

# **TAKING THE FALL**

by

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## **Dedication**

To Maverick  
for understanding the silliness of my life  
and yet still hanging out with me.

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## Prologue

At the Kline-Pakowski wedding, two men stood watching one woman. Their gazes were fixed on the curvaceous, slightly tipsy brunette who was dancing and laughing with the other guests.

"You can't have her," the dark man said as he came to stand beside the other.

"What is it you want, angel?" The tall man with the ash-blond pony tail looked at him, as if not surprised to see him.

"She's not for you, James." The angel's tone was most adamant. "You're a demon. She's too pure for you."

"It's not for you to tell me anything, Saint Gilbert of the anally righteous. We both know I'm beyond your limited powers. If I want her I'll have her."

Gilbert's hands curled into fists as if he was trying to control himself. "You can't always take what you want."

"And yet you're here for the same reason as me." James assessed him with cynical amusement. "You plan to manipulate her as well. You're no better than me, angel."

"I don't have to justify myself you, hellhound."

James threw back his head and laughed at his words. "Is that the best you can do? I've been called much worse." His



gaze locked once more on the woman. "She's fascinating, isn't she?"

"Yes, most beautiful." Gilbert swallowed hard as if trying to focus on keeping control.

James reached out and snagged a glass of white wine from a waiter passing by. "And she doesn't have a clue of her destiny."

"I cannot allow you to use that against her."

"Must you angels always assume those from Hell are after something?"

"Historical evidence proves that your brethren only want what's best for them."

"As do you holier-than-thou types." James downed his wine in two long swallows. "You can't tell me that who she is doesn't interest you, Saint Gilbert." He reached over and grabbed two more glasses, offering one to the angel at his side.

Gilbert declined his offer. "She's why I'm here."

"You knew I was coming for her."

"Yes."

That was a fact and they both knew it. They were enemies and each would do whatever they had to in order to get their own way.

"So do we allow her to save him or not?" James downed his second drink. "You and I both know that's the reason we're here."

"I'm here to stop her." Gilbert's mouth was set in grim determination. "He must die sometime in the next week."

James raised his eyebrow mockingly. “Fancy an angel advocating death...tut, tut.”

“I cannot allow Hell to prop him up as some despotic puppet to be manipulated for Satan’s amusement.” The angel’s words were strained and angry.

“Well, Satan *is* one for mischief.”

Gilbert sighed as if he knew the conversation was a pointless one. “I know you’ll try to make her save him.”

“Yes, what a role reversal for us—me saving and you wanting to destroy.”

“I do as I must for the greater good.”

James chuckled at his words as if amused. “Sounds like an excellent slogan for a t-shirt.” He contemplated the woman carefully. “And I do what I do for an increase in power base. Only the powerful survive Hell in any comfort. However I wasn’t aware how delicious this particular mortal was. I do *so* like corrupting the sweet ones.”

“Seduction to sway her to your way of thinking? How tacky and Neanderthal of you, demon.”

The demon in question shrugged his shoulders as if the angel’s opinion meant very little to him. “What’s your plan? To walk through a field of wildflowers quoting poetry until you bore her to death and she has no will to live and she agrees to what you want? At least I can offer her a bloody good series of orgasms.”

“The fact that you so underrate angels heartens me, as your arrogance will be your undoing.”

“Probably,” James responded laconically. “She doesn’t look like she has the ability to change history, but then the truly interesting never do.”

“Jontie Rhodes cannot be allowed to save Edward Carter.” Gilbert’s tone was adamant about that.

“Edward Carter is an evil bastard, angel. We both know that. Hell decrees he fulfills his contract to us and lives.”

“You may have *his* soul in exchange for favors but you don’t have hers.” The angel’s hands flexed into fists as if anticipating the fight ahead.

James sighed a world-weary sigh. “Everyone has something they need in their lives. She’ll be no different. Greed rules all mortals.” He grinned at the other man. “It keeps Hell in business.”

Gilbert shook his head in despair. “Do you care for no one?”

“You know the answer, angel. I don’t have the ability to care.” James’ voice was harsh and clipped, colored by the sting of past misdeeds and encounters.

“Don’t hurt her.”

“I have definite plans for the lady.”

“As do I.”

The demon bowed to the angel. “Then may the best immortal win.”

## Chapter 1

“Uh oh, two hot men at three o’clock and they’re both looking straight at you.”

Jontie Rhodes turned surreptitiously to look at the men her best friend Mackintosh “Tosh” McRae pointed out. *Whoa*. They *were* hot and looking at her. Jontie was amazed. It had to be a trick of the light. Normally men like that didn’t stare at her unless she was doing something dumb or embarrassing. She ran her hand lightly down the back of her skirt. Nope, no fabric tucked into her underwear.

“I swear they are salivating just looking at you.”

A sudden thought occurred to Jontie. “Is there anyone behind me they could be looking at instead?” *That’ll be right*.

“As your best friend, I’m ready to scratch the eyes out of any competition.” Tosh surveyed them with a lazy smile. “You know either one would fit in with your plans.”

“That’s very true.” This pair seemed to be tailor-made for what she had in mind. *How exactly do I go about it? Plans made over a couple of bottles of wine last night for hot sex with a wild stranger were one thing—but action was another*.

“Dark or light?”

“What about both?” Jontie wondered if she sounded more confident than she felt. The thought of just one of those men made her dizzy.

Tosh raised her eyebrow in amusement. “Hmm, ménage is a bit adventurous for you, isn’t it?”

“I’m tired of being boring.” Though there was a lot to be said about celibacy. *What was that again? Oh yes, control of the television remote.*

“Yeah—but *two* men?”

The thought of having two men making love to Jontie made her hot all over. But how did it work exactly? *Sure, I know the basics but am I aerobically adept enough for two at once?* The answer was “No.” Jontie had trouble juggling two bags of groceries without dropping one. “I’ll just settle for one.” *That’s if they’re actually looking at me.*

“Are you sure this is what you want to do?” Tosh didn’t sound at all certain of her friend’s grand plan.

“I have not had sex in eight months. I need someone.” Jontie’s vibrator couldn’t compete with the heat of a hard male body. Besides it was costing her a fortune in batteries. *They should consider making them solar-powered.* She smiled at the thought. *I could make a fortune and women would be forever grateful to me.*

“What are you thinking?” Tosh looked at her, intrigued.

“Solar-powered dildos.”

Tosh clapped her hands at the thought. “Ooh, I like that idea.” She nudged her friend’s shoulder with her own. “You know, technically you’ve not had sex for twelve months. You

can't count the strange infatuation you have with that bastard Aaron as sex."

"Yep—bastard." Jontie had to agree. Just the mention of Aaron's name made her mad. To her and Tosh he was "that bastard" after they found out he was married with two kids. Jontie would never have contemplated taking up with him if she'd known. Some lines weren't crossed as far as she was concerned, and getting involved with a married man was one of them.

"Actually a double rat bastard." Tosh nodded her head in agreement.

"He had the smallest cock I've ever seen." Not that it mattered when she had some dumb idea he might have been "the one." Body size was irrelevant when a person loved someone. Now Jontie was just maliciously pleased and sorry for his wife.

"Yeah, he looked like he was petite. You can always tell." Tosh said it as if it was a well-known fact. "It's in their eyes. That bastard's were too close together."

Jontie contemplated the men, whose gazes were locked onto hers. "Those two have great potential." She wasn't after marriage. Jontie just wanted uncomplicated, superheated sex at least once—then she'd go back to her reliable vibrator and maybe getting a patent on the solar-powered dildo idea.

"And their eyes are nicely spaced," Tosh observed. "Can you really have sex with a stranger?"

"Aaron was a stranger until I realized what a lying toe rag he was."

“And he *is* a bastard.” Tosh added that as if it was important to be stated.

“A small-balled married bastard in fact.” *Hell, I can do this. Men have wild sex all the time. Why can't I? Time to gird loins.*

“So?”

“How do I even know they'd be interested?” *How embarrassing would it be to put the offer out there only to be politely, and possibly patronizingly, rejected?*

Tosh made an exasperated sound as if she couldn't believe her friend's words. “Oh, *please!* You have cleavage to burn on offer.”

That was true. The dress Jontie wore was a scarlet-red halter dress. It required no bra as the halter gave her precarious support. She'd been tugging at the fabric all evening to make sure it covered what it could. *How do professional sluts handle lack of fabric with such ease?* “Okay, so I have no underwear on at all.” *Thank God my mother's not here.* Jontie knew she would have been horrified at the thought of her daughter walking around at a wedding bare-assed.

“Men love the ‘no underwear’ thing. Besides you're gorgeous.” Tosh grabbed her arm in excitement. “Uh oh, the blond one approaches.” She clutched her heart dramatically. “He has a ponytail. And look at that bod! I reckon body builder or a chartered accountant.”

“Huh?” Jontie shook her head at this bizarre statement and moved her stare away from the supposed body builder/accountant to look at her friend. “What?”

“I went out with an accountant once. He liked to carry me on his shoulders with my legs around his neck and his mouth on my—”

Jontie held up her hand to cut her friend off. “Way too much info for me. Now go away.”

The man was almost upon them.

“Scared I’m competition?” Tosh smiled teasingly at the man.

Yes. Her friend was everything she wasn’t. Jontie loved her but she had to go. “No, I don’t need an audience when I try and pick this man up.”

“Nervous?”

“Maybe. I’ve never picked a man up before.” The thought of it made her heart pound. *What does one say? Hello, I’ve an idea for a solar-powered vibrator but until I have that ready to manufacture may I use your cock purely for my own pleasure?*

“Jontie-girl, just mention sex and he’ll be yours.”

“Scram.”

Jontie gave Tosh a push and sent her on her way just as the man stopped and stood before her. He was everything she’d never had in a man before. Tall, lean, and he was making her thighs sweat just by the look in his sexy blue eyes.

“Um...h-hi.” *Smooth, Jontie.*

“Hi yourself,” he responded with a grin.

“Are you a friend of the bride or groom?” The weather was her next topic of conversation if that failed. *I suck at this.*

“Neither. I’m a gatecrasher.” He looked pleased by something. “You?”



“Er—a friend of the bride.” *God he smells good.* Jontie wondered if his skin would taste as delicious. “She’s too good for him.”

“Generally most women are so much better than the groom.” He stated it as if it was a fact. “How long do you think the marriage will last?”

“Two and a half months.”

“Exactly?” He smiled widely at her prediction.

*I hope our kids have his smile.* Jontie mentally slapped herself. *Get a grip.*

“Yeah, they’ll get over the married person sex thing and the first bills from this virginal extravaganza will come in and it’ll all fall to pieces.” Three of her friends recently married and two of those unions were on the rocks already.

He nodded his head as he looked around the room. “There’s a lot of white.”

“The bride felt she was entitled.”

“Was she?”

“Oh hell, no. She’s about as virginal as I am a natural blonde.” Jontie liked the way he laughed. It was smooth and rich and it reminded her of the taste of warm, gooey chocolate on her tongue. It also had the ability to make her relax slightly in the presence of raw male beauty. “So did you gatecrash for the free food? The fake calypso band? The doves that crapped on the bridal party when they were released?”

“Oh yeah, that was fun to watch.” He grinned at the memory, his eyes never looking away from hers. “However, I came for you.” He picked up her hand and enfolded it in his own.

Despite the tinny sound of the calypso band, she knew that her sudden gulp was audible to them both. "Me?" He *wants me? Seriously? Please let it be so. I swear if I have this man once I'll willingly revert back to virginal status for the rest of my life.*

"I knew you'd be here." He caressed her hand softly.

"Huh?" His eyes were mesmerizing and the touch of his hand on hers was so hot. *What'll other parts of his body do to me?*

"I just knew I'd meet the woman of my dreams."

Jontie smiled at his corny words. "You know, that's a crap pickup line."

"Yeah," he agreed with a smile. "But could I pick you up?"

*Oh hell yes. "Is that what your plan is?" Please, please, please.*

"Most definitely. So would it work?"

"Possibly." *How long do I play hard to get when I'm not but I don't want come across as incredibly easy? Now, I should have learned that and not bloody algebra in school!*

"Okay, here's the thing." He moved in close to her, their bodies barely separated by light. "You are the most beautiful, desirable woman I have seen in a long time and it would be an honor for me to be with you."

*Sexy and smart.* "That's so sweet."

"And I want to fuck you until you scream as you come."

Jontie jumped forward at his words, the heat of his body scorching hers through her dress. "That's good too." She was amazed at how husky her voice sounded.

"So?" His groin rubbed lightly against her abdomen.

Jontie closed her eyes and contemplated both the hard cock at her belly and the situation before her. She could go home, stopping first for a gallon of chocolate ice cream to

overdose on to forget this man. The righteous and good would do this.

“Yes, I want you.” *Who am I kidding?* Jontie hadn’t been righteous or good in a long time and she still planned to buy the ice cream regardless of whatever activities she might get up to—and having sex would burn off the pre-ice cream calories.

The man smiled with pleasure. “Excellent.” He tugged on her hand and pulled her after him. “Follow me.”

“I don’t usually—”

“I care not, lovely one.” He stopped and his other hand caressed her face with great tenderness.

*Lovely one? Me?* Jontie felt her insides go all gooey at his gentle touch against her cheek.

“This is just you and me—no one else matters.”

As they made their way from the main reception room, Jontie saw Tosh give her the thumbs-up sign. This was crazy yet exciting and wicked and she hadn’t been either of those for a long time.

“Where are we going?” She was allowing this man total control and Jontie’d never done that before. *So what makes him so different? Or am I focused on an orgasm and it wouldn’t matter the man?*

“Somewhere private where we can enjoy the moment.”

But there seemed to be nowhere that wasn’t taken up by wedding guests already indulging in what *they* planned to do. The bathroom was taken, the closet, the stairwell—and after seeing what was going in the kitchen, there was no way she’d be eating the main course.

“What is it with these people?”

The man lifted her hand and turned it over to kiss the palm. “Love is in the air.” He pushed on the glass door leading out to the reception center’s garden.

“It’s lust.” Just saying the word and thinking about what they planned to do made her wet in readiness.

“Lust is good.” He pushed her up against a barely concealed, life-sized fake Roman statue. He saw her turn and look up at it. “Mine is much bigger.”

*Great, I’ve been caught staring at a faux marble cock.* Jontie was both embarrassed and pleased to hear that he was so confident in his abilities.

“You men always say that.” *Should I be having sex with this man out in the open like this? It’s so wrong. So naughty...*

“I’m going to prove it, lovely one.” His mouth descended hungrily on hers as his hands took possession of her hips.

Jontie gasped as their lips met. If he’d not been holding her she would have collapsed under the sheer passion of his kiss. It was the sort of kiss that she dreamt of receiving but she never really imagined partaking in. Some kisses were mere preludes to sex. This kiss went beyond that. It was so deep, hot and sensuous that Jontie knew this man’s kisses had the potential to ruin her for any other male. *But what a way to go.* She felt his hands sliding up under her skirt and there was no way she wanted to stop this moment. This was the type of thing she planned to regale the ladies at the retirement village with when she was eighty to make them jealous. Her mouth left his and she looked into his beautiful eyes.

“What’s your name?” she panted breathlessly. It was madness asking his name when they’d never meet again but she had the need to know.

“James.” His hands moved over her sheer, pull-on stockings and made contact with her bare thighs. He smiled with delight. “No panties—excellent.”

“I’m Jontie.” She jumped forward in shock when his fingers slid into the cleft between her legs. “On my...” Her head fell back against the leg of the statue and her legs opened wider as those talented digits found her clit.

“I already knew your name,” James responded, his fingers not stopping for an instant.

“How?” Whatever thoughts she had of being exposed seemed no longer irrelevant, for it felt like there was no one else in the world but them at that moment.

“I’m a demon, lovely one.” James removed his hand and smiled as she whimpered in protest.

“You belong to a biker club?” His hands were now tugging at the fastening of her halter neck. Jontie’s hands went up to aid him. The need for him to touch her was overwhelming.

“Something like that,” he mused as the fabric of the top fell down and exposed her bare breasts. “You *are* stunning.”

Jontie knew she wasn’t but she was happy to hear him say it. She placed James’ hands on her suddenly aching breasts knowing that his touch would make her feel so much better.

“So how do you know my name?” *And do I really care?*

“Demons knew everything, lovely one.”

If anyone had heard the scream that tore from her lips when his mouth descended to her breast and sucked a nipple

inside, Jontie didn't care. The risk of being found half-naked with this gorgeous man sucking her outweighed any mortification. Jontie eagerly pressed forward as his hands fondled her ass, pulling her close to an erection she knew the statue behind them couldn't compete with.

"You have a condom?" She had a couple stashed in her clutch purse, which was sitting on the table at the reception. *Damn.*

James lifted his head momentarily. "Yes, I'll look after you." He placed his hands under her butt and lifted her up onto the base of the statue.

When his mouth dropped down to favor her other breast with the same attention, Jontie knew there was no way she could hold on much longer. She pushed his head from her breast.

"I need you, James."

\* \* \* \*

That was exactly what he wanted to hear. She *needed* him. His plan was working. Maybe a little too well. James had planned on seducing her but it hadn't occurred to him that this mortal woman could affect him so. While his body was on fire with the need to be inside Jontie, he also had the need to please her and that rarely happened. Oh, he could boast he always made a woman scream in ecstasy as she came but this was more than that. James wanted to watch her as she came, her body shuddering under every thrust of his shaft. He wanted to give and receive pleasure but he also had the sudden desire to make her his own—and that was madness. A

demon never took one woman when he could have hundreds.  
*Yet she's mine.*

James pulled at the fastening of his increasingly restrictive trousers and freed his cock. He watched as her eyes lit up in delight. Just her admiration of him alone made him harder then he'd been in a long time. His mouth found hers once more as he waved one hand and his penis was sheathed in rubber within a second.

"Do you need me, lovely one?" Jontie was in his arms, propped up against the statue, her legs open, wet and ready for him and she was the most beautiful woman he'd ever seen.

"Yes." The word was soft yet decisive as Jontie pulled him against her.

James could control himself no longer. He'd gone from being an arrogant demon who knew he could have any woman he wanted to a lover who only needed this one. As he plunged his cock into the tight, wet core of her, he growled in contentment. *She's mine.*

\* \* \* \*

"Oh, James," Jontie moaned as the push and pull of his shaft inside her made her pant breathlessly. *What was I thinking? A solar-powered vibrator couldn't compete with this.* Each hard thrust inside her intensified the already-curling spiral of pleasure that she knew was going to be the best orgasm of her life.

"Ready to come, lovely one?" James pulled out slightly at her nod and rammed back in hard, making Jontie shriek.

Later, wedding guests would remark that they thought they'd heard an exotic wild bird calling to its mate in the quiet

of the evening—and Jontie would smile and remember that bird and its mate.

She clutched James to her as uncontrollable shudders of pleasure ripped through her body. She was shaking from the intensity and as James came within her she held him close and wished for forever.

\* \* \* \*

“Okay?” James pushed the hair back from her face and marveled at the beauty that was there. For the first time in his life he felt alive, holding this trembling woman in his arms. He lifted her hand and kissed her palm once more. “You’re delicious, Miss Rhodes.”

“As are you.” Jontie kissed him with a strange shyness considering what they’d just done. “I’ll remember this for a long time.”

There was no way James planned to be just a pleasant memory for this woman.

“Oh, we’ll see each other again. One taste of you wasn’t enough.” He lifted her down from the base of the statue. “Do you want to see me again? Do you want me in your life?” The need to hear the answer was suddenly overwhelming to James, a demon, who was committed to nothing other than the pursuit of power. What seemed like a good idea to make sure this woman saved the target now seemed secondary to him.

“Seriously?” Jontie’s eyes were wide open in amazement.

“Yes.” That was the simple truth. James wanted her. He helped her refasten her dress.



“Yes,” she responded, as if to say anything else would seem foreign to her.

“I’ll come to you soon.”

James knew that despite wanting to stay he needed to step away and give himself a moment to think. Falling for this woman was a complication he’d not planned for. The powers that be, who wanted him to succeed in using her for their own means, wouldn’t be happy if he suddenly was more interested in her than what they considered normal. He could hear their words now. *“Mortal women? Take them by all means but do not fall for their charms. They will destroy you. If you can successfully manage to get Jontie Rhodes to save Edward Carter then you could move up the ladder in the power stakes in Hell.”* Being a middle order demon was frustrating. James didn’t plan on remaining there for another hundred years.

“How can you possibly come to me? You know nothing about me.”

“I’m a demon, remember?”

James vanished before Jontie could say another word.

## Chapter 2

“Holy crap! Where did he go?” Jontie whirled around in a haphazard circle, looking for the man who was there one minute and gone the next, only stopping when she felt dizzy. She leaned against the statue. “Did I just dream that?” She shook her head as if to reorganize her thoughts. “I had sex...it felt real.” She still could feel the heat of his body against hers and the path his shaft took inside. “I’m not that drunk that I would’ve dreamt it.” She looked up at the statue. “What do you think?” The statue only looked bored, staring off into the distance. “I’m sure he was here,” Jontie mumbled to herself as she replayed back what happened in her mind. It was fast, hot sex with a man called James who said he was a demon. *A demon?* “Nah, that’s not possible...demons don’t exist...but then he *did* disappear...” Jontie straightened up and pulled herself together. She knew standing alone outside in the dark talking to herself wasn’t going to answer the question. She headed back inside to the reception.

Tosh came to her instantly. “Wow, you look like you’ve been shagged within an inch of your life. Tell me all.” Her eyes were lit up with glee.

“I was—I mean I think I was.” Jontie put her fingers to her temple in thought. “I just don’t know.”

“What?” Tosh pulled on her arm questioningly.

“He disappeared.” *How the hell did he disappear? Was he just unusually quick? It was after all a fast fuck but still...*

“Who?”

“The guy—James.” Jontie could still smell his distinctive scent around her.

Tosh looked very pleased. “The cute blond? Way to go.”

“Yeah.” And he *was* cute. He was the type of man that she dreamt of wanting her but never really expect to come along. “You saw him, right, Tosh?” Jontie needed to know she wasn’t going mad.

“Oh yeah—once seen never forgotten.”

*Good, confirmation I’m not losing my marbles.* “He said he was a demon.”

Tosh clapped her hands in excitement. “I love biker guys. I bet he’d look good in leather. There’s something about a hot man in leather that—”

Jontie interrupted her. “No, I mean a *real* demon.” She looked at her friend’s face to get her reaction.

“Like out of *Charmed*?”

“Sort of...I don’t know.” Jontie had watched the television show but she’d never paid much attention to whole demon thing because it was just fantasy. Now she was beginning to wonder. “Tosh, he vanished into thin air.” Jontie told her what had happened.

“Sex outside?” Tosh was agog. “Up against a statue? That’s so desperate. I love it.”

“Yeah, it was pretty damn good.” She’d only had two other lovers in her thirty years on the planet and neither of

them had made her feel anything at all like James had. “Then he left me.”

“What did you want—a proposal of marriage after a quickie?” Tosh’s voice was full of cynical amusement.

“No, but...I don’t know.” The whole thing just felt so *unfinished* to Jontie. Realistically it was insane to want more, especially after he left as he had—and yet she had this need to see him again. “James *did* say he would come to me soon.” *But how’s that even possible? He doesn’t have my phone number or address and it isn’t like I’m going to stand by that statue and wait for him like some love-starved ninny. “I’m a demon, lovely one.”* Jontie shivered as she heard his words back in her mind. Could he really be a demon? Did they really exist? *And do I care what he is?*

“Hey, that sounds promising.”

“Tosh, he knows nothing about me.” It was just typical she’d meet a great man she’d never see again. “He doesn’t even have my phone number.”

“Well, he’s a wedding guest so we can track him down that way.”

“He told me he gatecrashed.”

“Ooh, a bad boy, huh? I really like the sound of this one.” Tosh looked at her thoughtfully. “He said he was a demon, right? They do mystical stuff. He’ll find you.”

“Demons don’t exist.”

“How do you know?”

Jontie didn’t and she couldn’t explain James’ vanishing act. “I don’t know.” *But I want to find out.*

\* \* \* \*

Gilbert never meant to touch Jontie. He'd seen her at the wedding reception and he knew she'd gone off with James. He was neither surprised nor disappointed. Humans needed sex. They craved the touch of a lover and the wild fulfillment of two bodies coming together. Gilbert thought no less of Jontie as he stood beside her bed and watched her tossing and turning as she slept. He'd only leaned over to stroke her arm and aid her in a peaceful sleep. He'd not expected her hand to grasp his or the feeling of warmth that shot through his body when it did. It had been such a long time since another had touched Gilbert. He'd denied his needs, as other issues had been more important. He was an angel. He was subject to the will of Heaven. But when Jontie pulled her towards him, he found himself falling onto the bed beside her.

When the sleeping woman turned her body into his, it was natural for Gilbert to reach out to hold her, determined only to give comfort and nothing else. But he'd not counted on her hands trailing down his chest and resting on his belly or that his cock would suddenly harden at the long-denied pleasure of a sweet-smelling woman so close.

"I cannot," Gilbert whispered into her tousled hair. "Heaven help me, I want to but I cannot allow it to happen."

"But I need you." Jontie pressed her breasts close against his side.

Gilbert groaned at the sensation of the unbound fullness barely concealed by the sheer cotton of her nightdress. Her eyes opened slowly and she looked at him.

"It is but a dream." He had to make her believe that, as well as himself. When he'd first seen her at the reception,

he'd been immediately attracted to her, but unlike James he had no intention of winning Jontie over to his side in order to deal with the future menace of Edward Carter. His plan had been to befriend her, not bed her.

"Please," she moaned as her hand slid down lower.

Gilbert choked slightly when she caressed his hardening shaft. He knew he had to stop this. He knew it was wrong to take the dreaming woman. When her lips sought his, he felt absolutely powerless to stop himself from responding to the sweetness of her mouth. When she gave a muffled sigh in contentment with his kisses, Gilbert knew that despite all the reasons he shouldn't he'd make love to this woman.

"Please touch me," she urged in a whimper as she reached for his hand and placed it on her breast.

Gilbert closed his eyes as he felt the soft fullness beneath his hand.

"Jontie—"

"Please—"

He rolled his body on top of hers until he lay between the cradle of her thighs. *I'm no better than the demon.*

\* \* \* \*

Jontie moaned as his hands caressed her breasts. This was exactly what she needed. When she'd returned home after the reception, still dazed by what had happened with James, the warmth of the shower hadn't been enough to make her fall into a peaceful sleep. Her restless dreams had been all about James and another man—a dark-haired man with deep green eyes that were tender yet passionate. There'd been something familiar about him but she hadn't been sure what until he

touched her and she knew. She was meant to be with him. She willingly gave in to the hands that pushed aside her nightgown and sought her breasts.

“Please suck me,” Jontie whimpered as she pulled his head to her nipples. She gasped in pleasure as his mouth suctioned down hard on one taut peak. Her body arched up offering everything to him. Jontie ran her hands down his back. “Why do you have clothes on? This is my dream so take them off.”

He chuckled low in delight against her breast. “As you command, my darling.” His clothes disappeared.

The sudden press of hot, hard male flesh against her skin made her jump. *This is an excellent dream.* Her hand continued on down the broad sweep of his back to rest of the tight muscles of his ass.

“What’s your name?” Jontie was enjoying the hardness of his cock against her inner thigh. She could only imagine how good it would felt inside her.

“Gilbert.”

“I need you inside me, Gil.” Having one man after the other was morally wrong but in a dream anything was possible and consensual sex was never immoral.

His hands moved to her face and held it carefully. “I want to, but—”

“What?” Jontie raised her legs and wrapped them around his waist, trying to entice him inside. She needed no further preliminaries. She was wet and aching with need.

“You’ll be angry with me when we next meet.” Gilbert moved his hands down her body and grasped her legs, lifting

them from his waist. He smiled as she whimpered in disappointment.

“I don’t care about that. I need you *now*.” Jontie’s whimper turned into a giggle when he lifted her legs up to his shoulders. She lay completely open and exposed to him. When his fingers touched her clit she flexed her butt muscles and pushed her pelvis forward for more. “Please fuck me, Gil.”

“Yes, my darling.”

When the head of his cock slid inside her vagina, Jontie gave in to the complete control he had on her body. This was her dream and as far as she was concerned this man could do whatever he wanted. And, as dreams went it was amazingly realistic. She could feel every hot inch of him pushing and filling her completely.

“Okay?” He leaned forward and kissed her lips.

“Oh *yes*.” The fullness was exactly what she craved and she had the oddest sensation of completion, like she’d found some missing part of herself. “It’s just a dream.” A hell of a dream, but still just that. Jontie didn’t believe in soul mates or people completing one another. To her it was just hype to sell ideas to the lonely and desperate.

“Yes, a perfect moment to remember.” Gilbert lay within her unmoving.

“Please, Gil—please move.” She had the heat, now she wanted the friction. She wanted to explode against the dream lover in her arms.

He began thrusting back and forth within her, careful at first as if scared to ruin the moment.



“Harder.” She wanted to feel every moment of this. Jontie was pleased when he started to ram inside her. It was a union but it also felt like an awakening and she wanted to remember this dream the next day. *This is somehow important to me.*

“I don’t want to hurt you.” Gilbert sounded strained as he tried to keep control.

“You never would.” Somehow Jontie just knew that.

“If only you knew the truth.”

“All I know is that I need to come and I demand you help me.” Her hands moved around to grasp his ass and pull him in closer.

“Yes, ma’am.”

Jontie squealed as Gilbert pulled out halfway and then pushed back in again hard. His long, pumping thrusts made her gasp for breath but there was no way she wanted him to stop. When the orgasm hit, her body stretched tight like a bowstring as a wild thrill of excitement radiated through her entire body.

“Perfect,” she murmured as she caught her breath and relaxed into the last of his thrusts as he came.

“Too perfect,” Gilbert growled, almost as if he was annoyed.

“I love you,” Jontie whispered as she fell into an exhausted sleep in his arms.

“Oh, Jontie, what have I done?”

\* \* \* \*

James appeared ten minutes later in Jontie’s bedroom. “What do we have here, angel?” He looked at the peacefully

sleeping woman and the angel who now stood looking down at her. "She's delicious."

James was no fool. He knew what had happened between them. Nor was he a prude. Passion wasn't something easily contained and he had no claims on this woman. *Yet.*

"Yes, she is but I shouldn't have done that."

James waved his hand dismissively. "That's irrelevant. She needed you, Saint Gilbert."

"What about you?" Gilbert looked at the demon warily.

"I don't need you." James chuckled in amusement at the bewildered look on the angel's face. Gilbert's job was to be good and righteous and he'd blown it all in one moment of passion. It was interesting to know demons weren't the only ones who lost themselves when it came to desire. "People have many needs and can have many lovers. Her need for you doesn't diminish what I shared with Jontie, or my plans for her."

"And what are they?" Gilbert turned away from the sleeping woman to concentrate on the demon.

"Edward Carter has always been on my agenda." James knew he had to focus on that. It was the key to his survival. If he didn't pull this off then there would be no increase in power and more than likely he'd be destroyed by those he sought to rise against and eventually command in the underworld. It had been the one thing that had been keeping him going.

"But what about Jontie?"

"She's a complication." James wanted to be with her and yet he wasn't sure if it was just lust or something else he felt. As soon as he'd vanished from her side he'd lectured himself

on hardening up, and that getting all silly over a mortal woman was ridiculous. No demon did that. He only came to her home to convince himself that she was no more to him than any other woman he'd bedded. And yet, when he saw the angel sitting beside her and read the look on his face, a wild sense of desperation came over him like he'd never felt before. *She's mine. You cannot take her from me.*

Gilbert assessed the demon before him. "You felt something for her."

"As did you." They were so far removed in their lives and beliefs and yet one moment with this woman had them questioning themselves.

"Yes—this does mess things up somewhat."

"Yet delightfully so." *Will I take back what I did? No.*

"You confused Jontie when you left her."

"*You'll* confuse her when she realizes you're not a dream," James shot back in accusation. *I'm not the only one at fault here.* "You screwed up as well, angel."

Gilbert nodded in agreement. "Yes." He turned around as he heard Jontie sigh in her sleep. "You'll pursue her." It was a statement of fact and they both knew it.

"As will you." James could tell by the look in the angel's eyes that his interest in Jontie had nothing to do with getting rid of Edward Carter or the good of mankind. "We both knew one taste wasn't enough."

"No but—"

"Oh, Saint Gilbert, don't be a righteous prick and tell me it's wrong, because it's not." James squared up to the angel.

“Let’s be honest here. We both felt something with Jontie and she felt something with us. There’s nothing wrong with that.”

“What can either of us offer her?”

*Nothing.* “Fulfillment for now.” Even as he said the words, James knew that would never be enough for him.

Gilbert looked at him skeptically. “And when it’s over?”

“We’ll cross and burn that bridge when we get there, angel.”

### Chapter 3

“What are you staring at?” Jontie whispered to Tosh out of the side of her mouth.

“His ass.” Tosh’s head was turned to the side and she was looking intently at the man who was giving a speech. They had been assembled with other staff members in the hotel’s empty ballroom to listen to Edward Carter, multimillionaire and new owner of Brisbane city’s exclusive Jarrahwood Hotel, where they worked.

“What?” Jontie tuned out what her new boss was saying as she focused on her friend. “His ass?”

“Yeah, you can tell a lot about a man from his ass.”

Jontie snorted in amusement, several heads turning their way “Oh get *real*, Tosh.”

“Come on, didn’t you look at that hot demon guy’s ass last night?”

“No.” Jontie followed Tosh’s lead and turned her head to the side and looked at her employer’s butt. Thankfully they were in a crowd and no one but those immediately near them were paying attention to what they were doing.

“Seriously? I would have looked.”

“Well, I wasn’t actually in a position to look at it, but I felt it.” She could still remember the taut muscles under her

hands as his butt flexed under her touch. It suddenly reminded her of another male backside she'd touched last night. What a dream that had been.

"How did it feel?"

"It was perfect." They both were. Jontie had woken up feeling more alive than she had in a long time.

"Okay, well perfection isn't necessarily good."

"Oh yeah—how so?" Jontie couldn't see anything exceptional about Edward Carter's backside under his expensively tailored trousers.

Tosh moved slightly to the left to peer at the subject in question. "People who appear outwardly perfect are often inwardly weird."

Jontie couldn't fault that logic. Some of the most attractive people hid the ugliest ideas and secrets.

"So, oh ass sage, what's the story on this guy?" No one knew much about Edward Carter other than he was rich and seemed to be rapidly acquiring wealth and titles at an astonishing rate. He was known to be ambitious and some said he had carefully chosen his trophy wife for the express reason of making it quickly in the world of politics. And as always, people were already taking bets on how long he'd last, for he seemed too good to be true.

"Flat butt—that indicates ambition but no passion." Tosh looked up at him thoughtfully. "He does what he has to in order to succeed."

Jontie straightened up. "All that from a flat ass?"

"If I saw him naked I'd be able to tell you more." Tosh's sentence came out louder than it was supposed to and all stares

were riveted on them. "...and that's how the book ended with the heroine saying those exact lines."

"Fascinating," Jontie mused, trying to control her laughter as they pretended nothing was amiss.

\* \* \* \*

"I had the best dream last night," Jontie told Tosh as they stood replenishing the stock for their cleaning trolleys. They worked as room attendants at the plush Jarrahwood Hotel in the heart of Brisbane City.

"I thought you said you rarely dreamed, that you slept the sleep of the dead and never remembered anything." Tosh alternated between placing guest soaps and tiny bottles of expensive hair care products in her trolley and her handbag. Neither woman considered it theft. It was a benefit, though unknown to management, of the job.

That was true. Jontie rarely if ever remembered her dreams. Of course she'd never had a dream like the one she had last night. Her thighs still ached from the thrusts of the hard male body that had taken her. But she attributed that more to James than her dream lover Gilbert. *Amazing*. She hadn't had sex in months and yet now she had two fantasy men in her life. She considered them fantasies as James had vanished and Gilbert was—well, she wasn't sure what he was. He felt so real and yet how could that be? He was a dream. Besides, Jontie wasn't someone who would have ever contemplated having sex with more than one man at any one time. True, it had a lot to do with lack of men who were interested in her. But it was also the fact that good girls didn't have multiple lovers. *Although I can't think why not*. Jontie

licked her lips at the thought of it. *Nah, it's crazy. Those men weren't real.*

"It felt so real though."

"It was about sex, right?" Tosh looked her with a knowing smile. "I'm sure those dreams are deliberately excellent so you wake up realizing how crap your real sex life is. So tell me about it."

She listened as Jontie described the dream. "Wow."

"Yep." It was a double wow plus. It was almost too good and the thought that it really had not happened made her feel sad. How was it possible to dream such a wonderful moment and yet wake up to nothing but the usual boringness of the day? It made Jontie feel totally alone and empty.

"So why do you think it wasn't real?"

"Hello? I went home alone and I woke up alone." It wasn't like she was unused to being alone. It was just hard to go from alone to being with someone and back to alone again. Jontie doubted very much she was a one-night stand kind of a woman. She straightened the shirt collar of her navy blue uniform and wished once more they weren't trapped in such prissy outfits. Yes, the hotel was exclusive but navy blue dress uniforms that looked like they came out of the 1940s were too hot and pretentious for the subtropical Brisbane.

"Yes, but you had sex with a demon and not a lot of women can say that."

"Did I?" Jontie looked at her friend in frustration. "I'm beginning to wonder."

Tosh shook her head. "No you're not. The good girl inside you is just appalled that you had sex with two men."



“One man-slash-demon and one dream lover. That’s hardly something to worry about doing penance over.”

“If a demon can disappear why can’t a dream lover be real?”

“Well, because...I don’t know if any of it was real.” Jontie pulled her laden trolley away from the supply cupboard. As much as she loathed her job, working today was good for her. It would take her mind off the whole “did-they-or-did-they-not-exist” thing.

“Jontie, nothing in life is as it seems, right? Things happen for a reason. So you have to ask yourself what’s the reason James appeared, then disappeared, virtually at the same time the dream lover wanders into your bedroom?” Tosh’s voice indicated that it was more than just a coincidence to her. “There has to be a reason behind that.”

“Maybe there isn’t one.” Jontie wanted there to be one but she couldn’t think of any rational reason to explain what she felt and was still feeling.

“Come on, you’re the one who’s always telling me there’s no such thing as coincidence.”

Jontie snorted at her words. “What do I know?” She checked the bunch of keys on her key chain. The Jarrahwood’s charm was that it was old-fashioned in looks, service and fittings. They still maintained the old-style keys rather than opting for electronic keycards. Old-world charm was uncomfortable when you had to lug around a wad of keys in the pocket of a restrictive uniform.

“You know more than you’ll allow yourself to believe, Jontie Rhodes.”

“Believe whatever makes you happy, Macintosh McRae.” She headed off in the direction of the elevator. “I’ll see you in a couple of hours.”

\* \* \* \*

James smiled when he heard the knock on the door. He knew who it was. He put his hands behind his head and relaxed as he awaited his guest.

“Room service,” Jontie called through the door. “I’m here to clean.”

“Oh, lovely one, you’re here to do so much more than that.” James’ belly tightened in anticipation at the thought of touching her once more. Realistically he knew he was supposed to be concentrating on winning her over to his side so she’d do as he bid and save that evil bastard Edward Carter. But reality had a way of shifting and changing and all he wanted to do at that moment was feel Jontie’s soft body in his arms as he took her once more—as he’d dreamed of doing. But this time he wouldn’t leave her. It had been agony waiting for the right moment to be with her again. The angel hadn’t helped things. However, if he guessed correctly, James suspected Jontie had been awakened to the possibility of two lovers and wasn’t averse to the idea.

On hearing no response from the other side, Jontie unlocked the door and pushed the trolley inside. She gasped when she saw the naked man on the bed but quickly recovered her aplomb.

“You’re not the first naked hotel guest I have seen waiting to surprise the staff.”

James grinned at her outward calm. Only the white knuckles gripping the trolley and her eyes trying to look anywhere but at his body indicated her agitated state.

“Does it happen a lot, lovely one?” He raised his knee so it raised up from the bed and pushed his cock more prominently on display. James smiled as he heard Jontie’s audible gulp.

“Usually they’re playing with themselves,” she murmured as she fidgeted with the trolley.

“Like this?” James moved one hand down his body and started stroking his already erect cock. He was pleased that her gaze was riveted on him now.

“Y-yes,” Jontie stammered, biting her lip, unable to look away.

James longed to have her mouth on his lips, his skin and sliding over his penis. “It’s kind of lonely. Do you want to play with me?” He knew by the hungry look in her eyes she did.

“N-no.” The word came out choked on the sound of denial.

“Why not?” James fisted his cock and tugged on it more aggressively. He liked the idea of playing with himself before this lady—a turn-on. “I assure you, you’d have fun.”

“You left me.”

*Ah, the real reason.* “I’m sorry.” His hand slowed down—he knew he needed to keep control or he’d come under his own steam and he didn’t want that. James wanted Jontie’s body against his when he did.

“Why?”

“I had to.” *How can I possibly explain my life to any mortal and make them understand or be less horrified?*

“Did I do something wrong?” Jontie’s voice was tight with worry.

James was stunned that she thought she had. Normally he wouldn’t have cared about the feelings or thoughts of another but this mortal woman made him think otherwise. “No, don’t ever think that—it’s who I am.”

“A demon?” Her hand lessened its grip on the trolley.

“Yes.” That was a fact. James wouldn’t be surprised if Jontie turned away from him as other humans had in the past.

“Really?”

James was pleased that she sounded genuinely interested and not repulsed.

“Yes.”

“Prove it.” Jontie moved away from the protection of the trolley.

James chuckled at her words. Demons proved themselves to no mortal. And yet, he wanted to with Jontie. “How?” *How do I keep her with me?*

“Do something magical.”

“We aren’t magicians, Jontie. We’re actually very scary beings,” he responded in mock seriousness.

Jontie approached the bed. “You don’t scare *me*, James.”

He looked up at her and he had a strange feeling in his chest. He had no heart, so why did it feel like something was beating wildly with excitement inside his chest. “Don’t I, lovely one?”

“No,” she murmured as she sat down on the bed beside the reclining man. Her hand reached out to still his on his penis. “Don’t do that.”

“Why not?” James locked stares with her. “Do *you* want to?” *Please say yes.* He could force her by the power of suggestion, as all demons could, but he wanted her to do what she wanted through free will. It was important to him

“Yes,” she pulled his hand from his burgeoning erection. *Thank you.* “Be my guest.”

\* \* \* \*

There were so many reasons why joining him on the bed was such an incredibly bad idea. She was at work. She had no idea who he really was and sex for the sake of sex had never appealed to her before. But then James had never been in her life and she’d never felt such an intense need to be with someone—except last night with her dream lover. Jontie hesitated.

“I had this dream.” *Why am I telling him this?* It wasn’t like they were faithful lovers. They barely knew each other and yet she was drawn to James in a way that made it impossible to turn away.

James reached up and touched the skin of her face with one long finger.

“I’m reality and I’m yours if you want me, Jontie.” His voice was filled with soft sincerity. “Do as you will to me.”

The tender look in his eyes was almost Jontie’s undoing. No one had ever looked at her like that before. It made her feel special and loved. *But this isn’t love, is it?* She wound her hand around his impatient, jumping shaft and stroked up-

wards. Jontie smiled as she felt James' body jump at her touch.

"You're not so scary." Yes, she knew she should be working. And yes, maybe this was too fast and too soon. And possibly she should stop and think about all the other reasons she shouldn't be doing this but she didn't want to. Jontie just felt the overwhelming need to be with this man. *Is he a demon?* It seemed that was true. *Does it matter? No, no it doesn't.*

James sat up and reached out to touch her. "You terrify me, lovely one."

"No, don't touch me yet." Jontie slapped his hand away. "I have a need to be in control." She didn't relax the firm, milking action she had on his cock.

"What do you have in mind?" He lay back down again.

"This." Jontie leaned in and licked the tip of his cock.

"You have my total attention," James growled, his fingers gripping the bed sheets as she continued licking his hard flesh.

Jontie had no idea what she was doing, having never done it before, but the idea that she could have total control over this man by just her tongue lapping his flesh excited her. She swirled her tongue around the bulbous head and sucked it inside her mouth. Her hands caressed his straining balls and she gave into the pleasure of doing exactly what she wanted to do. It was wildly liberating to be in charge. She licked and sucked all the way down and back up his shaft, delighting in the feel and texture of his skin.

"Uncle," James groaned loudly, his hands reaching down to pull her head from his body.

“Losing control there, James?” Jontie looked up into the lust-filled eyes of the demon. He wasn’t the only one feeling the moment. She was so wet that she could have easily slid down over him and sucked him inside her body. But she wanted more, much more.

“You have too many clothes on.”

“Well, I *do* hate this uniform.”

“It’s kind of sexy.” James reached down and caught her hand in his. “Pull your skirt up.”

Jontie felt a shiver run down her spine at his words. The need for him to fill her was slowing overriding any other thoughts.

“I’m in control, remember.”

“Lovely one, I could strip you in the blink of an eye,” James pointed out.

“So don’t talk about it. Do it.” As she finished the last word, Jontie found herself naked before him. “That’s a handy trick.” She lifted one leg over his body and sat astride him before his bouncing cock.

“So what’s that plan?”

“Well, you had a play, now I thought I’d have a play.” Jontie dipped her fingers in between her open legs and started massaging her clit in a slow, rhythmic way, staring into his eyes. She smiled when she saw the beads of sweat on his upper lip. The knowledge that he was barely keeping control made her even wetter.

“I’m not going to hold out much longer,” James growled as he reached out for her.

Jontie dodged him. “Come on, you’re an all-powerful demon.”

“Yes but a particular part of my anatomy is controlled by a power all of its own.”

She reached over and fondled his penis as her other hand played with her clit.

“I mean it, Jontie. If you keep doing that I’ll come all over you.”

“That would be a waste.” She dropped her hands from their tasks and lifted herself so she was just above his cock.

“Please,” he begged through gritted teeth.

“Okay, for you, big boy.” Jontie fitted the head of his cock inside her and slid slowly down the length. She closed her eyes as she allowed the hot fullness of him to take up the empty space inside her. When she opened them and looked straight into his eyes, she was surprised to see a look, so tender, so passionate within them that for a moment she forgot to breathe. Jontie leaned forward and licked the sweat off his upper lip, the tips of her breasts brushing the firm planes of his chest. She sat back and rocked back and forward on top of him, rubbing her clit against him with every stroke. Jontie could feel his cock pulsating within her and she rode him as hard as she could until she came with a loud shriek of excitement, and collapsed against his chest. Seconds later she felt him shoot up inside her—hot and hard.

“We should have used a condom,” Jontie muttered against his chest, too sated to move from his body.

“I’m a demon—I cannot get you pregnant.” James’ words sounded stilted with disappointment.



“Oh.” Jontie didn’t know what to say. He was like any other man—but not. He had power. He was a demon. *He’s my demon.* She sighed in contentment at the unsheathed feel of him inside her. James was still semihard and the thought of taking another ride appealed to her. But before she could sit up and act on it, James flipped her over so she was lying on her front.

“James?” His hands were pulling her up so she was on all fours with him behind her.

“My turn for fun now.” He pulled her legs apart as his cock prodded her ass.

“Again? I have rooms to finish.” *Like I care about my job.* This was a much more interesting way to fill in work time.

“You don’t care about your job.” James spanked her ass with two light slaps.

Jontie shivered at the sweet sting of his hand on her flesh.

“Do you like that?”

“Maybe.” A soft moan escaped her lips as his hand swatted her backside a couple more times.

“Yes or no?”

Jontie had no idea what the question was, but anything he wanted to do to her was a definite “Yes.” When she felt his cock prod at the swollen lips of her vagina, she pushed back against him, helpless to do anything else. She wanted him beyond her reason. She was surprised when she felt James trembling.

“James?”

“I don’t want to hurt you.” He kissed her shoulders, tasting her skin like she was a long-withheld treat, holding back

from plunging in. "But I need you." His fingers found her clit and rubbed in a slow, circular motion obviously designed to drive her crazy.

"Then have me." As his heated length slid inside her once more, Jontie let James control the pace. His thrusts were long and deep and they were exactly what she needed. She would have thought it impossible with any other man, but with his body on hers, his fingers deep in her pussy and his cock hot within her, she let out a wild yell as another orgasm tore through her. Only James' strong arms stopped her from collapsing in a languorous heap on the bed as he continued pumping in and out of her body until he was spent. He dropped down over Jontie and rolled her into his arms.

They lay like that for a few minutes, each caught up in their own thoughts.

"I have to go."

"*You're leaving me now?*" James hands were gentle as he caressed her breasts.

"I have to think...and yes, do the work thing." But mostly Jontie wanted time to assess what she was feeling. This was fantastic sex but she felt something else. There was a strange feeling of permanence about being with James. *How can that be? We've only just met.* She pulled out of his arms and got to her feet.

"Okay, I'll let you go," he muttered in a low, sexy tone as he rolled over and looked at her standing, flushed and naked before him.

"You don't actually have me." *Yet. Where did that come from?*

“Don’t I, lovely one?”

*Oh he does.* “My clothes?” They were suddenly back on her, as pristine and prissy as normal. And weirdly, she felt completely refreshed like she had just showered.

“I like you better naked.”

*Oh, the smile.* It made her want to throw off her clothes and crawl back into bedside him.

“I better go—I need to do stuff—you know, work things.” Jontie shot out of the room before she gave in and climbed back on for another ride. As she raced down the hall she stopped and realized she’d left the trolley in the room. “Fuck.” There was too much temptation in that room, yet she needed her trolley. She whirled around and slammed straight into a warm male body behind her. Her eyes opened in amazement as she looked at the man who stood before her. “Holy crap, it’s *you*.”

## Chapter 4

“Yes.” Gilbert steadied the woman in his arms. The feel of her body against his brought back sweet memories from the night before. He could tell by the look in her eyes she hadn’t forgotten what had happened between them either.

“You’re not a dream?” Jontie looked agog at the realization, her hands running over his chest as though making sure what she felt was real.

“No.” Her touch set off a million nerve endings that made his cock tighten with need.

“So we...er—”

“Made love? Yes, we did, Jontie.”

She pulled her hands from his chest and pushed back the hair from her face. “I don’t understand.”

That was understandable to Gilbert. He wanted to tell her the truth but he knew he couldn’t. Not yet.

“I want to explain it to you but now isn’t the time.” He knew she’d just come from James. That they’d had sex didn’t concern him for it wasn’t his business. That he sensed her thoughts were jumbled because of it *was*. He didn’t want to add to the confusion at that moment. “I’ll come to you tonight.”

“In a dream?” Jontie eyes were enormous on his. “How did you—”

“Come into your home and make love to you?” It hadn’t just been sex to Gilbert. He still remembered the sweet sound of *I love you* on Jontie’s lips. “That wasn’t supposed to have happened.” He reached out for her hand and enfolded it in his own. “I’m glad it did but it’s not what I do.”

Jontie looked down at their entwined hands, appearing puzzled at what she was feeling. “And that is?”

“I’m an angel.” He felt her hand grip his hard in surprise.

“Right.” Her eyes went up to his.

“Are you okay?” Most mortals had a certain, often incorrect concept of angels or they thought he was mad when he announced who he was.

Instead Jontie smiled and shook her head. “You know I should be shocked. I’m telling myself it’s not normal not to be shocked and yet I’m not. What does that say about me?”

“That you do not close your mind to things.” Gilbert caressed her hand as he spoke. “Neither James nor I want to hurt you.” While it was true angels weren’t fans of demons and vice versa, Gilbert didn’t sense the same level of evil in James as he had in other demons. It was there, lurking below the surface, but he seemed to contain it under a layer of rakish world-weariness that was part of his charm.

“You know each other?” Jontie’s query was one of surprise.

Gilbert nodded. “It’s a long story. I’ll tell you tonight.”

“But—”

Gilbert broke his gaze from hers as he sensed evil approach. He wasn't surprised to see Edward Carter coming towards them. He'd almost forgotten this man was the reason both he and James were at Jontie's side.

"Your boss approaches." He let go of her hand. Gilbert didn't trust himself to stand still and not make a move against Carter. Angels didn't act with violence. Sometimes it was hard to remember that, when he recalled the visions of what this man would do in the future. Only Heaven knew of the horrors to ensue because of Carter, and to use that knowledge now would cause greater problems. "I'll see you tonight."

"Gil—" Jontie caught at his arm.

He was happy that she not only remembered his name but that she called him "Gil." No one had done that since he'd become an angel all those years ago.

"Promise you'll come to me."

The edge of desperation in her voice made Gilbert want to give her anything she asked for.

"Yes, Jontie, I promise."

\* \* \* \*

When she opened the door to him later that night, Gilbert knew by the look in Jontie's eyes that she was relieved to see him. It made his heart swell knowing he had this effect on her

"You're here," she said, stating the obvious.

"I said I would be." He'd decided to come to the door so as not to frighten her.

"I thought you would just appear—you know, like last time."

Gilbert could see by the way she shifted her feet that Jontie wasn't as completely at ease as she made out. "I thought I'd try a more conventional way."

"James?"

"Is not with me, Jontie. We're not friends." He suspected James had planned to come to her tonight and no doubt would be pissed off he was there instead, but he knew the demon wouldn't force the issue. "Angels and demons rarely are." He stepped inside her apartment and shut the door behind him.

"So this is like some game between you?"

"No." Gilbert led her through to the living room as if it were his home and not hers. He wanted her to be comfortable. He wanted to talk to her. He wanted her. And that self-knowledge both thrilled and concerned him. Gilbert didn't use any person, let alone a woman, for his own needs unless it was mutual.

"Then what's this about?" Jontie ran an agitated hand through her loose hair. "It's not like everyday a woman has an angel and a demon turn up in her life."

"Sometimes angels and demons are drawn to one person for the same reason, Jontie." That at least was true. They'd both planned to subtly manipulate her for their own means. And yet that seemed to have backfired on them both.

"And that is?"

"Need." It was a simple word for a complex emotion.

"You need *me*?" Jontie looked amazed at the fact. "You're immortal beings. What the hell can you need *me* for?"

*Love.* That was the answer and it hit Gilbert hard. Angels rarely fell in love, but when they did it was forever. *Why now?*

*I've been an angel for over a century.* And the worst part was he couldn't tell Jontie the truth of why he was there—and love demanded truth. *Is this a test, God?* The laws of karma decreed that she save or not save Edwards Carter subconsciously without prior knowledge of that which she was destined to do. If Jontie found out, it had the power to backfire—making whichever way she chose worse.

“There's something about you that calls to both of us.”  
*And do I have the right to compete with the demon to have you?*

\* \* \* \*

“Why me?” Seemingly two immortal beings wanted her. A woman who was in debt up to her eyeballs, in a job she hated—and she was no raving beauty. If asked, Jontie would have called herself average, bordering on vaguely attractive in an unfashionable chunky way. Men didn't flock to her side wanting her.

“Because of who you are,” Gilbert answered as if it was obvious to him.

“And who am I?” *What does he actually know about me? Do angels get a dossier on people they're interested in?*

“A good, loving person.”

Jontie remembered back to Tosh's words about there having to be a reason a demon and an angel were both in her life. *What do they want from me?*

“How do you know that?”

Gilbert smiled at her. “I have contacts.”

Jontie felt her heart pound wildly under his smile. Like James' smile, it was blinding in sex appeal yet more loving



and sweet. “Of course you do—you’re an angel—you probably know lots of stuff.”

“Not as much as I’d like to,” Gilbert admitted, his eyes never looking away from hers.

The two men—or immortals—had that in common. Their gazes were direct, unwaveringly making Jontie feel like she was the most important person at that moment.

“You two are so different, yet very much alike.” *How can that be? One’s literally on the side of the angels whereas the other’s a bad boy from Hell.*

“And we both want you.”

Her heart raced at the thought of tasting Gilbert again, even though she knew it was considered wrong to lust after two men who moreover were essentially strangers, and in this case stranger than most.

“I’ve never had two men in my life at the same time.” Jontie wanted to tell herself that she should be appalled, but she couldn’t. *What’s wrong with me? Am I turning into a slut? And why don’t I feel bad about that?*

“I know.”

“I’m sure I’m going to go to Hell for wanting you both.” *At least I’ll know James.*

Gilbert chuckled at her words. “You’re hardly going to Hell, Jontie.”

“You called me your ‘darling’ last night.” She stopped and blushed suddenly when she realized that sounded like she wanted him to call her that again, which she did. *Should I be encouraging this man as well?* From a famine to a feast of men and as greedy as it was to want both, Jontie didn’t care.

“Yes, I did and I will again.” Gilbert gave a gentle smile at her discomfort. “So, you worry about morality?”

“Well, you’re an angel—you should know. I would have thought immorality would be in the top ten of things angels were against. ”

“There are different types of morality.” He moved towards her and pushed a stray piece of hair from her face.

Jontie’s pulse raced at his closeness. It brought back sweet memories of last night. *Should I?* The taste of James was still on her lips but she craved this man as well. *Yep, I’m going to Hell. But I don’t care because it feels right.*

“Like loopholes?” she asked breathlessly. Loopholes were good and they could work in her favor. Jontie felt her inner thighs sweat in anticipation.

Gilbert’s smile widened at her words. “Sort of. But as I see it you’re not hurting either of us.”

As far as Jontie knew, that was true. “You’re not even jealous.” Which she had to admit was a little annoying. She didn’t want either of them conducting a duel over her, but she was still woman enough to appreciate a hint of male jealousy over her.

“I can’t say that I’m not but I understand human nature and what people need. I believe you need us both.”

The thought struck Jontie as odd. Yes, she craved the closeness, the intimacy but that was as far as her need went. *Isn’t it?* “I’ve never needed anyone before.” She’d gotten by on her own for the longest time. People came, people went and her life went on. The idea that someone could be a permanent

fixture never occurred to her. "Is this just about two immortal beings on the prowl and both zeroing in on the same woman?"

"I can't speak for James but I find you very beautiful."

Jontie gulped loudly. This was crazy and exciting and scary and she wanted to enjoy every mad moment of it.

"Last night," she began, trying to find the words to describe what she felt when he came to her bed and made love with tenderness and passion.

"I wanted you and I couldn't stop myself." Gilbert's hands came down to rest on her shoulders. "I apologize."

Jontie's hands went to his chest. She felt the muscles contract and the knowledge that this man, this angel, wanted her made her ache to have him inside her once more. "I hardly stopped you, Gil."

"You thought you were dreaming."

She shook her head. "I never dream." Jontie remembered every moment of what happened. "I knew what I was doing." She looked into his beautiful eyes and had a moment of self-doubt. She didn't want to use Gilbert. Jontie didn't want him thinking he was second best. Both men were equals in her eyes and as liberated as Jontie wanted to believe she was, the idea of needing two men so desperately seemed like it should be wrong. It was forbidden. It was naughty. A shiver ran down her spine at the thought of it. *Naughty*. "How is this possible, that I'm drawn to both of you? Mortal men are rarely interested in me."

"Those men are fools then." Gilbert's gaze was on her lips.

*God yes, kiss me.*

“Do you want me now, my darling?”

A thrill of sensation shot through her body when he called her “my darling.” Jontie wanted to be that and so much more. “Yes.” Any other answer would have been a lie.

Gilbert breathed out a sigh of relief. “Good.” He pulled her close to his body and kissed her.

To be kissed by an angel was the most wondrous thing Jontie had ever felt. The passion of James’ kiss was exciting and raw. It was the sort of kiss that devoured her and demanded everything she had to give. Gilbert’s lips were just as passionate but there was something more. There was a feeling of eternity and recognition in his kiss. It was a soft, sweet promise of things to come. *I could kiss him forever.* Jontie pressed herself eagerly against his body. His straining cock pressed against her belly. Her hand automatically went down to his belt buckle to free it.

“Condom?” she asked between hungry kisses as her hands fought the buckle of his belt. She broke off his kiss and cursed. “Damn belt.” Gilbert laughed at her frustration and ripped the buckle open. “Excellent.” She unzipped his fly and his penis jumped out and into her hand.

“I love it when you touch me like that,” he growled as his hands made short work of her blouse. “And yes, I have a condom.” Gilbert unsnapped her bra and tossed it to the ground.

When his hands touched her breasts, Jontie almost forgot to breathe for a moment because the sensation was so exquisite. She pushed herself against him, her hand still stroking his cock.

"I forgot to ask for one last night." And that was so unlike her. Despite the previous lack of lovers in her life, Jontie believed in being careful.

Gilbert removed her hand from his penis. "If you keep doing that I'll explode and that would be a waste." He smiled as her hands slid around and grasped his ass instead. "I have the ability to get you pregnant so I used a rubber last night."

"Seriously?" *A baby with Gilbert?* The idea instantly appealed to her and that was crazy because Jontie had never had a maternal thought in her life.

"Yes." His mouth descended on one pink nipple and he sucked down hard. Jontie moaned and ground her hips against his, loving the feeling of his stiff cock sandwiched between their bodies. At the rate they were going, clothes dropping everywhere, Jontie doubted very much they'd make it into the bedroom. But that was okay. She just wanted to be with Gilbert and the setting was irrelevant.

Gilbert's mouth left her nipple with a soft, wet pop. "What do you want me to do to you, my darling?"

"Anything." Whatever he did Jontie knew she would love. She was on fire with need. She eagerly returned his hungry kisses, wanting to prolong everything about the moment with him.

"Tell me." His voice was soft with encouragement.

No one had ever asked that of Jontie before, but then no one was like Gilbert. The fierce, wild passion of James was exciting and something she also craved, but this was softer and more about her fulfillment.

“Well,” Jontie began, feeling her face go red as she wondered how she could ask an angel, of all things, to take her in the ass. That was something she’d never tried and she longed to. *But this is an angel, Jontie. One of the good guys. Their mob invented missionary sex.*

“Hey, you’re blushing. What is it you want me to do to you?” Gilbert ran one long finger down her face, as his other hand caressed her breast. “Don’t be embarrassed, my darling.”

Gilbert was the sweetest man and yes maybe that was par for the course, being an angel but he was the kind of man little girls dreamed of having in their lives.

“I want you to...” she hesitated and bit her lip. *Oh what the hell, you don’t ask, you don’t get.* “...take me in the ass.” Jontie waited for his response. He grinned the sexiest smile she’d ever seen. It was the sort of smile that she was sure would be outlawed in Heaven as it had a delicious wickedness about it that was bad but in a very good way.

“Yes, ma’am.” Gilbert kissed her hard and then turned her around so her back was nestled tight against his front. He walked them over to the back of the sofa.

“I’ve never done this before, Gil.” Even to Jontie the words sounded naïve and she blushed anew.

“Then let’s make it an experience to remember.” Gilbert positioned her hands on the back of the sofa and then nudged her legs wider apart. He ran his hand down the cleft of her ass and between her legs. “You are so lovely and wet, my darling.”

“You make me so.” Jontie pushed her butt back against him, loving the feel of his cock prodding between the cheeks.

She stiffened slightly when his fingers ran up to the puckered hole of her ass.

“Relax,” Gilbert murmured against her ear.

Jontie turned her head and watched as he waved his hand and a condom and a tube of lube appeared. It was excellent loving men who had the power to make things appear out of thin air. *Loving? Whoa, where did that thought come from?* Jontie’s eyes were on the length of his stiff penis as Gilbert rolled the condom on quickly.

“I wanted to do that.” She almost stamped her feet in disappointment as he slathered the clear lube over the tight rubber covering his shaft. “And that too.”

Gilbert chuckled at the petulant tone of her voice. “Maybe next time. I’m not going to be able to hold on much longer and it won’t help if you touch me again.”

Jontie rubbed her ass against his slicked-up penis.

“Aren’t you a powerful, immortal being?” She jumped when she felt Gilbert slide one finger inside her anus.

“Not around you.” He slid his finger in out of her several times before a second one joined in. “I am but a man.”

“But one hell of a man...okay, maybe not Hell, but you know what I mean.” When Jontie felt a third finger follow inside she moaned at the fullness. But she wanted more. “I need you inside me now.” Finger fucking was one thing but the hot length of him was what she was after. “Please, Gil.”

“Yes, my darling, anything you want of me.”

Jontie sighed at the soft kisses he rained down on her shoulders as he pushed the head of his cock into her ass. “Uh

oh, is this going to work?" That was one big penis going into one very small hole.

"Relax," he whispered against her ear.

Jontie shivered at the hot breath that fanned her skin. She let her body go loose and the ring of muscle he was trying to penetrate gave way as he worked himself inside.

"Do you want me to stop?" Gilbert's voice was ragged as he stilled his progress.

"No, and keep moving." The fullness claiming her was unlike anything Jontie had ever felt before. She clutched the fabric of the sofa and groaned when she felt Gilbert's balls grind against her butt when he was fully in. It was so tight and hot and all she could think of and feel was Gilbert.

"Okay?" Gilbert whispered against her ear, his tongue flicking the lobe.

"Oh yes, more than okay." When his hands moved around and found her clit, Jontie thought she'd come then and there. As Gilbert began thrusting in and out of her, Jontie closed her eyes and gave in to the sensation of the hardness of his cock competing with the softness of his mouth on her neck and shoulders. It was the most amazing sensation and she never wanted it to stop. Jontie was so caught up, in fact, that she didn't hear the key turning in her front door.

"Holy buckets!" Tosh pushed open the door and grinned with delight when she saw what she'd interrupted.

"Tosh!" Jontie's eyes snapped open in shock. The way they were standing, side on to the front door, left very little to the imagination. "What the hell are you doing here?" She



heard Gilbert chuckle against her skin as he momentarily stopped pumping inside her.

"It's Monday. It's pizza night." Tosh pointed to the flat steaming box in her hand.

It wasn't the only thing that was steaming. Jontie was so hot and wet she was going to explode and Gilbert's fingers on her clit weren't helping. As much as she wanted an orgasm she wasn't about to come with her friend watching.

"Tosh—"

"So you're the angel." Tosh turned her head and took a long look at the male ass on display. "You have a great backside."

Jontie could feel Gilbert shaking with laughter. It set off a vibration that started shooting around her body and was soon going to make her scream with pleasure. *Please not yet.*

"Nice to meet you," Tosh said, taking her eyes off his butt to look at Jontie. "Do you want to know what I can tell from his fine ass?"

"Tosh—leave now." *Can this get any more embarrassing?*

"Oh sure—right—I'll call you later and I'll tell you then." Tosh dropped the pizza box on a nearby table. "I'm leaving this as excellent sex requires empty calorie intake." She winked at them both and left.

"She has a key in case I don't answer."

"And it's pizza night," added Gilbert before he roared with laughter.

"Couldn't you have done something to stop her appearing like that?" Jontie sighed in relief as he started moving inside her once more.

“My darling, my mind is occupied elsewhere.”

Jontie was speechless for a moment then started to giggle. “That *was* kind of funny in an embarrassing way.” She felt herself being thrust forward against the sofa as Gilbert started to pump harder inside.

“Yeah, it was and I did say I’d make it memorable,” he mused with glee. “Are you ready to come?”

“Oh yes.”

His hot breath against her neck was the trigger for the most amazing orgasm of her life. It felt like her insides were somersaulting to keep up with the intense pleasure ripping through her body. She panted out loud as she tried to keep pace with Gilbert as he rammed hard, pushing them both over the edge as they came. Jontie slumped against the sofa with Gilbert still inside her.

“Can I get a ticket for that ride again?”

## Chapter 5

“I’m so sorry,” Tosh said hours later in a phone call to Jontie.

“No you’re bloody not.” Jontie knew her best friend of old. She knew Tosh would have enjoyed surprising her like that. If the shoe had been on the other foot, Jontie would have gotten a great laugh out of it herself.

“You’re right, I’m not.” Tosh’s laughter rang out over the line. “I nearly dropped the pizza when I saw what he was doing to you.”

Jontie had to admit she liked the edge of jealousy she detected in her friend’s voice.

“The pizza was delicious.”

“As, I reckon, was the angel.”

“Oh yes.” Angel trumped pizza every time. They’d enjoyed a long, leisurely shower afterwards and Jontie learned that even angels could be very, very naughty. She grinned when she thought back to how Gilbert had taken her once more in the shower and unbelievably had the stamina to carry her to the bedroom and fuck her until she thought she wouldn’t walk again. *Yum.*

“You’re having sex with a demon and an angel and I don’t know whether to applaud you or call you a bitch because I’m so envious.”

Jontie twisted the phone cord as she thought once again about having sex with the two men. She knew what Gilbert had said, that she wasn’t hurting either of them but it was still not something a “good girl” was brought up to do. And *I’ve been awfully bad with the hot immortals.*

“Do you think it’s wrong enjoying sex with two men?”

“Oh hell no,” Tosh exclaimed, her tone of voice reinforcing that she was adamant on that.

That was the answer Jontie expected from the free-spirited Tosh. Her friend was a woman who believed people should do what they wanted as long as it hurt no one. *Am I hurting one of them?* The idea that she could stabbed at Jontie.

“But what if—”

Tosh interrupted her. “Jontie, do you believe you can love more than one person in a lifetime?”

“Yes, of course.” *People fall in and out of love all the time.*

“But two men at the *same* time and they’re supernatural beings?” *That’s not normal. But then what is normal any more?* Jontie wasn’t one to impose rules on anyone else so why was she trying to do so on herself? *Good question.*

“Supernatural sex would be awesome then,” murmured Tosh in appreciation. “If I didn’t like you so much I’d hate you right now, you lucky cow.”

Jontie smiled at her friend’s words. *Yeah, I’m lucky.* Two amazing men descended in her life at the same time and desired her.

“What about the fact that they’re not exactly human?” They felt and looked human but Jontie was hazy on the specifics. *Is an angel a good person who’s died and gone to heaven? Is a demon the opposite?* She’d been so consumed with desire she hadn’t thought to ask more questions and that was so unlike her. Normally Jontie wanted to know everything.

Tosh stared at her. “What? Are you planning to take them home to Mother?”

“No.” Her mother would probably be okay with the situation. Jontie’s stuck-up siblings would be horrified. *Hmm, might be worth talking them home for that reason alone.*

“You’re having multiple orgasms with two hot guys who know about each other. You’re an idiot if you think that’s a problem.”

“What about the demon and angel thing?”

Tosh blew out a nonchalant breath. “Men are men.”

“Does anything get to you, Tosh?” There was a moment’s silence after Jontie’s words and she realized this wasn’t something Tosh would ever answer honestly. Jontie had known the woman for ten years and yet there was something hidden about Tosh she doubted anyone would ever know.

“Yeah but I don’t agonize over stuff that happens.” Tosh’s voice was carefully light. “Do you like one better than the other?”

Jontie shook her head at this question. “No I love them both equally.” The minute the words were out of her mouth she stopped, shocked. *I love them both equally? Love?*

“You what? You *love* them?”

*Tosh sounds as surprised as I feel.* “It’s just a phrase.” *Or is it?* Jontie’s mind whirled at the implications. Two men and she loved them both. *Talk about being a high achiever.* “The French have a saying ‘*coup par la foudre*.’ It means ‘hit by lightning’—it’s sudden, it’s quick and yet it’s meant to happen.”

That was exactly what had happened. They came, she saw and she loved them both. “Would you fall in love that quickly?”

“Jontie, I’ve had a different life than you.”

The sadness in Tosh’s voice upset Jontie. “Do you think one day—”

“Maybe...maybe not. You have to want to accept love in your life despite the ifs and the buts that come your way. Do you want to?”

Jontie licked her lips and thought for a moment. There was only one answer. “Yes.”

“Then do it.”

\* \* \* \*

“Hello, lovely one.” James slipped behind Jontie in the shower and pulled her into his arms. It seemed like forever since he’d last touched her and Jontie’s wet body had his penis as hard as a rock and pushing at her ass cheeks, seeking an entrance. That she trembled at his touch made him feel more powerful than he ever had. He needed no demon powers with Jontie to feel alive. Her skin against his and her soft sigh made him feel almost human again. James caressed her full breasts, teasing the nipples with his fingers. “I’m hungry for you.”

“Oh, my.” Jontie pushed back against him, eager for his touch.

James grinned when he felt her ass grind against his cock. *I’m not the only one who hungers. Excellent.*

“You like?” His hands slid lower, down the gentle swell of her abdomen and to their destination between her legs. James knew the creamy moisture he felt wasn’t due to the shower. He also knew she’d been with Gilbert. He accepted that. It was her choice. Yes, he was jealous but he also believed he could make Jontie want him more. Call it immortal one-upmanship.

“I love it but I’ll be late for work.”

“Work can wait.” When he touched her like this, James almost forgot why he’d been sent to her. *Edward Carter*. The powers in charge of hell had questioned what he’d been doing. All he had to say was that the woman was under control. That was the truth. If *anyone* wasn’t under control it was him. James wanted to forget the greedy Carter and the demonic plans for him and just be with Jontie. No rise up the demon ladder was as important as making love to this woman. He chuckled slightly when he realized what he thought. *Making love?* Demons loved no one but themselves. They fucked, they took, they tantalized. They didn’t love. *Until now. Oh, how the mighty have fallen.*

“Why are you laughing?” Jontie turned her head to look at him.

James kissed her lips, savoring the first, amazing taste after his absence from his woman. *Yes, my woman.*

"I was just wondering what Saint Gilbert is doing now?" James felt Jontie stiffen.

"You know about him and you still want me?"

"Oh yes." Nothing and no one could stop him wanting this woman.

"But what about—"

"That he had you? That pisses me off a bit but I know I'm a much better lover than him and I have plans for you."

*Plans sound good.* "About Gil," Jontie murmured, needing to get things clear in her mind about these two men. But that was hard to do with a stiff cock at her ass and a hot body plastered against hers.

"I care not for the angel." James' voice was low and husky against her ear. "Do you want me now?"

"Yes." To have said anything else would have been a lie. Jontie hungered for James to be inside her once more. She had two men in her life, both unique, both different and she needed them each of them equally. Jontie pushed her ass against him in invitation, allowing his hands to position her hips for entry. The first thrust of his body into hers made her squeal. She'd been wet just at the first touch of James. "Hard—make it hard." She had the urgent desire to feel him ramming into her hard and fast. She wanted the thrill of possession without being able to control it. She wanted James. "Oh my God," she panted as the grinding thrust of his shaft made her insides tighten in anticipation of a toe-curling orgasm.



James chuckled, his hands covering hers on the white tile on either side of her body. "Not sure 'God' is appropriate but you feel as close to Heaven as I believe I'll ever come."

Jontie's body stiffened as the orgasm hit. Wave after wave of hot spasms radiated from her pelvis up her back and down to her toes. She felt like falling down in a wet, slumberous heap as the sensation within gave her a feeling of peaceful contentment. James' last couple of thrusts inside her made her knees shake and it was only his strong arms wrapping around her body that kept her from falling.

"Beautiful." That was how it felt to Jontie. James made her feel beautiful.

\* \* \* \*

"Who are you, James?" she asked later on as he gently toweled her body dry. "You're no demon." *How can this gentle man who looks at me with such tender amusement be one of the Devil's spawn?*

"What do you think those from Hell are like, lovely one?" He wrapped her body in the towel and looked into her eyes. His expression was one of great world-weariness, as if he'd seen too much and was tired of life.

"Evil, manipulative, out for their own gain." That was the stereotypical view most people had because that was what they'd been led to believe. Jontie now knew there was so much more to this supposed demon.

"Well, that sure sounds like me." James kissed her nose and gave her ass a playful slap.

Jontie shook head. She knew *who* he was and *what* he was were two different things. “No, I don’t believe that. You’re sweet and caring.”

James’ chuckle had a grim sound to it. “You don’t really know me. I’ve done terrible things in the past and it’s my nature to do more in the future.”

“You’re a good man.” She could see great pain in his eyes and she wanted to help him somehow. “I know it—I feel it.”

“I’m not human. I’m a demon.”

“I love you.”

James looked at her as if he couldn’t believe her words. Jontie smiled a shy smile. “I know, it shocked me too. I wasn’t planning on falling in love with anyone.”

James rested his forehead against hers. “Oh, Jontie, I’m so very wrong for you, yet I can’t help myself. I want to be with you.” His sigh was deep and weary. “I don’t know what love’s like. Demons don’t believe in it—yet I feel an intense passion and adoration for you.”

“That sounds pretty good to me.”

“We can never be. There is no ‘forever’ for us.”

The sad way he said it made Jontie want to cry, for somehow she knew what he said was right. How, she wasn’t sure. All she knew was they had what time they had and to waste it would be crazy.

“Come love me again,” she murmured as she dropped the towel and invited him inside.

\* \* \* \*

“Hey.” Gilbert appeared beside her.

Jontie smiled at seeing him. “Hey yourself.” She was downstairs at her home doing a load of washing after work. She dropped the lid of the washing machine down and looked at Gilbert. Her heart beat rapidly just seeing him. He was gorgeous and he was in her life and she was so grateful.

“I missed you.” Gilbert moved in and kissed her lips as he pushed Jontie back against the washing machine.

She could feel the gentle vibrations against her ass as the solid hunk of man folded her into his arms. *I’m home.*

“You taste delicious.” She kissed him back hungrily. Jontie wanted to taste every inch of Gilbert.

He chuckled against her lips. “I aim to please.” His hands roamed over her breasts as if to prove his intention to do so.

There was so much Jontie wanted to ask him but when he touched her like that she forgot most of it. “Gil—”

“Yes, darling?” He murmured against her lips.

“Were you ever human?” Not that it really mattered who he was. That he was in her life now was what really counted.

“Yes, once a long time ago.” Gilbert’s large fingers started working on the row of tiny buttons down the front of her blouse.

“What happened?” *One man for breakfast the other for dinner. Who’s a lucky girl?*

“I was killed.” His gaze fixed on the front of her shirt. “These are really tiny buttons.”

Jontie smiled. She could tell him they were only there for show and not for use but having him fiddle with them gave her time to find out more about him. She knew once Gilbert’s

hands met her bare flesh she'd be unable to think of anything else than her need to be joined to him.

"How?"

"It was a mining accident. I was part of a team who went into rescue some trapped miners and the tunnel we were in collapsed."

"How horrible." A good man went to save others and died in the attempt. But then that was what heroes did. Jontie was pleased to know Heaven was aware of their efforts and rewarded them accordingly. She had a feeling not just anyone became an angel. It made her want to believe a little more.

"Life can be like that." He sounded neither sad nor angry.

"It's not fair."

"No—but then neither are these buttons." Gilbert waved his hand and her clothes disappeared. He nodded his head in approval when she stood naked before him. "Perfect."

"Gil!" She clutched at him to cover herself. Her laundry was downstairs and with the door open anyone could look inside.

"My darling, no one's going to see you but me and if someone happens to catch a glimpse then that'll just make their day." He picked her up and lifted her onto the washing machine.

"You're very naughty for an angel." Does my washing machine warranty cover this? *"How did the machine break? Well, an angel came and stripped me then had his very wicked way with me and I loved every second of it. So am I covered for that or what?"*

“No one, angel or not, is all good or all bad.” Gilbert stepped between her open legs and sucked hard on one nipple.

Jontie moaned and dropped her head back. “Aren’t you going to strip off?” She wanted to feel his hot flesh against hers.

“Why?” he murmured as his mouth left her nipple with a popping sound. “Does it make you feel out of control being the only one who’s naked?”

“Yes—oh.” His fingers found her clit.

“You’re so wet.”

“You make me so.” Looking at him made her thighs sweat in readiness.

“Beautiful, darling Jontie.” Gilbert slid two fingers inside her while he continued to suck her breast.

The vibrations of the machine, combined with Gilbert’s mouth and fingers, were indeed heavenly.

“How I love you.” There was no doubt about that in her mind.

Gilbert looked up at her in a mixture of surprise and pleasure. “You do?”

Jontie pulled him closer to her and leaned in and kissed his lips. “Yes.” He kissed her back with such sweet softness that her whole body trembled. It was like a kiss of promise, of what would be.

He broke off the kiss and his gaze locked with hers. “That means everything to me, my darling.”

Jontie wrapped her legs around his waist. “I need you, Gil. I hunger for you.” It seemed madness to want more sex

with another man but the two men were poles apart and her hunger for each was also different. “If I say ‘please fuck me’ will I go to Hell?” She reached over and unzipped his fly. His cock jumped out, clearly eager for her touch. “Or am I Heaven bound?” Jontie wrapped her hand around his shaft. She already knew the answer.

“Only good things will come to you, Jontie Rhodes.” Gilbert’s larger hand wrapped around Jontie’s as they guided him towards the wet, open core of her.

“Prove it, lover.” As the head of his cock plunged into her, Jontie sighed with pleasure and closed her eyes as she gave in to the hot sensation of Gilbert’s body against hers, his penis moving up inside her until it could go no further.

“Open your eyes. I need to see how much you need me.”

“I’ll always need you, Gil. You’re a part of who I am.” The truth of that hit her forcibly. This man, this angel, was someone she’d needed for the longest time.

Gil picked up her hand and kissed the palm. “I love you.”

“Excellent—now are you going to be a bad angel and fuck the stuffing out of me or what?” She grinned at the sound of his laughter at her words.

“Oh, I’m going to be *bad*.” Gilbert pulled out and pushed back in again hard, his hands cupping her ass as he started pumping hard within her.

Jontie clutched at his shoulders and held on, enjoying the ride. The washing machine changed cycle and started to spin. She squealed at the sensation against her backside and the thrust of the man before her. Jontie smiled in amusement.

“What?” Gilbert asked, not missing a beat as he plunged deeply in and out.

“I once had plans for a solar-powered vibrator.”

“Oh, darling, you’re never going to need that.”

“Pr—promise?” The words came out sounding broken as the beginnings of the orgasm hit.

“This is forever, Jontie.” Gilbert held her tight, her body shuddering against his as she came.

“Yes,” she moaned, her head dropping forward to rest on his shoulder as he came. The angel promised forever and the demon gave her for now. *And I’ll take what I can get for I love them both.*

## Chapter 6

A couple of hours later, Gilbert returned to Jontie's place, as did James.

"What are you doing here?" Gilbert looked at the demon in displeasure.

"I'm here to see Jontie, Saint Gilbert." James stood his ground. "Why are *you* here?"

"The same reason."

"Is that a problem?"

"Only if you want to make it one." Gilbert crossed his arms and made like he wasn't going to budge an inch.

James smiled thinly at his words. "Tough talk, angel."

"You have no idea."

"Yeah, I do. I've tangled with Heaven before." His gaze bored in on the angel's almost like he was trying to stare him down. "The last time nearly killed me."

Jontie stepped into the room. "Oh hello, you're *both* here!" She tightened the belt on her robe as she surveyed the two men.

Gilbert's eyed her fondly. As much as he wanted to be the only one in her life, he recognized the need Jontie had for James.



“Which one of us do you want, lovely one?” James moved to stand beside her.

Jontie sighed and shook her head. “It’s not that easy. I can’t choose. I want you both.”

Gilbert glanced at James, then back at Jontie. “Would it give you pleasure to have both of us together?” He didn’t want to share but he knew Jontie wanted to treat them both equally.

“W-what?” she stammered as she blushed red.

“You heard me.” Gilbert was prepared to do anything to make this woman happy.

“But—”

“Don’t think Jontie,” James looked into her eyes. “Just say what you feel.”

\* \* \* \*

When she’d first walked into the room it had been like the shootout at the OK Corral except for the fact those weren’t guns they were using. Now they both stood facing her, awaiting her response to Gilbert’s question. *Do I want them both together?* The thought of it was exciting—but that had to be weird—for them to make love to the same woman at the same time. Her original thought at the wedding, whether she was aerobically capable of taking two men at once, came back to her. *I’d sure like to try.* But she knew it wouldn’t be fair to either of them.

“Forget about what you think is wrong or right, Jontie.” Gilbert reached out and stroked her arm.

*Oh boy.* There was only one answer.

“Yes, I want you both together, but...”

“What?”

“What about you two? How would you feel?” The thought of sharing one of them with another *woman* didn’t appeal to her at all.

“This is no ‘about us,’ Jontie,” Gilbert told her. “We want to pleasure *you*. If you want us both together—”

“Yes,” she said, not allowing him to finish the sentence. This wasn’t the time to act coy.

James pointed to her robe. “Take it off. There’s no need to hide what you feel with us.”

Her robe dropped to the ground, leaving her naked and exposed to the eyes of the two men. Jontie walked over to them like she was in a trance.

“How...how do we do this?” Fantasy was one thing but the reality was beyond her.

Gilbert smiled at her shy words. “How do you *want* to do it? You’re in charge. We’ll play by your rules.”

“Me?” Jontie licked her lips as her thoughts jumbled over all the things she’d like them to do. Holding out long enough to let that happen was going to be hard. She knew if they touched her now she’d come just at the thought of being with them together—she was already wet with desire. “Take your clothes off.”

The two men did as commanded. Their cocks were already erect and ready to go. The thought of both of them grinding in and out of her body made her wetter than ever. “Get on the bed.” She pointed to Gilbert. He immediately complied, lying down, awaiting her. Jontie hesitated.

James looked at her puzzled expression. “What’s wrong?”

"I've no idea how to do this." Jontie felt dumb just saying it. James' arm wrapped around her waist and he walked her to the bed.

"It's pretty simple, lovely one. You mount Gilbert and I mount you."

Jontie moaned at the thought of it.

"You like that idea?" James asked, his eyes watching hers.

"Oh yes, do it now." She got onto the bed and crawled over to Gilbert's body. There was no need for foreplay. That had been accomplished just by them agreeing to pleasure her in this way. Jontie positioned Gilbert's penis at her vagina and pushed down, allowing it to fill her completely. She closed her eyes and savored the moment.

"Open your eyes, my darling. I want to see every moment of what you feel." Gilbert's hands took possession of her hips, moving her so she was leaning over him. He tongued one nipple as it came level with his mouth.

Jontie moaned as his mouth sucked on her flesh. She stiffened in anticipation as she felt the heat of James at her back, his fingers slippery as he pushed in and out of her anus, opening her up.

"Oh, my." This was even better than Jontie imagined. When his fingers were replaced by the head of his penis she pushed forward over Gilbert to give James full access. She panted as James slowly filled her body up. The fiery heat of two cocks inside her made Jontie dizzy with pleasure. She felt so full and tight and loved. These men were doing what she asked of them and she could demand no more. *Or maybe I could.* "Move." Sitting on one still shaft while another one lay

hard in her backside was good—but pumping friction was what she needed. And they delivered. The push and pull of one in and one out was so mesmerizing that all she had to do was hold on and enjoy the ride. She found out much later that the scream that tore from her mouth as she came had her neighbors calling the emergency services thinking someone was being murdered. Jontie fell forward onto Gilbert and allowed both men to use her willing body as they desired. That she had them both in her life was all she needed.

Later, Jontie went to the bathroom on wobbly legs and shut the door. She felt so sated and rested that it was almost like she was weightless. *Maybe this is the ultimate diet. "Have two men at once and feel amazing."* She leaned against the door and heard them talking. Jontie knew only too well how thin the walls were in the bathroom and like any woman worth her salt she wanted to know what her lovers were saying when they assumed she couldn't hear. She put her ear to the door and listened.

"It has to be very soon. Do you honestly think she'll allow Carter to die? Jontie is a strong, courageous woman who'd go out of her way to save him." Jontie was intrigued. *Carter? And James sounded so definite in that statement. What is all this?* James continued. "She'll rush forward to save him. It's her nature to do so."

"I fear you're right, but by doing so Jontie will start a chain of events that can't be stopped," Gilbert responded. "I have to stop her."

"And I'll make sure she saves him."

“*What?*” Jontie mumbled the word as her mind tried to take in what she was hearing. *Save who? Carter? Edward Carter? Why? And why are they so interested?* A horrible thought struck Jontie hard. *Oh no...it can't be...* Tosh's words about these two men being in her life for a reason hit her like a blow to belly. They wanted her—but for their own particular agendas. Her hopes plummeted—and then the men began speaking again.

“Jontie will be angry when she finds out the truth,” said James. “My understanding is that most humans take lies and manipulation badly.”

Gilbert sighed loudly. “She must never know the truth.”

“That's not very angelic of you, Saint Gilbert.”

“Like *you* care about her feelings, demon.”

Jontie couldn't believe what she was hearing. They were using her to get their own way. Was it a case of who could fuck her into submission first? The thought that she meant so little to them was like a stab to the heart.

“Edward Carter must die sometime in the next two days.”

“Angel, he'll live because Hell needs him to pay back his debts.”

“And you in turn, James, get a boost in power?”

“Yes, what of it? You've no idea how necessary great power is in Hell,” the demon answered. “I suppose you'll get another gold star on your forehead for being a good boy, Saint Gilbert.”

“I ask for nothing.”

"Except from me," Jontie murmured, brushing away the angry tears in her eyes. "I *will not* cry and neither of you will get what you want at my hands." The sudden weightlessness was replaced by the heaviness of her lovers' deceit. *Lovers? They don't love me! Edward Carter? My new boss? These two...men...are with me only because of him?* "Bastards," she spat out as she opened the bathroom door. They were using her to make up her mind to their way of thinking. She knew she meant nothing to either of them other than being an available body and a mind to manipulate. Her aggressive stare locked on the two men she now hated with a passion. "Get out!"

"What?" Gilbert reached out to her in surprise.

Jontie stepped back from him. If either of them touched her now she'd scream blue murder.

"Get the fuck out of my home."

"Lovely one—"

"Oh, *piss off!*" Jontie knew that term of endearment, which once made her melt with love and desire, meant nothing.

"Jontie, darling, what's wrong?"

"I heard you."

They looked at each other and then at her, with guilty expressions.

"Let me explain," Gilbert's eyes were agonized as he gazed into hers.

"I don't want to hear it because it'll be full of crap. You both are. You used me for your own gain." Jontie was angry to think she'd actually believed she loved them. But then, they'd gone out of their way to lure her with their charm and

masculinity. *And me being the desperate, loved-starved fool I am, I went along with it.*

"It wasn't like that." James sounded less surprised than Gilbert at her reaction.

No way was Jontie mollified. "What was it then? You both wanted something so you thought you'd screw me for it and whoever was best would win?" The pain of that knowledge cut deep.

Gilbert shook his head at her words. "I love you, Jontie."

She snorted in contempt. "*That's* not going to work now. I know the truth."

"The lady's right." James didn't move towards Jontie, and she sensed it was like he knew she needed the space. "Regardless of how we feel, Saint Gilbert, we've messed up."

"Yes."

"So what do we do to fix it?"

Jontie, despite her pain, was forthright. "You can't fix this, James." The situation was unfixable because having it broken was unutterably sad—but at least it was honest.

"Lovely one, you need us as much as we need you—and no, not because of Edward Carter." James' gaze was intense on hers. "You're a fire in our blood as we are to you."

"Oh, please!" Jontie didn't believe *that* lame greeting-card phraseology any more than she believed in them. "I feel nothing but hatred for you both."

"Liar," James taunted.

Jontie laughed harshly. "That's hysterical coming from you, demon—and your angel mate's no better. Now get out of my house and my life."

## Chapter 7

“Edward Carter.” No matter how many times she mumbled his name, Jontie still couldn’t believe that this all came down to some man she vaguely knew. Sure, he was her boss but in a “never-darken-my-doorstep” kind of way. He was totally removed from the staff unless he needed to be seen with them for publicity reasons. “Great, I now have to decide whether to save some stuck-up prick or not.”

From what she could work out the angel wanted him dead and the demon wanted to save him. “What am I supposed to do?” Gilbert’s words about no one being all good or all bad came back to her. “No pressure on me, though.”

Jontie rolled back and forward in her bed trying to get comfortable. She knew there was no way she was going to be able to sleep. The sense of betrayal she felt was too painful to let her rest.

“What an idiot I was to think I loved them.”

Gil appeared before her. “Hello, Jontie.”

*And lo and behold, an angel appeared....*

“I’m tired and I want to sleep.” She didn’t want to see him because seeing him made her want him and knowing that she could never be with them made her angry that they’d put her through what they had.



"You don't look well."

*Oh for fuck sake! I cannot deal with this now.*

"I've experienced something disagreeable and I'm trying to deal with it." Jontie felt her body get all excited just looking at him.

"I'd like to talk to you about this."

"And I'd rather not." *Because I'll want to believe you and that would get me nowhere.*

"Call me if you need me, Jontie."

She wanted to cry at the soft yet strong promise of his words.

"I plan never to need either of you again." *Where did it get me?*

"I'm sorry."

He seemed so sincere

"I no longer care."

"You do." Gilbert reached out to touch her.

"Don't." Jontie pulled away. "Goodbye, Gilbert." She stared at the wall for a long time after he'd left.

\* \* \* \*

Next morning as she stood brushing her teeth, James appeared.

"Great—the other one," Jontie mumbled through a mouth full of toothpaste. She spat out the minty foam and looked at him. *Delicious but with a nasty aftertaste.*

"Ah, so I take it the goodly Gilbert was here?" James leaned against the doorjamb and looked at her.

Jontie pulled the belt of her robe tighter. "What do you want?"

“You.”

“And I’ve have had more than enough of you. Go away.”

“I can’t.”

“Yes you can—just click your ruby red slippers together and piss off out of my life.” *And stop looking at me like that because I want you and I refuse to have you again.*

“Come on, lovely one, you like me.” James gave her a rakish grin.

“Yes as much as I like bamboo under the fingernails.”

“Really?” James arched his eyebrow at her. “I’ve never found that particularly appealing.”

*Lord, he was all that and I want him.* “Leave me alone, James.”

“I’ll keep coming back to you.”

“And I’ll keep saying ‘No.’” *Because I have to.*

“You’re a hard woman.”

“You’ve made me so.”

\* \* \* \*

Instead of going to work, Jontie called in sick. It took no effort at all for her to persuade Tosh to have the same dreaded malady.

Tosh’s mouth dropped open as she stopped them in the street when Jontie told her what happened. “You are *kidding* me. So what are you going to do?”

“I don’t know.” She wanted to hate both of them for what they’d done to her but even as she visualized their faces, such sweet memories kept coming back to squash down the hate.

“Well, you have to go to work eventually.”

"I know." Shopping on a sunny day could only lift her spirits so far, whereas unemployment made them plummet.

Tosh pushed her sunglasses back from her eyes and looked at her friend. "When's this saving thing supposed to happen?"

"From what I gather sometime in the next day or so, hence the reason I plan to be sick until the day after tomorrow." *I'll just sit around and mope about what could have been. Maybe eat a carton of ice cream.* Sometimes it could be better than sex.

"What about the angel and the demon?"

Jontie blew out a deep breath. "They're out of my life."

"You know, that almost sounded convincing." Tosh touched her friend's arm. "You love them."

*Maybe.* "I hate them for doing this to me." Jontie felt let down and while it wasn't the first time that had happened in her life, the fact it was those two men who did it hurt.

"Okay, I don't get this." Tosh looked confused. "Yes, they came into your life for an undisclosed reason, but the thing is, Jontie, you were always going to have to make a choice whether to save Carter or not."

"An unconscious, spur-of-the-moment choice, not influenced by sex."

"You are so lucky to even be *having* sex. And two men? Jeez, I can't even remember what sex with *one* guy's like," Tosh declared in envy. "Yeah, the angel and demon stuffed up but can't you see that people in love do dumb things?"

Jontie snorted at her words. "Oh *please*—they're not in love! This was just a game to them."

“How do you know?”

“Because they wouldn’t have treated me that way.” *They should have been honest and told me. And then what, Jontie? You still would have fallen for them because you were meant to.*

“Did you ever think that maybe neither of them had a choice?”

Tosh the diplomat. *God help us all.* “Everyone does.”

“Did you choose to fall in love with them?” It was a valid question and they both knew it.

“No, it just happened,” Jontie conceded in a soft voice.

“So how is that any different?”

When Tosh was logical there was no way to fault her. She was a smart woman. “Are you my friend or theirs?”

“Yours, and only a friend would tell you that you’re being stubborn and throwing away the best thing that’s happened to you.”

Jontie stiffened in shock. “You’re not helping me. Oh crap, it’s him.” She watched Edward Carter as he got out of his car and started to cross the street only yards away from them. It was a very busy street. Jontie felt the hair stand up on the back of her neck. “This is it!” She knew in a heartbeat what she did now would determine a certain course. *And I have no idea what to do.*

“What? You save him now?”

“Or not.” Jontie looked at Tosh. “What am I to do?”

“Nothing.” Tosh dropped her shopping bags and before Jontie had time to stop her she dashed off towards Edward Carter. “I’ll do it for you and break this hoo doo.”

Jontie looked on, horrified as she watched the car approach Carter, whose head was turned in the other direction. It was only Tosh grabbing his arm and jerking him backwards that saved his life.

“Tosh!” Jontie ran to where her friend lay sprawled on the ground with Edward Carter beside her.

“What the bloody hell are you playing at?” he bellowed in rage as he looked at his stained clothes.

“She saved your life, dickhead.” Jontie helped Tosh to stand. “I doubt very much that I would have.” Maybe this was what was supposed to happen. “Are you okay?” She looked her friend over in concern.

“Sure, problem solved.”

\* \* \* \*

Another looked on. “Oh dear, rushing in where angels fear to tread, Tosh McRae. I am going to have to teach you a lesson.” He smiled as he thought about it. “Yes, you’ll do nicely for what I have planned, Ms McRae.”

## Chapter 8

Gilbert appeared a couple of hours later and took her hand. "Hello, Jontie."

"Hi." She'd gone from hating them both to feeling shy and uncertain.

"I've just come by to say goodbye."

Jontie stiffened in shock. This wasn't what she had expected to hear.

"What? But I need you."

Gilbert's smile was soft on her. "You've forgiven me?"

"Yes, you had no choice." It was pointless hating someone who was doing what they believed was right.

"I'm glad." He held her hand to his lips.

"Why are you leaving me?" *Is it as I fear? Now that my part in Edward Carter's life's finished, Gilbert no longer needs me?*

"Whatever your fears, my darling, they're unjustified." His hand engulfed hers. "Besides this is just a temporary goodbye."

"What? I don't understand." *Is he leaving me or not? And how will I get by without Gil?*

"You need to be with James. He needs you more than I at the moment."

*This is so confusing.* His words contradicted themselves. “What about you, Gil? What do *you* need?”

The angel gave a deep sigh of resignation. “That’s not what this is about. It’s about James and redemption.”

“You like him.” Jontie could see it in Gilbert’s eyes. Something had changed in Gilbert when it came to the demon. *But what?*

“As I’ve said before, no one’s either all bad or all good. We’ve proved that in the way we’ve treated you. We were both so caught up in our own ends and treated you badly.”

“But I forgave you—both of you—because I love you.” What had happened in the past was just that. Jontie did not want to relive the wrongs or the rights.

Gilbert pulled her into his arms, hugging Jontie close. “That means everything to me, my darling.”

“But you’re going to leave me anyway?” His voice sounded made up to that fact. “Will I ever see you again?” The thought that she might not, tore at Jontie.

“You’ll see me very soon.”

A sudden chill ran up Jontie’s spine. If he was leaving her to James for only what sounded like a short time, that could only mean one thing. “James?”

“He’s a demon and the lifestyle they lead is precarious at the best of times.”

“Are you saying...” Jontie stopped when she saw the answer in Gilbert’s eyes.

“Be with him, love him and I’ll be there the minute you call for me.” Gilbert pushed back from her, breaking the contact of their bodies.

*James is going to die? Is that it?* She looked at Gilbert. “I thought demons were immortal.” *How can someone as beautiful as James die?*

“Everything can be destroyed, Jontie, including immortals.” Gilbert leaned in and kissed her. “Enjoy the time you have together.” He left before she could speak another word.

Jontie stood stunned. It was like a vital part of her had gone.

“James?”

The demon appeared before her. “Yes, lovely one?”

“I’m sorry for everything.” She moved to him and touched his face. *How I’ll miss you.*

“So am I.” He caught her hand in hers. “I don’t have much time.”

*Oh God, it’s true.* “What?” *Please tell me you’re wrong, Gilbert’s wrong.*

“I’ve been recalled to Hell.” James’ voice had a hard edge to it. “The upper demon realm is not pleased with me.”

“But Carter’s alive.” *Isn’t that what they wanted?*

“It’s not about Carter.”

Then Jontie knew. It was about *her* and what they meant to each other. “Stay here with me. Don’t go back.”

“They would find me regardless, Jontie.”

“But I don’t want you to go.” She flung herself into his arms and held onto James as if it would make a difference.

“If I could stay with you, lovely one, I would but it’s not to be.” James’ hands caressed her back.

“Stay with me tonight,” Jontie urged, needing all the time she could get with him.



“I’ll stay as long as I can.”

That night, their last one together, was so full of desperate, sweet loving. Jontie wanted to remember every touch, every kiss and every tender word James whispered to her. When the dawn came, they both knew it was over. Life as they knew it was about to change.

“Tell Saint Gilbert I’ll do my best to come back to haunt him,” James murmured with a grin as he disappeared.

\* \* \* \*

It wasn’t until a week later she called for Gilbert. Jontie had wanted to be alone to think about James and to mourn him.

Gilbert came to her the minute she spoke his name out loud. “Yes, my darling?”

“James is gone.” She walked into his open arms.

“I knew he had to go. He knew it too.”

“Will he be okay?” Jontie already knew the answer. As time passed and he’d not come back despite her calling his name, she knew James was no more.

“His world isn’t a pleasant one, but you made his life more loving in the last couple of weeks.”

“I hope so.” James deserved that and so much more. “I’ll never see him again, will I?”

“No,” Gilbert confirmed what she already knew.

Jontie’s hands caressed Gilbert’s chest. “I don’t want you to think that I want you as second best.”

“I know that you loved us both equally and it matters not the time you spent with him.” Gilbert’s lips brushed hers in a

tender kiss. "In the end I knew you were meant to be with me."

"I can't bear to lose you, Gil." It was probably crazy to ask for promises but that was what Jontie needed. *I will not lose this man I love.*

"You won't, my darling," Gilbert's voice was soft with reassurance. "We're meant to live a long time together."

*How is that possible? He's an angel. People need him.* "You can't be with me all the time." Jontie had to accept that and love him the time he was with her.

"You need me and the powers that be know that. They know true love can't be stopped for even the will of Heaven."

Jontie felt like an enormous weight had been lifted from her. "Really?" *I want to believe that so much.*

"Yes really." Gilbert placed a teasing kiss on the tip of her nose. "I'll still help people—but on Earth and by your side, my darling."

Jontie sighed in relief. He was hers as she was his.

"Before he left, James told me to tell you that he plans to come back and haunt you."

Gilbert smiled at her words. "I think I'd like that." He lifted her face to his. "This is forever, Jontie. Never doubt that."

"Forever with you is all I want, Gil."

\* \* \* \*

James smiled as one last time he watched the two of them embrace. He turned his back and walked away. It was better this way. Even Gilbert had seen that. What James had to do wasn't going to be pleasant. They both knew that. It wasn't

something he could drag Jontie into. She deserved better. That he adored her was without question, but her life and his could never be as one. He smiled to himself. *Besides, I'm not good at sharing a woman.*

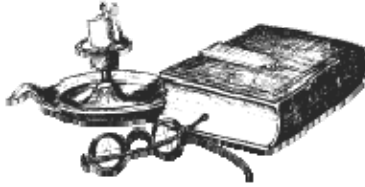
From the sweetness of Jontie's kiss, James closed his eyes and willed himself back to the pit he'd come from. He didn't want to go but so few demons had any choice at that moment. There was a battle ahead and the outcome was uncertain. In many ways it wasn't one James wanted to fight. *But I will.* Only the righteous abstained from fighting. They were smart. Demons were too angry to stop and think about consequences, hence the reason the world was in such a mess.

He muttered to himself as he made his way. "So, back to Hell I go." Gilbert was right. Hell was what it was. There was only black and white and nothing between. If one was strong the pain was bearable. If one faltered... "I'll never falter. I'll never allow Lucifer to take who I am from me." Despite popular mythology, even demons had souls. They were incased in an ironlike shell within and rarely seen—but they existed. Lucifer wanted every soul in Hell he could get. The more corrupt the soul, the more evil he could bring down on humankind. James thought of Jontie. "And I cannot let that happen."

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Amarinda Jones believes anything is possible and sometimes just asking for the impossible will surprise someone enough that they'll give it to you. Writing is like that. Put it out there and wait for a response. There's always the possibility you may fall on your ass, but after all, that's what cellulite is for. Amarinda believes in taking chances, speaking her mind and aging disgracefully. Twenty years from now she plans on being the neighborhood witch all the kids are scared of. But then, everyone has to have a hobby.

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