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AMARINDA JONES

THE
VAMPIRE'S KISS



The Vampire's Kiss

Richard Linquist is a vampire. He wants possession of Maverick House. He is fighting his cousin Alaric over it. When he learns from his housekeeper Polly that the house is his for the taking if he just kisses one particular woman, he knows nothing can be that simple.

Memphis Rower is stunned when she is approached by such a good looking man. Why her? When Richard tells her he needs her to kiss him to gain ownership of a house, Memphis is not about to make that easy for him. While she is attracted to him and sex with Richard is amazing, she denies him her lips. Memphis wants more. Richard has to love her for who she is and not for what she can do for him.

Nothing is ever simple for the vampires of Maverick House. What lies within those walls affects everyone's future.

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Amarinda Jones

EROTIC ROMANCE



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THE VAMPIRE'S KISS

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With deep gratitude,

Amarinda Jones

DEDICATION

To the mad and the bad and the plain naughty. You are the best and the worst, and you make life so much fun. Never change.

THE VAMPIRE'S KISS

AMARINDA JONES

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Chapter One

Memphis panted and moaned as she clutched the ass of the man whose cock was thrusting piston-like in and out of her cunt. Heat raced through her body as her legs wrapped around his waist. She didn't want to miss a second of wild, hard, hot sensations that were controlling her. Memphis wanted everything he could give her. "Don't stop...please don't stop..."

"Kiss me," her lover growled against the soft flesh of her neck.

"Never." For some indefinable reason, Memphis knew if she kissed this man she would lose what was left of her control completely.

"Never's a long time, sweetheart." He lifted his head and looked into her eyes. "You belong to me now."

"I belong to myself." Even as she murmured the words, somewhere deep inside, Memphis Rower knew this man would change her life.

Thirty minutes before.

"Are you kidding me? Kiss her?" Richard Linquist, vampire, surveyed the redheaded woman thoughtfully. "Why would I want to

do that?" The voluptuous lady in question made his cock jerk in anticipation, but kissing to claim someone?

Do I even want to stake a claim on one woman for the rest of my life?

While immortality made him invincible, Richard had a feeling love would weaken him.

I'm not ready for that.

At one hundred and seventy-five years of age, Richard Linquist still wanted to sow his wild oats for as long as he could.

"Yes." Polly Patrick nodded her dyed blonde head in certainty.

"Just like that and she's mine?" Normally Richard never doubted the housekeeper of his ancestral home, Maverick House, but there were times he wondered what Polly's agenda was.

In fact, who the hell is this woman?

He had known her for over a year since being called to the house, but he didn't have a clue who Polly was. She was chameleon-like in her ability to confuse and control those who called Maverick House home.

"Well, it's not going to be that easy."

Richard arched his eyebrow. "Nothing with mortals ever is."

"And she'll fight you. The kiss has to be given by her willingly."

Fight me? Hmm, that would be good. "I like feisty women." Richard's mind went briefly to Josephine who both fought and craved his dominance over her body. *Would this one be the same?* "I really don't understand why we are here at this place." It was a suburban public swimming pool in the middle of Brisbane. It was hardly the place Richard hung out at. Vampires never exercised. They had no need to. They were blessed with a fast metabolism and excellent health. Seeing others sweat and strain was not attractive.

"Because Memphis Rower is here and you need her."

"I need no one." That was Richard's credo. Need got people tied up and controlled. His cousin Alaric was a perfect example of that. Marriage had taken his mortality and Alaric didn't care. He was in

love. “And what a stupid name—Memphis Rower.” *Great body, though.* Richard’s eyes roamed over the lush curves. This was no stick-thin waif. This lady was built for sex. She was all hips, ass, and breasts. He licked his lips in anticipation. She was exactly the type of woman he liked to fuck.

Polly continued on, undeterred by his comments. “I believe her mother was a devoted Elvis fan. He came from Memphis, Tennessee, you know.”

Richard’s gaze switched to the woman at his side. How did a short, nondescript woman of no easily discernable age always seem to have knowledge about everyone? Polly knew about things before they even happened. In those moments when he and his cousin were cordial to one another they speculated on who Polly was. Was she as mortal as she claimed to be? And if so, that was unusual because Maverick House was anything but a normal posting for a mortal woman. The house held great magic—at least, that’s what Alaric and Richard believed. Whoever ended up with ownership of the abode would know just how powerful the house was.

When Polly had come to him and told him there was a woman he had to kiss in order to gain control of the house, he had laughed but agreed to go along with Polly. Kissing a woman, for whatever reason, was no hardship for Richard. He loved women, and they loved him back. “How do you know all this?”

“I just do.” Polly’s smile was simple.

Richard knew there was nothing straightforward about this woman. He suspected that smile hid more secrets than the Sphinx. “Who are you, woman? What secrets do you hold?” Even as he said the words he knew Polly wouldn’t tell him any more than she had to.

“All I can tell you is what the witch who came to Maverick House told me. You must marry your true love to gain ownership of the house.”

Richard wanted the house more than anything. There was something about it that called to him like nothing else did. But

marriage? That wasn't something on his agenda. Marriage was so final. It also meant the loss of his immortality. *I'm not ready for that yet.* "Alaric married Josephine so the house is his." His cousin had won, and that annoyed the hell out of Richard. They had been rivals for years. That he could occasionally take and sexually dominate Alaric's woman was the only satisfaction he had over his cousin.

Polly shook her head. "Not necessarily."

Richard's eyes locked with hers. There was youthfulness in her gaze that belied her appearance. She dressed like a frump with no character or style yet her aura and words were anything but. "Why is it none of us saw the witch?" That intrigued Richard. Polly had claimed she had been visited by an old crone who had told her what the men had to do. Why had she not come to them directly?

"I know not."

Richard snorted. "I think you know more than you say."

Polly's hands went down to her ample hips. "Do you want to stand here and quibble with me or act?"

He was a man of action but Richard also wanted to pierce the veil and get a glimpse into the woman behind it. What do you get out of this?"

"Nothing. Unlike vampires, normal people do things because they can."

That made Richard laugh. "You are the least normal person I know."

"Why thank you, Richard. Now, do as you are bid. I must be off."

He watched her walk away. The fascinating thing about Polly was she dressed plainly to the point of frumpiness and yet she walked like a queen. "One day I will find out who you are, woman." Richard sighed and turned his attention back to the other lady in question.

Maybe what Polly said was right. She usually was. Possibly it was worth his while to go talk to the redhead. If the ownership of Maverick House was still up for grabs, Richard wanted a chance of taking possession of it any way he could.

"I just have to kiss her. How hard could it be?" Richard knew he was considered attractive by women. It was a glamour that all vampires had. But whatever the outcome, a kiss or a slap in the face, Richard was a man of action, and consequences were there to be taken and dealt with accordingly.

And I may just win the house. He made his way over to her.

Memphis Rower was intent on drying herself off after her swim. Richard's eyes travelled over the path her towel took. Large breasts jiggled in the black Lycra as the material swept down the swell of her stomach to her curvaceous hips and pale, dimpled thighs. He felt his cock harden just picturing her pinned, naked and underneath him as he fucked her until she begged to come.

She looked up at him eyebrow arched. "What do you want?"

Attitude. I like it. "You." Richard saw no point in beating around the bush.

"Does that line always work?" Memphis wrapped the towel around her waist.

He smiled. "Generally." She blinked several times. Richard was pleased she wasn't immune to his smile.

"Uh-huh." Memphis slipped her feet into nearby flip flops.

"I want to kiss you."

Memphis burst out laughing. "Sure you do. The point is why would I want to kiss you?" She reached down and picked up a small cotton tote bag.

For the first time in his life Richard was at a loss for words. Mortal women never questioned him. They just came to him and did as he bid. Vampires had a charm that surpassed all human men. Who was this woman? What had Polly set him up for?

"I have to go. I'm sure you'll find someone else to kiss." Memphis turned and walked off.

Richard fell into step beside her, surprised that he was following her and not the other way around. "But I want you."

"Well, fella, the feeling is not mutual."

“Are you kidding me?” His ego had taken a blow, and Richard was unsure how to recover from it.

“I’m just not feeling the love.”

“Do you need love, sweetheart?”

* * * *

Sweetheart? The deep, husky way he said the word made her tremble. Memphis felt hot and cold and unsure whether she should run from him or to him. That was odd. No man ever affected her that way. But then this tall and darkly handsome man wasn’t the run of the mill pick up artist she came across. She had been stunned when the gorgeous man first approached her. Men like that didn’t even look at her twice. Memphis was fully aware she wasn’t beautiful. The best she could be described was plain and buxom. The only thing that stood out was her red hair and generally if a man approached they were only interested in finding out if the hair on her pussy matched that on her head. “I need to go home.” Yet, even as she said the words, Memphis found her feet slowing.

“What if I said I needed you?”

That stopped her in her tracks. No one had ever needed her. It was the one thing she craved. Someone she could rely on. “I’d think you were either stoned or doing this as a prank.”

“A prank?”

“Yes, my pussy is the same color as my hair.” *May as well give him the answer and get him on his way.*

Richard swallowed hard and was silent for a moment. He shifted his stance slightly. “I’m glad to hear that.”

Memphis wondered about his sudden unease. Her eyes travelled down the long length of his body, stopping at the obvious bulge in his pants. She licked her lips. She hadn’t had sex in forever, and the thought of any erect cock was making her wet with need.

“Er—um—” Memphis cleared her throat. *Get a grip, woman.*
“What do you want?”

“I want you.”

“Why?” There had to be a reason a beautiful man was at her side. She was dripping wet, bulging out of her old swimsuit, and smelling of chlorine. There was nothing alluring about her.

“Do you treat all men who want you this way?”

If three ex-lovers could be counted as “all men” then the answer was yes. “You and me? Together?”

“Yes.”

“But for the fact I have no idea who you are or even why you lurk around local swimming pools—”

Richard shook his head. “I never lurk.”

This made Memphis smile. He sounded offended by the implication. “This is just weird.”

He smiled back. “Why?”

“You’re gorgeous.” Memphis was not one to play word games. Things were as they were or not.

“As are you.”

She almost wanted to believe him. *Almost.* Past history with men made her wary. “No, I’m extremely average and smart enough to realize there’s something more behind this.”

“Like what?”

“I don’t know. Why don’t you tell me?” Memphis was oblivious to anyone else at the pool. This man commanded her total attention. Maybe it was the dark, intense eyes that held hers. *Maybe I’m just plain horny.*

“Okay, my name is Richard Lindquist. I’m a one hundred and seventy-five year old vampire, and I need to kiss you to gain sole possession of Maverick House.” Richard smiled at her.

Wow, at least he’s got a great imagination. And that smile? I could live with that for the rest of my life. Head slap—what are you thinking, woman? “Some men will say anything to have sex.”

“What do women say to have sex?” Richard leaned down close to her face, their lips barely inches apart. “What do *you* say?”

“I—er, um—I-I’ve sworn off sex.” *But for you I think I can make an exception.* Every fiber of her being wanted this man inside her body.

Richard looked stunned. “What? Why?”

“It’s all too hard.” *Why did I even mention the sex thing? And what’s with his teeth?* For a beautiful man they looked uneven when he laughed. Memphis thought back to his words. *I’m a one hundred and seventy-five year old vampire.* She looked at his mouth. *Vampire? Nah...*

“I can made sex easy for you.”

“I bet you could.” Some men could seduce with a look. He was one of them.

Richard held out his hand. “Come with me.”

For a split second she had been about to take his hand, but then logic kicked in. “I don’t think so.” Then her eyes met his. His gaze was hot with need. Memphis gulped. “I mean, no.” *That’s right. That’s what I mean. No to the sexy man.*

“Do you really mean no, sweetheart?”

Oh, boy. She didn’t know what she meant when he spoke to her in the low, husky tone. “No—I mean yes—I mean I have to get home.” Fucking possible vampires was not on her list of things to do. *Though I could find room for it.*

“Wouldn’t you like to have guilt-free, fantastic sex?”

Yes, please. “Do I get steak knives with it?” she replied, her tone flippant as Memphis tried to stay in control of what was rapidly becoming an uncontrollable situation.

Richard took her hand. “Come with me,” he repeated once more.

His skin against hers made her tremble. “I smell of chlorine.” Memphis’ fingers curled around his.

“I love the way you smell.”

“I’m wet.”

He smiled. "I'm pleased."

What would it feel like to have his cock between my thighs? "I mean dripping wet."

"Even better." Richard pulled her toward him.

"This is—"

Richard put his finger to her lips. "Shut up for five seconds, Memphis Rower, and enjoy what's on offer." He waved his hand and they disappeared.

A bikini-clad woman in her sixties dropped the tube of sunscreen she was holding. "Did you see that, Harry?" The woman looked agog.

"What?" The man didn't even look up from the newspaper he was reading.

"Those people were there then they weren't. He just waved his hand and they vanished."

"You've had too much sun, Beryl."

Chapter Two

“What the hell?” Memphis landed flat on her back in the middle of what felt like a mattress. Richard’s body came down on top of hers, pinning her to the bedding. She could feel every muscle and bulge. Memphis craned her head around to work out where she was. It looked like a bedroom.

“Where are we? How did you know my name? Who are you? What is this all about? And why me?”

Richard smiled and linked his hands with hers. “You ask a lot of questions, sweetheart.”

“I—what?” How dare he sound amused at her! Memphis tried to pull her hands from his. “Well, answer them. How did we get here?” She was still in her swimsuit so Memphis knew she wasn’t hallucinating in thinking she had been at the pool for her daily exercise.

“I told you. I’m a vampire.” His grin was wide with pleasure.

“Well, I would have thought a vampire would have landed with a little more finesse rather than in an undignified heap like this.” Memphis wriggled to free herself from under him.

Richard moved with her. “I wanted to be on top of you. As for your name? My housekeeper told me that. And, last but not least, we’re at Maverick House.”

“Maverick House?” The name alone indicated trouble to Memphis. She looked up at the man who held her. “I don’t understand any of this.” *I should be scared but I’m not. Why is that? Why do I feel like I belong here — with him? Have I had too much sun?*

Richard's hands released hers. "Just relax, sweetheart." He started to pull down the shoulder straps of her swimsuit. "I promise you'll enjoy yourself."

"That's what I'm worried about." Memphis slapped at his hands. Richard smiled down at her unperturbed. That's when she saw his fangs, long, pointed and gleaming white. "Bloody hell, you *are* a vampire."

He ran his tongue along both sharpened tips. "Yep, they're not for show."

"Are you going to bite me?" Memphis shivered at the thought. *What would it feel like?*

"If you want. I'd like to." Richard's eyes were locked on hers.

Surprise and a wild sense of desire shot through her veins. That he was a vampire shocked her less than him being a stranger.

I've never had stranger sex, but I've always wanted to.

It was wrong and it was naughty and it appealed greatly to Memphis.

I haven't been bad in so long. I need to be bad.

She blew out a sigh. But being good meant being safe.

Oh, crap. Why throw temptation like this in my path?

"Fighting with the inner good girl?"

That surprised her. "How do you know?"

"Women of great class and intelligence always analyze things too much."

Was he serious? Memphis was lost for words, unsure how to take him or what she should do. This was all so crazy. She was a normal, suburban woman who worked in a job she hated and swam to keep fit. There was nothing exciting about her and yet here she was in bed with a vampire. Memphis wasn't even aware her breasts were on display until his mouth descended on one nipple and sucked hard. "Oh, God..." Her hands went to his head to hold him close. The heat from his body was suffusing hers with the most delicious lustful sensations. Her thighs parted of their own accord, and Richard settled between

them and continued sucking. "I usually don't do this—you know, sex with a stranger—let alone a vampire, and you're stranger than most."

Richard lifted his head. "Shut up, Mem sweetheart, and just enjoy."

Mem sweetheart? "Um, R—Richard?"

"Yes?" His voice was muffled as once more his mouth was at her breasts licking her other nipple.

"If we're going to do this..." Any good girl intentions Memphis may have had were thrown out the window with those words.

"What?"

"You know, have sex." Which seemed a forgone conclusion as her hormones were urging her onward. "We need a condom." Being naughty was one thing, being safe was another.

"I'm a vampire I can't get you pregnant and I am immune to all diseases."

"Okay then." This was getting better and better. No messy condoms to deal with. They could be a passion killer sometimes.

Maybe fate wants me to have a good shagging.

"Indeed." Richard began pulling her swimsuit down her legs. He threw it to the floor. "It is red." He ran his fingers through the hair of her pussy. "Beautiful."

Memphis shivered. "I told you so." His head was moving down her body. She stiffened. "What are you doing?" She lifted her upper body and looked down at him. *He wasn't going to do that, was he? No one has ever done that before... Oh, my God, I just know I'm going to scream if he does...*

"I'm going to do whatever I want." He pushed her back onto the bed.

When his tongue touched her clit, Memphis jerked up in surprise and shrieked. The insistent pressure of his tongue made her moan and writhe as she tried to push her pussy against him and yet pull away at the same time as the pleasure was overwhelming. Memphis clutched at the bedding on either side of her. He was relentless, licking,

sucking, and lapping until she was sobbing with the need to be filled. It was like her world had stopped and all focus was between her thighs. She panted hard as wave after wave of hot, ticklish pleasure shot through her body and up her spine.

“Naked. I need you naked,” she whimpered. Memphis needed to feel a hard male body commandeer her own. *I want to be taken. I want to be fucked.* At her command, Richard stopped what he was doing, waved his hand and his clothes disappeared. Memphis applauded. “Excellent trick.” The rights and the wrongs of this whole weird situation no longer mattered. “I need cock.”

Richard smiled at her, his body moving over hers. “And you shall have it.”

As the head of his cock pushed into her cunt, the penetrating heat pushed her back into the bed. Richard’s body surged into hers. There was no stopping. It was total possession. Memphis closed her eyes and gave into the sensation. “O-o-h-h, R-Richard.” And then he began a plunging push-and-pull thrust deep and hard inside her. It was like he was carving his place inside her body. It was raw and sweet and so hot that Memphis felt like she was dissolving into him.

“You like this, sweetheart?” His lips were an inch from hers.

“I love.” Memphis panted and moaned as she clutched the ass of the man whose cock was thrusting piston-like in and out of her cunt. Heat raced through her body as her legs wrapped around his waist. She didn’t want to miss a second of wild, hard, hot sensations that were controlling her. Memphis wanted everything he could give her. “Don’t stop...please don’t stop.”

“Kiss me,” her lover growled against the soft flesh of her neck.

“Never.” For some indefinable reason, Memphis knew if she kissed this man she would lose what was left of her control completely.

“Never’s a long time, sweetheart.” He lifted his head and looked into her eyes. “You belong to me now.”

"I belong to myself." Even as she murmured the words, somewhere deep inside, Memphis Rower knew this man would change her life.

Richard laughed at her. "Playing hard to get?"

"You're on me and in me. I'm not playing. You've got me." She was full of pulsating cock and Memphis loved it.

His hands framed her face. "No, you're right, sweetheart. This is not a game between us." Richard trailed one long finger down her neck. "May I taste you?"

Memphis knew what he meant. He wanted her blood. Her eyes went to his. She saw the raw passion in them. "Um..." She was a woman who trusted few people. *And yet I want to trust him. Why is that?*

"You decide." Richard's dick stilled inside her.

"Will it hurt?" It was a dumb thing to ask as she wasn't scared of pain. It was more that Memphis was suddenly aware she was making a commitment to something.

"I'm told not."

She raised one eyebrow. "Is that because you're usually inside a woman when you do it and she's too dazzled by cock to think straight?"

"Are you dazzled by me?" Richard smiled at her.

Oh, yeah. His smile lit up her heart and she wanted to give him everything. "Sorta...kinda..."

"May I?"

There was really only one answer. Her soul cried out for total possession. "Yes."

"Thank you." Richard's mouth moved down and fastened on the flesh of her neck.

To Memphis, it felt like a really intense love bite as her flesh was sucked into his mouth. Richard's cock was still inside her body as she felt the fangs pierce her skin. She trembled as a slight, sharp pain made her whimper. Memphis held him close as his lips started a

sucking rhythm that his cock moved in time to. She groaned and pressed closer to Richard. At that moment Memphis wanted him to consume her. He was part of her as she was with him. It was a feeling of being whole that she had never experienced before.

Memphis looked down at his lips against her throat. She wanted to kiss him so badly and yet she didn't. Something told her it was not time to yet. "This is probably too late to ask now, but will this make me a vampire?" It always seemed to happen that way in the movies. But then, this was real life. Or was it? Nothing like this had ever happened before so she had no yard stick to measure the experience by.

Richard lifted his mouth and laughed. "You're adorable."

Even with her own blood on his lips he was the most stunning man she had ever seen. "And you're beautiful." Her hands caressed his face. "Suck me. Fuck me."

"For you anything, Mem sweetheart." Once more his mouth was on her neck and his cock ramped up and started slamming into her harder than before.

Each thrust pushed against her clit sending a wave of pleasure through her body. She whimpered and held on not wanting the feeling to end. The friction of his cock was driving her wild. Memphis arched her hips to his, needing to come with him and against him. Spirals of intense pleasure radiated in her pelvis and up her spine.

"Oh, R-R-Richard..." As Memphis came she screamed out his name.

She felt his own release rush hot within her body. They trembled and shook against each other. It was wild and passionate and she wanted to do it all again. When Richard collapsed on her, Memphis gratefully took his weight and caressed his back. This was more than just sex. Never before had she wanted to hold the man who had taken her.

Never before had he wanted to stay in her arms after. Richard lifted his head and looked into her eyes. "Want to kiss me now?"

“One day.” Memphis knew she would, but now was not the time.
I need to know more.

Chapter Three

“I haven’t kissed her yet. She’s still in bed sleeping.” Richard raked a frustrated hand through his hair. He was torn between rushing upstairs and demanding she kiss him so he could taste the sweetness of her lips, and wanting to sink down beside her in the bed and just hold her until he could work out what he felt. No woman had ever affected him this way. He wanted to both fuck her and to cherish her. It was the last thought that really mystified him. Richard never allowed himself to have feelings for any woman, let alone want to cherish one. While he adored all things female, women were to play with and enjoy. He loved making them squirm and sigh and come shivering against him. But cherish? *This is so confusing.*

“Why haven’t you kissed her?” Polly looked amused.

“She won’t let me.” That was the thing that really got to Richard. He never had to ask before. He was always been given what he wanted.

Polly burst out laughing. “Good for her!”

“But we had sex.” Even as he said the words, Richard knew he wanted more than that with Memphis. A strong, alien sense of need had gripped him.

“Even better for her. She gets to come and drive you mad,” observed Polly with glee. “I believe I’m going to like her a lot.”

The problem was Richard also liked her more than he planned to. “Why won’t she kiss me?” This was no longer about ownership of the house. He wanted Memphis to freely kiss him without any pressure from him. *Sure, maybe I’ll get the house but I want her kiss more.*

“What annoys you most? Is it that you need to kiss her to gain the house or that she refuses to obey you because you demand it?” Polly’s eyes were keen on his. “That’s it, isn’t it? She can’t be pushed into what you want. Sex is one thing, but there’s a real intimacy behind a kiss.”

“Sex is intimate,” Richard growled in defense.

“Body parts banging together in search of a climax is not the same as a kiss. That’s a sweet and delicious need that requires total trust and belief in the other person. Anyone can have sex.”

“When did you last have sex, woman?”

“That’s none of your business,” Polly snapped.

“Good grief! You’re blushing.” This was a side to Polly that he had never seen. Richard was fascinated. His housekeeper always appeared to be in control. *What is her secret? And does it have to do with a man? But who?* No male to his knowledge had ventured into the house since she and Alaric had arrived.

Polly took a deep breath as if to control herself. “The point is you have to earn her trust.”

“How do I do that?” Trust was not something Richard had much experience in. Sure he had lived over a century but that was due mainly to living on his wits.

“Get to know Memphis.”

“Please enlighten me further.” Richard seduced women. They fell for him without much effort on his part. How did someone get to know another? And would that result in the kiss he now craved?

“Listen to her. Ask her questions about herself. Show her that you care.”

He blew out a sigh. “I don’t know if this house is worth it.”

“Maybe. Maybe not. But she is and you’re doing it for her and yourself.”

Richard bowed his head at the truth of her words.

Bloody hell. I’ve finally fallen for a woman.

* * * *

Polly Patrick watched the vampire walk back up the stairs to the woman she knew would be his downfall.

“But in a nice way,” she murmured to herself as she headed to the kitchen.

Everyone on the planet had one person they could not walk away from. Memphis was his. It was amusing to Polly to see both Alaric and Richard, mighty, powerful vampires, felled by mortal women.

“And they both need to be taken down a peg.” While neither of them scared her, Polly knew others could be dazzled by them into doing whatever the vampires wanted. That usually meant sex. From the minute they set foot in Maverick House over twelve months ago, Polly had been determined not to give in to their sexual allure. She knew how vampires traded on female weakness. They were stunning men and amazing lovers who could drive a woman mad with lust and need.

“Been there, done that,” Polly said to herself. “And learned a bloody hard lesson.”

Never again would she give in to need like that. But neither man would ever know that. Polly Patrick kept her secrets to herself. She was answerable to no one but the house.

“And then one else.” The defiance in her voice barely hid the fear she felt.

When she had been first called to Maverick House, Polly hadn’t been inclined to answer. She had her own life as a witch and dealing with magic other than her own didn’t appeal to her. Polly had been running a nice little herbal practice in the trendy inner Brisbane suburb of Paddington. She provided ancient remedies to those who needed them. She stung the rich for lots of money to buy her potions and lotions and gave it to the poor for free. Polly had been content and at peace. No one had known her true identity and that suited her.

There were times when being a witch was tiring and living a simple life as a shopkeeper was pleasant.

But Maverick House had demanded her presence as it had her female relations and she knew it was pointless to fight it. Her great aunt Agatha had explained it to her like this.

"The House is like its name. It answers to no one and does as it wants."

Polly had not been willing to accept this fait accompli "But surely we have a choice?"

Agatha had shaken her head. "No, no we don't."

"But how? Why?"

"A deal was struck many years ago to save the life of one of our ancestresses from the witch trials that were happening in Great Britain at that time. She was sentenced to be burnt at the stake. To avoid this, our kin promised that all descendants would obey any call that was issued from Maverick House. Ever since, we have obeyed all commands if summoned. I myself was the housekeeper for a short time."

"What happened?"

Agatha shook her head. "I cannot say. I promised."

"Who owns this house?"

"Vampires."

Polly was not shocked. Witches rarely were. She knew many paranormal beings roamed the earth. "So we have to do what they want?" Never in her life had Polly followed a command and she didn't plan to now.

"Yes. We must do as the house wants."

"But it's an inanimate object. It does not have the ability to make me do anything I don't want to." Polly was surprised any of her kin had gone along with this. From the stories that had been passed down to her, Polly understood them all to be strong-minded women with demands of their own.

"The house is magic. It has the soul of the very first Lindquist vampire trapped within its walls. He was one of the most powerful beings who ever lived."

Polly snorted at this. "Can't have been that powerful if he got himself trapped in the walls."

"Even vampires make mistakes. He chose the wrong battle to fight."

"He who?"

"Aran Lindquist."

"Well, I don't care who he is. I'm not doing as bidden."

Agatha shook her head. "You will have no choice, my dear."

And Polly found that out herself. Maverick House had called her in her sleep over two years ago. At first she had fought it. Polly had used every skill she had as a witch to create a spell that would deflect the call, but none had worked. She quit sleeping, dosing herself with a concoction of herbs to keep her awake, to fend off any demands placed on her. But every night the house called to her.

And then one night, when she was tired and worn out, the man had appeared in her bedroom. At first Polly thought she had been hallucinating when the tall blond male appeared. His clothes were like something out of an old Hollywood epic of *Camelot*. While it was not usual for her to see spirits, this one was something different to the norm. This one had the look of one who could not be spelled away by a potion.

"You cannot fight me, Polly. I will win." He walked toward her, his stride strong and confident. The closer he got the more real and full-bodied he became. "I always win."

Polly stood her ground. "Not this time." She knew instinctively who this was. Polly wondered how he had escaped the walls that held him.

He answered her unspoken words. "From time to time, if it's important enough I can bargain with the house to free me. Whatever penalty it imposes is worth the moment of freedom."

"I will not do as you or anyone else says."

"It is your duty to obey me, Polly." His smile was one of great certainty.

Polly saw the fangs. They didn't repulse her. She knew too many supernatural beings to be horrified by the unusual. His being in her home gave her a chance for information that she may be able to use to save herself. *Get to know thy enemy*. She had a feeling her survival and sanity depended on it. "Who are you?"

"I am Aran Lindquist, your master."

Her guess was correct. "I am no one's slave." Polly turned her back on him in defiance. She would play this her way or not at all.

Aran laughed at her words. "Face me, woman."

"No, I have no need for conversation with you." She picked up her embroidery basket, which sat beside her bed. She employed herself with this when she could not sleep.

"Polly. Turn around."

"I have no time for you. I'm busy." She gasped out loud when the heat of a solid, male body slammed into hers. His hands wound around her waist and pulled her back into him. "Let me go." Her words were stilted and as calm as Polly could make them. *I will not panic*. Fear was an emotion that could be turned back on you as a weapon. When he refused to free her, she kicked her bare foot back into his shin. *Oh, if only I had my boots on*. But she didn't. Polly was dressed in her nightgown.

"If you want to make this harder than it has to be, then so be it, woman."

Polly felt herself pushed forward and over the bed, her ass up and the man close behind her. "Do you think by raping me I'll submit to your plans?" She felt the cool rush of her night air on her backside and thighs as her nightdress was thrown up.

Aran covered his body with hers. "This will not be rape," he whispered into her ear.

The warmth of his embrace made her shiver. Polly wanted to be repulsed, but she wasn't. She wanted to fight him, but the urge to do so wasn't there. That scared her more than the man.

When Polly felt his lips on the small of her back she froze. "What are you d-d-doing?" The gentle touch of his mouth on her skin made her hot all over. *Oh no, anything but this.* Polly wasn't sure if she pushed back in an effort to dislodge him or to encourage him.

Either way, Aran was not deterred. He placed a long line of soft, sucking wet kisses down her back to her ass, his hands gently caressing the soft cheeks. "Open your legs."

"No." Oh, but she wanted to. It had been so very long since Polly had enjoyed a man between her thighs. *But I will not submit.*

"You're too stubborn for your own good." His knee nudged between her thighs and parted them. Aran knelt down between her legs and started to tongue her clit.

Polly choked and gripped the bedding. This was torture of the most pleasurable kind. How smart of him to know that this would get to her more than a beating. "Stop it," she whimpered, her words weak with need.

Aran didn't answer. He continued to lick and suck her.

When one long finger penetrated her cunt, Polly jerked forward. Every spell to deter or wound a man became jumbled in her mind. How could she concentrate on ridding herself of him when he was taking her with a sweet insistence that answered the needs of her body and soul?

"Please don't do this to me."

Aran paid no attention to her pleas. He licked from her anus to her clit and back again, his finger thrusting inside her body.

Polly was helpless under his mouth and touch. As much as she wanted him gone, she wanted him inside her and that scared her. Once inside, Polly knew she would be doomed.

He lifted his head. "Tell me you want me to fuck you."

"Never." She jumped as the hand slapped down hard on her butt.

“You will be mine. You will do as I command.”

“Fuck off.” Her words were greeted by another swift volley of slaps. The stinging pain made her crave more from him. She wanted his touch, the pain, his cock. It was humiliating yet exciting for Polly. She pushed her ass out for more.

Aran chuckled. “You’re enjoying this.” He spanked her again and again. “Tell me what you want.”

“No.”

“Do you want me to fuck you?”

Yes. “Go fuck yourself.”

“I think you need to be taught a lesson, woman.” Aran raised himself up and moved close to her ass.

Polly knew what would happen next. She needed it to happen. The thought of being taken from behind by a dominant partner excited her more than it appalled her. As his dick thrust inside her soaked cunt, she cried out his name.

“Soon it will always be like this for us, Polly my love.”

The sound of his balls slapping against her ass and the heat of his thrust had Polly panting in need as she tried to take more of his cock inside her. “I hate you.”

Aran leaned in close to her neck. “You hate so delightfully.” His tongue licked the side of her neck.

“No.” She knew what he wanted to do. Sex and blood-letting were one and the same to a vampire. “I will not allow it.” *If I do I will always be yours.*

“Yes, you will, Polly. I will take you and make you mine.” Aran’s cock slowed its pace as his mouth fastened on her neck.

When his fangs pierced her throat, Polly knew she was doomed to serve him. “You bastard.” His response was to thrust and suck as hard as he could. To Polly it was like he was staking his claim on her and she was helpless to do anything but submit. When the orgasm hit, she bucked and pushed against him, milking every drop from his cock.

Aran's mouth left her neck and he turned her head to kiss him. Polly tasted her own blood on her lips and knew she was his.

* * * *

"Fucking bastard," Polly muttered as her mind came back to the present. She cared not that he could hear her. Aran had not come to her since that night. Although once more trapped within the walls of the house, he had won. He had no reason to approach her, however, she could always feel him around, waiting and watching. Like now. The fine hairs on the back of her neck rose. Polly knew Aran was near.

"I'm doing what you want. Now back off."

Polly pushed her bleached blonde hair back from her face. Normally her hair was brown, her eyes hazel, and her age thirty-four. But these were not normal times, and she disguised herself to deflect Richard and Alaric's attention from her.

"Those two vampires are as horny as goats." She was not for them. "I belong to no one." Polly liked the sound of defiance in her voice. It made her feel strong. That was, until the solid heat of a male body pressed against her. Every so often Aran did that as if to remind her he was there.

Like I could forget.

She closed her eyes and sighed. Polly was annoyed with herself that she once more craved the feel of his cock inside her. She could not forget that feeling. Polly had taken no man since that night.

"Go away." The lightest touch of what felt like a finger brushed her cheek. "I mean it. I will get those boys both married and then it's over."

That had been Aran's plan. Why? Polly had no idea. It was in the letter that she had found the first time she had walked into Maverick House. Why marriage? From what little she knew of Aran, she

doubted he was a romantic. He had taken her with passion, but there had been no love.

“The minute they are with those they love, I’m leaving. I want my life back.” Even as she said the words Polly knew it would never be as simple as that.

Chapter Four

Memphis sat up with a start and looked around her. The luxuriously appointed bedroom was foreign to her. She saw her discarded swimsuit on the floor.

She was naked. Memphis clutched at a sheet to cover herself. “Okay, now what the hell happened?”

She had just come out of the deepest sleep of her life and her mind was fuzzy as she tried to remember. She looked once more at her swimsuit. A vision of gentle male hands came to her.

Richard. The vampire.

“I had sex with a vampire.” Strangely, that didn’t sound as weird as it might have to Memphis. She touched the left side of her neck. The small wound was tender but not painful.

“Crap! What the hell was I thinking?” She scrambled off the bed tugging the sheet with her. “Sex with immortals is bound to be wrong. Great, of course, but wrong, wrong, wrong.” Memphis stumbled as she bent down to pick up the only clothes she had.

The door opened and Richard appeared. “Hello.”

Her eyes went instantly to the sexy vampire. Her heart beat madly as she felt a rush of wet heat between her legs. He was gorgeous. That was bad. In a good way. But still bad. *Very, very bad.*

“Stay away from me!” Memphis wanted to get dressed and be gone before she had a chance to do something stupid. *Like have sex with the luscious vampire again.*

Richard took no notice of her words as he walked over to her. “Why?”

“Just do it.”

“Scared I’ll touch you some more and you’ll like it?”

“Yes. I mean no. I mean—” *What the hell do I mean?* “I have to leave.” Yes, that sounded smart. *Flee. Run. Scarper.*

“You can’t leave.”

Memphis hugged the sheet to her breasts. “You’re not the boss of me.”

“No.”

Oh. That response was unexpected. “Well, let me go, then.”

“You have to kiss me.”

Memphis looked at his lips. They were infinitely kissable but something held her back. “Why?”

Richard smiled. “Because I need you to.”

His words held a sweet kind of desperation to them. Memphis almost believed the need to taste her was genuine but then her mind went back to his words at the pool. “If I kiss you now you get ownership of some house.” So much for wanting her. This was about real estate.

“This house.” Richard spread his arms wide. “Maverick House.”

“I don’t care if it’s a tin shack. I’m not kissing you.” *I do have my pride.* Kissing someone for their own personal gain did not appeal to Memphis.

“Why not? Don’t you like me?” He moved closer to her.

She edged away. “No.”

“Okay, then. You do like me.” He shadowed her moves.

“I didn’t say that.” Memphis stumbled once more on the sheet trailing at her feet.

“So, kiss me, sweetheart.” He waved his hand, and his clothes disappeared.

He was beautiful. If there was ever a reason to throw herself into a man’s arms and be consumed by kisses, Richard was it. Memphis swallowed hard. “I’m picky who I kiss.” *Look him in the eyes. Keep it above waist level woman.*

“We had sex.”

“Yes.”

“It was great.”

It had been fucking amazing. “It was okay.”

Richard looked amused. ““Okay?” Oh, how badly you lie.” He leaned forward and pulled her to him. “Kiss me.”

“No.” Memphis tried to pull the sheet from out under her feet. In doing so she fell down onto the carpet. She rolled over and tried to get up.

But Richard was too quick for her. He dropped down onto Memphis, pinning her body under his.

“This is so uncomfortable.” And yet as she said the words, her thighs parted under him.

“Liar.” Richard slid between her legs.

Full, hot cock rested against her inner thigh. Memphis felt a rush of wet heat between her legs in anticipation of the first sweet thrust.

“I’m not having sex with you again.” It sounded lame to her own ears. She could, if she chose, fight him, claw at his face, and demand he get off her. *Yes, I certainly could do all those things.*

“Okay,” Richard responded pleasantly, his fingers toying with her nipples.

“I mean it.”

“Sure you do.” His mouth moved to her neck and began nuzzling her.

Oh, he feels so good on top of me. “Stop it.”

“Or what?” Richard’s teeth nipped at her neck.

“Or I’ll—er, well, um, this is wrong.” It had to be. This much naughty pleasure was bound to have a cost.

Richard lined up the head of his cock against her pussy lips. “Does this feel wrong?”

In answer, Memphis arched her hips upwards without thinking. “I need to go home. I can’t keep having sex with you.”

This amused Richard “Why not?” He pushed just the head of his cock inside her cunt. “You want me.”

Memphis wiggled against him to entice more of him inside her. "Okay, I do, but it's just because I haven't had good sex before." It was an educational experience for her. *Yeah, that's it. I'm being educated and everyone knows knowledge is power so...*

"Just good sex?" Richard pulled his dick out.

Memphis whimpered at his withdrawal. "Pretty good sex."

"Pretty good?" Richard started to lift off of Memphis.

She pulled him back down to cover her. "Okay, great sex."

"Hmm," he murmured sounding unconvinced.

"Fine. Fucking amazing sex that made me so hot I thought I'd pass out as I came."

That made Richard smile. "Want to fuck some more, sweetheart?"

"Yes, for God's sake, get inside me now." Memphis sighed as the first thrust pushed into her body.

"You like that?" He began fucking her slow and deep.

"Harder."

Richard looked down at her. "I don't want to hurt you."

"I'm not made of spun sugar, vampire. Now fuck me hard."

"You're the boss." He pulled out and slammed back inside her.

Memphis cried out in excitement, her hands cupping his ass and holding him close. She wanted to feel every inch of him on or in her. "Like I'm the boss. You kidnap me and fuck me into submission."

He smiled. "It's been fun, though."

Yeah, it had. "The biting thing is interesting." Memphis wanted to feel that again but she wasn't sure how to ask. It wasn't something that was the norm when it came to sex. Memphis wrapped her legs high around his waist.

"You just have to ask and I'll do anything you want, Mem sweetheart."

"Bite me." Her words came out in a breathless rush. She was being fucked hard and fast. Just what she craved. *I want everything this man can give me.*

* * * *

“My pleasure.” Richard’s eyes were soft on the woman he held close to his heart.

For the first time in a very long time, Richard felt an emotion he had tried to avoid most of his life. Love. It was a complicated feeling that humans enjoyed but vampires found difficult to deal with. They were not looking for relationships. There was no point. They outlived everyone they came across. And yet, looking down in Memphis’ eyes, Richard knew the feeling that had come over him was not as alien as he once may have thought it. That she needed to feel his touch, his body and his mouth on her neck made Richard feel stronger and more alive than he had in his one hundred and seventy-five years.

His mouth moved down her neck. Richard felt the strong life pulse in her jugular. That Memphis willingly wanted to share this with him meant everything. As his fangs sliced into her flesh and the first sweet rush of blood touched his tongue, Richard felt a joy that overwhelmed him. They may have only just met. They may not know everything about each other, but that didn’t matter.

I want this woman for life.

“Oh, R-R-Richard.”

He loved the way she stammered his name. It told him this was not just a one-sided thing on his part. That Richard could give Memphis pleasure made him feel powerful. He continued the deep, hard pace of his cock inside her. That and the flow of her blood made this the sweetest, most exciting fuck that Richard had ever experienced.

I never want this to end.

But it would. The best things always did.

He felt her body shake and shudder as the orgasm took hold of her. That Memphis clutched Richard closer to him made his heart swell. Her long, loud shriek of release would no doubt be heard throughout that house but Richard didn’t care. He was giving his

woman satisfaction and that's all that mattered to him. Other people could think what they liked. As he came in her arms, his fangs disengaged from her neck and Richard kissed the wound.

"Bloody hell. Pardon the pun," Memphis murmured against his shoulder as she sought calm.

"You have to kiss me after that." Richard longed for her mouth on his. Never before had a kiss been so important to him.

"No."

"Why not?" Richard knew Memphis was holding back. But why? What more did he have to do? Whatever it was Richard would give it gladly to her.

"You don't deserve it."

That made him laugh. Memphis sounded so prissy and so like a woman who was confused. Richard knew part of why she declined was due to self-preservation. Being told she had to kiss someone was not a normal situation for anyone. The need to rebel against it was instinctual. Humans and immortals alike wanted to make their own decisions.

"So, you allow me inside your body, but I'm not allowed your lips?"

"Correct."

Richard sighed and rolled away from her. "You're going to drive me mad."

"Possibly, but you can always let me go home."

"I can't do that." *I need you in my life.* Richard had never realized how lonely he was until he met Memphis.

"Why not?"

His eyes met hers. *How would she handle the truth of what I feel? Will she believe me? Is she feeling the same way?* "Because for some strange reason, Mem sweetheart, I think I'm falling in love with you."

"Whoa!" Memphis jerked upright in response. "Really?"

"Uh-huh." *At least she hasn't run screaming out of the room.*

"Oh."

“Yeah.” Richard knew this was going to be a tough sell.

“Well, er...”

“Exactly.” Indecision was not what he wanted to hear. Richard was used to being in control.

Memphis pulled her legs up to her body and wrapped her arms around them. “I need time to think.”

“Me, too.” And Richard knew exactly where to do it. Love was screwing with his mind. *I need to feel in control again.*

* * * *

Richard went from Memphis to find Josephine in the bedroom she shared with his cousin. He knew it was the wrong thing to do, but the need to be in control of a woman and not feel like he was losing his own overwhelmed him. No woman had ever made him so confused.

Josephine moaned softly as Richard fastened her hands behind her head. Her legs were already wide open and held up and back against the rough wood of the chair he was strapping her hands to. She was totally exposed and completely at his mercy. Richard could do what he wanted with her. But that was his history with his cousin Alaric’s wife. There was no love between them. Each fed off the needs of the other. Richard liked to dominate, and after the pretense of fighting him, Josephine submitted to him. Alaric knew of their games and let them play as long as Josephine always came back to him.

Richard stood between her legs. His cock was stiff with need. Domination always excited him. He pictured Memphis trussed up like this. Would she allow that? “What do women want?”

“Huh?” Josephine looked perplexed as this was not what she expected from their usual play.

“What do you see in Alaric?” Richard edged forward until his cock was in line with her anus. He always took Josephine in the ass. He had her backside prodded up with cushions in such a way that he

could slide right in. Richard did not need her to move or touch him. Josephine was as much to him as he was to her. They were fuck toys.

"I love him." She wriggled against the padding beneath.

Richard could see the need in her eyes and the slick wetness dripping down from her cunt. He was going to fill and use her in his frustration. "How is that possible when you have sex with me?" *How can I love Memphis when I'm planning to fuck another woman?*

"You know why."

Richard fisted his cock and placed the head at the tight, puckered hole of her ass. He knew it would hurt her. He also knew Josephine needed that. "Because you like rough sex."

Her eyes strayed to the array of dildos on the table beside her. "Yes."

As he pushed inside her body, Josephine whimpered and cried out in pain, but Richard didn't stop. They had played this game too many times before to know that Josephine needed whatever he did to her. The tightness that gripped his cock made Richard groan out loud. He wanted to fuck her hard and fast and try to obliterate thoughts of Memphis from his mind. She had only just come into his life. It was not like she had to stay in it.

Do I even want a woman who refuses to kiss me?

Richard pulled out part way and slammed back in. Josephine wailed in excitement. In so many ways this was more what he needed in his life. Love just screwed with a person's mind.

"Go faster," begged Josephine.

Richard pinched one of her nipples hard between his fingers. "Shut up. You're not in control here."

"But I want—"

Richard pulled his cock out from her ass.

"No, don't do that."

"Well, be a good girl and say nothing." He thrust back into her once more. Richard reached over and grabbed the largest dildo. He placed it at the entrance to her cunt.

“Oh, God, don’t do that.”

Richard knew it was exactly what she wanted him to do. “Why not?”

“It’s just wrong and bad.”

“Good.” He pushed the vibrator inside her vagina and flicked on the switch. Josephine’s pelvis pushed forward for more. She was filled, and she loved it. There were no secrets to this woman. Josephine was simple in her wants and desires.

If only I could work out what makes Memphis tick.

Richard plowed cock and toy away inside her until Josephine came screaming.

“Please come on me,” she panted as she tried to come down from her high.

Richard removed his cock but he left the dildo vibrating inside her. He never came inside Josephine. Neither of them wanted that. He knew she liked the feel of sticky cum shooting onto her skin. It was a degradation she craved.

“Please, Richard.”

He fisted his cock and milked his shaft with a fast motion. As the jets of cum released, he aimed at her breasts and stomach, knowing that was what Josephine liked. Once spent, Richard pulled on his discarded trousers.

“You can’t leave me like this,” Josephine wailed.

He always left her exposed and vulnerable. Richard knew Polly would come soon and release her. “You don’t get to tell me what to do. I’m in control.” Even as he said the words, Richard knew this was the last time he would ever do this. Memphis was now in control of him.

Chapter Five

“Hello.” A tall, dark man appeared behind her

Memphis jumped in surprise. “Crap!” Her plan was to walk out of the house without anyone noticing, even though she had a feeling not a lot went unnoticed in this house as was the case now.

The dark-haired man looked at her with a smile. “Crap?”

“I mean, er—sorry—I, um—who are you?” Two handsome men in the same house. What were the odds?

“Alaric.”

Memphis nodded in understanding. “Ah, you’re the cousin.” That made sense. These men had good genes.

“And you are?”

“I’m trying to get the hell out of here.” The door was so near yet so far.

“Nice swimsuit.”

Memphis tugged at the bottom near her ass hoping the fabric was not riding up too much. “Er, thanks.”

“Did Richard bring you here?”

“Yeah, we sorta popped in.” *Had sex, I got confused with all the falling in love talk, and now I’m making a break for it.*

“I see.” Again Alaric smiled.

“Do you?” *I sure as hell don’t.*

“Yeah, he’s my cousin.”

“Of course.” *Duh, forehead slap.* He would know Richard better than anyone. “So you’re another vampire?”

“Yeah.” Alaric opened his mouth and showed his fangs.

“Nice.” It was probably not the right word but it was the only one she could think of standing exposed and vulnerable in her swimsuit. “Have you seen Richard?” After the awkward moment when the “love” word was mentioned, he’d disappeared. That was when Memphis decided to make good on her escape before he found her and persuaded her to change her mind.

“He’s playing with my wife.”

“Huh?” Memphis listened as Alaric explained the relationship between Richard and Josephine. She was agog and angry. How could he profess love to her then go screw his cousin’s wife? That was just wrong to Memphis. Was that permissible in the vampire world? “And you allow him to do her ? I mean, er, have um—”

Alaric helped her out. “Have sex with my cousin?”

“Well, yeah.” *If Richard was mine that cock would belong to me and no one else—fetishes or not.*

“I’ve lived a very long time. I understand passion and needs. What Josephine and I have is passion and love, but yet I know there’s a darker side that she needs to let loose every so often,” Alaric explained to her. “How do you feel about him and her together?”

Jealous as hell. “It’s none of my business,” Memphis responded primly.

Alaric chuckled. “Liar.”

“Look this is just a one night—I mean one day—well, not even a full day—stand with your cousin. What he does has nothing to do with me.” *But if I see him again I will be letting him know that I share no man.*

“Do you really believe that?”

No. “Yes.” *Oh hell, I don’t know what to believe anymore.* So much had happened in such a swift period of time.

Alaric didn’t look convinced. “What scares you?”

Lots of things did but she wasn’t about to tell supernatural beings her weaknesses. “Nothing.”

“Come on, tell me. I have no agenda with you.”

That was true. Memphis knew of nothing Alaric had to gain from her. "Okay, it's Richard's preoccupation to kiss me." Memphis loved to be kissed by the right person. However kissing for personal gain did not install confidence in her abilities as a woman.

Alaric laughed. "That's not unusual for a man to want to kiss a woman."

"He said he needs to kiss me to win this house." The house was okay but there appeared to be too many rooms for Memphis' liking. She hated cleaning.

"Ah, the house." Alaric didn't look surprised. "We both want Maverick House. I had a feeling getting married was not the end to the ownership battle." He explained to Memphis about the witch and her words to Polly, their housekeeper, about the first cousin to find true love and marry would win the house.

Hmm. That sounded a little odd to Memphis. Why was this Polly the only one who saw this witch? Did she have an agenda of her own? *This is all most curious.* "What's so important about this place?"

"It's not only magical but it's our heritage." He sized up the woman before him. "Richard must need to kiss you in order to get it."

"I don't kiss people unless I want to."

"Do you want to?"

"Yes." Why lie? Memphis had a feeling Alaric could see straight through her defenses. "But I'm not doing it for him to win a prize and then he dumps me."

"That's fair enough," Alaric responded. "How do you feel about Richard?"

"I barely know him."

The vampire sighed. "We're a weird family. Maybe you should leave before we mess you up."

Good idea. She needed time to think. "I will. I am. I'm going to." Memphis marched to the front door and pulled at the handle. It didn't budge. She pulled again. It held fast.

“Oh, yeah, you’re the one for Richard. The house knows what’s right.”

It was then a woman came along. “My name is Polly, and I’m the housekeeper here. Let’s find you some clothes, my dear.”

“I want to go home.” Yet Memphis allowed herself to be led away by the peroxide blonde.

“That’s impossible,” Polly told her as they walked up the staircase to the next floor that housed the bedrooms.

“But—”

“No buts. We all have to do what the house commands.”

The tightness in Polly’s voice made Memphis look into the other woman’s eyes. “You, too?”

“Yes, but this isn’t about me. I must admit I’m enjoying this between you and Richard. He needs to be taken down a peg or two. He needs you, Memphis.”

“Really? I think you’re wrong. He’s with someone called Josephine at the moment.” Memphis felt a stab of jealousy. *How can I be jealous when I barely know the man? I have no claims on him. We had sex twice.*

Polly waved her hand in dismissal. “They’re just playing. It means nothing. They both have a wild, dark side that only the other can fulfill.”

“You all take sex so casually here.”

“No, we have a different understanding of it than others,” Polly explained to her. “And you’re the one for Richard. Josephine doesn’t want him as a partner for life. He’s like a big sex toy for her. Alaric is the one she loves.”

This was all so confusing. Vampires, sex toys and magical houses. Whatever next? “Richard said he was falling in love with me.”

“Excellent.”

“It’s too soon to say stuff like that.”

“Rubbish.”

Memphis was silent for a moment. "Well, I'm not going to kiss him."

Polly smiled. "You will when you're ready."

The woman had an answer for everything. "Who are you?"

"Just a simple housekeeper."

Memphis shook her head. "I don't think so. I believe there's a lot of stuff going on inside of you and that blonde hair is just a mask to cover it all." Memphis knew peroxide when she saw it.

The blonde woman stopped and looked at her. "You're smart."

"As are you."

"I do what I must to survive," Polly shrugged her shoulders.

"So this witch that only you saw—"

"Was a means to an end and as soon as these boys are settled I can leave."

Why couldn't she leave now? "Are you trapped?"

"I'm biding my time."

Memphis looked at her surroundings. The house that held them, literally, was ornate, grand, and imposing. It was unlike her own suburban, humble abode. "What is it about this house?" She stopped and touched one of the stone walls. Surprising warmth, unusual for stone, suffused her hand.

"That's a very long story," Polly responded quietly, not hesitating in her step.

A wild thought occurred to Memphis. "This house is alive."

That stopped Polly. She turned and looked at Memphis. "Yes."

"Who? How?"

"One day I'll tell you but not today."

"Why not?" The need to know burned within Memphis. She wanted to understand Richard and the house was a part of him.

"Because the truth does not always set you free."

Chapter Six

Dressed in oversized jeans and a long t-shirt, Memphis sat on the bed in the bedroom she had occupied with Richard and thought about everything that had happened to her. He said he loved her. The thought of that made her hot all over. No one had ever loved Memphis.

“Yeah, but then there’s this Josephine chick.” How could you profess love then go fuck another woman? And *‘darker sides and passions that needed to be answered?’*

“Well, damn it, he can do all that with me or no one.” Memphis stopped and thought about what she had just said and the truth smacked her in the face. “I want Richard in my life. But how can that be? I barely know this man.” She ran her hands over her face. “This is so confusing.”

As if on cue, Richard appeared out of nowhere. “Hello.”

Memphis sprang off the bed. “You can’t just pop in and out like that. What if I needed privacy?”

“Did you?”

“That’s not the point.” She put her hands on her hips and fronted him. Memphis was gripped by two distinct emotions—pleasure at seeing him and jealousy at knowing where he had been. “Anyway, what do you want?”

He smiled softly at her. “You.”

“Really? After another woman you come to me? I don’t think so.” Memphis wanted to slap him for letting another have what was hers. *Mine? Well yeah.*

“Jealous?”

“No, you can screw whomever you want.” *Not.*

There was a smug look of pleasure in his eyes. “You are, and I like that a lot.” Richard moved toward her.

Memphis stood her ground. She wasn't about to be bullied by anyone. Dominance wasn't a turn-on for her. Equality was. “I don't want to be one of many.” Memphis realized, as she said the words, that she was talking about a future with Richard.

“What do you want?”

You. “I don't know.” Normally she was decisive in her thinking. At the moment Memphis was anything but.

“Yeah, you do. You're just scared to say it.” Richard came to stand before her.

“How do you know that?” Memphis poked a finger against his chest.

“I can see it in your eyes, Mem sweetheart. They're very expressive.” Richard's hands came to rest on her shoulders. “Josephine —”

The heat from his hands both alarmed and excited her. “I don't want to know.” *I do but I don't.*

“I want you to know.”

Okay, maybe it's best to get this out in the open so we can all move on to wherever that is. “That you have a dark, sadomasochistic side she shares with you?”

Richard nodded. “That's all there is to it. She considers me a sex toy.”

Good. Because I'd have to kill her if it was anything more. Memphis froze at her thoughts. *Oh dear, maybe I'm feeling a little too much here.*

“And you?” *Say you love her and I'll scream.* Memphis would declare to anyone who asked her that she wasn't the possessive type. *I just know what's mine.*

“Josephine needs to be dominated.”

Oh, I have to meet this chick. “What about me?”

“Do you want to be dominated?”

“No.” *Maybe. I don’t know. Will I get to come?* “I want respect.” The other obvious response was she wanted to be loved. *But one step at a time.*

Richard pulled her into his arms. “I respect you.”

Memphis soaked up the warmth of his body against hers. “What if I wanted to play with Alaric?” She felt him stiffen in response.

“Do you?”

“No.” His cousin was cute but he was not hers. And that was the whole thing. Memphis wanted exclusivity with a man. Anyone could screw around. Few people were lucky to stay together.

“Do you want to play with me?” He lifted her chin so he could look in her eyes.

“Maybe.” Richard’s chuckle in response made her feel all girly. “What if I asked you to give up Josephine?” Even as she said the words, Memphis knew she wouldn’t, which was weird because she didn’t believe in sharing her man. *My man?*

“I would if you desired it.”

“Frig, I don’t know what I desire anymore. You vampire people with your weird house are confusing the crap out of me.”

Richard smiled into her eyes. “You desire me.”

“You? She pushed her hands against his chest. “You’re just a big sex toy.”

“So, do as you will with me.” Richard waved his hand and his clothes were gone in a flash.

Her eyes went to his cock. “I’ve never actually, well, you know—”

“What? Made the first move?” Richard didn’t look surprised. In fact, he looked pleased.

“No.” How silly and naïve did she sound?

Richard held out his arms to her. “I’m yours, Mem sweetheart.”

And she knew in her heart those were not idle words. “I, um...”
Where do I start?

“Touch me,” he said.

Memphis’s hand reached out to his bare chest before her brain could contemplate all the ramifications of what she was doing. Her fingertips slid over the hair-roughened plane and down to his stomach. Her eyes went back once more to his cock. It was jutting out as if begging for her touch. *And I want to touch.*

Richard took her hands and guided them down to the shaft. “Please.”

She stroked the length of it. It was hard yet velvety smooth. Memphis closed her eyes and remembered once more the hot fullness of his dick plunging inside her. She licked her lips in thought. *Oh, what I would really like to do to him right now.*

“What are you thinking?”

Her eyes opened on his. “I’ve never sucked a cock before.” Memphis knew she was blushing but it was okay. This was Richard. She didn’t have to be anything but herself with him. “May I?”

“I am yours to play with.”

“Right.” *Now, how to do this?*

“You okay?” his smile was soft.

“I’m just thinking.”

“Need a clue?”

Memphis shook her head. “I am a woman. I can do this.” She dropped to her knees, her hand still on his cock. Memphis kissed the bulbous head of it. It tasted clean and spongy and all male. *Delicious.*

“Oh, that you kiss but not my lips?” Richard arched his eyebrows in amusement.

She curled one hand around his shaft and rested the other against his thigh. “This is more fun.” Before he could respond Memphis swallowed the head inside and sucked. The growl of approval that came from Richard gave her a feeling of power she had never felt before. This man was totally under her control. *And I like it.* Memphis sucked on the head of his dick as her hand began moving up and down the shaft in a milking fashion.

“Lower.” Richard pushed her hand closer to the head.

Memphis was only too willing to learn. She wanted him to come under her control. The thought of semen in her mouth made her hot. Memphis increased the friction of her hand and the suction of her mouth. She could feel his thigh muscles tense up.

“You’re going to kill me,” Richard groaned.

Memphis let his cock slide out of her mouth with a pop. It was shiny, pink and needy. “You’re immortal, right? Me sucking cock cannot kill you.” She lifted his cock and licked his balls.

“Memphis!” Richard jumped at her action.

“What?” She looked up at him as innocently as she could. “I thought you liked the whole domination thing.”

“Yeah, but when I’m in charge.”

“Not this time, Ricky.” She licked his balls once more before returning his cock to her mouth. Memphis sucked and licked, her hand pumping his shaft fast in her need to make him come.

“You’d better take your lips off me or I’ll come in your mouth.”

Memphis shook her head and sucked harder. The first jet of semen that touched her tongue was not as she expected. It was musky and bitter. Memphis sucked it down knowing the man whose fingers were now threaded in her hair was totally at her mercy. When the last drop was lapped up, Memphis released his captive cock and looked up at him. “Now who’s the boss?”

“You are, sweetheart.”

* * * *

In the kitchen Polly stirred the large pot on the stove. Although there was no physical presence beside her, she felt the heat of another body behind hers.

“I have to do this. I must push Memphis and Richard along,” she muttered to herself and the presence, as if daring it to disagree with

her. The sooner Polly did that then the sooner she could leave Maverick House and get on with her own life.

"It's not that simple. You can only go when I say you can."

"I must leave. I will leave. I need my life back." She gripped the spoon to keep control

"You need this house. You need me."

"You do not own me, Aran."

"You need me," he repeated once more.

She feared he was right and that made her more anxious to leave. In some ways he was right. As annoying as it was to be trapped into doing his bidding, there was a safety at Maverick House that Polly had never felt before. *And I am getting too dependent on that.* "I need no one." Her voice was defiant as she threw more herbs in the pot. "I need nothing but my freedom."

"Our time will come, Polly, my love."

My love. She closed her eyes as she felt strong hands stroking on her back. "I want to go home. I want—"

"I know but I cannot let you. Your job is not done."

"Alaric is settled. I swear Richard will be soon as well."

"This is no longer about them. They were only ever a small part of this. I needed them to find love and become mortal. I needed the Linquist name to live on."

Polly felt a cold shiver run down her spine. "What else do you want?" His soft, deep laugh made her shiver.

"So much more. This is just the beginning."

Chapter Seven

“These ropes are chafing me and I don’t like my ass up in the air like this.” Memphis wriggled around.

Richard smiled and slapped the ass in question. “You have a great ass.” He had, at Memphis’s request shown her one of the games he had played with Josephine. With Memphis it was different. Richard was not demanding obedience. He was having too much fun for that.

“Really?” Memphis was tied up over the bed. A rope was around and under her shoulders, another around her waist and the last one around his hips. She was two feet above the bed, suspended on a pulley with her ass up and out.

Richard had tied her legs together. He could still thrust his cock into her cunt, but the penetration would be tighter and deeper. “You have a juicy, plump bottom and I’m going to fuck it hard.” His cock was jumping in anticipation.

Memphis tried to twist her head around to see him. “Well, hurry up then.”

He laughed. “Some submissive you are. You’re not even fighting this.”

“Well, the thing is—”

“You want cock.”

“Yes,” Memphis responded.

“And I want your lips.” In fact the more Memphis held out the more he needed to taste her mouth and tongue on his.

“Bring your cock around to my mouth.”

Richard slapped her ass again. “You know what I mean.”

“I’m thinking about the whole kissing thing.”

That she was gave Richard hope. "You're a hard woman."

"I'm a dominating woman."

Which was funny to Richard considering she was strung up and at his mercy. And yet, even now, she was the one who had the upper hand. He wanted to make this crazy fuck as pleasurable as possible for her. No woman had ever made Richard feel so dependent on her.

"I am under your control. Now fuck me," she demanded.

Richard sighed and shook his head in mock despair. "I'm supposed to be in charge." He moved behind her.

"But I want cock."

"And you shall have it when I'm ready." Her cunt was his. Open. Exposed. Wet.

"Richard—"

"Memphis—" Richard rubbed his cock at the opening of her pussy lips.

"Please—"

It was the soft tone in her voice that got to him. He pushed his dick inside her body, loving the tight feel of her cunt.

"Oh, Richard, I love this." Then Memphis giggled suddenly.

"What?"

"Imagine if someone walked in now. What do you reckon their reaction would be?"

Richard started pumping in and out of her body. "That I'm mad for trying this with you."

"Oh, come on, it's been fun," she responded, unmoving but being totally used for pleasure.

Yeah, it has been. This was what Richard had been missing in his life. Fun. A simple concept but one he had not really thought about before. "You're beautiful." His hands sought purchase on her hips as he increased his thrust. "But crazy."

Memphis moaned at the change of pace. "You need crazy. You need me."

"I do." His balls slapped into her ass. "I love you." The sudden silence was deafening. "Mem sweetheart?"

"I'm thinking."

"About what?"

"That the minute you cut me down I'm going to kiss you."

Richard immediately pulled out from her body. "I need a knife." He hunted through the stuff he had brought with him. "Fuck, I don't have one." He had every size dildo known to man but not a pair of scissors.

"What? Do you normally leave Josephine strung up like this?"

"Well—"

"Really?"

"Yeah, Polly helps her down."

Memphis burst out laughing.

"I will get a knife."

"You'd better," she said between giggles. "I don't want anyone in this house seeing my ass except you."

* * * *

Richard disappeared in a blink of an eye leaving Memphis strung up and waiting. It was then Polly appeared from out of nowhere. Memphis blushed with embarrassment. "Er, where did you come from?"

"Long story," replied Polly.

"You say that a lot." *Hurry up Richard.*

"He'll come back when I let him in."

"Huh?" A wild thought shot into Memphis' mind. "Um, you know I like you and all, but the thing is I'm not into women and—"

Polly nodded. "Me neither. I have a fatal attraction to pushy men with large cocks." She walked around and released two simple knots. Memphis started to lower to the bed. "Men. Simple creatures. They never look for the obvious solution." She quickly untied Memphis.

“Okay, so what’s this about? How can you keep Richard out of this room?” The more she dealt with Polly the more Memphis was intrigued by her.

“I’m a witch. I can do what I want.” Polly threw Memphis the robe she had discarded earlier.

“Of course you are.” Memphis covered up quickly. Naked was okay with her but it had to be at her own choosing. “No one in this house is normal but me.”

“Well, you’re not completely so.” Polly’s eyes went from the ropes back to Memphis.

“So what is it you want?”

“Kiss Richard.”

Memphis laughed. “Well hell, I was just about to do that when you came in.”

Polly sighed in relief. “Good.”

“I thought you wanted me to do it when I’m ready to. Why the big rush now?” What was going on in this woman’s head?

“I need you to do it now. He knows he’s getting to me.”

Memphis could see the strain in the other woman’s eyes. “He who?” Was there another confusing person in this house?

“Aran.”

“And he would be?” Memphis asked, hoping to make some sense out of this. “And don’t tell me it’s a long story.”

“Aran Linquist is a medieval vampire who is imprisoned in these walls.”

That’s not what Memphis expected to hear. “Of course he is.”

Polly threw her hands up in the air. “I know it’s confusing.”

“How and why was he imprisoned? Is he a spirit? And what did he do to be punished so?”

“There are many legends. Some say it was a fight over land. Others say a woman. I believe that he took on a power higher than his own and he lost.”

“Whoa,” Memphis murmured as she thought about higher powers who could trap people in walls. She looked around at the walls in question. She remembered the warmth of them under her hand. *Freaky*. “These are probably two hundred years old? If he’s a medieval vampire how could he get trapped in these modern walls?”

“I’m not sure. That’s the thing with Maverick House. No one really understands the true extent of its power.”

No wonder Memphis was confused. The house was a contradiction in itself. “Okay, so let me get this straight. If I kiss Richard he gets the house?”

“Possibly.”

“Huh?” *Curiouser and curiouser.*

“I used to think this was all about finding mates for Alaric and Richard so that they could stop fighting each other and settle into the house in peace.”

“But it’s not?”

“No.”

Memphis lifted her hands in question. “So whether I kiss Richard or not is no longer relevant?”

“Oh, it is,” Polly assured her. “I have to be free of this house. I’m hoping by you kissing Richard, it will give me a chance to break free of the house.”

“If you’re sick of the house leave it now.” Wasn’t that the simplest solution? Or did only mortals think this way? Were witches mortal? *I have to get a book from the library to brush up on all this.*

“I can’t. Like you, I’m trapped,” Polly told her. “I’m hoping there’ll be a moment after you kiss him that the house’s defenses will be down.”

“Okay, this would be the Aran guy who is stuck in the walls.” In a strange, soap opera kind of way it was starting to make sense to Memphis.

“Yes.”

“I want to talk to Aran the vampire.”

Polly looked agog. "You can't."

"Why not?" Maybe he just needed a reality check, twenty-first century style.

"He only shows himself when it suits him."

Memphis snorted. "What a prick."

Polly smiled suddenly. "I don't believe anyone has ever called him that before."

"Well, he needs to have his ass kicked for playing with us all like this." Memphis hated to be manipulated by anyone let alone outside forces.

"I believe he has known his own share of sorrow and hardship."

No doubt. The man had been trapped within walls for hundreds of years. Polly grabbed Memphis' hand. The hand that held her own was not that of the old frumpy woman Polly pretended to be.

"Do you love Richard?" Polly asked Memphis.

"I barely know him and—"

Polly persisted. "Do you love him?"

The desperation in the other woman's eyes gripped at Memphis. "Yes." That was the simple truth.

"Then kiss him."

It was then that another truth hit Memphis. "What has Aran done to you?" No woman wanted to escape a man without good reason. It was either violence or love.

"The worst thing possible," muttered Polly.

Ah, love. "You're in love with him."

"Shh," Polly hissed out in a whisper.

"Oh, come on, if this guy is all-powerful and all-knowing—"

Polly interrupted her. "Then he knows enough."

After Polly left and she waited for Richard to return. Memphis sat and thought about what she had wandered into. Some medieval dude was holding people hostage for an unknown reason of his own. Was it a case of misery loves company or did he need these people with him?

Chapter Eight

Memphis found Richard as soon as she could. “Okay. I’m going to kiss you.”

Richard looked at her in confusion. “What happened with you and Polly?”

“Let’s see, I was naked and she helped me down.” That was not a memory Memphis wanted to carry with her.

“And she barred my entrance into the room.” Richard didn’t look pleased.

“Polly’s a witch. She did some sort of spell or something.” Regardless of that, Polly’s identity was not the most important thing. Memphis’ need to kiss Richard was.

“I should have known that about Polly.”

“How?”

“I’m a vampire. We’ve been around. We know stuff,” Richard told her.

“You think you do.” Memphis sighed, her eyes on his lips. “Anyway, there’s an ancestor of yours who haunts these walls. He wants you and Alaric to get married and play happy families because somehow this helps some grand plan he has. Polly in turn needs us to kiss so she can try to escape.” Why was Richard scowling? It all seemed perfectly logical to Memphis.

“Why?” He folded his arms over his chest.

“Well, she’s caught up in the plan but now she needs to be free. I believe she’s in love with Aran.”

“My ancestor?”

“Correct.” Memphis moved in close to him. “So pucker up.”

Richard took a step back from her. "You want to kiss me because it will free Polly?"

"No, not just that."

"What then?"

How did he go from demanding her kiss to pushing away from her? *What gives?* "Why does anyone want to kiss another?"

"Because they love them."

"Yes." That was what Memphis wanted to hear from Richard. Maybe it was madness to fall in love so quickly but she knew he was what she needed in her life.

Richard looked at Memphis pointedly. "Do you love me?"

"Yes." She saw his mouth soften slightly.

"And you want to kiss me?"

This was not what Memphis expected. She had thought Richard would be as eager to kiss him as she was. "Do you have a problem with this?" *Is my breath bad? Do I have a pimple on my nose? What am I missing here?*

"I'm not sure," was his response.

"Huh?" *What have I done wrong?*

Richard lifted one hand and raked his fingers through his hair. "I just feel like you're being forced into this."

"I am not!" Memphis wanted to stamp in feet in frustration. "Kiss me."

"Hang on a minute."

Oh yeah. That was romantic sounding—not. "Seriously?"

"Yeah. I want you to kiss me because there's nothing more you crave in this world."

Memphis shook her head. "You're making this whole love thing difficult."

"I want to be sure," Richard said. "I don't plan to fall in love with any else again. This is forever."

That had a nice ring to it. Forever. "Wait a second." A sudden thought occurred to Memphis. "You're a vampire."

“Correct.”

“You have the immortality thing going on.” *Houston, we have a problem.*

“Yes.”

“So I’ll get older.” Maybe he didn’t want to kiss her knowing she would turn into an old crone. Maybe that was his problem.

“And I will too,” Richard confirmed. “Once a vampire marries and we join our life to a mortal’s we lose our immortality.”

Okay. That sounded better for me but what did Richard think about that? “How do you feel about being mortal?” That had to be a huge leap from living an eternity.

“I still remain a vampire and I keep what powers I have.” Richard moved back toward her. “But I’m tired of living forever and I’m sick of being alone.”

Memphis had not considered that before. What sort of a life did an immortal being have when those around them they loved died? “Oh, Richard.” Memphis walked up to him and hugged him close to her. They stood that way for a couple of minutes, each savoring the love between them. She looked up at him and smiled. “Want to try the kissing thing? We need to find out if we’re compatible.” Memphis winked at him.

Richard laughed. “You know we are. Sex with you is fantastic.”

“Yes.” Her eyes were on his lips. Memphis licked hers in anticipation.

“I suppose we should try to help Polly,” Richard murmured, his gaze following the line of her tongue.

“Absolutely.”

He pulled Memphis tight against his body. “One kiss won’t hurt.”

“No.” Her arms entwined around his neck.

“Do you really love me, Mem sweetheart?”

“Oh, yes.” There was no other answer Memphis could give.

Richard dropped his head down to hers. “And I love you.”

Memphis stood on her toes and lifted her face to his. As her lips touched his, the most amazing feeling shot through her body. It was love and lust but also more than that. It was like with one kiss they had changed the future.

* * * *

Polly knew the moment she was free. A white glow suffused the house. She ran to the front door and snatched up the suitcase she had kept packed and waiting since Memphis came to the house. Polly grabbed at the door handle and pulled. It opened immediately. A rush of fresh air touched her face. She flung herself outside and ran down the path as fast as she could.

Aran Linquist let her go. He knew she needed to have one attempt at freedom before he drew Polly back to Maverick House. And she would be back. Polly had no choice. He needed her.

THE END

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amarinda Jones believes anything is possible and sometimes just asking for the impossible will surprise someone enough that they will give it to you. Writing is like that. Put it out there and wait for a response. There is 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 that all the kids are scared of. But then, everyone has to have a hobby.

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