



**Boyfriends**  
**A story by: Crymsyn R. Hart**

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# Boyfriends

By: Crymsyn R. Hart

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The smell of bacon fat curled my nose as the waitress placed the breakfast platter in the middle of my table. Chris reached over his water, spearing a sausage, picked up a few pieces of toast with his fingers, and licked off the butter. My stomach almost lurched at that as I barely sipped my coffee. It was his brilliant idea to meet at the *Waffle House*. I was perfectly happy staying at home, curled up on the couch, watching the *Wizard of Oz* over and over again, sipping my tea, and brooding. But no, he had to come over at midnight dragging me out all because he thought I had to get out of my house. Granted, I hadn't seen daylight for almost a week as all the curtains were bolstered and my apartment was an impenetrable fortress. He may have been my best friend, but it didn't give him the right to try and cheer me up.

“So cookie, have you gotten over him yet?” Chris muttered between swallows.

I took another sip of the burnt coffee wishing I hadn't. I put the cup down knowing no matter how much sugar or cream I dumped into the swill it wouldn't improve the taste or take away the crunchy grounds. We were the only ones in the place besides the zombiefied waitress who wiped the same spot on the counter, trying to stay awake. Chris noticed my gaze fall on the acne studded server and he raised his glass for more brew. It took her a moment to jump to attention before she shuffled over. Her uniform was yellow, coffee and grease stained, her hair falling out of her pins matching the color

of the coffee stains. There were more lines in her face telling her story than there was coming from her lips. I smiled nicely at her as I placed my hand over my cup and decided to sip on my water which had a slight chlorine taste.

“Madison, did you hear me?”

“Yes, I heard you, Chris. Eat your artery-hardening shit and let’s get out of here. Why did you have to drag me out? I was happy at home, now I have to go home and shampoo my hair several times to get the grease stink out of it. And how I’m feeling is none of your god damn business.”

“Like hell it isn’t! I haven’t heard from you for over a week and I know how you get when you’re brooding. How many times has Dorothy landed on the witch now?”

“Sixteen. But I can’t help it—”

“You’ve watched that movie sixteen times in a week? Gees, this guy really meant a lot to you. You haven’t watched it this much since Martin. He was what? Eighteen times? Good thing you have it on DVD.”

“No, it was Jonathon and twenty times. Thank you very much and I’ve already replaced the DVD since then.”

I took the moment to stare at the blob of ketchup on Chris’ plate. It was oddly enough in the shape of a slipper. He dunked his home fries into the glob and plopped it in his mouth. My stomach lurched forward and I made a dash for the bathroom. Unluckily I didn’t lose any of the coffee I had drunk and I think that might have made me feel better. After a few seconds of taking a deep breathes, I washed my face with cold water tasting the same chlorine aftertaste that I had been drinking. Bottled water my ass!

Finally, I looked in the mirror and wondered if Chris was right. Maybe I was beating myself up too much.

My skin was slightly pink from the dunking. My face looked like it had raccoon eyes from the dark circles. My blonde hair was up in a ponytail and I was dressed in sweats and a T-shirt that had ice cream stains dribbled over it. Hey, it wasn't my idea to come to this dump so Chris could satisfy his craving for breakfast junk food. I was an idiot. I really was letting myself get too worked up over a guy and one who I barely knew. It wasn't like we were serious or anything. It just happened I let myself fall head over heels for him, like I did with every guy, and when they stopped calling I always took it hard. I was defiantly the epitome of the emotional roller coaster. There was no doubt about that. The one who caught me every time I fell off was Chris. He'd heard my sob stories over and over again since high school. But that was what girlfriends were for, right? Okay, so he was a guy, but he was gay so didn't that put him in the category of a girlfriend? You would never know by looking at Chris he was gay. He was the straightest looking guy I knew and his parents hadn't accepted that fact yet. Whenever he had to do something with them, I became his date. I think his father was onto the idea more than his mother was, but his mother was old school Southern. Very prim and proper, taught her son to say yes ma'am and no sir, expected everyone to hold the door for her, was nice to your face and then smeared you behind your back. His dad was just the opposite, a crass Yankee, ex-mill worker who had been retired for years since they had won the lottery and integrated into slightly higher society then I thought they could pull off, but hell whatever. They raised a great boy who worked only because he didn't want to be bored

and was the sexiest guy I had known. Except of course, he was gay so that put him in the category of just being my girlfriend.

I laughed as I thought about the times we went out to clubs and all the girls fawned over him, shoved numbers in his pants, and all he did was give me a lost lamb look so I had to pretend to be his date so he could scan for men along with me. It was amazing how many gay men he actually pulled out of the straight clubs. For along time I used to be the one who dragged him out to listen to his sob stories, but I always picked a crowded restaurant and ordered something along the lines of a salad and listened to him as he hiccupped through his latest relationship that broke his heart. That was when I was with Ben. My ex-fiancé who called off the wedding, getting cold feet right before we said our I dos. Of course that was Ben, always had to wait until the last minute to make up his fucking mind. I guess that was the reason why all my relationships were fucked. I was insecure they would all screw me over and hey look, they had. Including this last one, Dante. Tall, dark and gorgeous. I swore he was gay, but after Chris made a go at him, he assured me he wasn't. That was good enough for me and I went in for the kill.

Three months later arranging dates around my third shift job and getting to know Dante, I was in head over slippers. Chris warned me not to let myself fall so hard, but did I listen? Things were going great, granted we hadn't had sex, but I just figured he was good with "boundaries" or maybe he was impotent and was waiting for the right moment to take his *Viagra*. Who knew? I wasn't pushing it. Damn, he was an awesome kisser though. Then one night we're getting all hot and heavy on my couch and he just goes stiff, not in the sense I wanted, and says he has to go. I was like; yeah—okay—sure whatever you have my number let me know when you want to get together.

That was two weeks ago and he hadn't called me back. Nothing. No card. No note. No rambling message on why he dumped me. Not even, 'it's not you it's me shit.' So last week I pulled out my latest copy of the *Wizard of Oz* and started watching it non stop. I was a sucker for the flying monkeys. They just did it for me every time. That and Glenda. She just knew how to brighten my day. It was sad really. It really was, but hell, my obsession for the movie had replicated to owning porcelain dolls of all the figurines and yes even my own version of the ruby slippers. I even had the outfit for Halloween and Chris had been the wizard so we made quite a pair. Still, Dante hadn't even uttered a word anything was wrong which was the worst thing of all.

"Hey, you okay in there?" Chris' voice echoed through the door.

"Yeah, fine. I'll be out in a minute," I muttered. "Damn."

I looked in the mirror one last time and then walked out the door. I sat back in the syrup encrusted booth and watched Chris eat the rest of his breakfast platter. "So what're you going to do now? You still going to brood? Or you going to put away the flying monkeys and get on with your life?"

"I guess it's time to hit the dance floor again, find out who else is swimming in the shark infested pool? So you want to go out Friday night? *Allure* is having ladies night tomorrow night, we could both get in free," I smiled.

"Bitch," he leaned over and hit my shoulder spraying scrambled eggs on the table. "As much to contrary belief, not every gay man dresses up in women's clothing, gets on stage, and lip sings to seventies disco. Besides, heels kill my feet. But I can't go with you anyway, Alex and I have plans."

I stared, wide eyed at him, as the waitress dropped our check on the table. There was a slight hop in her step as she was already calculating the tip. But I didn't grab it as Chris pulled his wallet out and threw a ten down on the table leaving her with around a buck tip. I raised my eyebrow.

He just shrugged. "Their coffee sucked."

We got to the parking lot and back into his car. For a rich guy, he didn't splurge. He was still driving the same '89 Escort with rust spreading on the hood he'd had since it was new. Back at my apartment, he was a gentleman and walked me to the door. He grabbed me in a bear hug and nuzzled the side of my neck. God, I wished he was straight. Finally, he put me down and I poked him in the chest. "So when did this whole thing with Alex get so hot and heavy and you didn't even tell me?"

He blushed. "Ahh, well, you've been busy following the yellow brick road. And— well things just developed. I think I'm in love. Can you believe it?"

"I think that's great. At least one of us is gettin' some."

Chris just hugged me even harder. "Okay, girl you go upstairs and get some sleep."

I just nodded and pushed my way into my place and saw the answering machine blinking. Holding my breath, I pressed the button. There was silence for a moment and then a sigh. A throaty voice came on. It was Dante. My heart soared. "Madison, this is Dante. Look, I have to see you. I know I haven't called, but I have a good reason. Look, call me back."

I replayed the message a couple more times and then hugged the phone to my chest. Should I call him? What does he have to say? I fell onto the couch and toyed with

the remote. Maybe I should just go back to Oz and forget about Dante. He had made these past couple of weeks hell. But I knew if I didn't call him it would weigh on my mind. Biting my inner lip, I reached over and grabbed my date book from the coffee table and punched in his number. Hell, if he wanted me to call him back I didn't care if he was sleeping or not. It was only a little past one and normally I should have been answering phones at the call center, trying to sell insurance, but I had switched shifts last week and was enjoying a four day weekend. If he called me this late, he had to be up. He had mentioned he was a night owl like me.

The phone rang, rang, and rang again. I swore I would get his machine, but after the fourth ring his deep voice answered sounding more annoyed than anything. Through the line, I heard jazz playing.

“Hello.”

“Dante, hi! It's Madison I got your message. Look, I can call you back later, if this is a bad time.”

“Hey, no. I thought you were someone else.”

My heart dropped and instantly the munchkins were singing in my head. “Oh!”

“No, it's not what you think. My mother is sick and I've been away with her. That was why I left so suddenly. She's dying and I just had to go. I didn't mean to leave you high and dry. I'm sure you think I'm a jerk, but I was hoping I could come over and see you. There was some other stuff I wanted to tell you, but not over the phone.”

“Yeah, sure whenever.”

“How about in an hour?”

I gazed around the apartment. Empty ice cream pints littered the apartment. The place was a mess and I was even worse. But hell, why not. "Sure."

"Great, see you then." He hung the phone up leaving me with the dial tone and staring at the little holes in the phone. I flung the receiver back into the cradle and went into hyper drive. I straightened the cushions, gathered all the trash, and turned the shower on to warm up while I did the variety of spoons and bowls in the sink. By the time I was in the shower. I had shampooed my hair and cut gashes in my leg from my blunt razors. I knew I should have bought new ones last week. Toweling my hair, I threw on some jeans and a fashionable T-shirt and ran the brush through my knotted hair. There was no time for makeup and well that would have been a little obvious I was desperate so I left that off. I mean I was desperate, but not that desperate.

There was a knock on the door echoing through my apartment. My eyes glanced at the DVD player and I sighed, debating if I wanted to press play or answer the door. Guess which one I chose? Yes, I opened the door and there was Dante in tight black jeans and a red T-shirt. He took my breath away as his dark hair was swept up in a ponytail and his dark eyes sparkled. He looked up at me and held my gaze and produced a single purple rose. It was the most thoughtful thing. I took it and nicked my thumb so a bubble of blood came up and before I could clean it Dante snatched it up and sucked on it. The look on his face was pure ecstasy. He looked up at me, smiled, and ran his tongue over the flesh. Yeah it was weird, but it was also the sexiest thing I ever had done to me.

Without another word, he pulled me to him and locked me in a deep throat kiss. Finally, he pulled away leaving me breathless. "Wow. What prompted that?"

He came in, locked the door behind him, and led me to the couch. His hands slid over my shirt searching for a way to get under it. I nearly fell into his embrace, but decided against it as the evil flying monkeys were gnawing at my conscious. Something about this was all wrong. “Dante. This is great and all, but what the hell did you want to tell me. I get the feeling your mother is not dying. So fess up.”

He laughed richly reminded me of dark chocolate rubbing over silk, sweet and soft, but it would still go to my thighs. “You’re very perceptive or I’m losing my touch.”

“Let’s go with I’m perceptive. Now what gives? You run off on me, break my heart and then come crawling back lying about a dying mother. So what’s up?”

“Okay, so you got me. I lied about my mother, but there’s something that I wanted to tell you. Show you.”

I leaned in close and kissed him lightly and he kissed me harder. I fell over into him and ran my tongue across his lips. As I did, I felt something sharp. I pulled away quickly and came back tasting blood. Dante just looked at me and smiled seductively.

“That was what I wanted to talk to you about. You see. I’m a vampire. I fell for you hard and I wanted to be sure about you. And I think I am.”

I stared at him and laughter bubbled up. We were certainly not in Kansas anymore. “So you’re a vampire.”

Anger crossed Dante’s face. “Madison, I’m serious. More than you know. I hoped it wouldn’t come down to this, but—” He pulled back his lips into a snarl and I saw his fangs growing and he struck, biting into my neck. The pain was so abrupt it hit me quickly and took me a moment to react from the pleasure of his mouth on my neck. Okay, this guy was for real. No normal human being could make teeth grow like that and

then move so quickly. Hmmm..the twister had picked up my house and landed me on top of the wicked witch herself. Finally, I came to my senses and started beating him on the chest to get him off of me. Not that I wanted him to stop, but a girl has to talk.

Dante moved back and I saw the smear on his lips and on his teeth as he preened the vestiges with his tongue. “Okay, I believe you. So what? You going to make me into a vampire or what?”

He just looked at me as if I had shot him. “You know, Madison. I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have come here. I thought. I don’t know what I thought.” He looked as if he had come to some horrid realization. He bleached out like stone and I was a statue that he didn’t see. He moved toward the door and I looked at him puzzled and moved in front of him before he could get to the door.

“Whoa, you come over here, tell me you’re a vampire, and now you’re just leaving. What the hell?”

He signed and stared me straight in the eyes. “Honestly, you’re just not my type.”

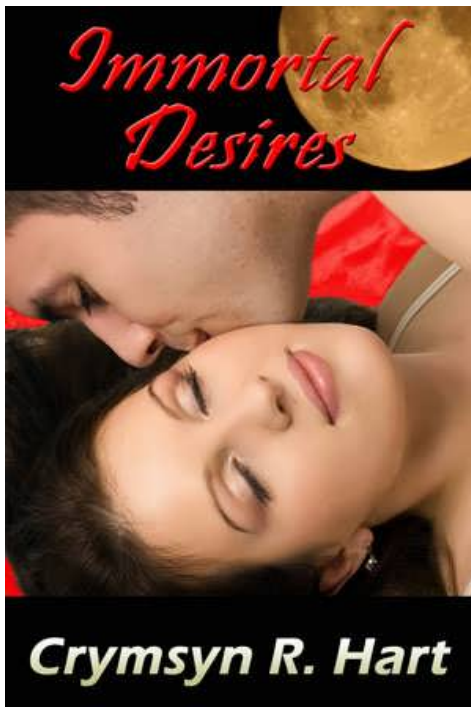
He pushed me out of the way and in an instant he was gone, evaporating into mist. I was left open mouthed, gaping at where he had gone. I turned on my heel and went back to the freezer, still in disbelief. I pulled out my last pint of ice cream and took out a spoon. I was more in shock as I opened up the pint and picked up the phone. But I hung it back up and knew that Chris would never believe me. Damn, it was just my luck.

Boyfriends sucked. Literally, it seemed.

I flicked the DVD on and even before the Technicolor cornfields came on, I decided to switch out the disc and put in a vampire movie I had bought on a whim. Yeah, it was definitely time to find a new movie. No more trips over the rainbow for me.

From now on, I was sticking with my girlfriends.

## More by this author:



*Warning! This e-book contains substantial sexually explicit scenes and graphic language, which may be considered offensive to some readers.*

*"This was a powerfully enthralling story. The reader is immediately swept up into mysterious events, fueled by the past. This was a great vampire love story that transcended time and space and explored love on more than the physical level. Undead-coffin-sleeping bloodsuckers await those adventurous enough to read on. The pages of Immortal Desires held me captivated from start to finish."*

*- Coffeetime Romance*

Amara has been dreaming about a man who leaves her breathless, and everything in her yearns to discover who he is. Is he real? Or is she in love with a ghost? Her body aches from the memory of his caresses, but his name always eludes her.

Andrew feels the same longing, as his heart has never completely healed since he was separated from his lover lifetimes ago. In Amara, he discovers his lost love reborn. Will the sorrow of his soul be eased with their reunion? Or will his longings go unfulfilled?

Andrew's troubles soon multiply when they discover that a vampire is killing his own kind to gain power. When Andrew realizes that Amara is the next target, he swears to protect her even if it means his life. To keep her safe, Andrew brings Amara back to his lair where he dwells with other vampires. Here, she discovers that her dreams are really memories from a past life and that Andrew is the one who has been haunting her. Overwhelming desire lures her to discover the true connection between them before it burns her alive. Before that happens, Amara meets Simon.

Something about him draws her. He seems more dangerous and intriguing than Andrew. Before long, Amara finds herself torn between Andrew and Simon. With both tied to her heart and her past, which one will she choose? Will she succumb to the hold that Simon has over her? What is the calling of her heart?

She has to decide soon, because time is running out and the hunter still lurks in the shadows...

### **Immortal Desires Excerpt**

Glancing in the woods, she saw a shadow leaning against a tree, staring right at her, waiting for her to make the next move. The figure was out of her range so she only saw the shape of the man that spoke to her. A flashback overtook her.

In her past, she was a child standing by a figure peeking out from behind a tree. A man with blonde hair and pale skin had smiled at her. He was some kind of angel. This memory wasn't from this lifetime. There were others that she couldn't quite grasp. Ones in which she had feelings for him. Suddenly her thoughts pushed her backward.

His breath was hot on her ear. His tongue traced the line of her neck. Amara held in a moan as the sensations of his hands moved up her calf, under her skirt, searching out her moist depths. She was helpless against him as he had total control over her, but she let him and surrendered to his manipulations.

From the memory, her nipples hardened and she began to breathe faster. It was as if he was next to her, doing what she was remembering. The night air was cool on her exposed flesh, but she was burning up from needing him. It had been so long since they had been together. Eons it seemed. Amara clenched her fists against the memory as her heart sped up and she tried not to be caught up in it. But it was impossible.

She felt the hardness of his length against her backside. His free hand cupped her breast, fingering her nipples.

Amara closed her eyes and bit down on her tongue to keep herself in the present. She had to stay focused. Through all of this, she knew he was the one that her soul had locked onto. He'd called her Jacquelyn, like in her dreams. She fought to sort through the mental block and the memories that she had of this man. Damn it! She had just read about him in her journals, but her mind was still overwhelmed from the squelched passion that had built in her just from the vague recollection. Finally, as she dug deep through the emotions he elicited in her, a name appeared in the haze.

Andrew.

Very good. I'm surprised you put it all together so quickly. For some the awakening process takes years, as their true identities are hidden underneath lifetimes of humanity. But you've known what you were since the day you were born.

"What are you talking about?" she whispered.

The volume of the cemetery's residents was growing louder. They were shouting something. Amara diverted her attention back to the graveyard but saw nothing unearthly, so she started toward the figure that held her transfixed. As she moved down the hill, the stranger's thoughts were merging with hers, just as she had done with Trevor. But this was different. He had access to her memories and she wasn't used to that. As she tried to push him out of her mind, the atmosphere in the graveyard changed, breaking her concentration. The spirits rose quickly, vying for her attention. They pushed the man out of her mind momentarily and made her aware that the phantoms were screaming.

What are they saying?

She looked toward him as she scanned the burial ground. Hairs rose on the back of her neck. The place had changed. It had become creepier in a way she couldn't explain. It was like the expectation that someone would jump out and get her, or fear that the serial killer was coming after her in a horror movie. It didn't feel safe. She glanced at Jesus and he was still staring. Cars whizzed by on the nearby road. The night was becoming dangerous, but Amara couldn't see the threat. The

stranger still shared her mind, but wasn't making it a point to intrude, rather he was just listening to her every move. She was surprised that he couldn't understand the spirits through her.

I never had the gift of talking to the dead. You were always more powerful. Maybe that was one reason I was jealous all the time, because I knew that, in the end, I would lose you once you realized how truly gifted you were. In the end, my worst fears came true. Honestly, I never thought I would see your beautiful face again. But here we are.

"Whoever you are, get the fuck out of my head! I don't know what the hell you want with me. Why are you following me? How do I know you? What the hell are you talking about?"

Listen. Don't you hear that?

"Hear what?"

Leave now. I don't know what the ghosts are saying, but you have to get out. Run!

"Like I'm going to listen to you. You won't even come out from the woods. The ghosts might be telling me to be careful of you. How do I know you're not some pervert who thinks because you're telepathic you can just fuck with my mind. Piss off!"

Amara turned her back on the figure, irritated that he had the audacity to tell her what to do. She always hated that. She didn't need anyone dictating her life.

Forgive me for showing up this way. I never intended to come to you like this. I had hoped I'd meet you on a more intimate basis and we could get reacquainted. Now is not the time for you to be condemning me or reminiscing. You have to listen. Whether you believe me or not, you must leave, quickly. Run!

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*Warning! This e-book contains substantial sexually explicit scenes and graphic language, which may be considered offensive to some readers.*

Book 1 of Gods and Goblins, Oh My!

Every spell that Kalliope casts explodes in her face. Going to bed disgusted, she awakes to find a gorgeous, naked man in her bed. She rushes into the bathroom to call 911, but her burglar has the most enticing voice and lures her to come make love to him.

Ensnared, the witch discovers that her naked burglar is not any ordinary man, but a god named Lugh, whom she had summoned from the fire and longing in her soul. Kalliope's entire being yearns to be touched by him, but before anything happens, another prowler comes into her life. Cromm, a death god, comes to collect on a promise made before she was born.

While trying to escape Cromm, Kalliope finds herself spirited away into a realm of gods and goblins where she meets a goddess who gives her three magickal apples. From the first bite, her world changes forever. The witch is now the newest magickal being on the block.

Lusting after Lugh, Kalliope wants to be his sex slave, not Cromm's. For this to happen, blood has to be spilled.

Who will win Kalliope? Will it be Lugh or Cromm? Will she ever get back to her realm? Only time will tell and she doesn't have much of that left, oh my!

### **Gods and Goblins, Oh My! Excerpt**

"Come here," he whispered.

Unable to focus, Kalliope stepped forward, feeling the places where his hands and lips had touched her in her dreams igniting. He looked gorgeous, and his eyes promised many delicious things. She could have a field day. Just before she fell under his spell, her foot came down on something sharp, which stabbed her big toe.

"Ouch." She jumped. The sudden pain snapped her mind back to reality. It didn't matter that he was naked and in her bed or that her dream was the hottest she had had in months. "Who the hell are you? How did you get in here?" She realized her state of dress and grabbed for the sheet, but found her phone instead. She brandished it like a weapon. Kalliope swallowed. Her heart thundered in her throat. Her eyes caught the curtain blowing in the light breeze. She hadn't opened the window. He must have climbed up the fire escape.

"Kalliope." His face lost the smile. He slid out of the bed, not bothering to cover his nakedness.

The witch was horrified, but her eyes strayed to his well-endowed manhood. Evil thoughts passed through her mind. Her cast-off dream resurfaced. She saw herself surrounded by flowers, in a bed of moss, with his fingers exploring parts of her that hadn't been caressed in years. His hard anatomy rested against her lower back. She licked her lips. His kisses had been sweet and light. She had wanted him in her dreams and part of her still did.

The intruder took a step forward and that jumpstarted her brain. A jolt of terror moved her to run into the bathroom. Kalliope realized her hands were shaking. She pushed the lock on the knob and stared at the phone. The knob shook back and forth. Kalliope waited for the intruder to break down the door and rape her. Fear gripped her every thought. She kept backing up.

"Kalliope," her assailant called through the door.

"Go away," she said, trying to sound brave.

Suddenly, her heel collided with the tub, and she lost her balance. Kalliope grabbed onto the shower curtain. As her weight caught the drape, the thick plastic ripped from the metal hooks, leaving some spinning on the rod. Her backside landed on the green shower mat and her feet went over her head as it hit the neon orange tile walls.

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### **Blurb Unedited**

Brenna has existed in the shadows for years predicting the outcome of human lives. Keeping this closeness gives her some semblance of life. Darkness and cold have been her constant companions. The only thing that motivates her is the hunt and the sweet aroma of copper underneath human flesh, mixing with the jasmine on the night breeze.

It seems like forever Veronica has been running from her ex. Her eyes are always poised over her shoulder, searching the shadows for Devon, the demon that drives her onward. He is obsessed, trying to reclaim her as his property. The continuous pursuit drives her to New Orleans where she collides with the one creature that changes her life forever.

Something deep within Brenna awakens and reaches out to Veronica to ease her suffering. For this frail creature, Brenna is willing to sacrifice everything and reveal the one secret that she has kept hidden from the world. To save the woman that she cherishes, Brenna risks her very existence and faces creatures hiding in the darkness that she never knew existed.

Will Brenna and Veronica survive their ordeal? Or will Devon claim them both?

**Masquerade** Teaser Excerpt (unedited)

(Brenna Speaking)

I sighed and sat down on a sheet-covered couch. A cloud of dust engulfed me as I did.

Poor Veronica, I thought.

She had no one, didn't know who to trust in a world that was a lie to her. Now I had told her to take a hike. I really knew how to make things right.

I don't know how long I sat there, but I finally decided to lie down and the next thing I knew someone tapped me on the shoulder. I opened my eyes and saw Veronica smiling down at me. I smiled back and got up slowly. This time as I moved the sharp pains from the wounds she gave me ran up my back. I cried out, holding my back.

“Are you all right?”

That question again. My gaze hardened. I didn't need to hear that at the moment, but I didn't want her going anywhere either. “No, I need to get this damn corset off.”

“I thought you would have had it off by now.”

“Yeah, well, I went looking for you after you left the room, and you were nowhere to be found. Just the empty house. I came down here to wait, but I guess I fell asleep.”

“Here, I'll help you, stand up.”

I did as I was told, the mesh material of my skirt scraping against my legs. Veronica's arms came around me, as she began to unbuckle the front. It was too tight, so she had to move to the back and undo the lacings. She had a hard time undoing the knot. Each time she pulled on it, it drew me closer to her body until I was only inches from her. As each string came looser more oxygen rushed to my brain. Finally she was done, but I was losing my balance and fell back into her. She caught me, her arms coming up under mine. Her fingers brushed against the sides of my breasts.

My nipples hardened as she quickly removed her hands from my chest. I caught her hand and held it over my breast so she could feel the nipple underneath it. Her fingers lingered a moment too long and then she backed away.

I turned to her, wondering what she was doing. She could read my emotions, just as well as I could read hers. She knew how much I yearned to be with her.

“Don't tease me,” she said, her voice husky with hunger of some kind.

I took a step forward. She didn't know if she could trust me. She assumed I was manipulating her just as Devon had. As the space grew between us, some of the walls she had torn down were thrown back up around her mind. She didn't want to be hurt again. I wasn't going to hurt her. I wanted to show her how sorry I was, wanted to indulge in the desires which had been rising between us, and for the first time give myself to someone without having to worry about what they thought of me. She knew who I was, what I was.

