

demon

rescuer

by

Racy Li

**Warning:**

**This story contains explicit erotic scenes using contemporary language and is only for adults of legal age.**

**Do not read further if such material offends you or if you are underage.**

## Demon Rescuer

**Racy Li**

“NO!”

Lia snatched the vase off the shelf and threw it. The intruder ducked. The ceramic shattered against the wall. He grinned at her, holding long sharp blades in both hands. She bolted, trying to get to the gun in her nightstand.

The man blocked her path.

*Shit.*

She jumped backwards into the kitchen, an easy hop in her tiny studio apartment.

Lia yanked open the cutlery drawer and began flinging silverware at him.

“GET OUT!”

But all he did was grin that sick grin and pace toward her.

“Stupid Quikmart silverware,” she muttered. She glanced around. There had to be something else.

There! She grabbed a large butcher knife.

“GET AWAY FROM ME!”

He smiled and flicked his hand at her.

Something invisible slammed into her legs, knocking her to the ground. Her glasses flew off her face as her head smashed into the kitchen tiles. Pain stabbed her head, causing her to roll to one side, just as he brought a fist down where her head had been. She couldn't see, but she could sure hear the tiles fragmenting at his blow.

The man howled in triumph as he raised his massive fist, dagger in hand for the final blow.

With all her might, she kicked upwards into his crotch.

The howl turned to a scream. His blades fell to the floor with a clatter, just narrowly missing her.

*Did I really kick him that hard?*

Suddenly, the man was lifted up and tossed into a wall.

Another man stood above her. He kneeled, reaching for her face.

She squinted.

The room swirled around her.

*He has blue eyes.*

His hand was warm and comforting against her cheek.

She moaned. "I hope you're with the police."

Darkness washed over.

\* \* \* \* \*

There were voices.

Lia tried to open her dry eyes.

Her head thudded with pain as she tried to sit up.

"POLICE!"

An Asian woman in a camel colored trench coat burst into her apartment.

Lia blinked, rubbing her head. "I think he's gone."

The woman holstered her weapon and rushed over to her. "Stay still." She reached for her radio. "I'll call a paramedic."

“No. No. I’m fine.” Lia knew what a head injury was like. The weird wavy feeling in her head was something else.

The cop introduced herself as Sgt. Wong as she helped Lia up off the floor and onto her loveseat.

“You sure you don’t want medical help?”

Despite the fact that the room kept wobbling, Lia began telling the cop about how she was attacked when she had returned home from grocery shopping. She had left the door for just a moment to drop the heavy bags in the kitchen. When she had walked back into the living room, the man had been leaning with his arms crossed in her doorway.

“He had this sick smile. And then he said, ‘So you’re the one that Master wants.’” Lia shivered. She ended her story with the description of the policeman who had saved her. Sgt. Wong frowned.

“Ma’am, I think you might have hit your head a little hard. There was no other officer around. And there is no evidence of forced entry, just the broken vase and scattered silverware. Are you sure your attacker wasn’t someone you know?”

“No! I’d never seen him before in my life! Wait, if the other guy wasn’t police, then who was he?”

Sgt. Wong shrugged, flipping her notepad closed. “The call came to us from one of your neighbors. He thought there was some kind of domestic thing with all the screaming and noise.”

“What?!”

Sgt. Wong finished filling out the report and handed it to Lia. “Can you please sign here to file this complaint?”

The detective’s radio barked with a loud buzz. “Sector Vlad, 10-85 in progress! Wong, you done with that call?”

Sgt. Wong jumped up with a curse. She grabbed the sheet in Lia’s outstretched hand. “Crap. All the bad guys are out tonight.” The cop grabbed her radio. “Central,

done with the aided call. Responding to the 10-85 in Sector Vlad now!" She looked at Lia. "Lock the door. And be more careful next time."

Lia rubbed her forehead, still aching. "Thank you."

After Lia had locked the door, she stood there, staring at the dull brass knob.

What the hell had just happened?

She remembered her rescuer's bright blue eyes, burning into her.

How could she imagine someone like him?

She closed her eyes. Crap. Somehow she had to find her glasses.

\* \* \* \* \*

Late afternoon sunlight filtered in the lone window. Finger-like shadows, cast by long leaves of bamboo stalks sitting on the windowsill, crossed a small ivy patterned rug.

The news blared on the radio.

Just a few feet away, Lia swept the broken vase pieces off the exposed hardwood floor.

Everything could have ended.

Lia threw the shards of the vase into the wastebasket so hard they nearly bounced out.

If it weren't for her mystery rescuer, she could have died.

Her grip on the broom tightened. Why hadn't she been smarter? She didn't need to rely on anyone, let alone a strange man, who didn't even exist.

There was no way she could have made up the warmth of her rescuer's hand against her cheek, the magnetic way his strange blue eyes drew hers, or the way strands of his dark hair fell over his eyes, highlighting the hard planes of his face.

Even his touch didn't tell her anything about him.

Lia yanked open the tiny closet door and threw the broom in. Something crunched. She slammed the door shut.

What was the point of being able to read people's emotions through touch when she couldn't even control it? The power was so stupid; it only worked with people she didn't know. As she found herself caring for others more and more, the ability to read that individual would fade.

Those closest had the ability to hurt the most. That's why you couldn't trust them.

Which is why Jon had so easily deceived her.

Fear had defined all too many of her years. After she had broken up with Jon, he had stalked her throughout college. With a shiver she remembered the dead roses he had sent to her, the mysterious phone calls at 2 a.m. and the time she had woken up in the middle of the night, to find him standing on her street, staring up at her window.

She had been afraid for so long.

Until *Abuela* reminded her who she was. She was a daughter of Mexican demon hunters and Spanish knights, not to be cowed by some stupid little man.

Lia had found the courage to stop being afraid and had learned her lesson. She would never let anyone get so close that she couldn't read them anymore. It was one of the reasons she lived in New York City and worked with dead languages. Ironic, that one could more easily stay aloof from others in a city of millions.

She tapped a button on her kitchen radio.

"Investigation into last week's burglary of the National Galleries in Washington D.C. has revealed the theft of several one-of-a-kind Aztec codices dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. These thefts are in addition to the disappearance of a number of items ranging from 16<sup>th</sup> century samurai masks to 15<sup>th</sup> century Aztec ritual knives. Many of these artifacts were not on display and were housed in the Gallery's basement storage area."

*Even better news.* Lia punched the counter. Those codices could have been invaluable in her attempts at deciphering the yet untranslated Aztec language. Why hadn't she made the trip to D.C. when she had the chance last month?

“Video footage from the night in question has shown that the items seemed to vanish into thin air. Although the burglary has been referred to the P.P.A. for further investigation, film experts are currently examining the tapes to determine if they have been doctored.”

Hmm. Maybe the guy was one of those P.P.A. agents.

She snorted. Yea right. Superheroes like Centurion were like celebrities; you saw them everywhere, but that didn’t mean an average person like her would ever meet one.

Her cell phone buzzed, alerting her of a voicemail.

Lia sighed, but a thrill shot through her as she listened to the message. The copies of Friar Bartolomeo Da Cenza’s notes, had arrived at the University!

\* \* \* \* \*

A noisy car alarm went off, adding to the cacophony of street sounds. As she headed down the sidewalk, bundled up in her winter gear, her thoughts wandered back to Da Cenza’s notes. She paused at a newsstand.

“CENTURION: EARTH’S SEXIEST CHAMPION!” “SILK! IS SHE SOFT AS SHE LOOKS?” Lia ignored the superhero tabloids, scanning the headlines for more news of the National Galleries burglaries.

Nope. No luck.

Yup, she thought. Only a true dork would be more concerned with the notes of a dead 17<sup>th</sup> century Franciscan priest serving in the Yucatan, than the fact she had nearly died the night before.

Lia splashed through a slushy puddle, grateful for her comfy warm winter boots.

An odd feeling sent tingles up the back of her neck. On a hunch, she looked upwards.

Was someone standing on the roof of that building?

As she squinted, the presence disappeared.

She shook off the feeling. Now *that* she probably imagined.

Still, she drew her coat closer.

Cutting through the park, Lia finally made it to the campus. She relaxed as she saw groups of students moving about.

No one would ever make her afraid again. It wasn't Jon. It couldn't be him. Jon was locked away in California, doing time for the murder of three women. He would never get out.

Lia quickly retrieved the package and ducked out of the department office. She couldn't use her own office; it was being repainted, and all of her notes were on her computer at home. She headed back toward the park. The sun set too quickly this time of year. If she cut through the park, she'd get home in ten minutes. But if she went around, it meant she would be walking out in the cold and dark for almost another hour.

Of course, she could always take a cab.

The thought made her nauseous. That last time she had taken a cab, the overwhelming chemical pine freshener smell had left her ill for the better part of the night. And with Da Cenza's journal just waiting to be examined, there was no way she was going to risk being sick.

As she crossed the street over into the park, she was glad to see couples and groups of people still out.

But as she kept walking, the crowds thinned out until she was the only one left on the path. Lia quickened her pace, her hand closing around the pepper spray key chain in her coat pocket. Turning a corner, she was relieved to see a group of five walking on the path as well. Her relief quickly gave way to uneasiness. Though it was dusk, all wore sunglasses. All were well dressed.

And yet all were oddly silent.

She had hoped to pass by them quickly, but their intentions became clear as they blocked the path by walking shoulder to shoulder in a single line.

“Excuse me, do you need something?” she asked as they stopped ten feet away from her.

One of the women laughed. “Yes, honey. You.”

Lia yanked out her pepper spray.

“Get away from me.”

The blonde woman stepped forward. “Try, baby.”

Before Lia could react, the woman kicked her wrist. Lia dropped the pepper spray as pain shot up her arm.

*What the hell is wrong with me?* She hadn’t taken all those self-defense classes for nothing.

She tried to swerve away from the woman’s punch but her comrade knocked Lia’s feet from under her.

Pain exploded as her head hit the pavement.

Her vision blurred. She couldn’t see a thing. Glasses. Where the hell did her glasses go?

Towering above her, a roar suddenly echoed through the park, bellowing a challenge.

Her right hand closed around her glasses. She smacked them on.

The group saw their challenger and collectively snarled, baring fangs that should not have been able to fit in their mouths. They left her to deal with the new threat. She forced herself up.

Even before her eyes focused, she knew it was him.

The blue-eyed man.

She watched in amazement as he fought them with the grace of a well-trained martial artist. Like a black cape, his long black leather jacket flew behind him. It was almost like watching a ballet.

Until he wrapped his hand around one man’s neck, single-handedly lifting him from the ground.

The man screamed with a sound that should not have come from a human throat and dissolved into little sparks of light. The remaining four backed away in panic.

She blinked.

They vanished.

Literally vanished.

She bent her head to the ground.

*This isn't happening.*

The stranger strode over to her as she staggered to her feet. She had hit her head harder than she had thought. He reached out to steady her from behind, supporting her arms with his, subtly forcing her to gain support by leaning her back against his broad chest.

Oh, he was definitely too solid to be a hallucination. Even in this dazed state, Lia could feel the wall of hard torso that supported her. His arms seemed huge compared to hers. Even hidden by his leather jacket, they conveyed a rare strength.

A deep masculine voice caressed her ear, sending shivers down her neck.

"Are you ok, Dr. Mendoza?"

She steadied herself, and turned to look at him. His beauty was mesmerizing, more perfect than she remembered. His midnight black hair, short and messy, framed his stormy blue eyes perfectly. A five o'clock shadow lay across his well-defined jaw, only highlighting his full lips.

She stammered, "I'm...ok."

He kept her enfolded and supported by his strong arms, as if afraid she would fall again. Lia couldn't help copping a feel of his very solid biceps as she tried to thank him for saving her. She added softly, "Again."

Reluctantly, he released her from his embrace, but kept one arm around her waist and another arm free for her to steady herself.

Despite the danger in his aura, somehow she felt safe with him. The man whispered into her hair, for despite her height at 5'8" he was still much taller than she

was. "I...was looking for you, Dr. Mendoza. I need to ask a few questions and explain. Let me walk you home."

Lia nodded. *You* have questions?

"Wait. How do you know my name?"

He pointed to the package containing Friar Da Cenza's notes, she displaying her name in big black letters. She flipped it. "Don't call me Dr. Mendoza. That's my mother. Just Lia."

"Lia," he repeated, his voice curling around her awareness with a strange sensuality.

She didn't like the fact that she was showing him where she lived. Then again, he already knew where she lived. If he had wanted to take advantage of her, he could have done it the first time.

Her body leaned against him, savoring his warmth and strength.

"Who are you? Are you a P.P.A. agent?"

He carefully kept his eyes ahead. "Jasper Ravinov. No I don't work for the P.P.A., but for the Paranormal Bureau."

She frowned. Everyone denied that the Paranormal Bureau even existed until after the Joran invasion. Even now, the Paranormal Bureau remained a shadowy organization that no one knew much about. "If you work for the Paranormal Bureau, why the hell are you telling me? Why did you disappear last night?" *And what did you do to that man in the park just now?*

"I'm telling you because you may be in danger and I need your help in catching some of your attacker's associates. As for last night, I had to go after one of his partners before he could hurt anyone else." He looked ahead. "But I've gotten in touch with the local police regarding the other night and the case is under my jurisdiction."

His hand closed around hers, warm and protective.

The truth of it all sidled into her thoughts, warm, embracing, seductive.

He stopped and looked at her, as if he knew of her abilities.

She froze.

He *did* know.

She tried to drop his hand but he held on to her.

She raised her eyes to his face. For a moment, she thought his blue eyes glowed.

“I’m not here to hurt you.”

And just as easily as she could read him, the sense faded, leaving nothing but the warmth of his hand enveloping hers.

She jerked her hand away, stuffing it in her coat pocket. “So you just left me lying on the floor? You didn’t even call the police to make sure I was ok?”

She caught a glimpse of their reflection as they passed a dark storefront, looking like a pair of young lovers out for an evening stroll.

“I did call the police. You don’t think your neighbors really made the call did you? It’s not that hard to tap into phone lines. Believe me, when I say I wanted to stay. I had to rescue a hostage that his associate had taken.”

She arched an eyebrow. “And you didn’t call for backup when you were going after that other guy?”

“It was a... situation only specialists like myself are trained to handle.”

Lia snorted in disbelief. “Why are you telling me? Shouldn’t it be top secret?”

He laughed suddenly, a loud and lovely masculine sound that brought a smile to her lips. “I’m so tempted right now to turn my reply into a bad line from a movie.”

He turned those eyes on her. “Like I said earlier, I have to tell you, because I think you might be able to help me catch more of his associates.”

She stopped at the curb, waiting for the traffic to let up. “What makes you think that? I have no clue why I’ve suddenly become a magnet for crazies.

He took her hand in his again. His thumb began to caress the back of her hand in slow warm circles.

“No idea at all?”

She felt a shiver go through her. *Too much.*

Lia yanked her hand away from him. She rammed them back into her pockets, brushing past him to cross the street. He followed her and suddenly yanked her back. A yellow cab zoomed past, honking angrily where Lia had been just moments ago.

Startled by the depths of his gaze, Lia found herself mesmerized.

“Careful.”

He linked his arm with hers and walked her across the street.

*Great. Now I can't even cross the street without getting myself nearly killed.*

The pair reached the door of her apartment building.

She moved to stand on her own, turning to face him. His dark aura of danger was so thick she could almost taste it.

“I...I don't want you to think I'm ungrateful for all you've done. But I just...can't deal with you right now.”

To her surprise, he nodded and pulled out a business card, handing it over to her. His fingertips briefly brushed the back of her hand, a casual, everyday motion that should have meant nothing, but seemed to mean everything.

As she looked up into his eyes, she saw a mix of something strange. All too quickly, it was replaced by a guarded look.

“I will call on you tomorrow then. 6 p.m. And we shall talk.” She stepped up onto the stoop. Before she could stop him, he kissed her.

Electricity shot through her, sparking sensations in odd places. Desire heated her blood as his tongue delved into her mouth. She trembled as her abilities surged once more. He tasted forbidding, mysterious, in a way that awakened a simmering heat low in her belly.

He wrapped his arms around her waist, his hands on her ass, pressing her more closely against him. She molded her body against his. She felt drunk on his kiss. The heat unfurled in gentle, demanding waves of warmth. It sent shivers throughout her body.

He was telling her the truth.

But there was so much more that lay underneath.

Startled, she pushed him away. She adjusted her glasses.

His eyes were unreadable. "You know the truth now."

She brought a hand up to her lips. She could still feel the aftershocks, skittering around her skin.

What could she say? Something witty, clever, and probing.

"Umm...I'll...call you."

*Brilliant, girl.*

He nodded to her and waited. She unlocked the second door, with trembling hands and when she finally turned around once more, he had already disappeared.

\* \* \* \* \*

She had tasted like wild green magic, earthy, mortal and wonderful. No wonder so many demons were after her.

Her hair had smelled like wildflowers. Something about her made him feel almost human again. He tried to clear his mind but he couldn't stop picturing her, especially how her brown hair kept falling so alluringly in front of her bottomless dark eyes.

From the rooftops, he had watched Lia as she walked confidently out of her apartment. Most women would still be hiding after being attacked the way she had been, but Lia was different. She had sensed him, even if she had no idea what she was sensing. And she had surprised him again in the park with her determination to fight the other demons by herself, even after being attacked the other night.

She was unique.

She made him feel almost human again.

\* \* \* \* \*

A phone call to her local precinct confirmed Jasper's statements. But she couldn't think of that now. She had to focus on Da Cenza's journal. It wasn't that the notes weren't interesting; in fact, they were fascinating; they spoke of a small Aztec cult

devoted to hunting demons. The last living member of this cult converted to Christianity, and he confessed his story to Da Cenza shortly before his death.

The journal was everything she hoped it would be.

So why did her mind keep wandering back to Jasper?

She forced herself back to the friar's journal. "Hmmm...Shamans carried old magic, given the form of black blades," she read to herself. "These blades blessed with the mark of their pagan god, Quetzacoatl, kill the unkillable and banish the unbanishable. Power can be transferred and stolen with the use of these blades. Grasping the blade, a bearer of blood can give a command and have a demon's will be done."

De Cenza had even included a rough drawing of Quetzacoatl's mark, an Asian-like feathered dragon, with long whiskers.

Seventeen minutes later, not that she was counting, her buzzer rang at precisely 6 p.m.

She ran to the window, looked down.

Jasper stood on the sidewalk, waving to her from below.

Lia grabbed a brush and frantically tried to tame the frizz in her hair as she grabbed her keys. She paused at an oval mirror hanging on the wall, trying to make herself presentable. The dark frames of her glasses made her look like an owl. Crap. Why the hell hadn't she ever gotten contacts? Locking the door behind her, she forced herself not to rush downstairs, but to walk down slowly and calmly.

She opened the foyer door. At once, the cold winter wind, mixed with a warm clove-like musk hit her senses. Long strands of black hair had escaped from his tied-back hair.

Surely she could think of something witty to say now.

"Umm. Hi."

He inclined his head to her. "Lia."

She led him upstairs. She felt incredibly warm, and self-conscious as if his eyes were lingering on her much too large butt.

In Lia's studio apartment, her "living room area" was separated from her "bedroom" by some bookshelves. In the living room, she only had one old blue loveseat. She sat facing him, her back leaning against one arm of the love seat, one leg tucked underneath her and one leg free. His frame took up so much of the loveseat that she couldn't help but touch him.

"There's something I need to tell you," he said softly, gazing into her eyes.

Her hand that rested on the back of the loveseat absently began stroking his shoulder. What was it about him that was so magnetic? She looked down. His hands were oddly callused, and beautiful. A thick silver band with crude carvings sat on his right index finger. "Why don't you start from the beginning?"

He hesitated. "The man that was in your apartment the other night was a proto-demon, a human host from which a demon has not yet spawned. Those people in the park last night were demons as well, but fully grown demons."

She reached for his face. The dark stubble on his chin was rough against her fingertips.

A shiver ran through her. She couldn't help but reach one hand up and trace the strong line of his jaw. "Demons. My *Abuela* told me about demons. But she also said there were no more demons."

Jasper frowned. "Your grandmother? Who is your grandmother?"

"No one you would know. But she once worked with my great grandmother, Selena de la Vega."

He cocked his head at her, his eyes reassessing her. Lia closed her eyes, unable to stand the scrutiny, even if her hands couldn't stop touching his very solid biceps. "*The* Selena de la Vega? You're Selena de la Vega's great-granddaughter?"

"Yes. But I'm not like her." She wasn't a renown demon hunter. She wasn't strong, bold, brave or beautiful.

Jasper brought a hand to her cheek. "No. You're not like her. But yes, you are strong, bold, brave, and beautiful."

She found herself leaning into his touch, even as a sober realization began to take hold.

"You're a demon aren't you, Jasper? You hunt humans with sexual mimicry. How better to lure your prey than by being attractive to them?"

Jasper simply looked at her, the truth reflected in his eyes.

Lia blinked. Her heart pounding, she stood up, and calmly walked towards her bedroom area.

She could feel his gaze hot on her back.

"I'm not your average demon, Lia."

She opened the drawer of her nightstand.

She reached in the drawer and undid the trigger's safety, blocking his view with her body. "Do you feed off of humans?"

"No. Once I was free of the man who turned me from human into demon, I swore to only feed off of other demons."

As she stood up, she suddenly felt his heat.

He had managed to sneak up behind her without her being aware.

He whispered into her ear. "Just what do you think you're going to do with that gun?" His breath against her neck sent her pulse racing. "Are you going to shoot me, Lia?"

She trembled. She didn't even know if it was alarm or desire. Lia tightened her grip on the gun. "Are you going to try to eat me?"

His voice was low, close to her ear. "Only if you want me to."

His hot firm mouth was on her bare neck. Heat thrummed and expanded, even as she found her senses opening up to him.

All he had said was true. Jasper was a demon who hunted other demons. He was one of the good guys.

But that didn't mean he was going to be "good" with her.

She closed her eyes as she leaned into him. His hands slid up her shirt. His palms were hot against her stomach, even hotter on her breasts.

"Lia," he whispered. "You don't have to be afraid of me."

Lia reset the safety on the gun with trembling hands. "I know."

She turned. His white shirt was unbuttoned at the collar and just below, revealing the strong lines of his neck.

Her eyes flicked upwards.

He reached for her glasses, folded them and set them gently on her nightstand. She grabbed his hands. At the first touch desire and need ripped through her with the force of a fiery tornado. Her knees went weak. "What is this, Jasper?"

"You tell me."

His mouth pressed down on hers, firm and strong. He tasted of hot summer nights. The kiss vibrated through her body, spreading feverish warmth. The hunger of his kiss beckoned primal sensations. Her hands clenched on the thin cloth of his white collared shirt.

*This is foolish.* But his cologne, a subtle oriental musk, enthralled her senses. His hands at the small of her back pressed her against his hard length.

She couldn't stop.

He drew back, fumbling with her shirt. She pulled him down, falling backwards on to her bed. His mouth sought her throat, licking long strokes, promising more. Each touch of his skin against her bare flesh quickened her pulse. His lips brushed the base of her throat as he unzipped her jeans. His hands slid inside her pants, cupping her ass with his hands. She shivered at the feel of those tiled abs as she unbuttoned his pants. In the space of moments, she found herself naked beneath his searing blue gaze.

She reached upwards and untied his long black hair. His black hair ran down his shoulders like shiny wet silk. Her fingers spread around his strong back, drifting over thin scars, down to the hollow in his back.

His hands caressed her breasts as he rubbed her taut nipples with his thumbs. The brush of his hot fingertips sent little shocks straight to her clit. His long hair tickled her as it fell, framing his face.

“Lia,” he whispered, a gentle amazement in his eyes, “Beautiful Lia.”

She gasped, closing her eyes in pleasure, as she ran her hands along the powerful planes of his chest. It was insane. Her senses fired rapidly. She had never wanted, needed anyone this badly in her life. She wanted to consume him, drink him in. Or was that his thoughts of her? Entangled in body, entangled in thoughts, body, mind and desire were becoming one.

“Damn you, demon. Is it always like this?”

He lowered his mouth to her bare nipple.

Her eyes flew open.

He lifted his head so he could look her in the eyes. His had a shimmering unearthly luster. Dark energy radiated from him, alluring her like a moth to a fire.

“No.” His voice vibrated with a masculine echo, washing over her skin like a full body caress. “Never like this.”

He circled a nipple with the tip of his tongue. She moaned. Her senses opened.

He was telling the truth.

Her senses had to be wrong. She pulled him between her legs so he could feel her wetness soaking through the cloth of her panties. “You’re such a liar.”

He trailed kisses down her curved stomach. “You know I’m not. But you can believe it if you want.”

He paused at her sheer red panties and grinned as he slid them down. He lowered his mouth to the tip of her engorged clit. The kiss sent shudders throughout her body. She couldn’t help but arch. She grabbed his thick beautiful hands.

“Lia,” he said, her name like a prayer. “You taste of magic.” He slid her panties down further. He licked a long stroke upward tracing her delicate folds on one side.

Then the other. He took his hands from her and covered her round ass, pressing her against his mouth.

She grabbed a pillow, trying to contain the pleasure, trying to keep the waves from crashing into her psyche. She couldn't lose control this quickly. She wouldn't be able to read him anymore. And that meant she couldn't trust him.

A finger dipped inside of her. But oh, it felt so damn good.

The sensations magnified, and rebounded throughout her body. She gasped for air, drowning in fire. He pressed his lips against her pussy, alternately sucking and nibbling in a staccato rhythm.

Rippled bliss spilled over her. It caressed at her resistance, melting under his hot strong tongue. Her fingers entangled in the dark hair that covered her thighs. His hands cupped her ass, as he feasted on her desire. Tension built in her abdomen, spiraling until her body shuddered.

Jasper lifted his mouth, trailing kisses up her stomach, between her breasts, around her neck. He was all sleek rippling muscle. She ran her hands around his shoulders as he nibbled on her ear.

"Lia, you are delicious."

She breathed his name, unable to think of what else to say. "Jasper."

"But that's only the beginning."

He positioned the tip of his cock against her entrance. It was big and blunt. Primal need swelled in her.

Jasper kissed her. Her mind spilled open. Need became animalistic fury.

She thrust her hips at him trying to take him in. He moved with her, keeping his tip at the same depth, teasing her. She pulled him toward her and kissed him, flashing open the barriers of her mind, teasing him with her desire.

He surged into her. She let out a gasp at the twinge of pain.

It was impossible. How could he be so big?

He groaned, flexing his cock inside her, eliciting a moan. "Lia, you are so impossibly tight."

Jasper let out a curse in a language she had never heard. His head rolled back. "Oh *yes*."

He thrust within her. She shuddered. Each stroke, each sensation was magnified, as his mind stabbed into her consciousness with each maddening thrust. Not only could she feel him, she could feel his sensations. His cock was so hard and supersensitive; he filled every bit of her tight cunt.

Each stroke brought a new depth of pleasure. All she could do was to hold on. She bit down on his shoulder, trying to stifle a scream. The pressure built, twisting higher and higher.

And then his cock began to vibrate inside her.

Her eyes widened.

He grinned at her, a demonic evil grin.

It just wasn't possible. It wasn't humanly possible.

A tornado of bliss erupted from her core, spinning, swamping, driving all thoughts from her mind. Nothing existed except for hot primal pleasure. It whipped through her body, ecstasy drummed itself into every cell in her body.

She didn't know how much time had passed before she got her breath back.

"What the hell was *that* at the end there?"

He shifted in her, still solid.

"Demons have excellent control over all parts of their bodies."

\* \* \* \* \*

In the aftermath, she lay in his arms. The smell of his cologne, her arousal and their passion lingered in the air. His hand lazily caressed the length of her arm as he nuzzled her neck.

She had opened to him, not just physically, but mentally. Her barriers had fallen.

And now she couldn't read him anymore.

It was too much.

She pushed his hands away, pushed him away and sat up.

His thick arm snaked around her waist, determined to keep her near him. "Stop Lia. I know what you're thinking. Stop being afraid."

She crossed her arms protectively around herself. "This isn't going to work."

"Don't think so much." His hand dipped between her legs. Heat swelled in her once more.

"Just because we had sex...oh."

His fingers pushed into her as his thumb lazily rubbed her clit.

He kissed the small of her back. The touch of his lips sent shivers up her spine.

"Go on."

"I mean, I just met you yesterday."

He kissed the back of her neck. "Time doesn't change what's between us."

"Sex. That's all." But oh, such incredible soul shattering sex. Even now, his fingers were making her soak the sheets.

"No. It's not. Read me. You are my other half. You know it's true."

"Are you crazy? It doesn't work like that."

"Read me, Lia. Open your mind to me."

"I can't. I can't read you anymore, Jasper. I can't read anyone once I've...become intimate with them."

A low predatory rumble startled her. In a single fluid motion, he flipped her underneath him. His big body fiercely pinned her to the bed. His cock surged into her already slick pussy.

"There will be no talk of others." His cock invaded her, hot, demanding. Her body traitorously responded, with pleasure that tingled from her core to her fingertips. "You are mine. And I am yours. And I am going to fuck you, Lia. I am going to fuck you up, down, left and right until there is nothing else but me and your pleasure."

She shut her eyes.

His hand was gentle against her cheek. "Don't be afraid of the pleasure."

"It's too much." She was falling apart. Jasper smashed her to pieces. She would evaporate.

He twisted her hands above her head, holding her down with a single hand.

His voice had become rough, a hint of a Russian accent creeping in his voice.

"Yes you can. Fight me all you want. But you cannot deny me."

His hard cock thrust into her.

She struggled underneath him, but all she managed in her wiggling was to elicit a satisfied groan from him. "Jasper!"

"You cannot lie to me. I know you better than you know yourself."

She gritted her teeth, shoving against him, trying to get him to move off of her but every movement, every motion slid his cock further inside her. Soon, his cock pulsed in her, as her hips slid up and down in a maddening rhythm of pleasure and anger.

"You masochistic brute," she gasped as sweet shivers began to overcome her.

"You can't expect anything else from a demon." He shifted and his cock began to thrum against that sweet spot within.

She grabbed fistfuls of his long black hair. "Damn you."

He groaned, lowering his head. "Do you know how hot you get when you curse me?"

Oh god. It was too much. Too much. His tongue plunged into her mouth. She couldn't stop him, couldn't avoid him. He was everywhere, hot demanding, invading her. Pleasure throbbed within her, rising, cresting.

His cock began to vibrate once more.

It shattered her weak barriers. Her mind opened. The wave of their combined pleasure crashed into them. She clung to him, and him to her, two became one as the world spun around them.

She didn't know how long they lay there. It could have been hours. It could have been days. But her life had utterly irrevocably changed because of him.

Pleasure, terror, euphoria, fear all swirled within her.

Jasper lifted his head to look up at her. His hair was entangled around her.

"You destroy me, Lia," he breathed.

"Me? You touch me and I fall to pieces."

He drew her closer to him.

"Listen to me Jasper. I have issues. I don't trust easily. I don't think I've ever trusted anyone, except for my grandmother. I'm very independent. I hate relying on others or having others rely on me."

He made shushing sounds against the top of her head. "I know. You're Selena del la Vega's great granddaughter. But we'll work it out."

"My great-grandmother has nothing to do with it. And don't start using the word 'we'. There is no 'we.' There is just Jasper, and Lia, who happen to be..." She refused to use the word relationship; that was too much. "Fuck buddies," she concluded.

Jasper nipped at a bare shoulder, sending a shiver through her.

"So then, let's fuck, buddy," he said a smile in his voice.

He tilted her chin so that he could look into her eyes.

She couldn't help it. A giggle erupted from her. Sheer unstoppable joy spread within her.

No. She couldn't. She clamped down on that.

He watched the expressions on her face. Understanding dawned in his eyes. "So much fear, Lia, You are like a nervous rabbit." He stroked her dark brown hair.

"I don't know even know you Jasper."

"So then, we will go slow. We will go at your pace. Whatever you are comfortable with."

"Thank you."

"I will not even follow you 24 hours. Maybe 23."

Her head jerked up.

He kissed her on the nose. "That was a joke, *maya lyubova*."

She frowned. "What did you just call me?"

"Oh that. Just a Russian term of endearment. Like sweetie."

"No it's not. You're -"

Abruptly, he jumped out of bed and stood up.

Tension radiated off him in waves.

"Do you hear that?"

"Hear what?"

"He's here. The one who's been after you."

Suddenly, she heard it in her head. It was a voice she had been all too familiar with. But never like this before.

"Lia...LIA...You are mine...Come to me..."

Lia brought her hand up to her mouth.

"It's Jon." She looked up to Jasper. "He's been stalking me since high school."

"You didn't tell me you knew demons before."

"He's a demon? He wasn't when I knew him."

Jasper cocked his head, as if listening to something else. He grabbed his pants and began shoving them on. "He's on the roof. I'm going up there."

"You're not going without me."

He stopped. "You're joking right? You're going to stay here where it's safe."

But Lia had already gotten up. She opened the drawer of her nightstand, withdrawing her gun, checking it to make sure it was fully loaded.

"I bought this thing to protect myself. I'm tired of him and I'm tired of running away. I don't care if he's a demon, this is ending NOW."

Jasper stood at the door, braced for a fight. "You think a gun is going to stop a demon?"

She stopped. "What can?"

"Unless your gun is enchanted, it's not going to work."

As much as it galled her to admit it, she knew he was right. He reached into his jacket and pulled out a business card. "If something goes wrong, call this number."

Reluctantly Lia took the card from his hand. Nothing ever changed. She was always helpless.

She ran to Jasper and kissed him.

He closed the door behind him.

Her hands fell to her side.

And then pain exploded in every cell of her body.

\* \* \* \* \*

Her mouth was dry. Gravel dug into her hands and knees.

"Hello Lia."

She lifted her head, finding herself on the rooftop. What the hell had just happened?

She looked upwards and froze.

*Oh. Great.*

Jon.

Only...changed.

Jon had clearly enhanced himself with his demonic powers, because when she knew him, he was not 7' tall, and definitely not muscular, didn't have long blond hair, not to mention those monstrous pair of white wings. Wearing a perfectly tailored white suit, he looked like an angelic pornographic fantasy, except for the snarl of anger that contorted his handsome face.

Jasper's voice growled behind her. "You could have killed her with that teleportation spell."

"But I didn't. And she will watch as you die. Lia...You are mine, always and forever. Did you forget that? I never did."

She staggered upward, aiming the gun at him. "Jon, I am not your property. I was never yours and I will never belong to anyone."

"You are wrong Lia. Not even your new boyfriend can stop me."

Jasper was suddenly between her and Jon. A red glow emanated from his body, as a growl, resonating with demonic power erupted.

"Just watch me."

Before her eyes, Jasper doubled in size as black feathered wings unfurled from his back. Black and red armor, shaped like the Roman gladiators of old manifested in a shimmer. In his right hand, was a shield, in his left a sword. A black helmet obscured his features, save for the glow of his eyes.

Jasper's voice vibrated with darkness. "Run Lia."

Jon snarled as similar silver and gold armor appeared on him.

They leapt into the sky. Thunder boomed as the two demons fought, sword clanging against shield. The smell of smoke and cinders filled the air.

Lia tried to move, only to find her feet anchored to the ground. She looked up to see a mass of feathers and swords. She couldn't tell who was winning. Drops of blood fell on her face.

She tried to move, grabbing a leg and pulling with all her strength, but she remained stuck all the same.

More blood fell to her feet. She looked up again, to see the two demons, swords outstretched, flying directly at each other as if they were in a jousting tournament.

The resulting clash blinded and deafened her.

Lia rubbed her eyes, trying to see even as she kept pulling at her legs.

Something crunched and smashed into the rooftop, shaking her free. She blinked frantically.

Jon's armor had disappeared. His white suit was filthy, matted with blood, with more blood streaming down his face. His left wing was crumpled. The point of the black demon's sword was inches away from Jon's throat.

A bizarre laughter erupted from Jon.

Something flew at her.

Before Lia even blinked, the black armored demon was in front of her.

And then, it was Jasper, as he had been, with his mandarin collared leather coat, falling to the ground.

Lia ran to him.

There was look of surprise on Jasper's face as he fell.

A crude short black knife was embedded in Jasper's chest, in his heart.

His eyes met Lia's, just before he closed them.

Lia screamed, and grabbed his hand.

Emptiness.

"Jasper!" She cupped his face with her hands, his stubble rough against her palm.

"I'm - I'm sorry." He breathed. Blood trickled out of his mouth. Random words poured into her mind, body, mind, soul, love.

*Oh my god. I love him.*

Tears streamed down her cheeks. She tried to shake him. "You will not die Jasper. I forbid it!"

But Jasper had already gone still.

She turned to the laughing figure.

"You monster!"

She gritted her teeth and fired until her gun was empty.

But the bullets only passed through the angel.

He smiled, looking radiant and angelic as ever. He stretched his hand out to her, exerting his power. A lasso of control looped her mind. "You don't really mean that, my love. Come here, and bring me my knife."

Almost as if in a trance, Lia turned and yanked the knife out of Jasper's chest.

Engraved on the obsidian blade was the sign of Quetzalcoatl

She stood up and walked slowly toward him, grasping the slick blood covered knife.

She stood before Jon.

He smiled, revealing fangs as the pupils disappeared from his eyes. He grabbed her by the shoulder and pulled her toward her, as his remaining whole wing began to wrap around her.

Lia gritted her teeth.

And plunged the knife into Jon's chest with a shout.

Light washed through her. It flowed around her, holding, hovering, like a wave poised to break.

To her surprise, Lia realized the magic was waiting for a command.

*"Grasping the blade, a bearer of blood can give a command and have a demon's will be done."*

Her voice was hoarse as she tried to speak. "Return your stolen powers to Jasper Ravinov and begone! Mind, body, and soul, I banish you from this realm forever!"

The wind picked up, swirling around the angel frozen in his embrace as he exploded into multicolored lights.

The lights swirled, surging upward into the sky, and then down into Jasper's body. He opened his eyes as the power slammed into him. The hole in his chest closed up as a silvery light infused his body.

He leapt up, just in time to meet Lia as she ran into his arms. He kissed away the tears that streamed down her cheeks.

"Don't cry." He held her close. "I'm here."

The magnitude of emotions overwhelmed her. Her voice quavered. "Are you ok?"

He hugged her fiercely. "I feel amazing. Do you have any idea what you just did?"

"I could not watch you die, Jasper. I couldn't."

He took a deep breath. She could see the faintest outlines of an odd shimmering glow around him. "You also gave me all of his powers, even the ones that weren't mine in the first place."

"What does that mean?"

"I don't know. But you'll help me find out, right?"

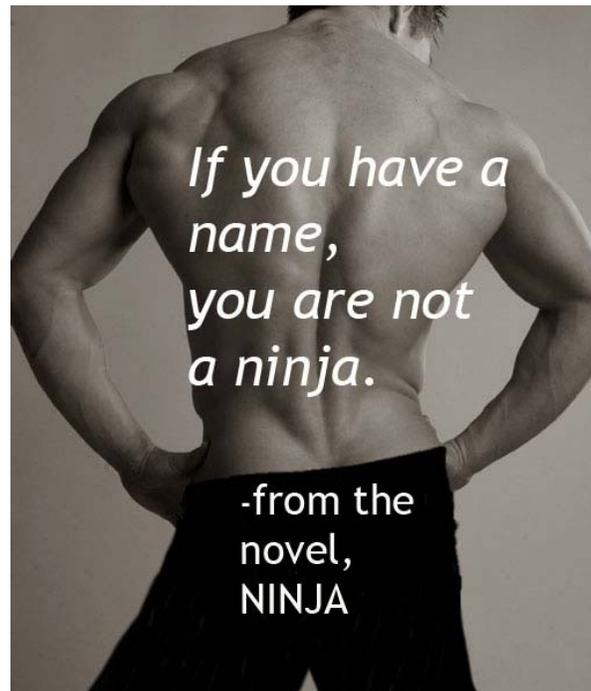
Something in her quavered. She took a deep breath. "I will try."

She kissed him.

## About Racy Li

Racy Li is a New Yorker with a weak spot for Afghani food and cold leftover pizza (sometimes together). She wanted a cat but somehow ended up with a husband. When she's not writing, her idea of fun is engaging in "lively discussions," kayaking, adding to her tea collection, and making friends with people who have cats.

Her first novel, a sexy urban fantasy, **NINJA** will be released in January 2007 from Loose Id (<http://www.loose-id.net>).



In a parallel world of alchemy, demons and superheroes, even the most ordinary may harbor the most extraordinary of secrets. Liz Blackwell leads a double life, as an attorney by day, and a freelance spy on the side. Unknown to her, her geeky secretary Kent Alistair is the mysterious superhero known simply as "Ninja." In the middle of an international game of crime wars, demons and mystical objects, can these two people learn to trust each other before it is too late?

*Includes a special appearance by Jasper!  
Jasper and Lia's story isn't finished just yet!*

Find out more at  
<http://www.racyli.com>!