pleased me. My pleasure must always come first."

Her feline vision surged, allowing her to see the creature more clearly in the muted light. He gently cupped her breast. Lilith smiled. So different from Sammael. Long and graceful, his body toned and defined rather than bulky and massive. Everything about him was golden. His hair, his skin, even his amber eyes were all varieties of the same color.

"Your skin is so soft." His voice whispered across her senses while his fingers lightly grazed her skin. Tenderness was a nice contrast to Sammael's brutality, but she needed her nipples rolled and sucked—bitten!

Awareness passed through Lilith like a specter. "Did you hear that?" She looked up and down the riverbank.

"Creatures often come here to drink. I see no one."

She didn't see anyone either, but she could sense something, unseen, yet present. "Let's move into the shadows."

Scrambling up from the grass, Lilith led him into the surrounding woods. Her pussy ached, her clit swollen and needful. Each step she took rubbed her slick folds together. Such sweet torment! The uneasy suspicion that they were being watched only heightened her arousal.

She leaned against a thick tree trunk and raised her arms above her head, wrists crossed. She arched her back and the male didn't hesitate. His warm hands tenderly cupped her breasts. "Squeeze me. Touch my nipples." He seemed afraid to hurt her. It frustrated the hell out of her. "Watch." Licking her fingertips, she rolled her nipple, pulling firmly until it gathered into a tight little point.

He deftly mimicked her movements and she sighed. Better, yet she needed so much more! "Your mouth! Suck them into your mouth."

Bending his golden head, he eagerly obliged. His lips closed around her nipple and sucked.

"Harder. Scrape your teeth over the very tip."

Someone *was* watching them. Her awareness of the entity surged in tandem with her growing arousal. It couldn't be Sammael. The coward would never venture into the Light, but he might have sent one of his minions.

She didn't care. Let them watch! She deserved this and more!

The golden male's arm circled her waist, pulling her forward, while his mouth continued to draw upon her nipples. He gently caressed her ass. Oh, that was nice. He touched her skin as if ... He *hadn't* ever touched a woman before!

Curious fingers delved between her cheeks, skimming much too quickly over her incredibly sensitive anus to brush against her pussy folds. She grinned. He was growing bolder.

"Would you like to look at it? Touch it?" A shudder shook his entire body and his cock jerked hard against her belly. She laughed. "I'll take that as a yes."

A smooth, low rock formation rose about knee high to her left. Lilith sat on the rock, shivering as her ass cheeks made contact with the cool stone. She carefully kept her legs together and motioned to the grass in front of her. The male knelt there, his warm hands resting lightly on her thighs.

"You can only look, until I say you can touch," she cautioned.

His amber gaze was already fixed expectantly on her cleft. Slowly she spread her legs, waiting until she felt the blissful opening of her flesh before she stopped. "This, my golden one, is called a pussy, or cunt, or—"

He reached for her eagerly, but she grabbed his wrist, laughing. "No, my sweet. You still have much to learn."

Jetrel watched Lilith's antics with a mixture of shock and arousal. What the fuck was she doing? Why had she come into the Light? Who authorized her to tempt the human?

Sexual energy beckoned him back to his corporeal form. Jetrel ignored the demand and focused on the unnatural couple. A lusty demon and a virgin. It didn't get much more entertaining. Unless he was the lusty demon about to defile the virgin.

"Here. Touch me. Feel how wet I am, how my body craves your hard cock filling me, stretching me."

Jetrel floated to the right so he could see exactly what was going on between Lilith's widespread thighs. The human touched her cleft hesitantly. Her pearly essence soaked his fingertips and he paused to examine the substance.

Taste it, you asshole. Or better yet push your tongue right up her cunt and get a good mouthful! Jetrel could smell her alluring musk. It perfumed the air, made him ravenous!

She grabbed the human's wrist and pulled his hand back to her sopping pussy. "Spread me open. I want to show you something very important."

Jetrel wanted to laugh. Oh, yes. The almighty clit. No sexual demonstration would be complete without instructions on its use. The human spread her folds and desire seared Jetrel.

Very nice! Her inner folds were the same rich sapphire as her eyes, her core a lighter blue-gray. And there at the top of her slit, the most spectacular clit Jetrel had ever seen waited to be licked, nibbled and sucked.

The human was fascinated by it. He fingered it, circling it and flicking it until Lilith rocked her hips and moaned.

You need some practice, Adam. Shove your fingers deep into her pussy and suck on her clit until she screams the heavens down. On second thought...

The human eased her off the ledge into the grass, continuing to caress her body. She had magnificent tits, high and round with just the faintest blue undertone to her nipples. Parting her legs, she helped the human settle between them. The human's ass blocked Jetrel's view of Lilith now and his being churned restlessly. If he couldn't be the one drilling her, the least they could do was let him watch!

Her long, shapely legs didn't hinder the human's movements; they hugged his sides, allowing his hips to draw all the way back before pushing into her again.

The human moved steadily, yet tentatively. Jetrel wanted to grab his ass and slam him into her. Poor Lilith didn't have a hope in hell of getting an orgasm out of this! She liked it fast and hard. He'd never actually fucked her, but he'd watched her with Sammael. At times with his permission and other times ... He grinned.

She moaned and thrust up against the human. The lusty little bitch was getting off on this! Wait until her mate found out she'd been in the Light defiling the human.

A scalding thrill rolled through Jetrel. Perhaps Sammael would allow him to help punish her. Perhaps they would take turns with her until she saw the error of her ways. Or better yet, they could fuck her together. They could chain her to the ceremonial altar and withhold her pleasure until she was

desperate enough to do anything. They'd shared women before—just never Sammael's mate.

She cried out and the human trembled, his white ass pumping frantically. Finally! They were finishing. The man flexed his hips deeply and shook, letting out a muffled cry.

Jetrel wasn't sure if Lilith found pleasure or not. She'd certainly been an eager participant.

The human rolled off her, leaving Lilith sprawled in the grass. Her pussy glistened with her essence and Jetrel felt a heated tingle as his corporeal body tried to materialize.

Her eyes flew wide and her panicked gaze darted toward the man to see if he had noticed the demon manifesting in front of him.

Damn her glorious cunt!

The human was fast asleep, his head pillowed on his arms.

Jetrel finished solidifying and watched Lilith squirm. *Oh, bright eyes, you're going to do a lot of that before I'm through with you.*

He crooked his finger.

She shook her head.

Narrowing his gaze to a menacing glower, he mouthed the word *now*.

* * * *

Lilith had never been so miserable in her entire life. She sat in an underground grotto, naked and afraid. Light from somewhere beyond the cave illuminated the pool in which she dangled her legs. At regular intervals, the water surged, washing across the floor and draining into a crevice at the

other end of the cavern. The warmth of the pool and its faint pink tinge revealed the source from which it flowed.

Why had Jetrel been the one to find her? Satan himself would have been preferable to Jetrel! He had abilities she didn't possess, didn't fully understand. He'd simply wrapped his arms around her in the forest, and at the whim of his mind, they'd been transported—here.

He was powerful. Mysterious. A scoundrel. A liar. A *spy*.

A wide stone ledge ran along the back of the cave, well out of the reach of the water. Jetrel tossed a pouch of food to the ledge and began to undress.

"Did you wash the human's stench from your flesh, Lilith?"

"I'm not going to fuck you, Jetrel. Just take me back." The warm surge of the pool inundated her senses and teased her pussy folds. Though the golden male had tried his best, his tender curiosity hadn't been what she needed at all. She still felt hollow and cold.

"What are you doing so far from home?"

Jetrel stood right behind her. His body heat warmed her back. He didn't touch her. Was he naked? Why had he brought her here if he didn't intend—

"You'll spread your thighs for me when and if I decide that's what I want, and no, I'm not naked—yet."

"My mind didn't used to be this open to you."

"You're upset. Tell me why? What were you doing with the human?"

She turned so she could see him. "I would think that much was obvious."

He wore only a pair of black breeches, which he'd folded up to his knees. His thick blue-black hair flowed to his shoulders, sleek and shiny. The glowing intensity of his eyes accented the blue highlights in his hair.

Hell help her, he was gorgeous. The most desirable male she'd ever known—and he knew it!

Parting in a challenging smile, his sensual mouth revealed startlingly white teeth. "Why the anatomy lesson? By whose authority were you interacting with the man?"

"Did you enjoy spying on me? I know it made you hot. Will you run and tattle to your master about what you saw?"

"I'm not ashamed of what I am, Lilith. Can you say the same?" He paused and his gaze intensified. "Who gave you leave to defile the human!"

"Why would you care? You've defiled your share of virgins."

"*Demon* virgins. This was different. Why did I find my brother's mate prowling around in the Light?"

"Don't you dare speak his name to me! That craven whoreson you call brother was—"

"Shark Clan demon with really big tits?" Jetrel didn't care to hear the rest of her impassioned rant. Sammael had been fucking Azza for as long as he could remember. The real wonder was that it took Lilith this long to find out. "You knew what he was like when you chose him. Did you honestly expect him to change? He was mated to Tultzif when he spread your thighs for the first time."

"Well, he'll never spread them again! I can tell you that much."

He lost his sarcastic retort as her unexpected declaration took his breath away. Did she realize what she'd just said? Had she meant to renounce Sammael? "Your response to seeing him with Azza was to seduce the human? I still don't understand."

She splashed water on her face and scrubbed her arms. Jetrel watched the gentle sway of her breasts. He wanted to palm them and feel her nipples harden. His tongue tingled for the first taste of her firm flesh.

As Sammael's brother, Jetrel had the right to woo her before she could choose anyone else as her new mate. Jetrel grinned. He suspected this wooing would take a long, long time!

"I didn't set out to seduce the—what did you call him?"

"Human. Man. God calls him Adam."

Stepping from the pool, she faced him, her arms folded loosely over her breasts.

"And what does God call you?"

He ignored the old insult. The rumor that he was God's spy had been around since the Fall. It no longer bothered him.

"The same thing he calls you. *Demon*. But you don't like that word, do you? How about misunderstood spirit? Fallen angel? Evictee? Pick one."

"Pain in the ass."

"If that's an invitation—I'll be happy to oblige."

"You're disgusting."

He laughed. "Of course I am. I'm a demon! We're repulsive, disrespectful, crude, *lustful*."

"Do you live in this slimy cave?" She shifted her weight from one foot to the other, inadvertently drawing his gaze to the cobalt blue folds peeking out between her shapely thighs. "Why did you bring me here?"

"Suck my cock and I'll take you somewhere more appealing." She glared at him, so Jetrel backed off—a little. Letting his appreciative gaze roam freely over her body, he explained his plan. "My sources say something big is happening tomorrow, so I'm going to hang around for the event. If I take you back now, I'm liable to miss it."

"But you don't know what the event is."

"Correct."

She arched her eyebrow challengingly. "Who are your sources?"

"Now what kind of a spy would I be if I revealed my sources?"

Lowering her arms to her sides, she moved closer. "Whose side are you on, Jetrel? Light or Dark? Or do you play the ends against the middle?"

Her fingertips stroked along his arm, across his shoulder and down his spine as she circled behind him. He stood perfectly still, allowing her teasing touch, enjoying it, but carefully resisting the stimulation. "Interesting analogy. If God is on one side and Satan is on the other, who is in the middle?"

"Adam?" she suggested, her silken voice as much a caress as her hand.

Continuing her orbit, her fingers brushing his collarbone. He felt his cock rise and anger flared. "Why not *you*? Aren't

you the center of the universe, at least in your own eyes?" Reacting to his subtle provocation, she drew back to slap him. He easily caught her wrist. "You hotheaded little bitch. Don't confuse me with my brother. I don't enjoy being hit."

Her eyes blazed. A tiny muscle fluttered just above her jaw. He could almost hear her teeth grinding.

"I don't know where I am." She spoke stiffly, her lips barely moving. "Take me back to the bend in the river and I'll return on my own."

"You nearly drowned. You'll never make it."

She yanked against his restraining hold. When he wouldn't release her, she tried to pry his fingers free with her other hand. "I can't stay here. *I won't!* Let go of me."

"I don't want to."

She stopped struggling, her gaze suddenly clouded. "Why?"

"I like having my fingers on you." He pulled her slowly toward him. "But I think I'll like having them in you even better."

Renewing her resistance, she tried to twist away. "I'm your brother's mate! You can't—"

"You renounced Sammael in front of me. That's an open invitation to woo you." He pressed her against his chest, his hands moving to cup her ass. "I accept."

Her upper body arched away, which ground her mons against his thigh. *I should pull her legs around my waist and fuck her right here, right now.* The vivid image in his mind was nearly too powerful to resist. He slid his finger deep into her crack and gently pulled her ass cheeks apart, allowing the

humid air of the grotto to tease over her. She quickly smothered a moan.

"I will set Sammael aside, but that doesn't mean I'll choose you next." She sounded muddled as if the words were meant as much to remind her as to inform him. "I may never choose another mate."

Possessive passion stirred within Jetrel. Being Lilith's mate appealed to him far too much. He would surrender control to no one! This slender slip of female was dangerous. "Who said anything about mating? I just want to fuck you."

She shoved him backward and stomped across the chamber. "Are you always this hateful?" Snatching his tunic off the ledge, she tugged it on over her head.

"I have a proposition for you." He flashed his most compelling smile.

"I have no interest in your proposition."

"You haven't even heard it."

She mocked him with her smile.

"I have the *right* to woo you. You cannot fuck anyone else until I've had you at least once."

With an exasperated shriek, she ripped off the tunic and dropped to her hands and knees, presenting him with her rounded ass. "Just get it over with." She ground out the words and opened her legs.

Jetrel clenched his fists. His cock bucked wildly, demanding he accept her invitation. Her breasts dangled, full and free, waiting for the pressure of his hands, her cunt opened sweetly, even her puckered little asshole was there for the taking.

"Get up," he growled.

"Get on with it!" She arched her back, lowering her shoulders to the floor.

Fury beat back his desire. He dropped to his knees behind her, his pants still securely tied. She lowered her face submissively, obviously expecting to be drilled and have it 'over with.' Jetrel seethed. He knew a thing or two about control. No female, regardless of how desirable, was going to command him.

His hands shot between her legs and under her belly, clasping her hips. Wedging her thighs wide, he pulled her knees off the floor. She cried out, trying to look back at him. He held her open, utterly at his mercy.

Using the tip of his tongue against her clit, he flicked and circled ruthlessly. Her hips jerked. She gasped and shuddered as he concentrated entirely on that tiny knot of nerves. He lashed and licked. He caught it between his teeth and carefully sucked it into his mouth.

She trembled violently. A sharp cry tore from her throat as her pearly essence released. He closed his eyes and inhaled her musk, savoring the earthy scent and the power of knowing he'd made her cream.

"Jetrel," she murmured, her voice muffled against her folded arms.

He flipped her onto her back while she was still pliant, draping her legs over his shoulders. He slipped his hands under her, squeezing her sculpted ass as he raised her to his mouth. Her folds were slick, her flavor delicate, yet evocative.

He swirled and explored every crevice and valley before slowly sinking into her honeyed well.

Ravenous for the sensual taste of her flesh and encouraged by her rapturous cries, he nearly forgot his purpose. Her pussy rippled around his tongue and he quickly pulled back. She cried out mournfully, arching, following his retreat.

"Please!"

He waited for the sensations to recede, then teasingly circled her entrance, never venturing beyond the sensitive gate. She wiggled. His hands tightened on her ass.

"Are you ready to hear my proposition?" He spoke the words against her flesh, his voice a gentle vibration.

"You want to talk *now*?"

Lifting his head, he met her gaze as he licked her essence from his lips. He eased her to the smooth stone floor of the cave and pushed two fingers into her pulsing cunt. "I want to woo you."

"You are wooing me." He flicked her clit. She jumped, releasing a nervous laugh. "What's your proposition?"

"You offer yourself, without reservation, to my wooing once." Slowly pulling his fingers out, he stroked her from back to front, ruthlessly avoiding her most sensitive spots.

She licked her lips. "That's all? I give myself to you once?"

She sounded disappointed. Good! "You surrender yourself—without reservation—to *whatever form* of wooing I choose. If I satisfy you completely, you offer yourself again. The first time I leave you wanting, in even the smallest measure, our courtship is ended."

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[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Three

Lilith stared up at Jetrel, her naked thighs framing his highly defined torso. His blue eyes glowed hypnotically, casting a haze over his angular features. She trembled. Sammael had demanded submission, forced it when she hesitated too long. Jetrel's proposition was considerably more appealing—and infinitely more dangerous.

How easy it would be to lose herself in him, to forget everything but the pleasure of his touch. She must resist. Regardless of how appealing she found Jetrel, she *would* control her own future.

"Well?"

"If I refuse?"

He grinned insolently. "Then you remain here until you reconsider."

Her mouth gaped and she tried to sit. He captured her wrists and spread her arms against the floor, arching over her. "I'm your prisoner?"

"Light comes in through the pool. It's obviously a way out, but Cat Clan demons aren't the strongest swimmers, and there's a powerful current."

She didn't really have a choice and he knew it. She had to submit to him once by demonic law or he could simply take her.

Apparently, he preferred his females willing.

He stood and untied the lacings at the front of his pants, his gaze holding hers.

"Will you take me back tomorrow if I submit to you tonight?"

Pushing the garment low on his hips, he paused. "I cannot answer that. Your return isn't contingent upon your surrender. It hinges on the *event*."

"And you don't know what the event is."

He nodded. With tantalizing slowness, he eased the fabric away from his erect cock and down along his hips. He tossed the garment to the stone ledge behind him. Her eyes never left his body. Surrounded by a nest of midnight blue curls, his shaft rose thick and proud. Large and drawn up tightly against his body, his balls revealed his advanced state of arousal.

"You have such a beautiful mouth. So full and soft. Offer me your mouth."

Lilith rose to her knees, carefully keeping her thighs apart, so he could see how wet she was. She licked her lips and left them parted, shiny—available.

He moved in front of her. His fist tangled in the back of her hair. She didn't flinch, didn't hesitate. Opening wider, she waited.

With the tip of one finger he traced her mouth, sliding easily across her moistened lips. He pushed his finger into the warm interior and she swirled her tongue around the tip. Their gazes fused as he pushed his finger in and out.

"I want to feel this luscious mouth sliding around my cock, but I'm starving for more of your sweet pussy." He pulled his finger out, motioning toward the cave's damp floor. "I suppose we'll have to compromise. Lie down."

She hesitated. Sammael liked to straddle her face and fuck her mouth. He'd shove so deeply into her throat she'd nearly suffocate. The more she struggled, the better he liked it.

Jetrel wrapped his arms around her, running his palm down the entire length of her hair. "I'm not my brother, Lilith. If I displease you, I never get to touch you again. Remember that."

His reassurance was as unexpected as the tender gesture. Heat swirled through her belly, and her breasts swelled.

Again she cursed the whim of fate that had allowed Jetrel to find her. Jetrel was too unpredictable. Too persuasive. She had to stay in control or he would dominate her with his seduction just as surely as Sammael had with brutality.

Lying on her back, she angled toward the pool as it surged. Warm water bathed her legs, teased her folds, caressed her.

He moved over her, his knees on either side of her head. Grasping the backs of her thighs, he pulled her legs toward her chest, rolling her hips clear off the floor. She gasped. His hands remained firm and insistent, keeping her in the unusual position. His cock bobbed just above her parted lips. Still, he made no move to enter her mouth.

His tongue stroked from her clit to her anus in one slow, thorough sweep. Understanding blossomed with empowering freedom. If she wanted him, he was hers for the taking. He would force nothing on her. She raised her hands to his hips and urged him lower. His cock teasingly grazed her lips.

Again and again he licked her, touched her, but remained only long enough to inflame her senses. She captured the

head of his penis with her lips and suckled vigorously. He finally slid deeper into her mouth. He licked, she sucked. He slid his tongue around her clit. She swirled hers around his tip.

It became a dance. He led. She followed. Whatever he did, she mimicked, until they were both writhing and wild. He rocked into her mouth in short shallow strokes as she tormented him with the firm pressure of her lips and the swirling motion of her tongue. His efforts centered over her swollen clit. Circling the hooded knot expertly, he drove her passion higher.

His cock throbbed and stretched her mouth, yet he never stayed in her throat long enough to frighten her. She willingly took him deeper.

Her skin prickled, sensitized to the point of pain. The hair on his chest abraded her tender nipples, making her wish he had more hands—or another mouth! She felt his fingers circle her weeping pussy and deep spasms begged him to push inside. His tongue kept up the relentless pressure on her clit while his fingers painted her puckered little hole with her own thick cream.

Was that what he really wanted? Would he fuck her ass until she screamed?

Not tonight. Just relax. His passion-roughened voice sounded inside her head and Lilith groaned. Knowing he could read her mind both excited and frightened her. She didn't want to be so vulnerable to anyone.

His fingers continued to lubricate her anus, so she focused on the sensual slide of his hot, throbbing cock in and out of her mouth.

He gave her clit several forceful flicks and positioned his middle finger against her ass. Heat spiraled deep into her body and her cunt clenched jealously, weeping for the fullness he withheld. With steady pressure, he breached her tight muscular collar and his finger slipped smoothly inside. She whimpered. Wanting him to stop—needing him to do more! He moved, slowly, drawing almost out before he pushed in as far as his long finger could reach.

Please, Jetrel, fuck me! Take my ass if that's what you want, but stop teasing me! she cried out within her mind, knowing he would hear.

His cock slid faster, deeper within her mouth, matching the taunting penetration of his finger. Tighter and tighter her need coiled. She moaned and writhed and moaned again.

Carefully closing his lips around her clit, he sucked it into his mouth. His finger thrust all the way in and Lilith screamed. She shook and trembled as her orgasm pounded through her. His cock thrust deep and hot seed splashed against the back of her throat.

He continued to suckle her clit as he slowly withdrew his finger and she came again. Shifting his hips to pull his cock from her mouth, he eased the pressure on her hips, but didn't let go. He followed her down, his tongue busily devouring every pearly drop of her body's sweet release.

She lay beside the water's edge, limp and replete as he feasted. His warm mouth felt fabulous as it moved against her flesh. Soothing, savoring, worshiping.

A long time passed before he finally lifted his head and grinned. "I enjoyed that most thoroughly, my sweet. But you are the one who must decide. Is our courtship over—or may I woo you again?"

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Four

Lilith crouched in the dense shadow of a leafy lilac bush and watched the grassy clearing with rapt interest. Clusters of tiny purple blossoms filled the air with their cloying aroma, making Lilith wiggle her nose. Jetrel had taught her many things in the past three days. He showed her strange plants and exotic creatures, whispering their names. Testing the boundaries of the garden, they'd followed the four rivers, meandering outward from the frothy spring at Eden's core. She'd been fascinated, intrigued, yet ever mindful that they didn't belong.

The *rules* were different in the Light. If a demon was brave enough to venture into the garden, it was best to travel by night. As the sun rose, their powers diminished until many were forced into their Clan forms. If Jetrel hadn't transported Lilith to the underground grotto, Adam would have witnessed her transformation into a sleek, black demonic cat.

For three days Lilith and Jetrel had explored, eating the fruits and drinking deeply of the water. All to no avail. Even the superficial disguise of adventure could not hide the fact that they were waiting. Jetrel waited for the *event*, convinced his source had not misled him, and Lilith waited for Jetrel to continue their courtship.

Jetrel stood beside her, his arms crossed over his chest. He made no effort to hide from the human standing alone in the clearing.

Can Adam see you? She used her mind rather than her voice to pose the question.

No. And he can't see you either. I've shielded you from view.

A tingle swirled down her spine and made her clit pulse. Jetrel's abilities thrilled her far more than she cared to admit. One of the few remaining members of the notorious Shadow Clan, the full scope of his powers was as much a mystery as his true allegiance.

Jetrel wore snug black breeches. His tunic covered her from neck to the knees, while the human—Adam—was naked. The setting sun displayed his golden body in glorious detail as he gathered fruit from the surrounding trees.

I thought he had undressed me, when he pulled me from the river. But I don't think he realizes he's naked.

Before Jetrel could respond a movement drew their attention to the other side of the clearing.

"There you are. Come. I've gathered food for us."

Confused by Adam's words, Lilith glanced at Jetrel. He'd said Adam couldn't see her, so why had the human invited her to ... Jetrel's gaze was fixed on the trees beyond Adam. Lilith followed the direction of his stare.

A female stepped into the clearing. Sunlight gleamed in her long blonde hair. She moved gracefully, relaxed, at home with her surroundings and—her mate! There could be no denying that this was Adam's mate. She was his perfect counterpart, his other half. Lilith's gaze narrowed on the female's face. Her features were delicate and rosy, disgustingly ... pure!

Jetrel stepped in front of her, blocking her view of the humans. *Calm down. Your jealousy is making it impossible for me to shield your presence.*

I am NOT jealous!

Ah huh. Whatever you say.

He pivoted and she could see the clearing again. Adam and his mate sat facing each other. Her legs wrapped loosely around his waist, her hands rested on his golden shoulders, and he fed her from his fingertips.

Fury, spiteful and violent, tore through Lilith. Jetrel's arm banded her waist, keeping her from rushing across the clearing and tearing the golden bitch limb from limb. *He was mine! I was not finished defiling him!*

Well, apparently he's ready to do some defiling of his own. Look where he's touching her. Oh, look at his cock. He's definitely ready to practice what you taught him.

She twisted out of his grasp and rushed deeper into the trees. Was this the event? Had Jetrel kept her in the Light to humiliate her? Sammael had promised to remain faithful. Adam had touched her as if she were special, unique. Would she never find a male capable of sharing the Dark Splendor with her alone?

Jetrel materialized in front of her and she collided with his chest. His arms encircled her, one hand cupping her bare behind under the edge of the tunic.

"Why does seeing Adam with his mate humiliate you?"

"Stay out of my mind!"

"Surely you know he was never meant for you. You're a demon, Lilith. You cannot change what you are!"

Shoving against his broad chest, she dug her feet into the grassy ground, determined to escape him. "Get away from me. I hate the Light. I hate the humans and I hate you!"

"Really?" He didn't let her go, but his hold gentled. His fingers lightly caressed her skin. "Why do you hate me? Because I won't let you lie to yourself?"

"Because you wanted me to see this. You knew God was making him a mate and you *wanted* me to see."

With one quick tug, he rid her of his tunic. She reached for it frantically. He held it out of reach. "Look at yourself. You are the most beautiful demon I have ever seen. But you *are* a demon!"

Breasts heaving, long hair fluttering in the balmy evening breeze, Lilith glared at him. "Give me back the tunic."

"No. I want to look at you. I want to watch your nipples harden and your skin flush. I want to woo you."

Exasperated, she spun, intentionally whipping his chest with her hair. "Go to Heaven!"

"Were you left wanting by our last wooing?"

His softly spoken taunt brought her up short. *Damn him!* "Not now, Jetrel. I'm too angry."

"You're not angry. You're jealous."

He was still behind her, yet she knew he didn't need to see her expression to understand her mood. Far more than just her body was exposed to him! "Fine. I'm jealous. That doesn't change the fact that I'm not in the mood for wooing."

"Then we'll compromise."

She groaned. His *compromise* in the grotto had been more devastating than anything she'd exchanged with Sammael in all her years as his mate. "What do you want from me?"

"I want a demonstration of your willingness to allow me to woo you once your mood improves."

Slowly she turned to face him. His expression was perfectly calm. Only the glow of his wide blue eyes gave away his desire. "And if my mood never improves?"

"Then we'll both regret your stubbornness." His grin held just a hint of challenge. "Some things are worth waiting for."

He pulled her into his arms and sat on the leaf-strewn ground. Arranging her legs around his waist, he guided her hands to his shoulders. An image of Adam and his mate flashed through her mind and Lilith pushed against him. He'd chosen the pose intentionally, forcing her to face her irrational jealousy.

"Let go." She squirmed and arched until she noticed how each wiggle intensified his gaze.

He cupped the side of her face, his expression pained. "Don't you know how long I've wanted—"

"How long you've wanted *what*? You held me down while your brother mounted me for the first time!" She twisted her face away.

"It was his right. You left your talisman at his door giving him permission to court you."

She shook her head, torn between laughter and tears. It was ancient history. Why correct his misconception now? The tension in her chest demanded release and the words tumbled out before she could stop them. "The talisman was

for you, Jetrel. Sammael already had a mate. I was offering myself to you."

He stared at her in stunned disbelief. "But you're first born of the highest Order. Your mate has to be a prince. Why would you ... Why didn't you tell him? Why didn't you tell *me*?"

"How? When did I have the opportunity? He claimed me the next morning."

Jetrel's arms tightened, drawing her closer to his warmth.

"They dragged me from my bed and brought me to the ceremonial chamber. I was surprised *you'd* acted so quickly, but I wasn't afraid. The four elders waited to witness the claiming and then you and Satan strode in."

"But instead of claiming you for myself, I held you for my brother." His voice sounded hollow and distant. His gaze avoided her face.

"We're taught to struggle during the ceremonial mating. Only a coward submits without a fight. But my cries were genuine. I didn't want him. I never wanted him!"

He framed her face with his hands and covered her mouth with his. For a long moment he just shared her breath and molded her lips.

Lilith closed her eyes. Jetrel's tenderness couldn't erase the wasted years, but it felt so good, so right to finally have his arms around her.

The wavering image of countless candles flickered to life within her mind. She could feel the heat and smell the rich aroma of scented wax and incense. High arched ceiling and obsidian walls—the ceremonial chamber.

She tried to speak, to sever his mental transmission. He cradled the back of her head in the bend of his elbow and slid his tongue slowly into her mouth.

Open to me, Lilith. Accept this.

The elders filed in, deep hoods concealing everything but the soft red glow of their eyes.

Why would he want her to relive this? Why would...

Her mother and sisters hurried her into the room, stripping her naked before the stone altar. She could feel their hands brush her skin and the rasp of fabric as they pulled each garment aside.

How was he doing this? She could feel everything as if she were there!

Three men entered, pausing just inside the archway. Jetrel stood in front of the other two, naked, his body gleaming in the candlelight. Satan and Sammael awaited, a step behind him. Their lustful gazes moved over Lilith without reservation or apology.

This was not how it had happened.

Sammael had been in front.

Lilith trembled, understanding. She wrapped her arms around Jetrel's back and surrendered to his sensual spell.

A violent shiver shook her as her bare bottom touched the stone altar. Her sisters urged her to lie back, but she didn't move fast enough. Sammael and Satan stepped forward. Each grabbing one arm, they stretched her out across the altar, holding her arms above her head.

Jetrel moved to the foot of the altar, muscles rippling, gaze boring into hers. Taking his cock in his hand, he proudly

displayed it for all to see. Thick and long, his shaft jutted prominently from his body, the head so engorged it was nearly purple. His large balls promised virility.

She felt his warm palm cover her breast, but in the image they had yet to touch. Her nipple tightened and she pushed into the caress. Reality melded with fantasy, confusing, yet stimulating.

In her mind, he slipped his hands under her knees and drew her toward him. She kicked and twisted, arching her back, only because it was expected. Her pussy ached for the fullness of his cock and her clit begged for his attention.

He bent her knees, spreading her thighs. Lilith waited for the blissful thrust of his shaft, but he left her open and empty while he turned his attention to her breasts. He cupped them firmly in his palms, massaging them, stroking them. Plucking her nipples until they tingled and burned.

Sammael's hand supported her left breast while Jetrel suckled her firmly. When he moved to the right, Satan's warm fingers joined in.

Lilith moaned. No one else had touched her intimately when Sammael claimed her body, although it was a common occurrence for the attendants to assist. She had always thought the practice would humiliate the female, yet her skin tingled and her nipples pulsed with welcome as Satan's mouth replaced Jetrel's.

The attendants caressed her breasts, her shoulders, her torso. Their lips and teeth tormented her nipples. Jetrel descended along her body, stopping to explore her hipbones and the silken plane of her belly.

Her clit throbbed madly, anticipating the gentle swirl of his warm tongue. He straightened and pushed her legs wide. Guiding the plush head of his cock to her cleft, he stroked up and down, intentionally avoiding her sensitive clit. Her folds surrounded him, slick and swollen.

The attendants sucked her nipples deeply into their mouths, keeping her arms above her head. She cried out. Holding her legs open, Jetrel refused to fill her. He teased her, built the burning ache. She needed to move, to writhe and buck, to do *anything* to bring his cock inside her.

He slid his hands down the inside of her thighs and slipped them under her body. Firmly cupping her ass, he lifted her and thrust to the hilt in one forceful drive. Lilith screamed. The wet walls of her cunt rippled with a staggering orgasm.

Jetrel threw back his head and roared. The attendants laughed, their breath hot against her wet nipples. Jetrel's cock stretched her pussy, throbbing in time with her thundering heartbeat. He pulled back slowly, letting her feel every thick, pulsing inch. When only the head remained inside her, he paused.

Pulling his hands out from under her, he gently traced her wet folds, accentuating how tightly she stretched to take him. She shifted restlessly, needing him to move, needing him deep—needing *him*.

His fingertip brushed her clit. She whimpered. He circled her, matching the rhythm to the throbbing of her inner muscles. Bracing her heels against the sculpted rim of the altar, Lilith offered herself to Jetrel. She squeezed him and arched, trying to bring him deeper.

Grinning, he grasped her hips and waited until she met his gaze. The incandescent blue pulled her in, surrounded her, penetrating her. His cock sank slowly into the depths of her aching pussy. Nudging her womb, he announced his presence to her entire body.

His being infused her.

She trembled, arching into each powerful stroke as he moved in and out. The attendants howled, nipping her breasts. Jetrel thrust harder, deeper. Consuming. She greedily clutched his cock with her sheath, increasing the tingling friction, forcing the tension higher.

He wrapped his arms around her hips, pulling her up off the altar. She locked her ankles behind his back and let the pleasure come. Deep, pulsing spasms gripped her cunt, stealing her breath and shattering the illusion.

She collapsed against Jetrel's chest, panting.

Shaken.

"That's how it should have been," he whispered into her hair.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Five

Tingling still from Jetrel's mental wooing, Lilith strolled along the grassy riverbank. He told her not to wander far and then slipped away into the trees. She suspected he was going to speak with his elusive "source," but she hadn't bothered to ask. She heard a startled gasp and spun around, her sight penetrating the gathering shadows.

"I'd convinced myself you weren't real, that I'd imagined ... Who are you?"

She waited for the irrational tightening of her chest and the deep empty pulsing between her thighs. It never came. Even naked, standing tall and proud, Adam failed to affect her senses. She looked at him with appreciative indifference.

Jetrel had left her no illusions regarding what she was.

"Who I am is not important. You should be worried about *what* I am."

"You tricked me." His gaze narrowed and he took a step toward her. "You made me believe you were my mate. I never would have touched you had I known—"

"It was not pain you were feeling while you thrust between my thighs. Don't pretend you were the victim, Adam. You were much too easily defiled!"

Turning from the harsh truth in her statement, he clenched his jaw and balled his hands into fists. "My mate must never know. You must leave this place and never show yourself to me again!"

"Oh I must, must I?" She circled him slowly, keeping herself a step ahead of his retreating gaze. "What will you do if I don't? You have no power over me."

"I do not, but God does!" His amber gaze met hers boldly. "You are a conniving temptress from the pit of Hell! My mate is perfect. Flesh of my flesh. You cannot compete with that."

She laughed, harsh and hollow. "*Compete?*" She spat the word at him, astonished by his arrogance. "With that pale excuse for a female? Why would I bother? She would have to possess something worth competing for! Make no mistake, *Adam*. Regardless of what transpired between us in the past—from this moment on—we are enemies!"

* * * *

"I want you to defile the female," Lilith said passionately.

"No!" Jetrel returned just as vehemently. "I will not defile a human. We have nothing to gain. Besides, Adam will have warned her. These creatures are not *that* stupid."

"He can't warn her without incriminating himself. She knows nothing. I want the bitch defiled!"

"Then fuck her yourself." Jetrel shook his head. "Your obsession with the humans will get us both killed."

She crossed her arms over her chest and glared at him. "What did your spy have to say?"

"Nothing we hadn't figured out on our own. The *event* was—uneventful. We return at midnight."

He disappeared into the shadows and Lilith muttered a curse. She kicked a clump of dirt into the river, watching the clear water turn murky and brown.

Damn him! Damn them both.

"Ssso, you are Jetrel'sss mate."

"I am *no one's* mate!" She looked around to see who had addressed her.

"He sssaid you were sssweet. I can hardly disssagree."

There, coiled near the base of a tree was a large serpent. Jetrel had pointed several out on their tour of the garden, but she hadn't realized the creatures could speak. Her gaze narrowed on the creature's scaly face, suspicion niggling within her belly. Was this a simple serpent or someone from the Serpent Clan?

"What do you want?" She studied its unblinking eyes.

"No, sssweet Lilith, what do you want?"

That voice, the ruthless determination in those simple words.

She knew that voice.

"You were listening. You know what I want."

"Yesss." The creature uncoiled, creeping across the ground toward her. Its bright gaze never wavered from her face.

"Bring me what I want, and I will sssee the humansss punished beyond anything you can possibly imagine."

"What do you want?"

"Behind you."

She glanced over her shoulder and the creature wrapped around her leg. Stifling a shriek, she fought down the impulse to unwind the thing and throw it as far from her as possible. She wouldn't have been afraid, if it were only a serpent.

"It's just a fruit tree."

The serpent hissed out a laugh. "That, sssilly girl, iss the Tree of Life. Partake before you return and bring two piecsses of itsss fruit to me."

"Two? Why two?"

"No more questionsss. Do ass I ssay!" Uncoiling from her leg the serpent crawled toward the surrounding foliage.

"Wait. I need Jetrel to take me back. May he partake as well? Can I share the fruit with him?"

"The fruit will make you ssstronger than you can possibly imagine. You'll have no need of him. Tell him or don't. It'sss up to you."

* * * *

Jetrel lay in the grass staring up at the star-dotted sky. Life was so much easier without a female. He slaked his lust on a willing wench whenever he felt the urge and went about his business.

The talisman was for you, Jetrel. Lilith's hushed confession tore through him, twisting his gut and making his cock pound for the reality of her wet pussy. *I was offering myself to you.*

As if summoned by his lustful thoughts, she lowered herself to straddle his hips and smiled into his eyes. If he hadn't been wearing his pants, she'd be impaled balls deep right now. Didn't she realize how much he desired her? Couldn't she feel his massive hard-on?

"Don't be angry with me." She rubbed herself against him teasingly. "I don't want to fight with you."

"What *do* you want?"

"Offer yourself for my pleasure."

His brows drew together as he considered this. She was up to something. Lilith was always up to something. There was no way she could overpower him physically. So what was her game? "I'm entirely at your disposal. Do with me what you will."

"Take off your pants."

She stood and removed her tunic while he silently obliged. Folding the borrowed garment, she set it next to a mesh bag he hadn't noticed before. "What have you got there?"

"A treat for later, but only if you please me *very* well."

"My, we are feisty all of a sudden." He stalked toward her, his curious gaze fixed on the pouch at her feet. "What's in the bag, Lilith?"

She pushed him backward. "You'll never find out like that. Lie down and fold your hands behind your head. I want to touch you."

Hesitating a moment longer, Jetrel reclined in the grass and raised his arms, locking his hands behind his head as she instructed. She stood over him, giving him a spectacular view of her long legs and blue folds. "You can't touch me from way up there."

She smiled and straddled his hips again, tauntingly pressing his cock flat against his belly before lowering herself on top of him. Her body seared his, dragging a groan from his throat.

"I've always thought you were the most tempting demon, Jetrel." Her breasts swayed gently as she arched forward, running her nails lightly from his elbows to his armpits. Tingles erupted. He shifted restlessly.

"Your features please me. Your body excites me. But I never really understood what made you unique, until now."

"My willingness to let you play with me like a toy?"

Confused by her mood, he resorted to teasing. He didn't want her to say something they'd both regret.

"In a way." She traced his features with the tip of her finger, paying special attention to the shape of his mouth.

"What I sense in you is balance. You're amazingly comfortable with who you are. Your instinct to dominate is just as strong as Sammael's, yet you willingly surrender, knowing it will please me."

He wanted to touch her, to stroke her face and press her against his heart, but she'd chosen this position. Control seemed important to her.

And she was important to him.

This was a dangerous game they played. Demons weren't meant to love. They were meant to devour, to manipulate and torment. Perhaps he'd spent too much time in the Light.

He no longer wanted to fuck her.

He wanted to make love to her.

What the hell is wrong with me!

She licked her lips and smiled as his gaze followed the movement of her tongue. Her hands glided along the column of his neck, squeezing his shoulders, and exploring the bunched muscles of his arms.

"What am I going to do with you?"

The conflict in her tone hinted at a dilemma far greater than which part went where. Before he could question her meaning, though, her mouth sealed over his. She tasted of

some exotic food he'd yet to sample. "What have you been eating?"

She nipped his bottom lip. "Silence! I don't want to talk. There are far better uses for your mouth." He started to pull his hands out from under his head. She grabbed his elbows. "Not until I give you leave."

His eyes narrowed, but he interlaced his fingers and relaxed. They both wanted the same thing. He really didn't care which road they took, as long as they agreed on the destination. Besides, he could always chain her to his bed and return the favor.

Her warm mouth covered his briefly, teasing him with the unknown flavor still upon her tongue. He delved deeply, hoping to identify the taste, but she moved on, dragging her lips along his jaw and tracing the pulse pounding in his neck.

Supporting herself against the ground, she held her breasts just above his face. "Would you like to lick my nipples?"

"Only if it pleases you." He grinned. She had spectacular breasts and she knew it. He wanted to squeeze them, to roll her nipples until they were hard and then suck them until she moaned. This was her game.

She leaned closer, brushing her nipple against his lips. "You may taste my nipple."

Taste! That meant more than lick if you asked him. He opened his mouth and swirled his tongue around her areola before closing his teeth on her nipple. He sucked hard, flicking the very tip. Without waiting for permission he moved to her other breast. She didn't seem to notice his

disobedience. Arching her back, she pushed herself deeper into his mouth.

"Enough, Lilith! Let me touch you!"

"Touch me. Taste me. Take me!"

He grabbed a fistful of her hair and dragged her mouth back to his, plundering her sweet depths with demanding intensity. The elusive flavor was driving him mad. He wanted to know what it was. He wanted more.

Finding her breasts with his hands, he squeezed her nipples, gradually increasing the pressure until she moaned. "I want to taste you. Bring that sweet pussy up here."

"I can't wait. I need you now."

"Not a chance!" He grasped the back of her thighs and urged her forward. Her knees hit his armpits, a momentary hindrance. Maneuvering one leg and then the other over his shoulders, he soon had her positioned over his face. "Offer yourself for my pleasure." He whispered her words back to her.

Lilith trembled as his hot breath stirred against her cleft. How had this happened? He was supposed to surrender himself to her.

"Come on. You said I could taste you. Just show me where to put my tongue."

Temptation incarnate!

She spread her folds, exposing her most intimate self. His fingers held her hips, anchoring her in place. He extended his tongue slowly, almost threateningly. *Hell help me, what a threat!* Pushing just inside her aching core, he swirled. Heat

spiraled clear to her womb. He withdrew and moved to her swollen clit, laving the little nub tenderly.

"No more. I want your cock inside me—now!"

Ignoring her, he continued his gentle assault, licking and sucking until she splintered into climax. "Now you can have my cock inside you."

He helped her maneuver past his shoulders, then Lilith did the rest. She knelt over his hips and closed her fingers around his throbbing shaft. She stroked him, bending to circle the tip with her tongue before guiding him to her entrance.

She felt the beating of her heart echoed in the throb of his cockhead. Her heartbeat accelerated and the throbbing increased. She squeezed him as tightly as she could, caressing him with her inner muscles.

Holding firmly to her hips, he pushed deeper. The walls of her pussy stretched for him, welcomed him. He pulled back and thrust hard. Her knees gripped his hips, her back bowing, her hair sliding against his legs.

She lifted herself nearly off him, then took him deep again. The moment of emptiness made the fullness even sweeter. Again and again she stretched herself around him, glorying in the completeness of being filled by him.

Harder and faster she moved. Her wet cunt gripped him like a fist, demanding that he release his seed. He braced his powerful legs, bucking up into her.

A high, strangled cry escaped her moments before deep, rhythmic spasms gripped her pussy. He thrust deep. His hips left the grass as his seed filled her in hot, echoing bursts.

She collapsed across his chest, gasping for breath. Staggered.

His hands stroked her back, combed through her damp hair, teased her bottom.

"Do I get my treat now?"

His voice sounded light and teasing, but Lilith was too shaken to lift her head. Why did being with Jetrel affect her so profoundly? She was shocked by the sensations still ricocheting through her body.

"I haven't decided, yet."

He pushed her away from his chest, her hair streaming around her face. "Are you going to try and convince me I didn't please you?"

"You pleased me very much, but this is no ordinary treat." She kissed him lightly on the lips and reluctantly disentangled their bodies.

He sat up, silently watching as she donned his tunic and picked up the mesh bag. Cradling the precious Fruit of Life to her breast, she studied her lover, her throat tight with uncertainty. He'd pleased her well tonight. Still, was that enough to earn the gift of immortality?

"I'm not yet certain this treat was meant for you." She blew him a kiss and flashed a playful smile. "I'll meet you in Hell."

Ignoring his startled expression, she dived into the river.

* * * *

Thunder shook the ground moments after she disappeared into the depths. Lightning flashed, splaying silver fingers across the blue-black sky.

What's going on?

Something is horribly wrong!

Jetrel glanced at the sky and then stared at the spot where Lilith had dived into the water. What had brought about these changes? None of this made sense.

He heard the deep, rhythmic flapping of wings and raised his gaze again to the sky. A brilliant beam of golden light penetrated the gloom and cherubim descended from Heaven.

Why would such powerful angels be needed in this peaceful garden?

Jetrel could restrain the thought no longer. *What have you done, Lilith?*

Dispersing his corporeal form, he melded with the shadows and went to investigate.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

The Seduction

Chapter One

Crimson, silky, hot, the Lake of Fire flowed around Lilith's naked body. She kicked hard, slicing through the water, ever deeper. Her skin tingled. Relentless currents tugged at her hair, having long since dissolved her borrowed tunic.

Unable to see through the murky lake, she let her senses guide her. She dove deep, arched beneath the rocky rim, and surrendered to the churning vortex of the fiery pool. Strength surged through her, intoxicating and new. The trek to the surface had nearly killed her.

I am different now!

Emerging in a secluded grotto, Lilith rose from the water. Moisture trailed along her limbs, caressed her flesh, and made her quiver. She tossed back her hair. Ruby droplets showered the cave and her triumphant laughter echoed off the stone walls.

She felt wonderful—powerful—safe!

A mesh bag hung against her hip, its long laces tied securely around her waist. She lifted the bag and examined the priceless treasure contained within. Three fist-size pieces of fruit. So simple. No one would guess their importance.

But there was one who didn't need to guess, one who knew she possessed the precious Fruit of Life.

Unashamed of her nudity, she walked through the sultry corridors, at home in the Realm of Darkness. Purpose filled

her stride, determination narrowing her focus as she mentally organized her strategy.

Inside her private chamber, she conjured an opening in the stone floor, easing her bundle into the insulated cubby. The fruit would be safe here, preserved against theft and deterioration. She sealed the opening and stood, releasing her pent-up breath and relaxing the muscles in her neck.

She'd done it! She'd survived the tide and returned with the prize.

Now she must plan the negotiation.

"Do you have any idea what you've done?"

Gasping softly, Lilith spun to face the intruder.

Tall and arrogant, Jetrel stared at her, blue gaze glowing.

"How did you get in here? The doorway is sealed."

He'd bound his shoulder length hair at the nape of his neck. Cobalt highlights gleamed among the ebony strands. Harsh angles and striking symmetry, his features never failed to steal her breath.

"Not against one who is wooing you." His gaze moved over her naked body with lazy insolence. "I am still wooing you, aren't I?"

Heat passed through her in languid waves. How could he affect her with just the intensity of his stare and the silken timbre of his voice? She couldn't let her attraction to Jetrel distract her from her purpose. She had much to accomplish before this night was through.

Consciously keeping her movements steady and controlled, she walked to the wardrobe and withdrew a shimmering blue gown. "You pleased me well, and you know it. Our courtship

is not why you're here." She pulled the garment over her head. The loose material swished against her smooth skin, draping in wide pleats from shoulder to mid-thigh.

"I thought you might be interested in what's going on above."

She stiffened at the mocking edge in his tone. Jetrel had made it clear he wanted no part in her conflict with the mortals. Whatever he had to say was sure to highlight her rash behavior and berate her choice to defile God's chosen one. "The Light holds no interest for me now."

He laughed, stalking toward her. "You lie badly. You always have."

"Say what you came to say. I have plans."

Caging her in the open wardrobe with his outstretched arms, Jetrel studied her silently. She met his piercing gaze, refusing to be intimidated, refusing to consider the way her pulse leaped and her body ached each time he drew near. His lightest touch sent her senses reeling. And she didn't like it one bit.

She would not fall for Jetrel!

She would not subjugate herself to another—ever!

"What happened in the garden, Lilith?" His voice sounded angry, strained. "What did you do?"

"You know what happened. You watched most of it!"

He traced her nipple with his fingertip. The sensitive bud hardened against the cool material sliding over it.

"I'm not talking about Adam."

She tried to duck under his arm, but he caught her, pulling her against his chest. Warm and smooth beneath her palms, his flesh begged her exploration.

Now was not the time for his sensual wooing! She had important matters to attend.

"What *are* you talking about?" His tall form absorbed the limited space in her cozy bedchamber, making her restless. Making her want...

"God drove them out of the garden and stationed cherubim to guard the gate."

"What has that to do with me?"

His fingers curled around her thigh, pulling her leg to his hip, bending her knee. "That's what I want to know. These events unfolded moments after you dove into the river." He squeezed her ass, his long fingers teasing her folds from behind. "I only left for a few moments. What happened while I was gone?"

"Why do you care what happens to these humans?" She squirmed, pushing against his chest, trying to escape his tormenting touch. He hooked her knee over his forearm, bringing her mons flush with the considerable bulge in the front of his pants. "You're more interested in them than in your own kind. It's not right."

He rubbed his cock against her. Cool leather slid against her hot, creamy core. The crisscrossing laces teased her sensitive folds.

"Adam pisses you off and God throws him out of Eden. Coincidence? I don't think so."

Plucking at her nipple with his other hand, he continued to tease her. Lilith ground her teeth against the pleasure and the demanding ache he created so effortlessly. Jetrel was dangerous. No one should have this sort of power over her.

She would never be powerless again.

She shoved hard, darting past him. "Haven't you overestimated my power? You're insinuating I forced the hand of God."

"Fine." He slammed the wardrobe closed and crossed his arms over his chest. "Tell me nothing. I'll learn the truth soon enough. I'm a *spy* after all."

He melted into shadow and disappeared.

Jetrel hated being called a spy as much as she despised the label demon.

But he *was* a spy.

And she *was* a demon.

Her pussy ached with unfulfilled desire. The material of her dress irritated her nipples. She didn't need this right now. No, she needed a lot more than this right now!

Shaking away her momentary stupor, Lilith took several deep breaths. Why would God drive the humans out of Eden? Her heart thundered and her spirit soared. She had never hoped for such a lofty victory.

How had Satan accomplished it? She must find out, which meant she must face him. Uncertainty made her belly quiver. *You can do this!* She must be resolute, unafraid, or Satan would destroy her.

She started toward the hidden compartment, then shook her head and left the chamber. No one just knocked on

Satan's door. Most were summoned. The bold could request an audience, but she didn't have time to follow proper protocol. She was anxious to solidify her position, and demand retribution for her former mate's betrayal.

Two massive guards flanked the chamber entrance, their smooth gray-green skin and flat features identifying them as Serpent Clan. They jerked to attention, extending their long arms, blocking access to the door.

"I must speak with him." She raised her chin proudly, her tone firm. "Tell your master Lilith awaits his pleasure."

One of the guards snickered, his small reptilian eyes gleaming lustfully.

"He isn't here, but we'd be happy to entertain you until he returns," the second guard offered with a licentious grin.

"I doubt I would find either of you entertaining. I shall return."

She'd retreated several steps when someone whispered her name. One of the guards gasped and the other muttered something she couldn't quite hear. Carefully composing her expression, she turned around.

Satan stood framed by the open doorway, his obsidian gaze fixed squarely on her. A plush-looking forest green robe outlined his tall, lithe body. From his smooth scalp to his long-fingered hands, his green-tinged skin shone in the torchlight. Serpent Clan demons were all hairless, but Satan made it look good. Prominent cheekbones and a slim nose gave his features an elegant cast, unlike his brutish guards.

Without a word, he turned and walked into the chamber, leaving the door open. A silent invitation. The guards hissed

as Lilith passed, but she ignored them. Her gaze swept the room, taking in the opulent décor. Rich jewel tones and gleaming gilt created a decadent ambiance.

"You dare to appear before me clothed." Satan climbed the stone dais and sat on his throne. Arranging his long robe over his legs, he then placed his hands on the padded arms of the chair and waited.

Lilith slipped the gown off her shoulders. It whispered down her body, pooling around her ankles. He expected her to kneel, to bow before him, but such deference was counterproductive to her plan. Lowering her gaze, she straightened her spine, keeping her body proud and erect.

"I stand before you ready to negotiate." She spoke calmly, clearly, though inside she trembled. Satan could kill with a thought—or would the Fruit of Life protect her?

"Negotiate?" he scoffed. "With what do you intend to negotiate? Your firm, young body? Those luscious lips? They are mine for the taking. Serpent Clan is Prime, and I am Serpent Clan Leader."

"Take my body if you must. I will not stop you, but this—"

"*Will* not? You *cannot* stop me should I choose to partake."

Frustrated, Lilith dared to lift her gaze. "Sire, you can share Dark Splendor with any being in your realm. None will gainsay you. I'm here on a matter more important than carnal pleasure."

The high arched chamber rang with his laughter. "I deem what is important and to whom. Your arrogance offends me."

"I don't mean to be arrogant." She lowered her gaze again, debating how best to proceed. Her only leverage was

the fruit. Once she revealed its location, she'd be powerless against him. "I wish to solidify my standing among the clans."

"Then show me proper respect, and I will hear your petition."

Damn him! Would no male ever see her as more than a receptacle for his lust? She couldn't refuse. It was demonic custom. Clan leaders could—and did—demand physical demonstrations of submission.

Countless times she'd sat at Sammael's side as lesser members of Cat Clan sucked his cock. On occasion her mate had insisted the sexual tribute be given to her instead. Knowing the intimacies were unwelcome aroused him even more.

It was Sammael's eager acceptance of these demonstrations that led her to demand he share Dark Splendor with her alone.

Dragging her thoughts back to the present, she scrambled for an alternative. She didn't want to suck Satan's cock, but allowing him to fuck her seemed even more repellent.

Jetrel's handsome image materialized within her mind. Of course! She fought back a relieved smile. "I'm being wooed by Jetrel. Until I accept or reject his suit I am forbidden to any other."

"You have renounced Sammael?" Satan sounded astonished. He stood and joined her before the throne, his gaze caressing her body. Her head barely reached his chest. Though he lacked Sammael's bulging muscles, power and menace emanated from the Prime Leader.

"I have."

"Why?" The word snapped with accusation.

"He proved unworthy of my loyalty. I not only renounce him as mate, I renounce him as clan leader, and wish to challenge for the right to take his place."

Satan studied her. A cruel smile parted his lips, revealing sharp white teeth. "You're a brazen piece of ass, I'll give you that. Who was he fucking and why does his infidelity make him unfit to lead Cat Clan?"

"He swore a blood oath to me. By sharing Dark Splendor with another, he broke his solemn vow."

"Why would he agree to such a thing? A clan leader is entitled to partake freely of any who serve him."

The vow had meant nothing to Sammael. He'd told her what she'd wanted to hear, then shoved his eager cock in the next willing pussy. Stubbornly suppressing her bitterness, she focused on the purpose at hand. "His reasons are irrelevant, Sire. A blood oath is sacred."

He couldn't argue the point. The decree was detailed in the Demonic Charter, a document the clan leaders mutually upheld. Anyone breaking a blood oath was dishonored and subject to a penalty proposed by the wronged party and approved by the Council of Seven.

"Do you have proof of this blood oath?"

"Yes, Sire. It was witnessed by Byleth, my handmaiden, and Sammael's—"

"Summon Byleth. I would hear her testimony."

Reaching out with her mind, Lilith called to her friend and servant, communicating the urgency of the situation. "She is on her way."

He started to touch her, then snatched his hand away. She was forbidden.

"You tempt me to break my own laws." Amusement and disbelief melded within his tone. "No wonder Sammael was no match for you. Sit upon my throne. I am forbidden to touch, not to look."

His voice sent shivers down her spine. She didn't want him, but knowing how desperately he desired her caused a heady rush of power to surge through her body. Climbing onto the dais, she sat. If he insisted on torturing himself, so be it. She would play his game.

"Part your thighs. I wish to see a cunt so splendid it inspired a blood oath."

Secure in the knowledge that he could do no more than look, she spread her legs and canted her hips, offering him a brazen view of her feminine flesh.

He hissed and tossed his head. "Let me touch you. Let me lick you! I will do no more than taste!"

Her eyes narrowed and her pulse leapt. The Prime Leader of the Realm of Darkness *asked permission* to taste her! For just a moment, she was tempted. But Jetrel's wooing was the only thing protecting her from far more than an intimate tasting. She could not compromise.

"It's forbidden, Sire. No one can touch me but Jetrel." Still, her nipples hardened and desire unfurled within her core. If only Jetrel were here. He could stroke her breasts and lick her clit until she shattered. She wouldn't care if Satan watched, if Jetrel were the one—

"Touch yourself!" Satan's harsh command interrupted her thoughts. "I would see your pleasure."

Exhilarated by the power his lust unleashed, Lilith cupped her breast with one hand and covered her mound with the other. Satan growled, moving closer. She stroked her fingers over her damp folds, knowing her hand blocked his view.

"Show me, damn you!"

She parted her flesh and paused, watching his eyes, feeling her body ripen and melt beneath his ravenous gaze. Her clit throbbed. Brushing her fingertip against the aching bud, she groaned.

"I *must* taste you! I will..."

Jetrel solidified behind Satan. His eyes blazed and his expression promised mayhem. "She is mine! No one can touch her. Not even you."

Satan whirled. "You dare intrude!"

"I'm protecting what's mine. None will fault me for that!"

Lilith snapped her thighs together, crossing her arms over her breasts. Energy pulsed between them, anger, possessiveness, lust. She'd inspired this conflict. Two incredibly powerful males prepared to destroy each other—over her! Awed, and a bit afraid, she rushed from the dais.

"Jetrel is right." She stepped between them. "He alone may touch me until our courtship ends."

"Then declare your courtship ended," Satan sneered. "I would fuck you now!"

The doors banged open and a second Satan stormed into the chamber.

Lilith looked from the 'Satan' standing before her to the furious Satan stalking across the room. Instinctively, she backed away.

"I have had it with your games!" the newly-arrived Satan shouted.

The first Satan laughed, his shape rippling and fluxing. Glossy blue/black hair flowed from his scalp to his broad shoulders. His skin faded to a golden shade identical to Jetrel's and his eyes glowed with sapphire light.

"Lucifer," Lilith whispered.

"Brother dear, games are what I do best." Lucifer looked at Lilith, his true appearance even more striking than his Serpent Clan disguise. "I almost had her. She was ready to let me taste her sweet pussy."

Ignoring the silken temptation in his voice, she studied him more closely. His basic shape was indistinguishable from Satan's. Only his coloring and long black hair set him apart. The Fall had subjected them to different curses. Six separate curses, which formed the six demonic clans.

Lucifer led Shadow Clan.

Jetrel's clan.

Had Jetrel known his clan leader was misbehaving? Was that why Jetrel interrupted?

"You impersonate me so often many believe we are one and the same." Satan turned his burning gaze on Lilith. "My guards told you I was not here. Why did you linger?"

"I departed, but you—or Lucifer called me back."

"And why are *you* here?" he demanded of Jetrel.

"My clan leader was about to take liberties not his due."

"If this is Shadow Clan business, then take it to—"

"Sire, I requested an audience with you." Lilith took a step forward and cleared her throat. "My business is with the Prime Leader, not the Leader of Shadow Clan."

"Lucifer, Jetrel, sit against the wall. Lilith, attend me now!"

Satan strode to his throne and sat. Lilith knelt at his feet. Any disrespect would be swiftly punished with the others present. Lilith was no fool.

Heaving a long, loud sigh, Satan lowered his voice for her ears alone. "Please tell me you didn't deliver my package to my brother."

"No, Sire. It is safely stored."

"How was he able to persuade you that he was me? Did you not think it odd that he didn't ask you about the fruit?"

She bowed her head and folded her hands, feeling utterly foolish. "Our conversation hadn't progressed to the point where—"

"Do you really think *I* would be more interested in fucking you than in—immortality? You overestimate your appeal."

"I was foolish. I see that now."

Chuckling, Satan relaxed against the throne, glancing at Jetrel and his brother. "I suppose I can't blame you entirely. He has been practicing these deceptions since before the Fall. Go fetch the bundle. My patience has been tried enough this night."

Lilith pushed to her feet. Dread tensed her muscles and dried out her mouth. Once she gave him the fruit, her opportunity was ended. It must be now.

"May I speak first, master?"

"Master?" He laughed. "That sounds charming on your lips. If only it were sincere. Do you consider me your master, Lilith? Will you submit your will to mine?"

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Two

Jetrel watched Lilith's face closely as Satan waited for her reply. Lucifer sat beside him, relaxed, seemingly disinterested in the drama unfolding across the chamber. Jetrel wasn't fooled by his nonchalance. Lucifer's gaze hadn't left his brother since Satan commanded them to the wall.

Lilith stood before Satan naked, unashamed. Glorious. Possessive desire pounded through Jetrel. *Mine. This incredible female is mine!*

"My will is my own," she stated clearly. "I offer you my respect."

Dumbfounded, Jetrel braced for Satan's reaction. What the heaven was she thinking? Did she want Satan to subdue her? No one openly defied the Prince of Darkness.

"If you respected me, you would do as you're told."

"You have corridors filled with slaves, obligated to submit to you. I offer the cooperation of an equal."

Lucifer gasped.

Jetrel shot to his feet.

Was she insane?

The Prime Leader's roar shook the room. Lilith faced him squarely, proud and unafraid. Jetrel ran to her, shielding her with his body as Satan stepped down from the dais.

"Get—my—fruit!" Each word impacted the chamber with physical force.

"Not yet."

Satan lashed out. Jetrel lunged to intercept the blow, but Lilith shoved him to the floor. Stunned, Jetrel watched Lilith grab Satan's wrist and force his arm to his side.

"Until you partake, Sire, I am stronger than you." She let go of his wrist, yet held her ground. "I don't want your kingdom. I want what's rightfully mine and nothing more."

Lucifer helped Jetrel to his feet, his expression fascinated. "How is this possible? What has she done?"

Panting, his lips curled back in a silent snarl, Satan glared at Lilith. "State your terms."

Jetrel and Lucifer exchanged astonished glances. Satan was giving in?

"Declare me Cat Clan Leader. That will give me the authority to do the rest."

"No female has ever been clan leader," Lucifer said. "No clan will follow you."

"They will if I am allied with Serpent Clan, if the Prime Leader himself approves my appointment."

Again Lucifer turned to his brother. "Why do you not destroy her where she stands?"

"I cannot!"

"They struck a bargain while she was in the Light." Jetrel took Lilith's chin and drew her face toward his. "What have you done?"

Satan laughed. Stomping back to the dais, he sat and gestured toward Lilith. "She has outmaneuvered me, plain and simple. The new Leader of—*Pussy* Clan has officially entered the game."

Lilith ignored the slur and twisted her chin away from Jetrel's hand. "Is the other piece for Lucifer?"

"Yes. As often as he annoys me, he is my brother. Do you intend to share our secret with Jetrel?"

Looking at her lover, a tight knot formed in the pit of her stomach. She couldn't remember a time when she hadn't desired Jetrel. He filled her dreams and fantasies, never drifted far from her thoughts. Even during her years with Sammael, she'd secretly longed for Jetrel.

When she'd left her talisman in the doorway, offering herself as a mate, she'd meant the invitation for Jetrel. Instead, Sammael, the older brother and clan leader, had presumed it was left for him. If it were not for that horrible misunderstanding, she would be mated to Jetrel.

Eternity would be empty without him.

"Yes. We will include Jetrel."

"Then this is a three-way alliance," Satan said. "Shadow, Serpent, and—"

"Cat Clan," she finished before he could repeat the derogatory phrase.

The chamber door swung open and one of the guards stepped inside. "Byleth has arrived," the guard announced.

"Who is Byleth?" Satan asked.

"My handmaiden. She's here to bear witness against Sammael."

"If he truly broke a blood oath, it gives you reason to replace him as clan leader. I suspect your real motivation is not going to be discussed with the other clans."

Satan nodded in agreement with his brother's assessment.
"Let her in."

Byleth was a hybrid demon, born of two different clans. Her long silky hair came from her Cat Clan mother, while her Raptor Clan father graced her with golden eyes and angular features.

Without speaking she shed her garments and bowed to Lucifer. Her pale flesh gleamed in the firelight, her full breasts swaying as she moved. Lustful appreciation ignited in Lucifer's gaze, but he didn't touch Byleth. The servant went to the dais and knelt before Satan's throne, her face near the floor.

"You could learn deportment from your handmaiden," Satan told Lilith. "Byleth, did you witness a blood oath between your mistress and her mate?"

"I did, Sire."

"Look at me. I would rather not converse with the back of your head."

She raised her torso, remaining on her knees.

"Explain."

Byleth glanced at Lilith before she spoke, then her bright gaze settled on Satan. "Sammael took advantage of the demonic custom of sexual tribute, Sire. As I understand it, the custom is meant to solidify political allegiance during formal meetings and important negotiations."

"You understand a lot for a handmaiden."

"My father is Agreas, Leader of Raptor Clan. I was conceived during just such a tribute."

"Continue."

"Sammael demanded sexual tribute from anyone entering his presence, not just those wishing to establish their acceptance of his authority. It became a humiliation for his mate, my mistress."

Satan shifted his gaze to Lilith, though he continued to question her servant. "How did the blood oath come about?"

"Her frustration escalated over time, but she was forced to take action when a party from Shark Clan proposed a joint venture with Cat Clan. Sammael..."

"Go on. Were you witness to the events or is this what your mistress has told you?"

"I was there, as was the entire Cat Clan Council. Sammael shared Dark Splendor with each and every member of the Shark Clan delegation. One at a time to begin with, but toward the end ... It was disgraceful."

"How many?"

"Sixteen. Male, female, one was barely old enough to mate. Sammael took his pleasure while the boy screamed."

"Why was this never reported to me?" he asked Lilith.

"Shark Clan's venture was approved, and I chose to deal with Sammael in my own way. I told him I would denounce him publicly if he continued to misuse his authority and swore I would bear him no children until he proved himself worthy of offspring. He promised he'd accept oral tribute only at the Council of Seven and fertility festivals as the custom demands, and he would share Dark Splendor with no one but me. After what he'd done, I demanded a blood oath detailing these stipulations. Byleth and Sammael's manservant witnessed the pact."

Satan looked into Byleth's eyes. "Did you witness this oath? Did Sammael offer it freely?"

"I did, and he did."

"Three members of the Shark Clan remained behind to oversee the venture," Lilith continued, anxious to have the tale finished. "One of them was Azza."

Lucifer laughed. "That Shark Clan whore has spread her thighs for half of Hell. Sammael broke a blood oath to fuck Azza?"

Satan dismissed Byleth, unwilling to continue the conversation in her presence. "You found Sammael with Azza?"

"He had her spread out on the ceremonial altar as if he were claiming a mate."

The significance wasn't lost on the others, Lilith saw from their disgusted expressions. Sexual tribute was an intricate part of demonic culture. Festivals and ceremonies all contained various forms of sexual expression. But once a demon mated the rules changed—specific limits were put on the acceptable forms of tribute. Sammael had flouted these strictures, demonstrating his disrespect for Lilith as well as the hierarchy of Hell.

"And you fled into the Light?" Satan asked.

"Yes, brother dear, let's talk about the Light." Lucifer moved closer to Satan, accenting the striking similarity in their appearance. "Jetrel reported some rather interesting developments. What do you know about the humans being driven from the garden?"

Satan grinned, his dark eyes flashing. "Whenever I entered the garden, I was unable to shift from my animal form. I listened and learned, but I couldn't accomplish many of my goals while restricted to my serpent's body."

"But Lilith was able to maintain her demonic form," Jetrel said. "What did you have her do?"

"And what did you do for her?" Lucifer wanted to know.

"I simply pointed out the injustice of forbidden fruit." Satan laughed. "And now Lilith will make us all immortal."

* * * *

Jetrel stared down at the fruit cradled in his palm. "I thought it would be bigger."

"Wait until you taste it. It's like nothing you've ever had before."

He took a bite. "I know this taste. The flavor was in your mouth the last time I kissed you." Juice dripped onto his chin and she caught it with her thumb, lifting it to her mouth. He watched her pink tongue explore the liquid. His cock hardened enviously.

Pulling a chunk from the fruit, he painted her lips with the juice. "Will this really make me immortal?"

"Satan heard the cherubim say anyone who eats from the Tree of Life will live forever. That's why God drove the humans out of the garden. They had already eaten from the Tree of Knowledge. If they ate from the Tree of Life, it would have made them immortal."

"There was more to it than that. God only forbid them one thing and Satan tricked them into—"

"You're defending them again."

He said nothing. He and Lilith might never see eye-to-eye regarding the humans, but nothing could diminish his desire for her.

Her lips gleamed invitingly. Jetrel traced their fullness with his tongue, savoring the combined sweetness of fruit juice and Lilith. What was it about this woman that affected him so deeply? With their ability to control outward appearance, many Shadow Clan females were more beautiful.

He traced the arch of her eyebrow, the straight line of her nose, the high curve of her cheek. All the while her gaze caressed his face.

Pride.

Intelligence.

Determination.

She emanated a strength of spirit that fascinated him.

Covering her mouth with his, he offered her a lingering taste of the Fruit of Life. "I want to become immortal while feasting from your naked body."

Her throaty chuckle taunted him. She rubbed against his chest, sliding the cool material of her gown against his heated skin. "What if I get hungry? I enjoy feasting as much as you."

"I'm sure I can find something to sate your hunger."

He angled his head, sealed his mouth over hers, and delved deeply with his tongue. Her velvet heat enveloped him, made him ravenous for more. He carefully navigated past her sharp teeth and curled his tongue around hers, stroking, consuming.

Her scent filled his head, her taste enticed him. He wanted all of her at once, yet he wanted to savor her—forever.

"Why me?" he whispered into her open mouth. "Why share this gift with me?"

She stiffened against him and pulled her mouth away. "Strategy. Satan told me to bring him two pieces of the fruit. I would have been outnumbered."

Chuckling, Jetrel teased her lips with his fingertip, then pushed into the moist interior of her mouth. "That doesn't really answer the question. Why *me*?"

"Give me back the fruit. If you didn't want—"

He silenced her with a long, lingering kiss. "The connection between us is powerful and unique. I will hear you admit it one day. But for now I'll accept your passion."

Lilith molded herself to Jetrel, absorbing his heat and strength through her very pores. She didn't understand the emotions he unleashed within her, but he was right. A powerful connection existed between them.

He swept her into his arms and placed her in the middle of the bed. This was her sanctuary. No male had ever entered this room before Jetrel. Sammael always summoned her to his chamber, never daring to invade her private domain.

Jetrel's presence marked the beginning of a new era. A time she would share with this man. Her equal. Her lover.

Her *mate*?

Time would tell. They would soon have the rest of eternity to define their relationship.

Jetrel spread a square cloth on the small table beside the bed and placed the Fruit of Life upon it. "Cut this up for me."

Lengthening her fingernail, Lilith sliced the fruit into succulent chunks, then retracted her claw.

"Thank you." He grinned, reaching for the laces at the front of his black leather pants. "Off with that gown. I want you naked."

"Say please."

He laughed. "Please."

She watched as he shucked his pants, enjoying the bunch and flex of his muscles as he bent and twisted. Hell help her, he had a spectacular body! Highly defined while remaining sleek.

"You're still dressed."

"You distracted me."

His cock rose proud and thick from a nest of blue-threaded ebony curls. She licked her lips, anticipating the heated slide of his flesh in and out of her mouth.

He grasped the hem of her dress and pulled it off over her head. Blue fire ignited within his gaze, revealing his rising passion.

"Lie back."

She did and he straddled her hips, his cock arching toward her eagerly. He pulled her hands above her head and conjured Shadow cords, commanding the translucent fibers around her slender wrists.

"What are you doing?" Her voice sounded sharp even in her own ears.

"I spread myself for your pleasure and allowed you to do whatever you wanted. Now it's my turn."

Tugging against the Shadow cords, Lilith fought back a wave of panic. Sammael bound her often, controlled her, brutally dominated her. His strength alone made resistance futile, but he liked watching her struggle against the chains.

"Let me go! There's no reason for this."

Jetrel took her face between his palms, gazing deeply into her eyes. "I'm not Sammael. I would never hurt you."

"Then loosen the cords!" Her throat burned and tears blurred her vision. "I can't ... I don't want to be helpless. Even with you."

Gently he caressed her cheek, his gaze thoughtful and tender. "I want you to trust me enough to accept the cords. I won't be satisfied until you do. But I will force nothing on you." He dissolved the smoky fibers, freeing her.

Lilith exhaled and raised one hand to his hair. Removing the leather thong, she sifted the long strands through her fingers. "Trust doesn't come easy for me."

"I know." He rubbed his thumb back and forth across her bottom lip. "Relax. We'll never do anything you're not ready to do."

Moved beyond words by his gentleness, she returned her arms to their position above her head, holding herself captive for him. He kissed her softly, leisurely. His tongue stroked, his teeth nipped, but he never ventured beyond her parted lips.

His body shifted as he reached for a piece of fruit, but his mouth never separated from hers. On and on he kissed her, making her desperate for the intimate thrust of his tongue.

"Hold this for me."

He placed a piece of fruit between her teeth. Licking and nibbling, he ate from her mouth. His tongue passed over her bottom lip, seeking the sweet residue. She closed her lips around his tongue and sucked him into her mouth. A deep growl escaped his throat.

Wild, demanding, he thrust boldly, encouraging her response with throaty moans. The exotic flavor heightened their pleasure, reminding them of the eternal bond they forged.

He trailed more fruit along her neck and crushed it into the hollow above her collarbone. Tingling heat followed in the wake of his stroking tongue. She arched, thrusting her breasts upward as he sucked the fibers of fruit from her skin.

Grabbing another slice, he continued the teasing process. Her nipples tightened painfully as he saturated the sensitive crests with cool juice. He crushed the chunk into pulp and spread it around her nipple, decorating the blue-tinged bud.

His warm mouth covered one mound, sucking the fruit from her flesh and lingering to torment the pebble-hard tip. He licked and suckled, then licked some more. Lilith squirmed beneath him, her breath coming in shallow pants. Her breasts felt tight and achy, needing the firm pressure of his hands.

Trailing his tongue over to her other breast, he began the tormenting process all over again. She tossed her head and laced her fingers together, resisting the urge to touch him. He'd cared enough to release the Shadow cords. She offered her surrender in return.

Jetrel took the last slice of fruit and settled between her thighs. Her waist-length black hair spread out against the

bed, creating a dramatic backdrop for her smooth, ivory skin. He studied her plump mound and the blue folds already slick with passion.

She responded freely, offering herself without reservation. His demonic nature demanded that he conquer and consume, but he knew what her passivity cost her. Her proud spirit bowed to no one, yet she yielded to him.

Determined to savor the moment, he pushed her legs wide, parted her, and wedged the fruit in the very heart of her pussy. Her slick folds closed around it until only the rounded tip remained visible.

"It tingles." She wiggled. A deep flush spread over her breasts and blossomed across her cheeks.

"I don't want this to end. I want to feast on you forever."

She grinned. "This may be the last piece of fruit, but my body is always available to assuage your hunger."

Lowering his face between her legs, he inhaled her musk and the fruit's tangy fragrance. His senses whirled, intoxicated by the heady combination. He licked her delicate flesh. The fruit added an exotic flavor to her response. Her cream soaked the fruit, coating his tongue and filling his mouth. He drank deeply, lapping at the saturated fruit until it dissolved completely.

She groaned, rocking her hips as he tongued her cunt. He held her thighs wide, devouring her with bold thrusts and firm suction.

He traced her slit from back to front over and over, deliberately avoiding her swollen nub. "This little berry is as

delicious as the Fruit of Life." He closed his lips around her clit.

She cried out, her hips lifting off the bed as he suckled her tenderly.

"Please, Jetrel!"

Pushing two fingers deep, he circled her clit. Her inner muscles rippled and clenched as orgasm claimed her. She cried out sharply, her cunt clamping his fingers firmly, then releasing in a series of smaller spasms.

"Grab the backs of your knees. Open wide."

She didn't hesitate. Pulling back on her legs, she offered him everything.

Jetrel pushed his cock into her slowly, filling her, stretching her. He had never been this aroused before. Tight. She clasped him so tightly it intensified his aching need.

He dragged his hips back, reveling in the clingy heat of her core. She gripped him, pulsing rhythmically. He thrust deep, then withdrew completely.

"No!"

He drilled her, pulling all the way out before thrusting back in.

She gasped each time he left her and whimpered when he filled her again.

Power surged through his body. He wasn't sure if it was the culmination of their desire or the Fruit of Life, but he couldn't hold back. He pounded into her, each rapturous cry assuring him she felt it too.

He ground his pelvis against hers. Her long legs wrapped around his waist, clinging to him, while climax shook them

both. He spilled his seed deep inside her body and her core throbbed, echoing his pleasure.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Three

Sated and slick with sweat, Lilith lay in Jetrel's arms. Each time they shared Dark Splendor it was more spectacular than the last. She tried to keep her heart separate from the pleasure he unleashed within her body, but her defenses eroded with each passing night.

His wicked smile called to her. The tenderness in his bright gaze challenged her to trust, to open herself body and soul to his caring.

"Satan will convene the Council of Seven six days hence. Will you be ready by then?" Jetrel stroked her shoulder and teased the outer swell of her breast with feather-light touches.

"I'll have to be. This must be done in one fell swoop. The other clan leaders cannot have time to plot against me."

"Why is this so important to you?"

"My father was the most formidable leader Cat Clan has ever known. After my mother died, he decided to mate with a lesser member of Serpent Clan. This opened him to ridicule. Too many leaders were mating outside their clans. Many members of Cat Clan wanted my father to mate again with one of his own kind."

"It's common practice. Hybrid demons are often more powerful than pure clan demons. Sammael's mixed blood gives him abilities I don't have."

"Your mother is a good example of the trend. She first mated outside Shadow Clan, but when the clan wars began,

she set aside Sammael's father and mated with one of her own kind."

Jetrel propped himself up on his elbow, staring down into her face. "Mother set Forcas aside because he was a sadistic bastard. Sammael learned from the best."

"Perhaps, but hear me out. Forcas had mated outside the clan. That started the decline of his popularity. My father stayed true to Cat Clan when he chose my mother, giving him a political advantage over Forcas."

"But your mother died while birthing you."

"Correct. And Father accepted the talisman of an insignificant member of Serpent Clan. He saw it as the first step toward unification, but it was political suicide."

"His affection for the Serpent Clan female paved the way for Sammael to overthrow him."

"Exactly. Though Sammael was a hybrid, he was the son of Forcas, who had many loyal followers."

"I know all of this." Jetrel lifted a lock of her long black hair and twisted it around his finger. "What I don't understand is why you're so determined to lead the clan yourself. Why not offer your support to one of the Alpha males already plotting a usurpation?"

"Because I'm my father's daughter. I'm the rightful heir to Cat Clan, and I want to finish what he began."

"Uniting the clans."

He was silent for a moment. Lilith watched his expression change from bland interest to intense speculation and smiled. It would serve her purpose better if he were the leader of Shadow Clan, but her heart had made its decision long ago.

"The council meeting could get ugly. Are you prepared to follow through with this? They will exploit any hesitation."

"I know and I am ready." She paused. "How will you react when I demand their subjugation?"

"Our courtship will not protect you from the Council of Seven. If you refuse their sexual tribute it will be seen as weakness."

"That didn't answer my question. I'm prepared to *accept* their sexual tribute, but how will you react?"

It took a long time for him to answer. "I will support you in any way I can."

* * * *

"Oh, it's glorious! I should have let you talk me into this long ago."

Lilith smiled at her handmaiden's excitement. Sunlight revealed golden highlights in Byleth's long dark hair. Her gaze gleamed like polished amber as she looked around in wonder.

They had emerged from the river in a wooded glen. The changes in their surroundings surprised Lilith. The ground was hard. Weeds now hindered the growth of plants, stealing precious nutrients from the soil. Dark clouds hovered on the horizon. Still everything about the Light fascinated Lilith.

"Time passes differently here than in the Realm of Darkness. I visited yesterday. Adam and his mate had already aged several decades. Their sons should be ripe for defilement by now."

"Does Jetrel know we're here?"

"Jetrel and I don't talk about my plans for the mortals. He doesn't understand my resentment. Satan, however, is more than happy to assist in my endeavors. He hates the mortals even more than I."

"Why do you hate the mortals so much?"

Lilith crossed her arms over her chest and considered the question for a moment. "Adam treated me with the same condescending disrespect I endured from Sammael. I was hurt and vulnerable, and the mortal made me feel even more so. My former mate will soon learn that I am not the powerless fool he thinks me. Adam must do the same."

"What do you want me to do?"

Taking Byleth by the hand, Lilith led her through the trees. "Cain is firstborn. The younger one's name is Abel. We are going to play with Cain."

Byleth laughed. "I like the sound of that. I've never defiled a human before."

"It's not as entertaining as you might think, so don't get your hopes up. They lack the force and stamina of a demon." At the crest of a hill Lilith crouched, pulling Byleth down beside her. "There he is. Cain tends the fields while his brother cares for the animals. We're going to use this difference against him. Follow my lead."

She stood and shifted her gown forward. The rounded neckline dipped low, exposing the upper swell of her breasts. Byleth did the same.

Lilith studied the scene below. A tall young man knelt beside a wide basket, arranging vegetables and fruits in an

appealing display. Naked to the waist, his torso gleamed golden in the sunlight.

They hurried down the slope and sneaked up behind the human.

"What are you doing?" Lilith asked, keeping her voice gentle, purring.

Cain started, an oblong gourd falling from his hand. Still on his knees he pivoted to face them. "Where did you come from?"

Lilith cocked her head. Adam's son looked very much like his father, all golden skin and innocent eyes. "Very far away. What do you have there?"

"The best of my crop. I'm preparing an offering for the Creator."

"You give the Creator the very best of your crops?" Byleth smiled prettily, moving closer to the kneeling man. "This must please Him very much."

"He has instructed us to offer animal sacrifices, but I tend the fields. I want to honor Him with the fruits of my labor."

"And magnificent fruits they are. It seems cruel that animals must die for your God to be honored." Lilith glanced at Byleth to make sure her servant understood the importance of what she was about to say. "We don't even kill animals to survive. We believe that *all* life is precious."

"You eat the flesh of animals?" Byleth shuddered, her breasts quivering beneath her thin dress.

Lilith grinned. Good girl. She had followed right on cue.

"I couldn't live with myself if some poor animal had to die to sustain me. Plants offer their generous bounty. There is no reason for one animal to die so that another might live."

Cain rose to his feet, brushing off his knees and staring at Byleth curiously. His golden gaze moved from her face to her breasts, then quickly returned to her face. "You have never eaten the flesh of animals?"

"Of course not. With all of this at your disposal," she motioned to the field behind them, "why would you need to harm another creature? It's barbaric!"

"Where have you come from?" he asked again, more forcefully this time. "My father whispers of a temptress, a creature of deception and lust. He has warned my brother and I to be wary of such as she."

"Oh, has he now? Does your *mother* know of this temptress?"

He shook his head. "Father never speaks of her in front of Mother."

"I see. Do you believe we are creatures of deception and lust?"

He rubbed his chin and scrunched up his eyebrows. "You are both very..." His gaze rested on Byleth. "Beautiful."

"Do you have a mate, young Cain?" Lilith asked.

"Not yet. Father has promised that one will be provided for me, but the Creator has yet to reveal His plan."

Lilith smiled, moving behind her handmaiden. "This is Byleth." Lilith slipped the wide straps of Byleth's dress down her arms. The front panel sagged revealing her breasts little

by little. Lilith stopped just before Byleth's nipples came into view.

Cain's gaze fixed hungrily on the swelling curves and shadowy secrets still concealed. "I should go." He licked his lips.

Byleth shimmied and the dress swished down her body, pooling at her ankles. "You should stay."

"She's yours, Cain. Mate with her. Do whatever you like. She will let you. She will teach you, if you're not sure what to do."

"I know what to do," he said firmly. "But why are you giving her to me? What do you want in return?"

"Only to watch." Lilith moved back toward the hill. "Pretend I'm not here."

"It will give you pleasure to watch me cover her?"

Lilith didn't respond. Byleth was already busy stripping Cain's garment from around his hips. He groaned and Lilith chuckled. Humans were so easy!

A copse of trees crowned one side of the hill. Lilith moved into their shade and turned to watch the show. Byleth eagerly stroked Cain's cock. His features contorted with a mixture of fear and wonder. Reaching out a tentative hand he cupped Byleth's breast.

Desire melted Lilith's core, making her breasts tighten and her nipples tingle. She leaned against a tree trunk and slipped her hand under her dress. Her pussy folds were dewy and swollen. With a throaty murmur, Lilith slid three fingers into her slit. She spread herself with two and used the middle to rub her clit.

Cain bent over Byleth, suckling eagerly on her nipples. She stroked his cock, firmly, quickly. *He isn't going to last long if you keep that up.* Lilith sent the thought directly to Byleth's mind and her hand slowed, finally releasing him.

Suck him just enough to make him wild, then make him eat you until you come at least twice.

Byleth dropped to her knees and licked the head of Cain's cock. His eyes widened comically. He held Byleth's face between his hands as she sucked him deeply into her mouth.

Now! Pull back.

He cried out, staggering so badly he nearly lost his balance as Byleth abruptly released his cock. Bracing his hands on his knees, he stood panting, as the handmaiden reclined in the grass. She spread her legs wide, beckoning to him. Lilith couldn't hear their exact words but she could easily imagine the conversation.

Cain knelt between Byleth's legs and reverently stroked her pussy. Lilith smiled. Deep spasms of pleasure rippled through her cunt. Watching didn't usually stimulate her this powerfully. She circled her clit, amazed at how swollen and sensitive it had become.

Can I help with that?

Jetrel's silky voice sounded within her head a moment before he insinuated his body between her back and the tree. His warm fingers covered her hand and he cupped her aching breast.

"Are you having fun?" he whispered into her ear. "It feels like you're enjoying yourself."

His fingers moved against hers, controlling her hand while she masturbated. Lilith trembled. It was even more erotic than if his fingers alone caressed her.

"Is that Adam's son?"

She could only nod. He continued to rub her fingers against her clit.

"Kneel down. I want to be inside you."

Happy to oblige, Lilith knelt and leaned forward. Jetrel thrust into her completely, in one forceful lunge. She barely bit back a scream. His thick cock stretched her, filled her so full she whimpered.

"He can't see me. So be quiet. If the human looks up here he'll think you've lost your mind."

His fingers strummed her clit while his thick cock slid in and out of her aching pussy.

Below them, Cain fingered Byleth. He licked her with unskilled enthusiasm, his fingers keeping up a steady rhythm in her cunt. She arched and cried out. He started to lift his head, but she grabbed his hair and pulled his face back to her sex.

"Just your mouth this time," she ordered, her voice carrying to Lilith and Jetrel. "Fuck me with your tongue."

She lifted her legs to his shoulders and arched her hips. Lilith could no longer see what he was doing, but her mind provided the image of his tongue thrusting in and out of Byleth's core.

Jetrel caught Lilith's clit between his fingers and pinched, slowly increasing the pressure until she moaned. Her hot cunt

squeezed him like a velvet fist. He pumped faster, thrust deeper.

Each time he found her in the Light it made him wild with jealousy. At least she'd only been watching this time. If he ever caught her defiling another mortal with her own body, he wasn't sure what he'd do.

Possessive passion drove him on. He slipped his hand between their bodies and soaked his thumb in her cream. The mortal was eating Byleth's pussy like his life depended on it. Jetrel circled Lilith's puckered anus with his cream-slick thumb.

Lilith wiggled away, but Jetrel wasn't deterred. She always protested anal play, but her body responded eagerly. He'd just have to show her it didn't have to hurt.

Burying his cock completely in her pussy, Jetrel pushed firmly until her body accepted his thumb. Her inner muscles erupted in wild spasms and he grinned. Oh yeah, she liked it. He just had to take his time.

He only moved his thumb, letting the sensual slide accent how tightly she stretched around his throbbing cock.

Byleth cried out again and Jetrel glanced down the hill. Cain ignored the handmaiden's protests this time and thrust himself into her body. He kept her legs over his shoulders and pistoned her fast and hard.

Jetrel teased Lilith with his gentleness, sliding his thumb in as he pulled his cock out. He reversed direction, but kept the same torturous pace.

"Please!" Lilith clawed the grass.

Finally, Jetrel's demanding need drove him beyond the brink. He thrust deep, using his thumb and his cock in alternating penetrations. Lilith braced against the ground, her keening cries muffled in her tangled hair.

She bucked sharply, the rhythmic pulsations of her inner muscles shattering Jetrel's control. He thrust inward with his cock and his thumb, and came in long, forceful waves.

Lilith didn't want to move. Peaceful lethargy spread through her, making her lazy—and content. She wanted to curl up on her side, Jetrel's body still buried deep within her, and go to sleep. But Byleth and Cain had finished. Lilith needed to enact the final phase of her plan.

Don't let me stop you.

Whimpering softly, she felt Jetrel release his corporeal form, disintegrating the fullness inside her.

He might be invisible, but he'd be watching and listening.

She stood and straightened her gown, reveling in the erotic slide of her moist inner thighs.

Would you like me to lick you clean before you go down there? I'd be happy to oblige.

She ignored the telepathic taunt and walked down the slope.

Cain had just pulled out of Byleth. His fingers stroked her cum-slick folds, his fascination obvious.

"Lick your fingers," Lilith suggested with a challenging smirk. "Then you'll know what passion really tastes like."

He scrambled away from Byleth, wiping his hand on the grass. "You are *her*, aren't you? You're the one my father warned me about."

"Perhaps. Did you not enjoy fucking Byleth? I think you did better than your father. He didn't even make me come."

"What do you want with me?" He snatched his garment off the ground and covered his nakedness.

"I want you to feel special. I want you to have something Abel will never understand. Everyone wants to feel special. Now you share a bond with your father. Something even Abel can't take away."

"Abel can take nothing from me. I am firstborn."

"But he's the favorite, isn't he? Your father trusts him with the flocks, while you're stuck digging in the dirt."

"I *choose* to tend the land. Why are you trying to cast doubt upon my brother?"

Lilith laughed. "I watched your father play with you and Abel while you were still children. I thought I saw a certain tenderness in Adam's gaze when he looked at his younger son. Apparently I was mistaken."

"Apparently."

She held out her hand toward Byleth. "Let's go. Our work here is finished."

The handmaiden stood, not bothering to don her gown. "Can we play with him again tomorrow?"

"I don't think so."

"Will I ever see you again?" Cain asked, his gaze fixed on the handmaiden's naked body.

"Time will tell, but I doubt it will be necessary." With another mocking laugh, Lilith led Byleth up the hill.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Four

"I thought having them thrown out of the garden would be enough for you." Jetrel solidified inside Lilith's private chamber. She gasped and turned from the mirror she'd been using to arrange her hair.

"I didn't have them thrown out of the garden. I can't say the event upset me, but I had nothing to do with what took place."

Jetrel had to consciously unclench his teeth before he could speak again. "You made the deal with Satan that set the whole thing in motion."

"Satan fully intended to tempt the woman. Don't be a fool. He overheard our argument and exploited my anger to further his cause."

"When will it be enough? What will make you feel vindicated for Adam's insult?"

"This isn't about Adam!" She gestured angrily with her hairbrush. "They are the enemy. Your affection for them is far more twisted than my disdain. They're human. God's chosen creatures. We are demons! We're *supposed* to hate them. What the heaven is wrong with *you*?"

"I followed Cain after you left with Byleth."

She squared her shoulders and met his gaze. "And?"

"And he took his offering and presented it to the Creator."

"That's what he intended to do with it before we came. What's your point?"

"His brother sacrificed the firstborn of his flock." Jetrel stalked toward her, his angry gaze boring into hers. "God was pleased with Abel's sacrifice, but rejected Cain's. How did you know this would happen?"

"Educated guess," she said stiffly.

"Cain was furious. The seeds of insecurity you planted burst into a bumper crop."

"How poetic."

He grabbed her upper arm as she started to turn away. "He lured Abel to his field and murdered him! Cain killed his brother."

Her delicate brows drew together over eyes clouded with confusion and ... regret? Was it possible? Jetrel released her arm. She rubbed it, averting her gaze.

"I didn't realize he would ... I just wanted him to be jealous."

It would be so easy to berate her further, reiterate what her meddling had wrought. But that spark of compassion gave him pause. Perhaps there was hope for her after all. Jetrel believed in balance. He embraced his demonic nature. Despite Lilith's insistence that he was too easy on the humans, he understood his role in life.

"Why are you all dressed up?"

"Sammael heard about my petition and demanded that the council convene. I'm out of time. It's now or never."

"You must face the council tonight?"

"Yes." She tucked the last strand of hair into place and conjured a pin to secure it. "They are waiting even now."

"Declare me your mate."

"What?"

"It will limit them to oral tribute." Possessive passion wrestled with his need to protect her. Lilith would soon be the most powerful female Hell had ever known. He wanted to solidify their bond, before she presented her case to the Council of Seven. "Do you want the leaders to fuck you one by one—or worse?"

"Of course not."

"Then announce your acceptance of my suit before the ceremony begins. I cannot interfere once the proceedings start, but as my mate you will be protected."

"This is my fight. I must win this battle alone."

"I understand that. Still, I will be with you."

* * * *

Sammael's angry voice echoed down the stone corridor. Excitement surged through Lilith. If he was shouting already, it stood to reason the council was not sympathetic to his plight.

The guards silently stepped aside as she neared the doorway. She paused in the open archway, assessing the scene. Firelight emanated from the walls casting a red haze over the large room. Sammael stood at one end of the heavily carved table. The other leaders had assembled according to their clan's current standing. Satan sat at the head of the table, Lucifer on his right, the official representative from Serpent Clan on his left. Because Serpent Clan was Prime, they were allowed two representatives. The Prime Leader only voted when the council split evenly on an issue.

Cat Clan's chair next to Lucifer was empty as Sammael stood at the foot of the table facing the others. The leaders of Raptor, Shark, and Canine Clans completed the assembly.

"Here is your accuser now," Satan said, gesturing toward the archway.

Slicked straight back from his high forehead, Sammael's hair was raven black. Massive shoulders and a broad, muscular chest narrowed dramatically to his lean hips. He was a spectacular specimen of male flesh, but Lilith felt only hatred as she looked at him. His brutal features twisted with fury, his pale blue eyes glowed.

"I have spoken only the truth and offered witnesses to verify my claim," she stated clearly. "Do you deny offering me your blood oath that you would restrain your behavior?"

He snarled, blue-tinged lips drawing back from sharp pointed teeth. "No female will dictate my actions. I take only what is offered to me. As clan leader I am entitled to—"

"You are unfit to be clan leader. You exploit the position for your own pleasure while your clan flounders in uncertainty. I renounce you, Sammael. Not only as my mate but as the leader of Cat Clan."

Four male gasps followed her statement. Satan folded his hands on the tabletop, watching her closely. Lucifer lounged in his chair, amusement clear in his bright blue gaze.

"You dare humiliate me publicly?"

"I've not decided on your punishment. Public humiliation may well be part of it."

Lumbering toward her, he swung his meaty paw. Lilith sidestepped the clumsy blow and kicked him squarely in the

chest, knocking him back several paces. "I will suffer your abuse no longer!"

He howled in outrage and he advanced again. Grabbing his forearm, she shoved her shoulder into his midriff and flipped him. His scream ended abruptly as his back slammed against the warm stone floor. She planted her boot in the middle of his chest, sneering down into his startled face. "Did you make a blood oath to me?"

"A blood oath to a female is—"

She moved her boot to his throat, constricting his airway. He grasped her ankle, but her anger and her newfound strength made it impossible for him to budge her. "Yes or no!"

"Yes." The word was barely understandable with her foot on his throat.

Easing the pressure a bit, she asked, "And did I witness you breaking that oath with your Shark Clan slut?"

He hesitated. She kicked the side of his face.

"Yes, I fucked Azza. So what?"

She left him flat on his back and turned to address the clan leaders. "A blood oath is sacred. According to the Demonic Charter I am entitled to determine his punishment."

"Only if we approve," Agreas, the Raptor Clan leader, quickly pointed out.

"My punishment is simple. I demand that Sammael and Azza be restricted to their animal forms for the remainder of their lives. A cat can't very well share Dark Splendor with a shark, now can he?"

Several chuckles were quickly disguised as coughs.

"That will leave Cat Clan without a leader. Have you selected your mate's replacement? Is that what this is really about?" Agreas spoke again.

"I intend to lead Cat Clan myself." Before the barrage of objections could manifest, Lilith rushed on. "My father was clan leader before Sammael. I am just as qualified to lead the clan as *that creature*." She motioned toward her foe, who sat rubbing his throat. "I intend to complete what my father began."

"Your father wanted the clans combined. United, if you will. He believed we would be stronger if we worked together toward common goals." Lucifer supplied the information as if on cue.

She smiled at him and nodded. "Precisely. Once I am officially named Cat Clan leader, my first priority will be to solidify an alliance between a majority of the clans. Those who do not join us will be subject to our rule."

Sammael recovered enough to stand. "I will not tolerate your—"

"Silence!" Satan cut him off. "By your own admission you offered and then broke a blood oath. Lilith is entitled to name your punishment. I, for one, think her solution a fitting consequence for your misconduct. My vote is yea."

Lucifer quickly followed suit. The Serpent Clan leader offered his support and the others realized Lilith had not entered the confrontation unprepared. One by one they agreed to her terms and approved the punishment she'd proposed.

Sammael growled his fury, rushing toward the door. The guards stopped him before he could pass beyond the archway.

Satan stood and crossed the chamber as the guards forced Sammael to his knees. "I hereby sentence you to remain in animal form for the remainder of your days."

Fighting the transformation, Sammael screamed and writhed. Bones cracked, joints popped, and his skin mutated to fur. Usually a fluid, effortless change, he frantically hindered every stage of his shift. Lilith watched the metamorphosis in macabre fascination.

"Get him out of here and apprehend Azza," Satan ordered. "I will see to her punishment as soon as the council adjourns."

Lilith straightened her tunic and tucked a loosened curl behind her ear. That had been the easy part. The Demonic Charter had been all the ammunition she needed against Sammael. Gaining the acceptance of the clan leaders was another matter entirely.

"Do you have the support of Cat Clan in this endeavor? Have they agreed to follow a female?" Agreas voiced the questions.

Lilith clenched and unclenched her fists.

Raptor Clan had aided Sammael as he overthrew her father. Agreas indulged many of the same indiscretions as Sammael. Her handmaiden's existence was proof of Agreas' indiscriminate lust.

"Once I explain the alliance I have formed, they will follow me." She focused on her most vocal adversary, moving to stand in front of Agreas. "As will *you*."

He laughed. Mockery sparkled in his golden gaze. "Nothing could make me bow to a female!"

"Nothing?" With challenge ringing in the one word, she walked proudly to the head of the assembly. Satan pulled his massive chair away from the table.

The next few minutes would establish her standing among the clan leaders, or shame her beyond bearing.

The choice was hers.

With purposeful calm, she released the fastenings at her shoulders and allowed her dress to slide down her body. It caught for a second on her rounded hips, but a little shimmy sent it sailing to the floor.

"I am Cat Clan Leader! I have the strength and intelligence to lead my clan, and I possess the ability to bring forth life. Can a male—of any clan—make that claim?"

Lucifer grinned, sweeping his hand toward her. "Behold the beauty of Cat Clan!"

"I'd be happy to give her a good fucking, but I have no intention of bowing to a cunt!" Agreas snarled.

"Then Raptor Clan will be shut out of the alliance."

Lucifer stood and joined her at the head of the table. He brushed his thumb across her bottom lip, his gaze intent upon her mouth. "Shadow Clan accepts you into our midst. Let me be the first to—"

"I will accept your sexual tribute gladly, but know this. Jetrel is my mate, so only oral tribute is allowed."

He caught her under the arms and raised her to eye-level. "When did this come about? When last we spoke he was just wooing you."

"The specifics are incidental to this ceremony. I welcome the worship of your mouth, but keep your cock to yourself."

The others chuckled at her boldness. Even Lucifer smiled, slowly lowering her to the floor.

"Serpent Clan is Prime. My emissary should lick her first." Satan motioned toward his chair. "Have a seat. Let the ceremony begin."

Shaking just a little, Lilith sat in Satan's chair and hooked her knees over the padded arms, proudly displaying her sex for the other clan leaders.

This was it. There was no turning back. She must be proud and brave, and revel in their tribute. Anything less would mark her a coward, unworthy of leadership. The thought of these six males bowing before her, submissive and respectful, made her breasts swell, her nipples harden. "I am ready."

The Serpent Clan leader went first. Kneeling between her widespread thighs, his tongue flicked out, lashing her folds again and again without ever touching her clit. "Serpent Clan accepts Lilith into our midst." He licked her one last time from back to front and then returned to his seat at the table.

Exhaling a relieved breath, Lilith relaxed against the chair. That hadn't been so bad. He'd kept it professional.

She watched the leader of Shark Clan rise. Every muscle in her body tightened. Azza was of Shark Clan. Lilith didn't want this creature touching her.

"Relax. He will smell your fear," Satan whispered from beside her.

"I'm not afraid. I'm disgusted by the thought of any Shark Clan—"

The leader knelt, his face hovering over her pussy. "My clan has done you a great wrong. I beg forgiveness and would not defile you with my touch. Know that Shark Clan welcomes your presence within the Council of Seven."

She touched his smooth gray scalp and he glanced up at her. "I accept your apology, and I'll react to Shark Clan according to its merits from this day forth."

Acknowledging her pronouncement with a solemn nod, the gray demon returned to his seat.

The leader of Canine Clan shoved to his feet, toppling his chair in the process. His hostile gaze darted to each leader in turn. "I will bow before no female—ever! If the rest of you are so enthralled by her cunt, have at her. Canine Clan will hold to its own."

He stormed from the council chambers.

Distracted by the Canine leader's angry retreat, Lilith gasped when she turned back to the assembly. Agreas stood directly in front of her, his golden eyes leering at her sex. She must control him or he'd use this to humiliate her. Defiance hardened his expression. He bent to one knee and smirked. Without warning he crammed two fingers into her opening.

Twisting her fist in the back of his hair, she yanked his face up to hers. "Remove your fingers. Now!" She tightened her hold until his eyes watered. He pulled his hand away.

"Perhaps you should join Canine Clan in exile. I will not tolerate such disrespect."

"Please." He gasped. "I humble myself before you. Allow me to demonstrate my respect."

She glared at him for a silent moment, then released his hair. "Clasp your hands behind your back." He did. "Lick me gently. Reverently. Until I tell you to stop." Using only his tongue he traced her slit, licked her folds, and circled her clit. The little nub tingled in response and Lilith shoved him back. "You are not worthy to witness my pleasure. You will leave the assembly now and contemplate a suitable penance for your attitude."

Panting, still on his knees, Agreas whispered, "Yes, mistress."

* * * *

Invisible yet able to see and hear everything that transpired, Jetrel watched Agreas walk from the council chambers in defeat. Good! The arrogant bastard deserved this and more.

Lilith was handling herself beautifully. Jetrel was awed by her daring and proud of her cunning. But it didn't change the fact that others were touching her, tasting her!

Lucifer knelt before her next, his gaze bright and caressing. Jetrel clenched his fists. Satan cupped her breast, gently toying with the hardened nipple. Caressing her inner thighs, Lucifer tested the resilience of her flesh.

"You seem tense," he taunted. "Are you sure you wouldn't rather take my cock?"

"No! I am Jetrel's mate. Only oral tribute is allowed."

"Then lift your legs to my shoulders and accept the worship of my mouth."

Her gaze searched the room. She was looking for him!

I'm here, love. He sent the reassurance directly to her mind. Despite the jealousy clawing at his gut, he went a step farther. *You're strong and beautiful. These males should be on their knees before you. Revel in your power. Be unashamed!*

Lucifer chuckled. "I'm waiting."

Wetting her lips, Lilith raised her legs to Lucifer's shoulders and looked directly into his eyes. "So am I. Pleasure my flesh."

She spoke calmly, clearly. Her voice filled with challenge. She offered her flesh and only her flesh. Jetrel understood the distinction.

Lucifer traced her slit with his tongue, thoroughly exploring every fold. "Delicious! She is sweeter than honey."

Satan stroked her breasts, bending to taste her nipple. She arched into his caress, surrendering to the pleasure. Jetrel watched as Lucifer parted her folds. She moaned softly. Jetrel ground his teeth.

Lilith was magnificent. What male would not want her? Lucifer stroked her skillfully, building her passion by degrees. Her clit engorged, the hood puffy and swollen. Lucifer curled his tongue around it over and over, never touching the ultra-sensitive center.

Join me, my love. Share this pleasure. Partake of the power!

Sinking into her mind, Jetrel accessed the portion of her brain receiving the sexual stimuli. He felt Lucifer's tongue slide across her flesh and the pressure building within her core. Never before had he experienced release from a female perspective. It thrilled him, yet tormented him. He wanted to be the one pleasuring her.

Lucifer pushed his middle finger into her cunt. She cried out softly, surprised by the sudden penetration. A second finger joined the first as Lucifer worked her, his tongue maintaining a continual rhythm around her clit.

The enticing scent of her musk filled Jetrel's nose, making his cock ache. Lucifer spread her wide, thrusting his tongue into her dusky passage. His fingers found her clit and rubbed until she shook uncontrollably. She jerked and moaned, and came hard against his mouth.

Jetrel shook right along with her, carnal pleasure nearly manifesting his physical form. At the last second he severed the link, miraculously keeping himself non-corporeal.

Expelling a ragged breath, Lilith met Lucifer's glistening eyes. "I accept your tribute."

"The pleasure was mine!"

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Five

Only Satan remained.

The others had returned to their seats.

Lilith stared into his obsidian eyes, determined not to look away. She sprawled before him, willing, unafraid. He was only allowed oral tribute, but his glittering eyes promised more. Would he break the Demonic Charter and...

Purposeful steps brought him to her, his gaze never faltering from her face. After a long pause, he knelt. "Your father understood what is needed to unite the clans." He carefully pushed two fingers deeply into her pussy, rubbing her clit with his thumb. "Exchanging sexual tribute will never forge a lasting unity." He moved his fingers, screwing them in and out with a twist of his wrist. "I should claim you as my mate. That makes the most sense." He thrust hard. "But you've accepted Jetrel's suit."

She couldn't concentrate with his fingers working her cunt, rapidly building another orgasm. Was he threatening her? She didn't understand.

"So I suggest Jetrel fuck you as often as you can stand it. He should stay between your thighs until his seed takes root within this luscious body." He bent and licked her clit.

Lilith moaned. He wasn't gentle or coaxing, as Lucifer had been. He demanded a response. Commanded her surrender. Her cunt clenched his fingers, helpless to resist.

"And when you birth a daughter." His hot breath fanned her wet folds. "She will offer herself to me." He sucked on her

clit. Lilith bucked, arching into the scalding kiss. Relentlessly he suckled, while his fingers fucked her hard. Pleasure burst with brutal force and Lilith screamed. "Are we agreed?"

Muddled by her orgasm, it took Lilith a minute to remember what he'd asked. "If I have a daughter—"

"You will bear a daughter within the year," Lucifer told her.

"What if she doesn't want you?"

Satan laughed, pulling his fingers out of her trembling body and licking them clean. "Let me worry about that. The female heir to Cat Clan will be my mate. Are we agreed?"

This was the price. She should have realized he would exact some form of payment. Reaching out for Jetrel's mind, she found his thoughts tense and troubled.

What should we do?

How badly do you want the alliance?

I only want you more.

Then agree.

"The female heir to Cat Clan will be your mate."

* * * *

Lilith's frustrated pacing took her from one end of her private chamber to the other and back again. "Have I just made a terrible mistake? What if she hates him? What if she hates me for agreeing to this? What if—"

Jetrel swept her into his arms and cut off her words with a firm kiss. "She has yet to be conceived and you're tormenting yourself with worry. I didn't realize you possessed maternal instincts."

"This isn't funny."

"Was uniting the clans necessary?"

"If not necessary—wise."

"Was establishing yourself as clan leader imperative?"

A bit of the tension melted from her posture. "Yes."

"Did you really expect that Satan wouldn't demand something in return for all you gained?"

"I'd focused so entirely on the task ... I should have seen this coming."

Trying hard not to smile, Jetrel pushed his fingers into her hair and tilted her head back. "I'm not without resources. I would never allow our daughter to be abused in any way."

"Our daughter. Do you trust Lucifer? How accurate are his predictions?"

"He is not able to consistently see into the future, but what he sees has never been wrong. You will birth a daughter within the year." Her brow furrowed, her lips trembled, and a conspicuous sheen blurred her gaze. "What? Why are you troubled now?"

"He did not say the child would be yours. What if I have conceived already? What if I bear a half-human child?" She shuddered.

The thought disturbed him too. He looked at her lush breasts and curvy hips. "Do you have some indication that this is so?"

"No. I just..."

"What?"

She licked her lips, avoiding his gaze. He'd never seen her like this before. She had just faced down Satan himself and now she seemed—vulnerable.

"I want her to be yours. I want her to be *ours*."

"You claimed me as your mate before the Council of Seven. If this conflict had not made such a declaration beneficial, would you have accepted my suit?"

She stroked her hands up his chest, resting them on his shoulders. Her expression was tense and clouded. "Love is a human term. Demons are not supposed to love. We covet, lust, protect, even assist. But what I feel for you is so much more confusing than any of those black and white emotions."

"You love me?" He was astonished that she would even allude to the word.

"I didn't say that," she insisted sternly. "I desire you. You fascinate me. I'm amused by you. I'm *content* with you."

He shook his head, no longer fighting his smile. "Sounds an awful lot like love to me."

"What would you know? You spend far too much time in the Light!" Rising to her toes, she wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him with all the tenderness he'd freed within her soul.

Jetrel opened for her questing tongue and drank in the taste of her devotion. Her mouth yielded sweetly, but her tongue demanded attention. He was happy to comply.

As she molded her naked body to his, Jetrel realized he was still dressed. He tore his tunic off over his head and attacked the laces on his pants, bringing them together skin to skin.

"For our joining to be real, I must claim you as my mate."

She chuckled deep in her throat. "You want to fuck me in front of the elders?"

"No. I want to know that you trust me. I want you to accept the Shadow cords."

Easing away from his body, she held her hands out in front of her. "*Only* for you. You will never bind me in front of others, or I will set you aside."

"I will never hurt you. Do you believe that?"

"Yes." Her expression was resigned as she turned toward the bed.

He didn't want her resignation. He wanted her wild, abandoned to pleasure unlike any she'd experienced before. Catching her hand, he shook his head and said, "Like this." He conjured Shadow cords and commanded them around her wrists. She watched the smoky fibers move of their own volition. Once her hands were bound together he raised them above her head, securing them in place with a mental command.

She tugged and twisted, testing the restraints. "How do they hold me? They're not secured to anything."

"They're secured by my will and obey my commands." Demonstrating his claim, he directed the cords higher, lifting her onto the balls of her feet. "I could suspend you in midair as I worshipped you with my mouth, but the weight of your body would bruise your wrists."

"Unless I draped my legs over your shoulders."

He grinned. "You like the idea?" His cock bucked in approval and she laughed. "You dare laugh at me? While I hold you captive?" His tone was light and playful.

Lifting her by the cords, he cupped her ass, supporting her weight as his mouth fastened onto one nipple. She arched

into the caress moaning deep in her throat. He suckled firmly, one then the other, until both tightened into hard, blue-tinted peaks.

"I'm going to suspend you completely." He stroked her velvety behind. "Are you ready?"

"Yes," she whispered. "Do *everything* you've ever dreamed."

He trembled, waves of desire crashing into him. She had no idea the wicked things his lustful mind could imagine! Conjuring more Shadow cords, he wove a web of connecting fibers, supporting her shoulders, her hips, her thighs, and her knees. She reclined in the cords, her legs spread wide. Utterly helpless. Wonderfully accessible.

For a long time he just looked at her. Her full breasts quivered with each ragged breath, her gaze watched him cautiously, and her pussy ... Once he looked at her pussy, he couldn't drag his gaze away. Plump and smooth, her mound was the same soft ivory as the rest of her body, but her inner folds were sapphire blue. The more aroused she became the brighter they turned.

If he fucked her now he'd ravish her, pounding hard and fast until they both screamed, but it would be over too quickly. He was claiming his mate! This called for something special, something more.

Stepping between her thighs, he gently traced her dewy slit with two fingers. Her slick heat sent thrills ricocheting through his entire body. She was more than ready.

Still he hesitated.

Go on. I want you to.

The words sounded within his mind. Somehow she'd guessed his thoughts. Sinking two fingers into her cunt, he stroked her clit with his thumb. She gasped and tossed her head. After only a few strokes, he worked the moisture down to her tightly puckered anus. Commanding her legs apart, and tilting her torso down, he found the desired angle. He spread her ass cheeks and positioned his cock against her.

"I won't hurt you. Trust me." Mixing shadow and substance, he found the combination her body would accept. He eased inside her incredibly tight entrance and gradually solidified.

"Oh! How are you doing that?" She shifted in the cords, unable to resist even if she wanted to. "That feels ... odd."

"Am I hurting you?"

"No."

"Well, I want you to feel more than odd. Try to relax. I'll control my size until you're accustomed to me." He pulled back and slid forward, testing her response.

She wiggled, her breath hitched. "You can ... control your size?"

"Relax and I'll show you."

He grasped her hips and pushed deep. Rubbing her clit, he allowed his cock to fully solidify.

"Oh ... oh!"

Circling her swollen nub, he concentrated on the powerful contractions of her flesh. The erotic massage stimulated him unmercifully. But she wasn't yet ready for thrusting. "That's right, don't fight it. Accept me." Her neck arched. Her hair

brushed the floor and her ass clenched him so tightly he nearly came.

"Why aren't you moving?"

"We have forever to practice this. We'll take it one step at a time."

He gently strummed her clit, triggering her orgasm. Her whole body shook, her passage pulsed wildly, then she went limp with a little whimper.

As she sagged against the Shadow cords, he carefully decreased his size and pulled out of her ass. Covering her clit with his thumb, he shoved into her moist cunt. "My ability works both ways."

She gasped and arched to meet him. He solidified as he thrust, then increased his thickness and length. She cried out. "Too much?"

"No! Don't stop!"

He rubbed her clit and rocked into her, straining the Shadow cords. She tightened around him each time he started to withdraw, her slick heat caressing him. Nothing had ever felt so good! He pumped faster, driving deeper, and she anointed him with cream.

Throwing his head back, he roared in triumph, and loosed his seed at the mouth of her womb. On and on he pumped, his body shaking, his cock jerking, as colors danced before his eyes.

Lilith drifted in the blissful oblivion somewhere between reality and dreams. A sharp twinge deep in her belly jarred her from the lethargy. Her eyes flew open and she stared into

Jetrel's passion-muddled face. "I felt ... a quickening. I think we just conceived."

His warm hand splayed against her belly and his gaze clouded thoughtfully. "I can't tell yet. Are you certain?"

"Not entirely, but I've never felt anything like that before." The Shadow cords dissolved and he caught her against his chest. She wrapped her legs around his waist, not ready to lose the fullness of his cock inside her body.

"Then we better keep trying just to make sure." He grinned wickedly.

He laid her sideways across her bed and began to move all over again. She framed his face with her hands and saw the brilliance of her gaze reflected back from his shining eyes.

Her heart swelled and the words formed within her mind.

I love you, Jetrel.

He smiled.

"Please don't tell anyone!"

Laughing, he thrust deep. "It will be our little secret."

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

The Claiming

Chapter One

Realm of Darkness

Twenty Years Later

"Try it one last time. If you aren't successful, we'll end your lesson for tonight."

Verrine glanced away from her tutor, too frustrated to show the proper respect. She had failed repeatedly. Why continue this humiliation?

Non-corporeal transportation or Shadow shifting, only the most powerful Shadow Clan demons ever mastered the skill, and Verrine was a hybrid, born of two different clans. It was ridiculous of her tutor to expect her to succeed, but he'd been personally selected by her mother for his tenacity.

No excuses, Verrine. The echo of Lilith's voice urged her on. *Never surrender!*

Gathering energy into the center of her body, Verrine spread her arms and dispersed her physical form. Her fingers tingled, prickled, then burned. She stubbornly focused through the pain, surrendering to the darkness. Powerful energy currents captured her essence, sweeping her along.

"Good! Explore." Her tutor's voice sounded distorted and distant. "See how long you can maintain control without solidifying."

Verrine floated through the Realm of Darkness, exploring stone corridors and shadowed alcoves, feasting halls and ceremonial chambers. Her exhilaration built with each moment she remained intangible. Energized by her accomplishment, she soared past demons oblivious to her presence. A few sensed another entity, but were unable to see her. She passed through walls, speeding from one room to the next. Impulsively she sank through the thick stone floor and emerged in one of the vapor caves lining the Lake of Fire.

Pink mist curled up from the water in fragrant wisps, the scent spicy and evocative. Sight and sound remained intact in this state. She experienced sensations similar to touch, yet she had no physical form.

She heard the water gurgle and then a series of splashes. Peering through the mist, she located the shadowy outline of a tall, broad-shouldered body. She floated closer, powerless to resist her curiosity.

The figure pushed sodden locks of long black hair over his shoulders and pivoted toward the shore. Rippling muscles dramatically defined the male's torso and arms. The rest of him remained submerged in the murky water.

More splashes and a muffled groan. What was he doing? She moved to one side, adjusting her vantage point.

His right arm flexed and pulled, flexed and pulled. Looking more closely at his hand, she gasped. He was pleasuring himself! His hand rubbed up and down his cock in firm, steady strokes.

Hadn't he heard her gasp? Perhaps it wasn't audible, or the male simply didn't care.

His hips pumped, his fist slid, and he continued to groan. Verrine's nipples tingled. How was that possible? She touched her breast and gasped again.

She was solid!

The male growled and spun to face her. "You better be ready to do more than watch, if you dare interrupt my pleasure!"

She stumbled back against the cavern wall, trembling uncontrollably.

Lucifer, the leader of Shadow Clan, stalked from the pool, water running off his naked flesh in pink rivulets. His eyes glowed blue. A fierce expression contorted his angular features. Verrine's gaze followed the pink droplets downward as they accented every furrow and ripple of his muscular body. Powerful legs, narrow hips and the longest, thickest cock Verrine had ever seen. Not that she'd seen many, but hell help her, his was impressive!

His hands fisted in her dress, ripping it down the center before she could summon a rational protest. He effortlessly lifted her, pinning her against the warm stone wall with the weight of his body. Tangling his hand in her hair, he tilted her face and plundered her mouth.

Helpless and completely overwhelmed, Verrine endured his aggressive attention for only a moment before she tore her mouth away. "Please, my lord. I've not yet mastered the skill. I didn't mean to solidify. I'd never intentionally spy on you."

Gradually his lust-bright gaze diminished. Keeping her against the wall, he pulled her legs up and wrapped them around his waist. He brushed her hair back from her face, saying nothing for a long time. His hands stroked up and down her thighs, occasionally cupping her bare bottom.

She was open and helpless, all he had to do was ram his cock ... Her core quivered, anticipating just such a claiming.

"Does your mother know where you are?"

"*I'm* not sure where I am." He eased his chest away, gazing boldly at her breasts. "Please put me down. I explained the misunderstanding."

"When is your awakening?"

Heat suffused her face and her pussy swelled at the intimate question. He had no right to ask her such a thing. Sexual awakenings were never spoken of in mixed company.

"That is between my mother and I."

"Has your training begun? Who is your sexual mentor? I'd like to test his skill." His hand cupped her breast, his thumb rubbing her nipple.

"Two years." She gasped. "I'll not be awakened for two more years."

His forehead furrowed as he gazed at her hardened peak with obvious interest. "Why? Clearly you're ready now."

She arched into his touch, thrilled by the mastery with which he teased her. "Explain that to my mother."

His fingers brushed her thigh, diving inward until he found her slick pussy folds. "Have you ever touched yourself? Stroked your clit until your body shattered?"

Biting her bottom lip to keep from crying out, she shook her head. He traced her slit, sliding through the moisture gathered there. "Nothing is softer than a passion soaked pussy."

He swept her into his arms and moved to the low stone ledge protruding from the back wall of the cavern. She wrapped her arms around his neck, her gaze assessing his features. With his silky black hair and incandescent blue eyes, he was actually quite striking—when he wasn't scowling.

Her mother frequently hinted that she should consider only the clan leaders for her potential mate, implying such a match was destined for Verrine. Lilith would never be more specific.

No one was more powerful than the leader of Shadow Clan.

Well, his brother Satan was, but the Prime Leader had never so much as glanced her way.

Lucifer laughed easily and often. He took an active interest in the members of his clan. Her father, Jetrel, liked and respected him. Jetrel spoke frequently of Lucifer's outrageous antics as well as his shrewd policies.

Arranging her across his lap, Lucifer supported her back with one arm, leaving the other free to play. She shouldn't allow this. Regardless of who he was this was forbidden. After her sexual mentor deemed her education complete she'd be free to practice her skills with any demon she found attractive. The only thing prohibited was actual penetration. Unfortunately, her awakening had yet to begin.

"My lord. We should not. I..."

His mouth covered hers, ending her protest. Sliding and caressing, he used only his lips at first. Verrine had kissed her share of boys. Generally giggles and periods of awkward silence followed the clumsy attempts.

There was nothing clumsy about Lucifer's kiss. His fingers spread against her cheek, his thumb curved under her chin. "Part your lips. Let me taste you."

It never occurred to her to object. She opened for him and groaned as his warm, wet tongue sank into the interior of her mouth. He tasted exotic, indefinable. She didn't know the flavor coating his tongue, but it pleased her, urged her to explore his mouth.

He chuckled. "You learn quickly, little one."

Carefully lowering her to the stone ledge, he lay beside her, arching over her. She circled his neck with her arms, raking her fingers through his damp hair. Excitement thrummed through her, but honor required that she try one last time. "Please, my lord. Don't defile me. I know I intruded on you, but it was—"

He laid two fingers across her lips, his gaze intent upon her face. "You will be a virgin when you leave this chamber. That is *all* I promise."

Heat curled through her belly. How could she pretend to be upset, when her whole body longed for his touch? Who better to awaken her sexually than Lucifer? Surely her mother wouldn't begrudge her this.

His gaze swept slowly down her body, pausing at predictable intervals, before returning to her face. "You are

even more desirable than your mother. I wouldn't have believed that possible."

"You have—known my mother?"

"Not in the way you mean. She's an extraordinary woman, but we have never fucked."

Embarrassed by the blunt word, she glanced away. "I see."

He chuckled. "Do you?"

"You wanted her, but she was mated to my father."

"The situation was more complicated than that, and it has no bearing on what we're about to do." He stroked along her ribs, teasing the outer swell of her breast. "Raise your arms above your head and spread your legs for me."

Her eyes widened and she nervously licked her lips. "You said you wouldn't defile me."

"I said you would leave here a virgin. There is much we can do without disturbing your shield."

Warm and smooth beneath her back, the stone ledge provided support, but no cushioning. Each movement accented her nudity, her vulnerability. Lucifer would take what he wanted, with or without her consent. There was no point in resisting.

"Why are you not mated?" She continued to study his face. His full lips and wide, thick-lashed eyes prevented him from looking sinister. Unless he wanted to, she amended, with a mental smile. "Surely many females have offered themselves to you. Why have you not—"

"Keep talking and I'll put my cock in your mouth. I didn't detain you for conversation."

She raised her arms above her head and opened her legs, closely watching his reaction. If he expected her to beg and plead, he would be disappointed. Even his crude threat appealed to her. He had a fabulous cock, thick and long, the head bright blue. The thought of it sliding in and out of her mouth made her insides melt.

Her parents were unashamed of their sexuality. They had never intentionally fucked in front of her, but numerous times she'd caught glimpses of their vigorous couplings as she hurried from a room.

"Your breasts are lovely. High and full, yet not overly large. Ages will pass before they sag."

She chuckled. "Are you going to inventory each body part?"

"Yes. I think I will." He took her nipple and rolled it between his thumb and forefinger. "This little beauty is spectacular. Such a rich shade of blue. Are you sensitive here? When I pull on it do you feel the sensations echo in your cunt?"

"I don't know," she said calmly. "Why don't you try."

Growling low in his throat, he rolled and tugged, moving from one nipple to the other until both tightened into hard, distinct peaks.

"No. The sensations remained in my breasts." She tried to sound casual, but already her pulse pounded and her body ached.

"Well, let's see if we can do better." Bending over her, he suckled one tip deeply into his mouth. The hot, wet suction

released the tandem sensation he'd described. Each forceful pull on her nipple triggered a spasm in her core.

She arched, pressing her thighs together as tension mounted.

Sliding his hand across her abdomen, he cupped her smooth mound. "Open for me, little one. Let me feel your passion flow." He insinuated his hand between her thighs, lightly petting without spreading his fingers.

Shocking sensations confused her emotions. Fear mixed with pleasure until she wasn't sure if it was the pleasure itself she feared. His simple rubbing sent tingling heat spiraling through her pussy and deep into her belly. Even her breasts felt swollen and sensitive and he was no longer touching her there.

Perhaps she wasn't ready for this.

Perhaps she...

His hand splayed. His middle finger slipped between her feminine folds.

"Oh yes! Your cream is hot and plentiful. You must feel this."

Guiding her hand to her sex, he moved his fingers over hers. Hot and incredibly soft, she caressed herself for the first time. She trembled. He had to be feeling this too, how wet she was, swollen and ready to be filled by his mighty cock.

He moved her fingers to an exquisitely sensitive knot at the top of her core. She gasped, her body jerked.

"Yes. Rub your clit. I want to feel you come around my finger."

She stroked herself, shaking while he pushed his fingertip slowly into her cunt. "You promised not to—"

"I'll not go in that far. Keep rubbing!"

Her body accepted the steady press of his finger. *Oh, that was good!* She rubbed her clit and moaned. Tighter and tighter the pressure wound. She rubbed faster. He pushed deeper, and she clenched his finger spontaneously as pleasure rippled through her core.

Stunned, trembling with aftershocks, she relaxed against the ledge. Before she realized his intent, he slipped from the ledge and knelt on the smooth stone floor. He lifted her leg and hooked it over his shoulder, bending her other knee until it pressed against the wall.

"Your passion smells so sweet. I must partake."

He ran his tongue from her anus to her clit in one long sweep. Verrine cried out, instinctively tangling her fingers in his long hair. Before she could pull his face away, he repeated the stroke, pausing this time to rim her cunt.

Scalding pleasure washed through her again. This was even better than the teasing slide of his fingers and far superior to her own touch.

More. She wanted more! She wanted his tongue inside her, his mouth moving against her, his teeth lightly scraping her flesh.

I'll give you all that and more!

She gasped as his deep voice sounded within her mind. Her tutor had tried to send his thoughts to her, but Verrine had never been able to decipher the signal. This was Lucifer. The most powerful of all Shadow Clan demons.

He flicked his tongue across her folds and circled her sensitive clit before delving slowly into the very heart of her pussy. A throaty moan escaped her. Her senses hummed, vibrating on the brink of another orgasm.

Gently parting her with his thumbs, he licked her clit, firmly, rhythmically. Her core took on the cadence of his kiss. Each distinct pass of his tongue made her throb more intensely.

Now, sweet Verrine. Come for me, now.

Forceful spasms erupted, sweeping through her in wave after wave of blissful release.

A savage snarl echoed off the cavern walls. Lucifer's mouth still moved against her. How had he made the sound?

His body was jerked from between her thighs and flung across the chamber. She saw only a blur of green and heard Lucifer's scream.

Scrambling up from the ledge she crossed her arms over her breasts, too terrified to interfere. Satan's long fingers wrapped around his brother's throat, pinning him to the cavern wall. Lucifer's feet dangled well off the floor and both hands clawed at Satan's wrist.

"I may not be able to kill you, but I can torture you for eternity!"

What had triggered Satan's rage? He'd never shown any interest in her, hardly noticed she was alive.

His hairless scalp gleamed with just the faintest tinge of green. Many Serpent Clan demons looked blatantly reptilian. Were it not for Satan's vastly different coloring, his angular

features and tall, broad-shouldered body would look identical to Lucifer's.

"You know she is meant for me."

Even hearing the words, Verrine struggled to accept them. If this was about her, she must at least attempt to explain. Stomping down her fear, she hurried across the chamber and knelt behind the Prime Leader, bowing low to the floor.

"Please, Sire, may I speak?"

He spun, releasing his brother. Lucifer slumped against the wall.

"I found my brother's face buried between your thighs. Your cries of pleasure echo even now within my mind. What would you say to me?"

Not daring to lift her gaze, she barely maneuvered the words past her dry lips. "He is not to blame."

"You would accept responsibility for what I saw?"

"I was practicing non-corporeal transportation when I ... happened upon him."

Satan's hand grasped the back of her hair, drawing her gradually to her feet. She didn't resist, so the pressure remained steady, not hurtful. "Did you offer your body for his pleasure?" His obsidian gaze bore into hers. "Did you willingly spread your thighs?"

"What is going on here!"

Verrine wanted to die. She wanted the cavern floor to swallow her whole. What else could go wrong? Slowly turning her head, she found her father standing in the chamber entrance, his expression thunderous.

A whispering current passed over her body and a robe materialized around her, covering her nakedness. She glanced at Lucifer. He stared at her father, but he had to have conjured the robe. Not even Jetrel could construct Shadow garments upon another person.

Satan released her hair and took two menacing steps toward Lucifer. The Shadow Clan leader didn't so much as flinch. A garment similar to hers now adorned his tall form.

"This is between my brother and me," Satan told Jetrel, but his angry gaze never left Lucifer.

"My daughter was standing naked within your grasp. I must disagree."

"As soon as I make certain she was not defiled, you may take her with you."

Lucifer moved between Satan and Verrine. Her heart lurched within her breast. His willingness to defend her in the face of Satan's rage filled her with warmth and tenderness. Was it possible that he cared for her?

She shook away the naïve thought. He was saving his own ass! They'd been caught misbehaving, it was as simple as that.

"She is a virgin still. I barely touched her."

"You had no right to look upon her much less—"

"What happened here!" Jetrel shouted. "Verrine, explain."

With one last lingering glance at Lucifer, she crossed to her father. "I was working with my tutor on non-corporeal transportation. When I passed through this chamber I unintentionally solidified. I surprised your clan leader and he..."

You needn't protect me, little one. I'm not afraid of Satan.

"He took full advantage of the opportunity," Jetrel said stiffly. His gaze moved between the brothers and his daughter.

"He took nothing that was not freely given."

Satan roared, his furious bellow shaking the room. "It has not been easy keeping my distance from her. She has been ready for the past three seasons. I sensed her curiosity, the stirring of her desires. But I waited. I honored the pact. I will *not* be robbed of her awakening!"

"What pact?" She turned to her father, trepidation shaking her soul. "Am I promised to the Prime Leader?"

"This is not how you were meant to find out. We had intended—"

"Our intentions are irrelevant thanks to my brother! She will be my mate. She will honor the pact or *everyone* will suffer!"

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Two

"How far did it go?" Lilith tried to keep her tone calm, non-confrontational, but palpable tension gripped the Realm of Darkness.

"What difference does it make?" Verrine refused to meet her gaze. "How could you promise me to Satan without telling me? How could you let me believe I'd have a choice?"

"Do you have feelings for Lucifer or were you just—"

"What I feel, what I think, is irrelevant! You made a pact with the Prime Leader. You bartered me away like..."

Lilith pulled Verrine into her arms as the first sob shook her daughter's shoulders. For nearly twenty years Lilith had dreaded this day.

Watching Verrine grow to adulthood had been one of the most amazing experiences of Lilith's life. She treasured every stage, every phase of Verrine's transition from child to woman. The final step remained, and it could be postponed no longer.

"He wants to awaken you himself. He's so captivated by you that he is unwilling to allow anyone else to touch you."

Verrine eased away from Lilith and met her gaze directly. She had Jetrel's eyes, a brighter, truer blue than her own. Verrine's hair mixed blue and black evenly, another trait she inherited from her father. But her delicate features and stubborn nature came directly from Lilith.

"Why did you keep this from me?" Verrine asked, her tone tight, disappointed. "If I had known, I never would have let Lucifer touch me."

A derisive snort escaped Lilith. She focused on Lucifer's rash behavior, not wanting to analyze the possible truth in Verrine's statement. "No one *lets* Lucifer do anything. He knew of the pact and it didn't stop him from ... Did he defile you, Verrine? If he did, it's better that we tell Satan now than allow him to find out during your awakening."

"He did not defile me." She crossed the chamber and sat on her bed. "Satan never gave any indication that he knew I was alive. He has had countless opportunities to talk to me. I don't understand why he ignored me so completely if he is as captivated as you say."

"He hasn't ignored you. His gaze follows you constantly when your attention is directed elsewhere. He's a creature of actions not words. He saw no point in engaging you until he was free to woo you."

"You should have told me."

Lilith accepted the criticism with a nod. Anger was easily dismissed, but Verrine's disappointment cut Lilith like a blade. "You were supposed to be awakened on your twenty-first birthday. I had intended to tell you about the pact this year. You would have had plenty of time to adjust to the idea before he claimed you."

"Adjust to the idea. That phrase says it all. I've never had any say in this, have I? I will be Satan's mate regardless of my feelings in the matter."

"What are your feelings in the matter?"

Both women looked at the chamber's entrance. Jetrel stood there, one broad shoulder leaning against the archway.

"I don't know. I've never thought of Satan as anything but king. He is Prime Leader. I owe him my respect. He can be incredibly cruel. But his power is intoxicating."

Jetrel smiled. "It sounds like you've thought about him more than you realize."

"What happens now?"

Lilith watched her mate's gaze cloud and knew his news would not please their daughter. His expressions were often subtle, but she'd learned to interpret every nuance in their years together.

"He wishes to begin wooing you," Jetrel said.

"When?"

"Immediately."

Verrine gasped. "Tonight? I am not to have *any* time to prepare myself for his wooing? I must go to him tonight?"

Let me talk to her. Lilith carefully sent the thought directly to Jetrel's mind.

He nodded and left the room.

She had to do something to ease the panic in Verrine, to alleviate her helplessness. Lilith had endured years of abuse at the hands of a brutal mate. Her daughter would never suffer the same fate. "I will be brutally honest with you," Lilith began.

"It's about time."

"You have no choice but to accept Satan as mate. You will be required to submit to his desires until the season of

wooing has ended. If you find the match unbearable at that point you are free to set him aside."

Verrine laughed. "Set aside the Prime Leader of the Realm of Darkness. You must think I'm a fool. He would never allow such a thing. If I told him I intended—"

"You would not forewarn him. You would make a proclamation to the Council of Seven before Satan had any idea what you were about. He would be bound by the Demonic Charter to let you go."

"Are you suggesting this is what I do?"

Lilith sat beside her daughter and gently stroked her hand. Fierce protectiveness surged through Lilith, followed immediately by a rush of tenderness. Even after nineteen years the intensity of her maternal instincts surprised her. She must arm Verrine for the battle awaiting her.

"I'm explaining that you are not completely trapped. If Satan cannot stir your passion, you have options. If he is cruel to you, do not hesitate. I waited far too long to set Sammael aside."

Verrine said nothing. Her troubled expression tore at Lilith's heart. She had raised her daughter to be strong and independent, but ultimately Verrine must face this conflict alone.

"There is one more thing to consider." She waited for Verrine to meet her gaze. "If you set Satan aside, it gives Lucifer the right to woo you."

* * * *

Satan paced his throne room, fury and possessive passion twisting through him with ferocious intensity. He'd been a hair's breadth away from killing his brother. *His brother*, for hell's sake! No female should have such power over him.

Knowing it was no longer possible for him to end Lucifer's existence was no consolation. He'd been mad with jealousy, blind with rage, completely out of control.

It would not happen again!

He would surrender control to no one!

Verrine must understand that she belonged to him and him alone. He would show her in no uncertain terms what it meant to be Satan's mate. She would not leave his bed until she surrendered to his claiming. Blood pounded through his cock, echoing the thunder in his ears. Another surge of dominance consumed him. She would be his!

A resounding knock announced her arrival. He wanted a moment to observe her, assess her. Striding to the corner beside the door, he transformed into his animal shape, winding into a tight coil.

One of his guards pushed the door open and Verrine entered. A diaphanous garment of pale blue floated around her body, a teasing cloud that concealed nothing. Her regal bearing fascinated him, so like Lilith, proud and sure. Strands of bright blue mixed with her long black hair. High round breasts tapered to a narrow waist, then flared dramatically to rounded hips and a delectable ass.

Satan hissed and uncoiled, resuming his demon form.

She meandered toward the dais, studying his elaborate throne. He could bend her over the seat and fuck her brutally from behind.

No! This must be a gentle wooing. She must offer herself willingly.

"It is customary to disrobe when you are in my presence," he told her.

Her head tilted, but she didn't turn around. "I didn't realize you were present, Sire. Shall I disrobe now?"

Her tone was tight, her posture stiff. This was not a good beginning.

"Verrine." He spoke her name softly, caressingly, but the memory of her supple body arched in ecstasy as Lucifer partook of her pleasure shot fiery darts into his gut.

"Yes, Sire?" She still faced his throne.

He gently cupped her shoulders. She started violently. Had fear or dread caused her reaction? "Why will you not look at me?"

She turned, dislodging his hands, and raised her gaze to his face. Wide blue eyes stared back at him unflinchingly. She appeared—resigned. He didn't want her resigned to her fate, he wanted her wild and willing, eager for his touch.

As she had been with Lucifer!

He shoved the thought aside. Jealousy would not serve him now. He must woo her, win her, seduce her.

"What can I do to put you at ease?" He looked at her mouth, craving his first taste of her passion.

"Why would you want me at ease? I am yours to do with as you will."

A smile tugged at one corner of his mouth. "You aren't afraid of me." The realization astonished him. "Why aren't you afraid of me?"

"If you had wanted me afraid you would have claimed me long ago. Why wait until I'm mature for this interaction?"

He brushed his knuckles against her cheek, his lips parting in a predatory smile. "You're right. I didn't want a frightened child. I wanted a proud female worthy to be my queen. Are you she? Are you brave enough to be my mate? Are you strong enough to match my passion?"

Her lips trembled and her gaze began to glow. Had he been too bold? Hell help him if she wept. He hated female tears!

"Our wooing is to be a test of *endurance*?" Laughter revealed itself in her tone. "You don't cast yourself in a very flattering light."

His eyes narrowed and he curved his fingers around her chin. "You mock me?"

"No, Sire. I'm but trying to understand."

"I'll make it simple for you. I cannot get the image of your face out of my mind. I keep seeing your expression as you surrendered to the pleasure *my brother* unleashed within your body."

"I didn't know." She continued to meet his gaze, pride replacing her amusement. "If I had been aware of the pact, I would never have allowed ... It should not have happened."

"But you enjoyed his touch, his kiss."

She said nothing.

Growling angrily, he yanked her against his chest. "I want to touch you and kiss you and taste you. I want to fuck you until you are so full of *me* you can think of no one else."

"You cannot claim me—"

"Unless you want me to. If you want my cock inside you, if you ask to be filled, it is permitted."

Dragging in a shaky breath, she turned her face away. "I'm not ready to be claimed. I will *not* ask it of you."

"We shall see."

He swept her into his arms and strode across the room. Kicking open an adjoining door, he carried her into his bedchamber. Verrine's heart lodged in her throat. Panic gripped her for a long painful moment, but gradually anger and determination bled through the other emotion. She was in control! Let him do his damndest. He couldn't claim her unless she asked for his cock.

Setting her down beside the bed, he framed her face with his hands and pressed his mouth to hers. She expected a brutal, demanding kiss. Instead his lips slid against hers and his tongue teased.

"I may not be good with words, but I know how to use my mouth."

He deepened the kiss, urging her lips to part and caressing her tongue with his. A deep flush spread over her skin, raising her temperature and speeding her pulse. He wrapped her in his arms, molding her body against his, pressing his erect cock into her belly. He felt huge, impossibly long and...

"I want to see you," she whispered against his mouth. "Disrobe for me."

A tremor shook him and Verrine smiled. Feminine power expanded making heat pool in her core.

She had expected to endure this, not ache to be filled by him.

"If I take off my robe, you will not leave this room until I am satisfied."

She grinned. "There are many ways to find satisfaction."

His dark eyes gleamed dangerously. "How many of them did you explore with my brother?"

"I thought I was here to learn from you."

He chuckled. "Clever girl. Divert my attention, distract me from my anger."

"May I help you undress?"

Opening a seam down the front of his robe, he dropped the garment to his feet, standing before her naked. Sleekly muscled and hairless, his body waited for her exploring touch. She ran her index finger from the indentation at the base of his throat, down across his chest, over his rippling abdomen. Hesitating below his waist, she then wrapped her fingers around his massive cock.

"Let me claim you, Verrine," he growled. "Let me fill you."

Passing her thumb over the plush head, she watched a drop of moisture seep from the tiny hole. Fascinated, she sat on the edge of the bed, leaning closer. She blew her moist breath across him and heard his restless groan.

"I will not let you toy with me and leave me wanting."

Looking up at his tense features she smiled. "You will not be left wanting." Circling the head of his cock with her tongue, she explored his texture and taste. She cupped his

heavy balls with one hand while she took his shaft into her mouth.

"I want to pleasure you." Despite his complaint, he rocked his hips, driving his cock deeper.

He slid in and out, his shaft throbbing against her tongue. She moved her hands to his lean hips and then boldly cupped his tight ass. Growling deep in his throat, he thrust in earnest, bumping the back of her throat with each lunge. She sucked and swirled her tongue around his shaft. He pumped faster.

"No! Damn it. *This* is not what I want from you."

He jerked out of her mouth and turned away. His ass flexed and bunched, his hands clenched, then released and clenched again. "Did you suck *his* cock?"

"Why do you keep asking about him?" Every time he mentioned his brother it reestablished the image within her mind. She was trying to forget, trying to keep her mind in the moment, open her emotions to Satan's wooing. "The more you know the angrier it will make you."

Turning back around, he grabbed her upper arms and pulled her up off the bed, pressing her against his heaving chest. "Did Lucifer defile you? Is that why you won't ask it of me?"

"He showed me how to touch myself and then he gave me pleasure with his mouth. That is all we did! Now I will say no more about it, so don't ask."

"Show me. Show me what he taught you. Get on the bed and pleasure yourself."

"No!"

He pulled his lips back from his teeth and snarled. "You dare defy me!" Pushing her facedown across the bed, he flipped up her dress and kicked her legs apart. "You belong to me! It's time you start accepting the fact."

"I belong to myself and raping me isn't going to change the fact!"

"I have no intention of raping you." He whispered the silken threat into her ear as his fingers slipped between her thighs. "You're wet. Did having my cock in your mouth excite you or are you secretly hoping I'll fuck you?"

"You can't fuck me unless I ask you to, and that will never happen now."

He laughed and lightly pinched her clit. "Never is a very long time."

His fingers played over her folds, traced her slit and rimmed her anus. She squirmed and gasped, each new sensation more tantalizing than the last. When he pushed his middle finger into her core, they groaned in unison.

"You are so tight," he whispered. "My finger stretches you. We will definitely have to work on this." He turned her over and pushed her legs up and back, placing her heels against the edge of the mattress.

Verrine looked at him framed by her thighs, his expression a mix of possessiveness and fascination. He touched her with such care and gentleness she was powerless to resist.

"Did you like it when ... "

His words trailed away. She'd sworn not to respond and he already knew the answer. Parting her flesh with his fingers, he ducked his head between her thighs and traced her slit

with his tongue. Again and again, he licked her, pausing at the top of each stroke to circle her clit.

Her legs shook and she helplessly rocked her hips. His finger sank into her throbbing core as his tongue settled directly over her swollen nub. Working his finger in and out, he gradually stretched her passage enough to take a second finger and then a third.

The fullness was exquisite, exhilarating, a teasing promise of what was to come. She clenched his fingers as he thrust into her core. He took her right to the brink and then stopped.

"No!" She cried out as he pulled his fingers from her aching pussy.

"Now we're both miserable. It's up to you. Do we try and go to sleep or do we finish what we've started?"

What difference did it make if he claimed her now or in three weeks when she was no longer allowed to refuse him? He would claim her eventually. "Finish," she grumbled.

He laughed, draping her legs over his shoulders. "That doesn't sound very enthusiastic. And I think you need to be more specific. What exactly do you want me to do?"

"Make me come," she answered succinctly.

"How shall I make you come?"

"With your mouth first and then with your cock inside me." She met his glistening gaze and surrendered the last of her resentment. "Claim me, Sire. I want you to."

"Nicely said."

Pushing two fingers deep inside her, he went to work on her clit. He licked, stroked and suckled the sensitive nub until her core throbbed demandingly. Only then did he move his

fingers with strong, steady thrusts. With a careful twist of his wrist, he inserted a third finger. The additional pressure amplified the sensations already pulsing through her. His tongue flicked over her clit and an orgasm burst within her. She cried out, her core rippling with tingling pleasure.

While she floated in hazy lassitude, he surged up along her body and thrust past her virgin shield. Verrine cried out at the sting, then moaned as he pushed deeper and deeper still.

"Arch your back. Take all of me."

Stretched to the point of pain, she whimpered. She glanced down to where their bodies joined and saw how much more of him there was to take. "I can't."

He grinned, his dark eyes flashing. "Yes, you can." Leaning down without pushing farther into her, he caught her nipple between his lips and sucked forcefully.

Her inner muscles fluttered and hot cream flowed, easing his way. She tilted her hips. His shaft sank deeper. He moved to the other breast and slipped his hand between their bodies, massaging her clit with his middle finger.

She relaxed, accepting the inevitable, embracing her true life path. Her body understood, responding effortlessly when she surrendered to their mutual need.

Hooking her knees over his elbows, he dragged her hips up off the bed, impaling her completely. Only her shoulders remained on the mattress. He held her high, accentuating the pressure of his full length within her body.

"Mine!" He growled the word with obvious warning and pulled nearly out. "Mine." He slammed back in.

Verrine clutched the bedcovering as he pounded into her, overwhelmed by the fullness of his penetration. The stinging pain receded, her body lubricated enough to accommodate even his aggressive thrusting. But his savage expression and fierce possessiveness doused her passion. She submitted to his claiming, while her heart ached for so much more. Passively she waited for him to find release.

He threw his head back and roared, his body shaking as he pumped his seed deep into her body. Panting harshly, his gaze muddled, he stared down at her. Her legs still draped over his arms, her body arched from the bed to his groin.

"Why did you find no pleasure in my claiming?"

He sounded confused, not angry, so she answered honestly. "I don't want to be your possession. I want to be your partner, your equal, your mate."

With a snarl, he separated their bodies and turned away. "Now you sound like your mother."

"I'm very much like my mother. Isn't that why you wanted me so badly?" Crawling off the bed, she smoothed her dress down over her trembling legs. He said nothing. "May I go now?"

He nodded toward the door.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Three

Shaken and depressed after her encounter with Satan, Verrine wandered through the stone corridors deep in the Realm of Darkness. She couldn't face her parents. They would know Satan had claimed her and demand an explanation.

She had none to give.

Raking her fingers through her hair, she walked through a wall before she realized she'd Shadow shifted. *Damn*. She'd never been this disconcerted before.

Okay, calm down and think.

She walked on as she sorted through her cluttered thoughts. Satan had surprised her with his patience. He'd skillfully roused her passion and given her pleasure. Only his brutish possessiveness had left her cold. If he'd kept his jealousy suppressed, she'd have continued to be responsive. Their mating would have been wonderful.

Like it had been with Lucifer. The thought filled her with shame. She belonged to Satan. It was not seemly for her to harbor desires for any other male, much less his brother.

Would this end their courtship? Would Satan declare her unfit and ... She didn't even know how it was accomplished when a male ended the courtship.

Mine! His domineering tone echoed through her mind. She was being ridiculous. He wouldn't set her aside. She'd been marked from conception as his. She had no idea what he would do next, but Satan had no intention of letting her go.

Rounding a corner, Verrine collided with something warm and solid. She cried out, stumbling back a step.

"Look what we have here, boys. If it isn't the precious Princess of Pussy Clan. What are you doing this far from home?"

She didn't know the male's name but his pronounced muzzle and fur-covered face identified him as Canine Clan. Where in Hell was she? Canine Clan had taken over one of the deepest levels when their leader refused to join the alliance. They were outcasts, vicious misfits who preyed not only on the human race, but the other demonic clans.

Whirling on the ball of her foot she ran in the opposite direction. Had she Shadow shifted again without realizing it? How had she come to be this deep—

A fist tangled in her streaming hair, ending her escape and her panicked speculation. "Not so fast, Princess. I'm sure my father would love to see you before you run back to Mommy and Daddy."

Shifting into her animal form, Verrine swiped at the male with her razor-sharp claws. He howled and launched himself at her, transforming from demon to monstrous wolf in mid-air. His powerful jaws closed around her throat, pinning her to the floor.

"Marut! Bind her. Do *not* harm her!"

Verrine felt the pressure against her throat increase, compressing her airway threateningly before the wolf-creature released her. Her Cat Clan strengths were stealth and speed, but Marut had easily caught her. Fear expanded within her, sweeping her back into demon form.

A tall, muscular male stood a few paces away, his fists planted on his lean hips. He swept Verrine with his yellow gaze, assessing her. Authority emanated from his bearing. This must be Moloch, leader of the outcast clan.

Marut shifted back into his demonic form and conjured Shadow cords, commanding them around her torso, securing her arms to her sides. He was a hybrid, half Canine and half Shadow Clan. No wonder he'd caught her. No Canine demon should have been able to match her speed.

"Will that keep her from Shadow shifting?" Moloch asked his son.

"It should. She's very young."

Moloch approached. His appearance was less animalistic than his son's. Only his bright yellow eyes and elongated incisors revealed which curse ruled him. Crouching before her, he sniffed the air.

"You reek of sex. I'd heard your awakening was scheduled for next year."

"My awakening has nothing to do with Canine Clan. You rejected the alliance. You are all forbidden as mates."

He laughed. "Which is why we are forced to take captives. Your mother didn't think about that complication when she declared our entire clan cast out."

"The Council made that decree, not my mother. What do you want with me?"

He leaned closer, inhaling deeply. "That scent. I know that scent. Who just fucked you, Princess?"

Hiding her fear behind defiance, she turned her face away. If he knew the Prime Leader had claimed her, it would make her more valuable as a hostage.

"I'll figure it out. I have a great memory for scents."

Marut stood beside his father, leering at her. "What should we do with her? We can't keep her here while we go pillage."

"Bring her along. We'll play with her after the hunt."

* * * *

Lilith unsealed her doorway and quickly dropped into a deep bow. "Sire. What brings you here?" If Satan wished to speak with someone, he had them summoned. This was highly irregular.

"Tell Verrine I'm here."

She couldn't begin to interpret the myriad emotions reflected in his expression and tone, but his distress frightened her. "I don't understand. I thought she was with you."

"She is not here?"

"No, Sire. I have not seen her since I escorted her to your chambers."

His face twisted with fury, his lips pulling back from his teeth. "If she is with Lucifer..."

Without finishing the threat, he spun and headed down the corridor. Lilith ran to keep up with him, her pulse pounding in her ears. "What happened, Sire? How long ago did she leave you? Was she upset?"

He said nothing. His purposeful strides carried him quickly toward Shadow Clan corridors.

Jetrel, where are you? Lilith reached out frantically with her mind.

In the council chambers. What's wrong?

Is Lucifer with you?

Of course. She heard his mental chuckle. He presides over Shadow Council meetings. What is amiss?

"Sire. Lucifer is with Jetrel. They are in a council meeting. Verrine did not go to your brother."

His long strides halted but he didn't turn around. "Where would she have gone?"

"That depends how upset she was. Did ... did the wooing go badly?"

Jetrel came rushing down the corridor, Lucifer a step behind.

"What is going on?" Jetrel demanded as he reached Lilith. "You sounded terrified."

"Verrine is missing."

"Don't be melodramatic," Satan muttered. "We're simply not sure where she went after she left my chambers."

Lucifer stormed past Jetrel and slammed Satan against the corridor wall. "What the fuck did you do to her? If you hurt her, I'll—"

"My mate is not your concern!" He shoved Lucifer back.

Lucifer cast a net of Shadow cords around Satan's torso and bound him tightly. "Your *mate*? You claimed her? I should—"

"Did you claim her?" Lilith asked. "Is that why she fled?" She and Jetrel flanked Lucifer, forming a solid wall of demonic indignation.

"It wasn't like that. I didn't hurt her. I would never harm Verrine. Now release these cords before I lose my temper!"

Ignoring Satan's command. Lucifer stepped back and spread his arms. Lilith wasn't sure what he was doing, but Jetrel seemed to understand.

"Well?" Jetrel asked once Lucifer released the trance.

"Canine Clan has her. They've taken her into the Light."

* * * *

Verrine struggled against the Shadow cords until she exhausted herself. She tried to disperse her form, but true to Marut's boast, her abilities were no match for his. Stumbling along behind him, she was tethered to his waist by the Shadow cord binding her throat.

She reached out with her mind, broadcasting her location. Sending the signal to her father first and gradually broadening the scope until Marut turned to face her.

"No one is going to hear you, Princess. Your control isn't strong enough."

Ignoring the provocation, she tried to distract him as she found a new strategy. "Why do you come into the Light to hunt? There is plenty of food in the Realm of Darkness."

"Not for Canine Clan demons." He tugged on the cord around her throat, dragging her slowly toward him. "We are left to scavenge like rats thanks to your mother."

"It was your father's choice to refuse the alliance. All he had to do was—"

"Humble himself before a female. Any Alpha would rather die." He set off again, but kept his hand on the cord near her

throat, forcing her to stay at his side. "He'll fuck you first, of course. It's his right as pack Alpha, but I'll be right behind him."

Her steps faltered as his threat sank in. How would she survive being taken over and over, defiled again and again. Bile rose into her throat. Her hands clenched into fists. She had to find a way out of this!

His laughter abraded, his tone taunted. "Once the others have finished, we'll clean you up and start over."

"No," Moloch said from in front of them. "The others will not touch her. I just identified her scent. We're about to sample *Satan's* whore."

Marut looked at her with new interest. "You spread your thighs for the Prime Leader? I've heard he's repulsive."

"He's less of an animal than you!" She ducked his backhand just in time, but the cord tightened around her neck, choking her.

Moloch ordered the others to continue on and took her leash from his son. "The hunting party will manage without us tonight. I've waited half my life for an opportunity like this."

She kicked out at him. He caught her leg, toppling her sideways. With her arms bound she fell hard on her hip, then her head smacked the ground. Pain exploded behind her eyes, dragging a cry from her dry throat.

Moloch flipped her onto her stomach and pulled up on her hips.

He meant to take her like the animal he was! Fury and fear combined in a surge of power. She dispersed the Shadow cords and transformed. Leaping forward, her paws found

purchase on the leaf-strewn ground and she bounded off into the darkness.

Marut's angry howl echoed through the night, but Verrine didn't pause. She darted between trees and dove beneath low hanging branches. He might have had the advantage in the open corridor, but she was agile and quick—and fighting for her life.

His paw swiped her hindquarters, tearing through her flesh. She protested with a feline yowl and leapt high into a tree. Branches groaned and leaves rustled. He was close behind! The tree swayed beneath their combined weight.

She climbed higher. The branch beneath her bowed precariously. His claw caught her calf, but she ignored the searing pain, focused entirely on escape.

Afraid of heights, Marut? She sent the taunt directly to his mind, inching toward the leafy profusion marking the end of the branch. *Come and get me, puppy!*

He leapt forward. She waited for the last possible second and launched herself into the next tree. His big body came down on the spot where she had been. The branch snapped and he plummeted to the forest floor.

She heard his howls and more snapping branches as he crashed through the tree. No time to gloat, she still had to elude the rest of his pack.

* * * *

"We can cover more ground if we split up," Satan told the other three.

Lucifer and Jetrel could communicate effortlessly even over long distances, so Jetrel and Lilith set off in one direction, the brothers in the other.

Jetrel took Lilith's hand and gave it a little squeeze. She tried to smile, but the knot of tension in her belly made it feel more like a grimace.

"I can't help but feeling this is my fault," she lamented. "If I hadn't pushed for Canine Clan's—"

"Placing blame will not help us find her, my love. And we will find her. Focus. Listen to the night. Let your senses guide you."

Nodding, she accessed her feline senses without releasing her demon form. They crept through the trees and Lilith's hand tightened around Jetrel's. "She was here. I detect her scent." Their daughter's subtle scent was nearly overpowered by the smell of fear. Lilith kept the realization to herself. "This way."

She turned her face to the wind, pausing while her brain processed the information. Blood. The smell of fresh blood was all around them.

Her breath shuddered and she rushed on.

A Canine howl rent the night and Lilith whipped her head toward the sound. It came from a different direction than Verrine's scent. "They've lost her." She exhaled a ragged breath, relief washing over her in a calming wave. "She's escaped."

"I'll tell Lucifer to find the pack. We'll go after Verrine."

'Find the pack' meant kill them all. Lilith heartily agreed.

Following the trail of blood to the edge of the forest, she hesitated. Before them spread a vast grassy valley. Tree stumps littered the undulating hillsides as far as the eye could see.

"Why would someone cut down all these trees?"

Jetrel spoke the question echoing her thoughts. "I don't know. But we're about to find out. Her trail leads into the valley."

She glanced at the sky. A bright full moon silvered the land, leaving them vulnerable to discovery. Exploring the Light had been so much easier before humans overran the land. They were everywhere these days, wicked and wild, some more depraved than any demon.

Cat Clan business kept Lilith fully occupied. Her trips into the Light to torment mankind had become rare indeed. She occasionally dispatched one of her clansmen to discover what was happening above, but mostly she was content with her life and family.

"Come on. We must find her before some human does." She shuddered at the thought. Verrine was weak and wounded, terrified and alone. Lilith lengthened her stride, ignoring her own uncertainty. They had to find her.

Nothing else mattered.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Four

Satan hissed, venom dripping from his fangs. "If they have harmed her in any way I will feast upon their flesh before I kill them."

Lucifer slapped him on the back. "I'm damn glad you're on my side when you get like this."

"Don't be so sure of that!" Satan knocked his arm away. "If it were not for you Verrine would be safe in the Realm of Darkness."

"What the fuck is that supposed to mean? I'm not the one who claimed her like a ravening beast."

Satan stopped abruptly and faced his brother. "How would you know how I claimed her?" He watched guilt and amusement play across Lucifer's features and drove his nails into his palms to keep from lashing out. "You watched us? You invaded my bedchamber and watched me claim my mate?"

Lucifer stood his ground, blue eyes blazing. "She is precious to me. I cannot pretend otherwise. If you had hurt her I would have—" Satan's vicious backhand ended his sentence. Lucifer licked the blood from his lip and smiled. "Do we fight? Or do we find the dogs?"

Fury consumed Satan as he tromped through the woods. This had happened before, but never to such a devastating degree. They were frequently attracted to the same female. It had become a game over the years. Lucifer would woo them, bring them tenderly to the point where they would willingly

accept anything. Then Satan would partake of the final surrender.

But this was different.

Or was it?

He had no patience for wooing, while Lucifer reveled in the teasing, seductive play to which females responded so well. Satan enjoyed watching his brother tantalize a female until she was senseless with lust. The combination had served them well in the past. When Lucifer was present it became a competition. Who could arouse the female the most? Satan thrived on competition. It gave him the incentive he needed to keep his lust under control. But this was Verrine.

He would not share his mate!

Forcing aside the disconcerting concept, Satan focused on the dogs. Night creatures moved through the trees, chattering restlessly. The wind whispered its secrets, telling him all he needed to know.

The pack huddled around their leader, who crouched over his fallen son.

"Moloch." Satan didn't raise his voice. He didn't need to. The stench of fear exploded in the air around him.

The lesser dogs whined and fell prostrate before him. Moloch trembled, but remained beside his son.

"He is dying, Sire. You are too late."

Satan narrowed his eyes and raised his hand, extending it toward Marut. "Not so fast." The young male writhed and howled in agony, blood oozing from his numerous wounds.

"Stop it! Let him die. Please, Sire."

"I am your king now? Why the sudden respect, Moloch? You refused to bow before."

"I refused to bow to a *female*. I have never been disloyal to you."

"Really?" Satan caused another surge in the young male's agony, enjoying Moloch's pathetic whining as much as Marut's screams. "What do you call abducting my mate?"

After only a few minutes Satan grew bored. He released his hold on Marut and watched his breathing shudder, then cease. Moloch howled in grief, gathering his son to his chest. The others joined the chorus until Satan silenced them with a thought. The lesser dogs crumpled into lifeless heaps leaving only their leader, clutching his son's corpse.

"We did not touch her, Sire. I swear!"

Lucifer stepped forward, his blue gaze illuminating Moloch's blood streaked face. The dog quickly closed his eyes. "Look at me. If you are as innocent as you claim you have nothing to fear."

"I didn't touch her."

"Did you want to?" Satan asked. "Did you defile her over and over in your mind before she escaped you?" Moloch trembled, stubbornly keeping his eyes tightly sealed. "Look at Lucifer—now!"

Unable to resist the mental compulsion, Moloch raised his amber gaze. Lucifer's eyes intensified until the dog's whole body glowed. "Feel the humiliation and degradation you intended for Verrine. Know the pain of her violation. Be defiled!"

Moloch screamed, his son forgotten with the onslaught of his agony. His flesh blistered and peeled. He rolled across the ground moaning and flailing.

With remorseless expressions, the brothers watched his suffering.

* * * *

"What in hell's name is that thing?" Lilith squinted through the darkness. Even her feline sight could not make sense of the hulking structure.

Jetrel seemed less interested in the anomaly. His gaze fixed with single-minded intensity on the scene surrounding the fire. Three human males in their prime and a grizzled old man huddled over their daughter.

When they had come to the crest of the hill and spotted Verrine below, Lilith charged forward blindly. Jetrel had grabbed her arm and shook his head. "They aren't hurting her." He sounded utterly amazed. "Look. They're tending her wounds."

"Why would *humans* attempt to heal her?"

"I have no idea. But look more closely. They're cleaning and bandaging the tears in her flesh." Jetrel shuddered, fury contorting his features. "Which one of those *dogs* did this to her?"

"Were Satan and Lucifer able to find them?"

"I haven't asked. I figure Lucifer will contact me when the fight is over."

"Satan and Lucifer against a pack of stray dogs." She snorted. "Shouldn't be much of a fight."

"What shall we do about Verrine? Steal her away while they sleep?"

"Why? She's our daughter. Let's go get her back."

Lilith carefully arranged her hair to cover the rippling blue edges of her ears and watched Jetrel do the same. "Your eyes," she cautioned him. "They're glowing." He immediately decreased the intensity of his stare.

They walked down the hill hand in hand.

The older man separated himself from the younger three, moving across the camp to intercept them, his stout staff at the ready.

"Who goes there?" His voice was firm and strong despite his advanced years. He squinted into the darkness surrounding them.

"How did our daughter come to be in your camp?" Jetrel asked.

"This is your daughter?"

"Yes. Where did you find her?"

Lilith kept her silence, watching not only the old man, but the younger three.

"Shem found her out in the valley. It looks as though she's been mauled by an animal. I am Noah. If you come in peace, you are welcome in my camp."

"We have come for our daughter," Jetrel said emphatically.

"She can't be moved. If her wounds start bleeding again, she will die."

Lilith glanced at Jetrel. They both knew that was unlikely, but they couldn't tell the human they were immortal.

She couldn't resist her curiosity another moment. "What is ... that?" She motioned to the structure behind them.

The three young men snickered and looked embarrassed. Noah squared his shoulders and raised his chin. "It's called an ark. God has told me that he is going to send a Great Flood to purge the land of its wickedness. I and my family will be spared by retreating into the ark."

"Only you and your family are to be spared?" Lilith asked fascinated. He seemed so sincere.

"Anyone who enters the ark will be spared," he told her. "But no one believes me."

"You must admit it's a wild tale."

"I know what my God told me and I'm doing my best to obey."

"I'm sure your devotion will be rewarded in a mighty way," she said not bothering to keep the mockery from her tone.

Noah sadly shook his head. "May I at least have your daughter moved into the ark, where she can recover in safety."

Lilith was tempted to let him do it. What a surprise they'd have when Verrine recovered. "The rest of our party is hunting the animal that wounded her. We must find them."

"You are welcome to leave the girl here until you've located them. We will continue to tend her."

Why was he being so kind? He was a human for hell's sake. "We take care of our own."

Jetrel moved to where Verrine lay curled up on her side.

"I strongly advise against this," Noah said.

"You see to your children," Lilith told him. "We'll see to ours."

Jetrel carefully scooped Verrine into his arms.

"When is this flood due, by the way? I want to make sure we take shelter in time."

Noah heaved a frustrated sigh. "The animals have gathered already. Tomorrow is the seventh day; the day the rains will come. There will be no shelter but the ark. God intends to flood the entire world. You will perish with all the rest unless you heed my warning."

She smiled. He was adorable. Delusional, but adorable. "Thank you for your kindness." She paused. "I've never said that to a *human* before." She laughed at his startled expression and followed Jetrel into the night.

* * * *

"Do you believe him? Do you think God intends to flood the world?" Jetrel shifted Verrine higher against his chest and she moaned.

Lilith touched Verrine's brow and frowned. "She's feverish."

"We need to seek shelter. It's nearly dawn."

"Why would God destroy his own creation?" Lilith responded to his earlier question.

Jetrel laughed. "You're asking me to explain God?"

"No. I was just thinking out loud."

"I would think you would revel in this—if it is true. This is even more spectacular than having them kicked out of Eden."

"I did not have them kicked out of Eden."

"Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent, the serpent blamed you. It's all rather amusing if you ask me."

"You didn't think so at that time."

"I'd just seen you fucking Adam. Nothing was amusing at the time."

"Can you contact Lucifer? Find out what's taking them so long?"

There's a cave in the canyon wall. We'll meet you there,
Lucifer's voice responded in her mind.

"Did he send that to you too?"

"Yes." Jetrel nodded toward the steep canyon wall. "Let me get her settled and I'll come back for you."

"No need." Lilith transformed into her animal self and bounded on ahead.

Having Shadow shifted with Verrine, Jetrel was waiting in the cave when Lilith arrived. Lucifer shifted into the cavern with Satan a few moments later. Both males hurried forward to assure themselves that Verrine was alive.

Lilith watched their response with trepidation. Their mutual desire for Verrine was obvious in every move they made. This did not bode well for her daughter.

"She's very weak, but already her wounds have sealed. She'll recover."

"I let him die too quickly." Satan ground out the words between clenched teeth.

Lucifer only nodded.

"The entire pack is dead?" Lilith asked.

"I should purge my realm of all the dogs."

"If their new clan leader does not see the wisdom of the alliance, Shadow Clan will assist you," Lucifer assured him.

Thunder shook the cave. Lilith steadied herself against the wall.

Lucifer walked to the cave's narrow entrance and peered out into the pre-dawn gloom. "It's starting to rain. Can she travel?"

Lilith joined him for a moment, watching in awe as clouds filled the sky.

"I've never seen a storm gather so quickly," Lucifer said.

"If Noah is to be believed, this is no ordinary storm."

They crossed the cave together.

"We should Shadow shift back. This looks bad," she told the males.

Jetrel gazed between his mate and his daughter in helpless frustration. "I can only take one or the other."

"I will take Verrine," Lucifer volunteered.

"Only if you take me too," Satan snapped.

"That was my intention."

Lilith wanted to laugh, but her stranglehold on all emotion was the only thing keeping her from tears. This had been too close. Much too close.

* * * *

Searing pain lanced through Verrine's leg, exploding across her hip. She cried out, clinging to the warm body in front of her, but heat enveloped her back as well. Dragging her eyelids open, she sagged against Lucifer's chest. Someone

moved her hair away from her nape and warm lips brushed her skin.

"Where am I?" Wrapping her arms around Lucifer's neck, she snuggled against his body. Hands swept down her sides, causing her skin to tingle.

"A very good question, brother. Where are we?"

Satan's deep voice drew her farther from the comfortable void. The pain intensified. "My leg."

Those unseen hands pulled her away from the comfort of Lucifer's embrace and lifted her. She blinked and groaned as pain shot from her hip to her thigh. Satan carried her to a stone ledge at the far side of a small cavern and sat, cradling her in his arms.

"What is this place?" The walls glowed. Verrine touched the smooth stone, not surprised to find it warm.

"A Shadow cave. You have to be able to shift to get here. We use them as hideouts and for planning sessions away from curious ears."

"The real question is, why am I in a Shadow cave rather than the comfort of my bedchamber?" Satan asked.

"I don't know. Shadow shifting with others is always tiring, but I've never stalled out in the middle before."

Verrine leaned against Satan, resting her head on his shoulder. "I feel wretched."

"You're lucky to be alive. No one else would have survived such an attack."

She looked up into his glistening dark eyes, amazed at the warmth she found there. "I always wondered if I was immortal."

"Well there had to have been a better way of finding out."

His fierce expression made her smile. He was being fierce *about* her not *to* her and she liked it. "I'm open to suggestions."

"I'm glad to hear it."

Lucifer cleared his throat, reminding them of his presence. "The sea is churning beyond the cave. Can you feel the vibration?"

Placing his palm flat on the rock ledge, Satan nodded. "Something is definitely wrong. Can you contact Jetrel? Did they make it back safely?"

After a moment Lucifer nodded. "They're fine. I guess you're more of a burden than I realized."

"That's a horrible thing to say about Verrine." Satan grinned. The resemblance between the two had never been more striking. Verrine shivered as an unexpected tingle danced down her spine. "Are you cold? The stone is warm, but it's hard."

Lucifer pulled his tunic off over his head and draped it over her like a blanket. His scent and body heat still clung to the garment. She shivered again. "Thank you."

"You're trembling. Are you in pain?"

The sensations zinging through her body had little to do with pain. She had the complete attention of the two most powerful demons in all of Hell. "Just when I move my leg."

Satan eased her to the ledge and knelt on the floor beside her. Lucifer had been kneeling on the floor beside a stone ledge when Satan walked in on them. The similarity sent more shivers through her body. She glanced beyond Satan,

her gaze colliding with Lucifer's. His lazy smile assured her he knew exactly what she was thinking.

"Roll up onto your side. Let me look at it."

"Why? Can you heal with your eyes?"

"No, but I can infuse your body with energy so it heals itself more quickly."

She looked at Lucifer again. "Can he really or is he just trying to touch my ass?"

"He can help you heal, but I'd be more than happy just to touch your ass."

"Don't even think about it."

"You can't control my thoughts, brother dear."

Throwing a threatening glare over his shoulder, Satan said, "I can make it so you no longer have thoughts."

Lucifer just laughed and leaned his shoulder against the cavern wall.

Satan helped Verrine roll up onto her side and lifted the coarse dress to her waist. An alien tightness gripped his chest and his hands trembled. What the fuck was wrong with him? She was just a female. Swallowing past the ridiculous lump in his throat, he asked, "Where did this garment come from?"

"The humans must have put it on me. I was far too weak to conjure clothing when the young one found me."

"Your body is already mending remarkably well. The gashes have closed. This should ease the discomfort."

His palm hovered over her skin, moving from her waist to her ankle with slow, steady sweeps. She moved restlessly, bending her knee and presenting him with the tempting curve of her ass.

Concentrate! She needs your energy, not your cock!

She was so damn beautiful! His whole body ached just looking at her. He had never wanted a female like he wanted Verrine. What he felt for her was so much more complicated than lust. He was desperate to protect her, to provide for her. The possibility of losing her had been more painful than anything he could remember in his long existence.

A moan escaped her lips and she pressed her thighs together.

"Am I hurting you?" He immediately broke off the energy stream, his voice low and intimate. "This should have eased your pain."

Expelling a ragged gasp, she clutched Lucifer's tunic to her chest. "The pain in my leg is gone."

He touched her hip, rubbing his thumb lightly across the barely visible scar. "Then why do you look so miserable?"

"I need to..." She moaned again. "Oh, Sire, I ache."

Shit! He must have infused the transfer with his own arousal. He rolled her gently to her back and slipped his hand between her thighs. Her blue folds glistened with moisture, slick and ready for his eager cock. "I'm sorry. This was unintentional."

She reached for him, pulling his face down to hers. "Kiss me."

Startled by her request, his treacherous heart leapt within his chest. He gently settled his mouth over hers and slipped two fingers into her pulsing core. *Oh fuck, she was hot and incredibly soft!* He wanted to bury his face between her thighs

and lick her until she screamed. He parted her lips instead and tenderly tasted her mouth.

I wasn't the one who claimed her like a ravening beast. Lucifer's criticism echoed through his befuddled mind.

He would never ravish her again. She would know only gentleness at his hands and find pleasure within his embrace. He would...

She curved her fingers around the back of his neck and opened her thighs, giving him room to move. Desire pounded through him. His cock had never been this hard before. He needed to be inside her—now! Brushing his thumb across her clit, he felt her start violently.

"Relax. Let it happen." He meant the words as much for himself as for her. He was no good at this. He knew how to conquer, to overwhelm, to claim. Seduction was Lucifer's...

Lucifer watched them. Satan could feel his heated gaze. Verrine responded openly. Was she so aroused that nothing else mattered, or was Lucifer's presence exciting her? The possibility made him wild.

Satan slid his fingers deeper. Her core squeezed him rhythmically. She lifted her hips, meeting each firm thrust, abandoned completely to the fervor of his kiss.

His tongue curled around hers and she sucked him into her mouth. Satan let out a throaty moan. She tasted so good! He pushed in until his hand rested flush against her body, then carefully stroked her clit. Her orgasm burst and he captured her cries with his open mouth.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Five

Several hours passed in strained silence. Lucifer was unable to Shadow shift with the storm raging outside the cavern. The energy pattern of the entire planet seemed to be affected by the storm. Satan conjured wine and Lucifer managed to shift a basket of food into the cave.

Verrine sat on the stone ledge, her legs drawn up under her borrowed dress and silently watched the brothers scowl at each other. Satan was strength personified, arrogant, intelligent and harshly serious. Lucifer was mischief and mystery, sensual seduction and charm.

They were the perfect contrast, the most fascinating combination. Waking up pressed between their bodies had planted a wicked seed within her mind. Watching them, imagining the possibilities, cultivated the plant. Had such an arrangement ever been proposed? Especially by a female?

She smiled. Hadn't her mother set the standard for outrageous females? She was about to prove that she was Lilith's daughter through and through.

"Have you ever shared a female?"

"What?" The word burst from them both in unison.

Verrine laughed. "It was just a question."

Satan pushed to his feet and crossed the cavern. "You are my mate. I will share you with no one."

Her heart thudded within her breast. *Are you bold enough to love them both? Are you ...* Her thoughts trailed away. Love was a human emotion. Demons did not love.

Refocusing on her goal, she tossed back her hair and said, "It was just that attitude that ruined what happened between us before. I belong to no one." She paused, caressing his face with her gaze. "However, I am willing to share myself with you."

"And only me."

She bit back a laugh. This was a dangerous line she toed, but nothing had ever made more sense, seemed so right. She just had to convince the two most powerful beings in the Realm of Darkness that she was the only female for them. "Facing death can bring life into focus like nothing else. You excite me, Sire. I respect you and honor you, but your brother makes me laugh. He is playful and amusing, and I need those things in my life as well."

"If you must choose one or the other, which would it be?" Satan asked stiffly.

"I would choose to continue my search for the perfect mate." She looked from Lucifer to Satan and back again. "I have found the perfect mate in *both* of you. But one without the other is incomplete. I would choose neither."

Lucifer laughed. "I'm not greedy. I'm willing to be the consort of the Prime Leader's mate."

"You'll fuck her whether I agree to this or not?" Satan shouted.

"No!" Verrine stood. "That's not the deal. Either we mutually agree or I plan a different course."

"A course that compromises the pact?"

She stood her ground, wanting this with every fiber of her being, determined to have it. "I honored the pact. I came to

you willingly and submitted without reservation. Can you deny it?"

"Set him aside. Then I'm free to woo you," Lucifer suggested cheerfully.

"I know." She paused for a long moment, studying each brother in turn. Her gaze finally settled on Satan. She lowered her emotional defenses, allowing him to see the strength of her desire. "I can't choose one or the other, because I want you both."

"He is never to touch you unless I am there," Satan said gruffly.

Verrine's heart galloped madly. Her knees quaked. *Had he just agreed?*

"Does the same apply to you? Will you only touch her when I am there?"

"No. She is my mate."

Lucifer didn't argue. He looked at Verrine, his blue eyes glowing. "As your consort, am I free to have other partners?"

She grinned. "You won't have time. I intend to keep you very busy."

"Am I free to accept a mate of my own, should a female I desire offer herself to me?"

She had to think about that. Was it fair to prohibit the possibility for all eternity? "What has kept you from taking a mate before now?"

He shrugged. "Apathy. No female has ever captivated me. Before now."

"Then I'll just have to see that you remain captivated."

"I will not create this bond on a hard stone floor." Satan looked at Lucifer. "Can you transform the cave?"

"I don't know. This storm is playing havoc with my abilities. I'll try."

He walked to the center of the room, his features relaxed, but the blue of his gaze intensified, reflecting off the cavern walls. The ledge vibrated and expanded, sliding outward until it met his shins. She now sat in the middle of a large stone platform. Stepping up beside his brother, Satan conjured blankets beneath her and surrounded her with mounds of cushions.

A spicy, exotic scent drifted on the air. Verrine inhaled deeply and sighed. Incense. She tested the softness of the thick blankets and arranged the cushions against the wall. Pleased by their thoughtfulness, she pushed to her knees and tugged her dress off over her head. With a smile she watched them react to her nudity, awareness pulsing between them. "No clothing is allowed in my bed."

Lucifer laughed and shucked his breeches. Satan shrugged out of his robe. As they stood side by side, she was able to study their subtle differences. Satan was a bit taller, while Lucifer was more muscular. She grinned. The distinction applied to every body part. Satan's cock was longer, Lucifer's thicker.

Her pulse sped and excitement coiled low in her belly. These two magnificent males would soon join her and—join *with* her. Feminine power intoxicated her, made her giddy and anxious, ready for the bonding of bodies and spirits. "You never answered my question."

"Which question is that?" Satan asked.

"Have you ever shared a woman before?"

"Yes." Satan smiled, his dark eyes gleaming. "Your intuition served you well. It's something we both enjoy."

"Good." She licked her lips, a wave of uncertainty washing over her. "I've never wanted anything more, but I don't really know how it's done."

They moved as one, circling the bed and joining her upon it, one on either side. Satan slipped his arm around her shoulders, Lucifer supported the small of her back. Cupping her chin, Satan drew her face toward him, covering her mouth with his. They each cupped a breast and Verrine arched into the warm pressure of their palms, their stroking thumbs.

Satan kissed her, sweeping his tongue over and against her, filling her with his scent, his taste, his heat. Then he released her and Lucifer turned her head, framing her face with his hands. His kiss was softer, sweeter, filled with patience and tenderness.

Verrine moaned. Just kissing them built her need to a throbbing demand. How was she going to survive the culmination? She wanted to devour them and be devoured by them, yet she wanted it to never end.

Panting softly, she lay back against the cushions. They stroked her breasts, warm hands, playful fingers and clinging lips combined in a dizzying seduction. One licked and nibbled while the other suckled, then at some silent signal they switched. Tingling sensations curled from her breasts to her core. Her clit throbbed jealously.

"I will taste her, while she sucks you."

Lucifer nodded. Anticipation sizzled along her nerve endings as Verrine watched them reposition. Satan pulled her down along the bed, away from the cushions. Bending her knees and spreading her legs, Satan lay on his belly, rubbing his smooth scalp against her inner thigh. The gesture was oddly endearing and intimate.

On his knees beside her head, Lucifer traced her mouth with his fingertip, his eyes glowing like sapphires. She nipped his finger and he chuckled.

"Maybe I better not, if you're in the mood to bite."

Her gaze moved to his thick cock, bobbing not far from her mouth. "I won't bite *that*," she promised with an inviting smile.

"If you want it, take it. I'm not stopping you."

Satan pressed his palm over her mons, watching their sensual play with obvious interest. Verrine tingled from head to toe and a heated flush crept from her breasts to her hairline. *They* were waiting for *her*!

She wrapped her fingers around Lucifer's shaft, amazed to see that she couldn't circle his thickness. The head of his cock was bright blue, matching the intensity of his gaze. The harder he grew the brighter it glowed until she chuckled. "Can you use it to find your way through the darkness?"

She licked the very tip and her playful question was forgotten. Compressing her lips into a tight ring, she sucked him through the barrier and reveled in his rumbling groan. He arched over her, supporting himself on his forearms as he rocked his cock into her mouth.

Warm lips brushed her mound, nuzzling her gently. She couldn't see him with Lucifer arched over her face, but Satan teased her with feather-light kisses. He wasn't using his tongue, just rubbing her sensitive flesh with his firm lips. His mouth opened wide covering her entire mound. She squirmed. His hot, moist breath caressed her. And still he hadn't touched her with his tongue.

That's what she wanted and he knew it. She wanted the tender stroke, the rhythmic flick of his skillful tongue.

Lucifer kept up the steady slide of his cock in and out of her mouth, but Satan's teasing made her restless, frustrated. Unable to speak, she lifted her hips in silent invitation. His deep chuckle vibrated through her. His tongue finally sank between her swollen folds and circled her clit.

Verrine moaned. Satan stroked her, traced her, explored her silken flesh. She let her legs sprawl, open and eager for his torrid kiss. His hands slipped beneath her, squeezing her ass, lifting her more firmly against his mouth. Her core pulsed hungrily, waiting for the thrust of his tongue, but again he withheld what she wanted most.

Carefully closing his lips around her clit, Satan sucked the sensitive nub, dragging a keening cry from Verrine. She tossed within his grasp, desperate for that tiny flick, that little nip that would release her pleasure. He ruthlessly kept her poised on the brink until her entire body trembled. Then he shoved his long tongue deep into her cunt. She came hard and fast, her inner muscles rippling around him.

Lucifer pulled out of her mouth and caressed her breasts while Satan feasted on her release. He licked and sucked

every last drop of her creamy essence. His obvious enjoyment triggered a new cycle of arousal. He adored her with his mouth and she wanted to give him everything.

Verrine shifted her fingers through Lucifer's hair as he caressed her breasts. He was so gentle, so dear. Her heart swelled with affection.

Satan moved up beside her. "Now I get the pleasure of that glorious mouth while Lucifer prepares you for more."

"I'm ready for more now."

Lucifer scooped her up in his arms and she laughed, while Satan stretched out on his back. "No you're not," Lucifer said. "But you will be." Satan spread his legs and Lucifer set her down on her knees between them. "Ass in the air, little one." He guided her into position, placing her hands on either side of Satan's hips and centering her face between his brother's thighs. Lucifer lifted her hips and spread her legs wide. "Don't mind me, just play with his cock."

His casual suggestion had the opposite effect. She stroked Satan's cock with her hand, but her attention focused on Lucifer. He massaged the back of her thighs, her hips and her ass, his hands strong and sure.

"Suck me, Verrine. I want to feel your lips around my cock."

Leaning forward she took Satan into her mouth, inadvertently providing Lucifer with just the view he desired most. "You have such a fabulous ass." He rubbed both cheeks at once, then pulled them apart and brushed his thumb over her anus. "Did you claim this as well, brother dear."

"No. You will be the first."

Verrine's eyes widened as she pictured Lucifer's thick cock. Releasing Satan from the warm suction of her mouth, she raised her head. "You can't mean to take me there. You're huge."

"I'm the leader of Shadow Clan. I can reshape my body at will. I would never hurt you." He laughed. "Unless you want me to."

Satan took her face between his hands and urged her back down over his cock. "Don't let him distract you. That feels wonderful."

She sucked and swirled her tongue around Satan, while Lucifer prepared her body for their final joining. When she had suggested they share her, she hadn't actually thought they'd take her together. Two cocks inside her at the same time, two hard bodies straining against her as one? Excitement thrummed and she nearly came just imagining what they had in mind. Could Lucifer really claim her ass without causing her pain?

Lucifer pushed two fingers into her pussy and Satan growled a warning.

"I'm just getting my fingers wet," he protested, but he slid in and out several times before moving on. Spreading her cheeks wide he rimmed her anus with his tongue. Prickly sparks of pleasure erupted from the simple caress and she shivered. She'd never dreamed she was so sensitive back there. He sneaked down and circled her clit with his fingertips, while his tongue played over and against her puckered little hole.

Verrine slid her mouth up and down Satan's long cock. Taking him well into her throat, she still couldn't accommodate all of him. She worked his shaft with her hand and focused her mouth over the sensitive head.

The blunt tip of Lucifer's finger pressed against her anus. She concentrated on Satan, trying not to tense. Pressure, more pressure. Then he slipped past the tight collar of muscle and into her ass. She made herself relax. It was a very different sensation than having a cock in her pussy. As he pulled back the sensations escalated, then eased as he thrust back.

"Ready to give this a go?" he whispered above her ear. His broad chest molded her back, and his finger remained deep in her ass.

She released Satan's cock and took a slow deep breath. "I am."

Expecting him to pull out, she gasped when he used his hand to lift her entire body. This drove his finger deeper and made it glaringly apparent how strong he really was. He lowered her over Satan's hips, his finger still impaling her.

"Take your time." Satan cupped her breasts, gently stroking her soft flesh. "We've got eternity to get this right."

His assurance thrilled her. Coming from Satan it was twice as sweet.

Lucifer covered her mound with his other hand, his middle finger directly over her clit. "Lower yourself onto him. I'll help you."

He held her open while she positioned Satan at her entrance, then gently rubbed her clit as she made the long,

long descent. Inch by incredible inch, she filled herself with Satan's shaft. Satan squeezed her breasts and rolled her nipples, his eyes closed in obvious pleasure.

"Now lie across his chest. It's my turn."

She looked back at Lucifer unable to help her uncertainty. He smiled that slow sexy smile that melted her insides. "I'm not going to hurt you."

Satan guided her down, his hands sliding up and down her back. "Give me your mouth. Let me taste you."

She splayed her fingers against his smooth scalp and kissed him deeply. He tasted different, sultry and evocative. This was what he tasted when he licked her pussy! She was tasting herself on his tongue.

A new stimulus eclipsed the startling realization. Lucifer effortlessly eased his cock into her ass. She could barely feel the steady penetration. Had his finger stretched her so thoroughly...

"Tell me when to stop."

His cock gradually solidified, growing thicker and longer within her anal passage. *Oh, she could feel him now!* Tight. Tighter. "Stop. Please stop," she gasped.

"Is that too much? I can back off."

"Just give me a minute. This is all new to me."

Satan found her mouth again, kissing her tenderly while his hands explored her hips and her thighs. Lucifer teased the outer swell of her breasts, patiently waiting for her body to adjust to the incredible fullness.

They cared enough to wait, taking only what she was willing to give. Even crammed full of their cocks, she was in control.

A slow, warm, melting sensation passed along both her passages. Cream. Her body had released the slick lubricant welcoming her mates home. She moaned, amazed at her carnal nature, her capacity for passion. "Did you feel that?"

"Fuck, yes!" Satan growled. "Lift her, Lucifer. Show her how to move."

He lightly cupped her breasts, guiding her upward. She pushed against Satan's shoulders and followed Lucifer's lead. Centering herself directly over Satan's mighty cock, she squeezed her inner muscles and laughed as both males groaned.

Exhilarated by her newfound power, she arched her back, rubbing against Lucifer. "What's next?"

"Move on him and I'll match your rhythm," he told her, his hands on her hips, steadying her.

She rose just a bit, then slid back down. Satan chuckled, "You'll have to do better than that."

She tried again, using her knees to lever herself up along his incredibly long shaft. Lucifer helped her, pulling her up, but letting her push back down. Quickly finding the rhythm, she didn't realize Lucifer was moving with her until he changed direction. She cried out, surprised by the contrasting penetration as Lucifer's cock came into play.

Pressure became pleasure, fullness turned to bliss. She had never dreamed anything could feel so good. Lucifer clasped her hips, driving up into her ass as she impaled

herself on Satan. Each stroke sent fiery darts spiraling through her abdomen.

Satan reared up and sucked her nipple as she arched deeply, throwing her head back. Higher, they drove her higher. Her head spun and her blood sizzled through her veins.

Complete.

She would never feel complete without this fullness, this—unity!

She shattered, screaming in uninhibited pleasure as her orgasm forced rational thought from her mind. Satan bucked wildly. Lucifer matched him thrust for thrust. They came together with a mighty roar, their seed erupting deep within her trembling body.

Verrine collapsed across Satan's chest. Lucifer followed her down, molding his chest along the entire length of her back. Sandwiched between them, still filled by them, she fell instantly asleep.

Lucifer laughed softly, not wanting to wake her. "Is this a good thing?"

"She's content." Satan stroked her tousled hair. "It's a very good thing."

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Chapter Six

For forty nights and forty days, Verrine and her males were trapped in the Shadow cave. They frolicked naked and experimented with every conceivable sexual position. The bond between them strengthened each time they came together. They would sometimes love her leisurely, awakening her senses by degrees. Other times they overwhelmed her with their intensity.

Love. That bothersome human concept. None of them had spoken the word, but Verrine understood. They each selflessly worked toward the others' happiness. Was that not in essence love?

She was almost disappointed when the storm calmed and the earth resumed its normal rhythm.

Lucifer returned the cavern to its original shape and Satan disintegrated everything he had conjured during their stay. Verrine dressed in moody silence. She enjoyed having these two entirely to herself. They each had vast responsibilities and pressures awaiting them in the Realm of Darkness.

"What are you going to tell Lilith?" Satan asked as they prepared to leave.

"That we are officially mated and I couldn't be happier."

"And that's all?" Lucifer objected.

"I'm not sure she'd understand."

"She wants your happiness. If *I* can accept this, she better learn to adjust."

Verrine smiled at Satan's words. He had come a long way from '*mine!*'

"I want to be inside you when we shift," Lucifer said passionately. "I'll make sure we end up in Satan's bedchamber, but I want to enter the Realm buried deep inside your body."

Satan tossed his head and growled, obviously excited by the idea. "Doesn't she have to face you for you to Shadow shift?"

"We'll switch when we get to your chamber and I won't come until after we switch."

In all of their various positions, Lucifer had always penetrated her ass. When she conceived the first time they needed to be certain it was the Prime Leader's heir. Her pussy ached anticipating erotic play. She had only to think about their cocks working in tandem to grow wet and ready. She couldn't get enough of them!

Satan grabbed her none too gently and pressed his chest against her back. He lifted her, creating a chair out of his arms. Lucifer knelt before her, pushing her dress to her waist. She trembled. They had done many things in the past forty days but this was different, more final, more definitive. Satan, her mate, held her open, offering her pussy to his brother. Satan allowed this—no, encouraged it—because it thrilled her, made her whole.

Lucifer licked and tantalized her delicate folds before he concentrated on her responsive clit. She tangled her fingers in his hair, urging him on. He was so tender, his affection evident in every stroke, every lick. He pushed into her cunt,

fucking her gently with his tongue. Hanging on the brink of orgasm, she cried out sharply when he pulled away.

"It's always better when we make you wait at least once," he reminded her with a lazy grin. Freeing his cock from his breeches, he moved between her thighs. Satan held her perfectly still while Lucifer pushed into her, slowly filling her with his thick shaft. "Wrap your legs around my waist and hold on tight."

She instantly obeyed, bringing him fully into her welcoming heat. Satan knelt now and parted her ass cheeks, preparing her for his entry. She moaned and clung to Lucifer. Satan couldn't control the size of his cock. Lucifer always entered her in semi-Shadow state and then increased the pressure to her liking.

"Relax. We've got you," Lucifer soothed.

As Satan had done for him, Lucifer held her open, offering her anus for his brother's pleasure. Satan felt huge as he pushed against her. She clung to Lucifer, burying her face against his throat. Pressure, insistent pressure. A tingle of fear, then her body surrendered. She cried out, and his shaft filled her ass.

"Oh fuck, she's tight. Why have you been holding back?"

"I didn't want to hurt her."

Suspended between their powerful bodies, cross-impaled by their cocks, Verrine trembled, her hands fisted in Lucifer's long hair. This was more intense than anything they'd done before. Raw, elemental, unhampered by Shadow magic.

"Am I hurting you?" Satan asked in a harsh, hoarse whisper. "I'll pull out."

"No! Don't leave me. This is just ... overwhelming."

"Pull back so I can touch her."

Lucifer eased away, making room for Satan's hand between their bodies. He stroked her breasts and belly, before tenderly teasing her clit. Lucifer raised her head from his shoulder and kissed her with the same slow patience in Satan's caress.

They pressed in, filling her, stretching her, surrounding her with their power and warmth. Satan's hands moved to her breasts and Lucifer deepened his kiss.

Hot air curled around them. A deafening roar filled her ears. Lights danced before her eyes and the walls of the cavern undulated in and out of focus. Satan sank into her, not just his cock, his whole body merged with hers. Lucifer melded with them until they were literally one entity.

They soared through space and time, twirling and dipping on the currents of energy. The Shadow shift lasted only a moment, but Verrine moaned when their beings separated, stunned and bereaved by the loss, the ultimate unity.

Satan held her tightly against his chest as Lucifer moved within her pussy. Sensations returned by degrees. She smelled their male musk and the incense still clinging to their skin. Muscles rippled against her back, while Lucifer strained between her thighs.

Her core clenched in deep spasms of pleasure, squeezing him, caressing him. He pulled out with a groan and spilled his seed against her belly. "Sorry. I couldn't wait." He rubbed the pearly substance into her skin while he tenderly kissed her mouth.

Satan held her tightly against his chest. Lucifer seemed reluctant to leave. "I should let your parents know we're back."

She nodded and kissed him goodbye, her gaze caressing his face while he lingered between her legs.

"Give us a few minutes," Satan suggested, then Lucifer Shadow shifted from sight.

Satan carried Verrine toward the bed and carefully separated their bodies. Placing her in the middle on her back, he paused to look at her. "You are the most extraordinary female I've ever encountered."

She smiled, pleased by his praise. "Even more extraordinary than my mother?"

"Were it not for Lilith, I would not have you."

"And you do have me," she admitted with a smile. "I've said I belong to no one, but that's not exactly true. We belong to each other. I've never felt that more intensely than I did today."

He crawled onto the bed and settled between her thighs. Kissing her deeply, he slowly filled her slick pussy with his throbbing cock. "If ever you doubt your affection I'll order Lucifer to strand us in a Shadow cave."

Tilting her hips, she watched him through lowered lids. "I may find myself continually filled with doubt if it leads us back to the Shadow cave."

"You'll find yourself filled with more than that." He drove full-length into her, muffling her cry with a demanding kiss.

She arched into each thrust, pulling her legs up high against his sides. Reveling in his aggression, she surrendered

to his strength, willing to yield control—for the moment—to the power of her mate.

* * * *

"Are you sure this is what you want? Satan can be violently jealous. I've seen his temper more than once."

Verrine smiled at her mother. "It's because of his willingness to share me that I'm confident in his devotion. Does that make sense?"

"He wants your happiness more than his own. I understand. They don't like to hear the word, but it sounds like Satan loves you."

"They are so different and yet when we come together the universe stands still. I'll do everything in my power to make him happy because he's willing to do this for me. I'll do my best to make them both happy."

Lilith shook her head, but amusement brightened her gaze. "I knew trouble was brewing, but I never expected this."

"I didn't set out with this arrangement in mind, but some things are just meant to happen." She glanced away, suddenly feeling awkward with the topic. "Have you told Father yet?"

"I'm not sure how he'll respond. Thinking of you with Satan about drove him insane. This may take a while for your father to accept."

Verrine laughed, tucking a long lock of blue-streaked hair behind her ear. "We've got all the time in the world, and we

may well have the world to ourselves. Has Father been to the surface to check it out?"

"Yes, he went yesterday and said the water is starting to recede, but he saw no sign of the humans."

"I can't believe God did it. The world had come so far to start all over again."

"Sometimes we need to wash the palette clean."

Jetrel Shadow shifted into the room without warning, causing both females to gasp. "You have got to see this!"

Intrigued by his obvious excitement Verrine stood and took his hand. "I'll come back for you in a second," he told Lilith and shifted with Verrine to the mountaintop.

Without a word he returned for his mate, leaving Verrine alone, and in awe. Water spread out as far as the eye could see. Only scattered crests of mountaintops dotted the vast expanse of blue. The sky arched overhead, blinding in its intensity. She turned to her left and gasped, afraid to blink or the vision would disappear.

She caught the flash of her parents' arrival out of the corner of her eye, but Verrine couldn't drag her gaze from the panorama spread before her. A mammoth arch stretched from horizon to horizon. Vivid ribbons of color shimmered against the dazzling blue of the cloudless sky.

"What is it?"

She understood the hushed reverence in her mother's tone. Her whole being hummed with awareness and promise.

Hope.

The atmosphere danced with hope.

A dove flew past, a leafy branch clutched in its beak. She followed the bird's progress and laughed. "Look." She pointed into the distance. "The humans made it. Noah's vessel survived the storm."

"Unbelievable. I really thought the old man was crazy," Lilith said.

"You weren't the only one," Jetrel admitted.

Verrine turned to face her parents. "What does all this mean? Is our war with mankind over?"

Jetrel wrapped his arm around Lilith's shoulder and smiled at Verrine. "They're a little outnumbered at the moment. Your mother will have to find something else to entertain herself."

Lilith smiled up at him, her gaze filled with love and laughter. "I already have. But our daughter has some interesting news. Don't you, Verrine?"

"Mother!"

"What news?"

She couldn't just tell him like this. She had intended to break it to him gently, maybe drop hints until he figured it out on his own. "I have solidified my relationship with Satan."

"That's good." He looked at Lilith. "Isn't it?"

Lilith arched one dark eyebrow. "Tell him the rest."

It was really unfair for her mother to corner her like this. Even if Verrine were being forced to toss the torch, she didn't have to wait around and watch the fire. She formed the image of Satan's bedchamber within her mind, carefully preparing her escape. "Satan is my mate, but Lucifer has agreed to be my consort." After watching her father's jaw drop, she quickly added, "I've decided to keep them both."

Flashing a triumphant smile, Verrine Shadow shifted out of sight.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

Aubrey Ross

Multi-award winning author Aubrey Ross writes under several pen names, according to genre. Though her stories can take unconventional turns, they're filled with passion, intrigue, and emotional realism. Whether her stories are set in Hell, Valhalla, or on an alien planet, Aubrey's sure to entertain.

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