

Excerpt from:

The Unlikeable Demon Hunter: Burn

“Come on, Avon. You can’t be late for your own performance.” Cole pushed his glasses up his nose with a little face scrunch, unwilling to cross the threshold into the Zone of Chaos, a.k.a. my bedroom.

I dug through the pile of workout clothes on the closet floor and tossed a couple Ziplock bags over my shoulder. The one containing hair spray, gel, elastics, and bobby pins hit my fluffy area rug with a quiet thunk, while my jumble of make-up, false eyelashes, and glue sailed onto my mattress.

“One second.”

“Let’s go already. Parking is a bitch at the—” Cole’s irritation cut off with a yelp as a tangle of duct tape and extra shoelaces flew through the air to wing him in the shoulder.

I sat back on my calves. “I can’t find the shoes you—”

“I what?”

I shook my head to clear it. “My custom leather taps. I need them for this performance.”

“Dropping pricy hints for your next birthday? Noted. Meantime.” He nudged my dance bag across the floor. “Your shoes are in here. You put them in last night.”

I pulled them out. Black worn taps. Not purple and red saddle shoes with a red heart.

“These aren’t them. They don’t fit anymore.” My voice caught on a half-sob.

Cole crouched down next to me and slid one onto my left foot. “They fit fine.”

I ripped it off. “They don’t.”

Yeah, I was being sulky and kind of childish, but I was a performer. Performers needed the right tools to put on a good show and the shoes I was looking for and annoyingly not finding were it for me. The old shoes would be okay, but I intended to set the world on fire.

“You want to try dancing your heart out in front of a crowd wearing shoes you don’t feel absolutely confident in, be my guest,” I said.

Cole put the shoe away, then grabbed my hair and make-up accoutrements, and snagged my costume bag from a chair. “Take a moment and breathe. You’ve got this. I’ll meet you at the car.”

I dropped my face into my hands. This wasn’t my pre-show jitters that I fed off to give my tapping an exhilarating edge. This was a full-blown nightmare of

being backstage with the lights dimming and the audience shushing, the first notes about to play, while I stood there in the wings, all my moves forgotten.

Get it together, Katz. People were counting on me to nail this performance. I jogged down to the car, trying to weave my nerves into something more productive.

My phone beeped with a flurry of texts from Leo and my family, even my mom, telling me to break a leg. Nothing from Ari, though. I'd give him shit later when he got home from... I frowned. Where was he?

When I slid into the passenger seat of his hand-me-down clunker, Cole made a big production of ceding control of the radio dial. "M'lady."

"M'thank you."

"Dork." He pulled away from the curb.

I fiddled with the cracked plastic knob, but every radio station was static. I was about to shut it off when I caught the faintest strain of a melody that filled me with hope, light, and deep anxiety. I gripped the dashboard.

*"Let's slay all our demons*

*I'll lay down my knives*

*For you, I'll lay down my knives."*

Cole groaned and snapped off the dial. "This emo crap can't be helping your state of mind, babe."

I scrambled to twist the knob back on, but the song had vanished. Just more static. I spun through radio stations and got nothing. “Comebackcomebackcomeback!”

Deep in my core, a spark caught with an agonizing electric snap. Current snaked over my body and a scream tore from my throat.

“I know I’m good,” said a Southern Californian drawl that was dry with amusement, “but I didn’t even touch you.”

I clutched his biceps. My body relaxed and my heart slowed its galloping.

Rohan.

I opened my eyes and wriggled closer to him, my cheek finding his solid pecs the perfect pillow. A dusting of dark hair tickled my nose. “If you can’t tell the difference between an orgasm and a nightmare, you might need to rethink your technique.”

He rolled me over and pinned me against the cool sheets, edging one knee between my legs. “Yeah? You think I need practice?”

I ran my hands down his bare skin to his hipbone. “I mean, it does make perfect. And you are kind of anal about your technique.”

“You’re getting kind of anal, too,” he snickered.

I brushed my fingers over his erection and he hissed. “That’s right, buddy. You can crack jokes or go for door number two.”

Rohan waggled his eyebrows.

Groaning loudly, I flopped onto my back.

Ro stretched out against me, his lips brushing mine.

If I lived until ninety, I would never tire of feeling him fitted against me. How the ridge of his hip pressed into my soft curves. He was like my own personal docking station. He recharged me, but he always left me better than I was: singing a little louder, shining a little brighter.

“You loooooove me,” he said.

“Weelllllll.” Now it was my turn to hiss as he slid a finger inside me. My nipples tightened, and a drugged lust snaked through my veins.

“You are positively dripping with love for me.”

“You’re hopeless,” I laughed, squirming against him as he stroked Cuntessa. I brushed my breasts against his chest, loving the fierce rumble he made.

“Say it,” he growled, though he was grinning.

His love shone in the twinkle of his eyes and in the way that he stoked the fire in my body with awed adoration. We were going to grow into that old couple who always held hands and giggled at some inside joke as they tottered along at a snail’s pace.

I threaded my fingers into his hair, pulling his face close to reassure myself he was here. For as long as possible, I wanted us to stay like this, where he was my entire world. “I love you so much, Rohan. And I need you inside me.”

“Patience, sweetheart.”

“Please. Now.” My ribcage constricted and I held his forearms tighter so he couldn’t fade away.

Rohan wrapped his hand around mine, pressing it to his heart as he knelt on the bed and pushed inside me. But he didn’t move, just demolished me with a single volcanic gaze, his eyes amber rum and cinnamon.

I bucked my hips and he cocked an eyebrow at me.

“Oh good,” I said. “You remember you’re here. Inside me.”

“I could never forget that.” He fucked me in a lazy tempo. Something in my chest eased as Rohan leaned down to whisper in my ear and I laughed as his stubble tickled my neck. This was it, this was perfect.

“You’re my heart, my home. I love you, Lilith.”

I gasped, my lungs seizing.