

Changeling Press Presents  
Hot Toddy #5  
The Vampire's Christmas  
Angela Knight

All rights reserved.  
Copyright ©2004 by Angela Knight

No part of this e-book may be reproduced or shared by any electronic or mechanical means, including but not limited to printing, file sharing, and email, without prior written permission from Changeling Press LLC.

ISBN 1-59596-103-8  
Formats Available:  
HTML, Adobe PDF,  
MobiPocket, Microsoft Reader

Publisher:  
Changeling Press LLC  
PO Box 1561  
Shepherdstown, WV 25443-1561  
[www.ChangelingPress.com](http://www.ChangelingPress.com)

Editor: *Pat Haley*  
Cover Artist: *Angela Knight*



This e-book file contains sexually explicit scenes and adult language which some may find offensive and which is not appropriate for a young audience. Changeling Press E-Books are for sale to adults, only, as defined by the laws of the country in which you made your purchase. Please store your files wisely, where they cannot be accessed by under-aged readers.

## Chapter One

### Six Months Earlier

Amelia Patton clattered up the beige stairs of the apartment complex, the plastic dress bag hooked over one shoulder. It had been a long shift at the hospital, but the prospect of showing David her purchase had put a bounce back in her step. The gown was every little girl's fairytale dream -- seed pearls, white lace, and yards and yards of satin skirt, with a train that would reach halfway down the church aisle. The lace veil alone had her inner eight-year-old sighing in bliss.

Clutching her precious dress with one hand, she juggled the keys until she found the right one and inserted it into the lock. The door swung open, revealing the living room that had made real strides in livability over the past two months. When she'd first moved in, David's furniture had consisted of a couch he'd bought at Goodwill and a really tacky table made from a cable spool. The big screen television and entertainment center were worth more than all the rest of the furniture in the apartment. God love the man, he was too butch for taste.

Amelia had coaxed him into replacing the castoffs with a lovely cream living room set, colorful pastel sketches, and a pretty floor lamp with a stained glass shade. She made good money as a nurse, she argued. They could afford it.

"Honey, I'm home!" God, she loved saying that.

No answer. She frowned. It was well after midnight; David would be home from his shift with the Atlanta Police. Unless something had happened... A frisson of fear slid up her spine, but she forced it away. "Hey, Dave! I went by the mall on my dinner break and picked up that gown I told you about. Wait 'til you see it..."

The bedsprings creaked from the next room. "Amelia." His voice sounded hoarse.

"Hey, babe, you okay? Did you get into another fight?" That was how they'd met. David had come by the ER after a drug dealer resisted arrest with a little too much enthusiasm. She'd been smearing antibiotic cream across those sculpted ribs when he'd asked her to dinner. Amelia had looked into those crystalline blue eyes, and fallen helplessly in lust. She hadn't been able to say no to him since.

A year later, she still lusted for him -- but she'd also come to know and love his wicked sense of humor, strong character, and clever mind.

“Come here.” David normally reserved that cold, demanding tone for the prisoners he brought to the hospital after they’d tried to bust his head. He’d never before used it with her.

“David, what’s wrong?” Worried, Amelia hurried into the bedroom, the dress slung over her shoulder.

They’d bought the massive iron bedstead in an antique store when she’d moved in with him. David had teased her that its tall, ornate posts were perfect for bondage.

She’d still never expected to find him naked and shackled spread-eagle to it like a beefcake buffet.

David was a big man, as dark as she was blonde, broad shouldered and narrow hipped. He spent a couple of hours in the department gym four days a week, building the layers of rippling muscle he considered an occupational necessity for a beat cop. Adding to the impression of overwhelming masculinity, a dark ruff of hair spread across his chest and arched down his cobblestone belly toward his thick cock.

His face was just as broad and angular as his tough body, with prominent cheekbones and a regal nose, straight and narrow. His mouth added the only note of sensual vulnerability about him with its full lower lip and lush upper curve. A hint of a dimple graced one corner, giving his smile a boyish charm.

“Yum,” Amelia purred, grinning at the sight of him spread out in chains. “For me?”

“What do you think?” His cock stirred hungrily, and he stared at her like a cat watching a caged canary.

She rocked back on the rubber heels of her shoes and grinned. “This is an interesting switch. Usually I’m the one tied to that bed.”

“Come here,” he said again. His blue eyes blazed with lust.

Smiling wickedly, Amelia paused just long enough to hang the dress in the closet. Then, reaching for the hem of her scrubs, she started toward him. But before she could reach his side, she realized something was wrong. He was far too pale, in the way she’d come to associate with massive blood loss, and his face was drawn. She let the hem drop. “David, are you okay?”

“I said *come here* !” he roared, peeling his lips back from his teeth in a savage snarl.

*He had fangs.*

Sharp, white, damn near two inches long, they made his handsome, sensual mouth look alien and threatening.

They couldn’t possibly be real.

She gave him an uncertain smile. This must be some kind of new sex game, and yet... “What’s with the Count Dracula dental work? Halloween isn’t for three months.”

“Get over here!” He lunged at her so hard the bed danced on the floor, but he couldn’t break the chains. The iron posts began to bend.

Amelia jumped back, sick horror creeping over her with the knowledge this was no joke. Strong as he

was, there was no way he should be able to bend the solid iron headboard. "Jesus, David! What the hell is going on?"

"What are you doing here?" a female voice demanded. Amelia whirled as a woman she'd never seen before stepped into the room. The stranger barely came up to her shoulder, a petite brunette with a wealth of sable hair and a small, heart-shaped face. She wore jeans and a black knit top that made the most of impressive breasts. Her frown was ferocious as she glared up at Amelia. "You don't belong here, it's too dangerous. You must leave until this is finished." She stalked past on booted feet, pulling a familiar plastic bag out of her purse. Before Amelia could ask where the hell she'd gotten a unit of whole blood, she snatched a pair of scissors off the table, clipped the top off the bag, and thrust it into David's mouth. He began to drink thirstily.

Blood. *He was drinking blood.*

Like some kind of vampire.

A sense of unreality crashed in. Amelia took a step back. David. Naked. With a strange woman. Chained to a bed. Drinking blood. "Who the hell are you? Will somebody please tell me what's going on?"

"Get out!" the brunette snapped. She had an exotic accent, clipped and Slavic. "If he breaks loose from these chains, he'll kill you. Go! When he is sane again, I will tell you." She had fangs too.

Amelia's jaw dropped. "You're a vampire!"

The brunette shot her a glare. "Congratulations. Your grasp of the obvious is stunning. Now use those dubious wits and get out while you still can."

Still drinking, David rolled his blue eyes in her direction. The depths of his eyes glinted red. There was nothing at all sane in his gaze.

Amelia whirled and ran.

She moved in with one of her nurse coworkers the next day. She never went back to the apartment; she was too spooked. Instead she bought new clothes and uniforms, changed her cell number, and did her best to disappear, broken heart and all.

Two weeks later, Amelia learned from another officer that David had resigned from the force.

She tried very hard not to think about him otherwise. She didn't dare.

Yet for months it felt as if somebody had dug bloody chunks out of her heart with an ice cream scoop. The ache never went away, but in time she got better at ignoring it.

At least until the day five months after she left him, when the phone rang at the ER nursing desk. Amelia was closest, so she picked it up. "ER."

"Amelia."

It was like hearing the voice of a ghost. Her entire body flushed hot, then went ice cold. "David."

"I'm... sorry. About what happened that night. The Change drove me a little crazy. You have no idea what it's like becoming a..." He broke off. "But I'm back to normal. Or as close as I can come to it, without you in my life. God, Amelia, I miss you. I want to see you again. Please..."

Amelia hung up the phone and walked into the women's bathroom. Sagging against the wall, she began crying in deep, ragged sobs.

The man she loved was a monster. And she didn't dare see him again.

Christmas Eve

A brutally cold wind whipped through the hospital parking lot, and Amelia hunched deeper in her coat as she walked toward her car. She'd worked a double shift tonight, and she was exhausted. But she figured it was worth it. After all, her fellow nurses had families to celebrate Christmas with. Children. Husbands. Taking two shifts meant one of them got more time with the people who loved her.

And tired Amelia out too much to think.

Enough that she could face going home to the empty apartment she'd moved into four months ago. At least no tinsel and colored lights waited there to torment her with memories. Last year, David had tied her up and banged her brains out under the Christmas tree. She hadn't been able to even look at holiday decorations this year without feeling a fist clench around her heart.

As she headed toward her car, a flicker of interest penetrated her depression. There was a black limo parked next to her car. A tall blond man stood next to it, his arm around a woman who was bundled against the cold. The two had their heads together, whispering.

A memory ambushed Amelia. David, standing with her in that same pose, his arms strong and warm around her. She caught her breath in pain and turned her face away from the pair. Trying to ignore them, she stepped between the cars and clicked her key fob to unlock the Honda.

"Amelia?" The man's voice was deep, with a faint Slavic accent.

Automatically, she turned. "Yes?"

And froze, instantly recognizing the woman who stood beside him. It was the petite dark-haired woman who'd been with David that night.

The vampire.

Staring into those dark eyes, the world spun around her, propelled by raw terror.

"Turn around and put your wrists behind you," the vampire said.

*Like hell*, Amelia thought. But to her horror, she felt her body turn, as if she was no longer in control of

it. Fighting her rebellious arms as they obediently extended behind her, she gasped. "What? What the hell...? What are you..."

"Silence," the woman snapped. "Dimitri?"

The blond man stepped up behind her. Amelia felt something cold close around her wrists. Handcuffs?

"Wait! Stop that!" Panicking, she tried to jerk away, but her body wouldn't obey.

The woman opened the door of the limo. "Get in."

"No!" Amelia wailed, even as her body mechanically slid into the car.

"Oh, do be quiet," the vampire snapped. "This is your own fault. Go to sleep."

Darkness crashed down.

\* \* \*

Amelia regained consciousness to a metallic taste in her mouth. She was moving. Evidently they'd put her in that limo of theirs, since she could smell expensive leather. Her arms were twisted behind her in an uncomfortable pose.

"Are you ready to discuss this calmly?" a coldly familiar voice asked. The female vampire!

Fighting panic, Amelia lifted her head. By the looks of things, they were riding in the back of the limo she'd seen in the parking lot. The woman sat next to her. A man was driving; she could see nothing of him but broad shoulders and the dull gold gleam of his hair. The one the vampire had called Dimitri?

Amelia herself was belted in with her arms held behind her. She rolled her shoulders and discovered something cold -- metal. That's right, they'd handcuffed her. "What is this?" she croaked. "Where are you taking me?" Fear rose, cold and tight in her chest. *They're kidnapping me!*

"Calm down," the woman said. "I have no intention of hurting you."

"Yeah?" Her voice cracked. Amelia grimaced, cleared her throat, and tried for a little more authority. "Just exactly *what* do you have in mind?"

Determination hardened her captor's coolly beautiful face. "We're going to put things back to rights."

"We owe David Tate a debt," the blond man said. Yes, that was definitely Dimitri. Amelia recognized the voice. "And we intend to pay it."

"What kind of debt?" There, that was better. Much better to be pissed off than terrified. "Who the hell are you, anyway?"

The woman's dark eyes fixed on her face. In the darkness of the car, there was a strange ruby glint in their depths, something not quite human. She nodded at the driver. "This is my husband, Dimitri. My name is Varina Karov. Your lover saved my life."

Amelia licked dry lips. "I thought it was you," she whispered. "You were with him that last night. You

kept him from... hurting me.”

Those unhuman eyes narrowed. “He was not himself.”

“Yeah, I gathered that when he tried to rip out my throat.”

“He’s better now.”

“I seriously doubt that.”

Lush lips tightened with anger. Belatedly it occurred to Amelia that pissing off her captor wasn’t a good idea. “He’s through it now. He’s recovered.”

“As much as he can with you being so blindly stubborn,” her husband rumbled from the front seat. “You’ve hurt him badly.”

“*Thurthim ? He tried to kill me, mister!*” Amelia glared at him, then turned to the woman beside her. “Where are you taking me?”

“To see him.” It was Dimitri who spoke.

“So he can kill me?” She wanted to scream.

Varina’s creepy ruby eyes flicked toward her. “Don’t be a fool. If I saved you six months ago, would I let him kill you now?”

“I don’t know. Would you?”

“We do not kill, no matter what your peasant superstitions say.”

“That’s not what you said six months ago.”

“He’d just made the transformation. It’s a dangerous time for us. But he has adjusted to his new nature. He’s come back to himself, and he wants to see you.”

“Well, I don’t want to see him.” Amelia turned her head away, surprised at the bitter jealousy she felt. David had spent the past six months -- or longer -- with this beautiful vampire. *And now* he wanted a reunion? She didn’t think so. “I told him I wanted nothing to do with him when he called.”

Not that her desires mattered, since she was evidently on her way to see him anyway. The thought of what he might do to her made Amelia feel faint and sick.

“He’s not a monster, Ms. Patton,” Varina said. “And neither am I.”

“Yeah, well, the whole kidnapping thing is not exactly a gesture of good faith.”

“*We do not kill.* We don’t even need that much blood. A pint or so, perhaps. Most of us take it from lovers, but he hasn’t touched another woman since you left. He drinks from blood bags.”

“Yeah? *You* obviously touched him plenty.” There it was again, that bitter stab of jealousy. This woman was so petite and delicate, she made tall, blonde Amelia feel like a cow.

“I was dying. I had no choice.” Varina’s lush mouth tightened in frustration. They were headed out of Atlanta, the lights of the city falling behind them. “And as I said, I’m married.”

“Happily married,” Dimitri growled. “I would have lost her if it hadn’t been for David.”

Despite the dictates of common sense, some aching part of Amelia had to know. “What happened?”

“Dimitri was out of town on business,” the vampire said. “I was hunting drug dealers. . .”

“*Drug dealers?*”

Varina shrugged and smiled slightly. “I get bored. I get hungry. And when Dimitri is out of town. . .” She stopped and sighed. “But it was stupid. I see that now. If I’d died, my husband would have died too.”

“What? Why?”

“We are linked in a blood bond,” Dimitri explained. “It’s a kind of psychic union we formed by sharing blood. She feeds from me, and though I am not a vampire, I drink a small amount from her. Her blood makes me immortal, while mine sustains her. But if one of us died. . .”

“The death would kill the other,” Varina finished grimly.

“So David. . .”

“Saved both of us,” Dimitri said.

Amelia licked her lips and turned her attention to the vampire. “So what happened?”

She hesitated a moment, gathering her thoughts. “That night I had my eye on a group of young dealers. They’d been the bane of their neighborhood, terrorizing elderly people and young families. I wanted to get them under control. If I drank from them, I could establish psychic dominance over the lot and stop them.”

“You didn’t drink from me, and yet you seem able to tell me what to do,” Amelia interrupted bitterly.

Varina shot her an irritated glance. “I’m in your presence. To control a group after I leave them, I must drink.” She shrugged. “But no sooner had I approached them than a rival group staged a drive-by shooting. I took a shotgun blast in the chest, and the dealers scattered.”

Amelia frowned. “But I thought it took a stake in the heart to kill a vampire.”

“Superstition,” Dimitri told her, meeting her gaze in the rearview mirror. “If you damage the heart badly enough, a vampire cannot heal.”

“I lay in that alley, bleeding out my life, when David found me. He bent over me.” Varina looked away, staring out the window at the darkness beyond. “I could smell the life in him. And I went. . . a little mad. I took him.”

“You *attacked* him?” Amelia’s jealous imaginings of vampire seduction vanished in a poof of sympathy. David had tried to help someone, and had had his life ripped away for his efforts. In a moment, he’d lost



both his job and the woman he loved.

Varina nodded bleakly. "I lost control. By the time I regained myself, it was too late. He was dying. There was only one way to save him, and that was by making him a vampire."

Amelia felt sick. If Varina was telling the truth, David hadn't cheated on her -- he'd been victimized through no fault of his own.

God, she wanted to believe that. But how could she trust anything Varina said? She wasn't even human. How could Amelia even trust her own need to believe? What if Varina was using her powers to trick her?

Besides, no matter how he got that way, David was a vampire now. None of these people could be trusted. "Okay, fine. If David wants to call me and talk, I'll listen. But in the meantime, *stop the car and let me out!*" That last emerged as a scream of mingled rage and fear.

The vampire shot Amelia a hard look, her pretty face impatient. "No." She ground her teeth in frustration. "Eh, I'm wasting my time. I'll let David explain -- or whatever he cares to do to you." Ruby eyes met hers. It was like falling into a crimson sea. "Sleep, you stubborn, jealous little fool."

And for the second time that night, everything went black.

## Chapter Two

Amelia opened her eyes to meet the gaze of a sweetly smiling angel peeking out from pine needles. She blinked and jerked, instantly realizing two things. First, the crystal angel was hanging from the branch of a Christmas tree, and second, she was bound and naked under the tree in question.

Frowning, she looked down her body at her bare breasts. Pine needles brushed her nipples, and some smartass had tied a red bow around her neck, as if she were a puppy.

She was pretty sure she knew who the smartass was.

"Bitch," Amelia growled, and squirmed, testing her bonds. Her wrists were bound together at the small of her back, and her ankles were circled by some kind of leather cuffs attached to either end of what felt like a bar. The arrangement arched her breasts upward and spread her thighs.

She lifted her head. Several small, neatly wrapped packages surrounded her in an artistic pile. Her eye fell on a little card attached to the bow around her throat. The tiny envelope read *To David*.

"Perfect, just perfect," Amelia muttered, as her heart began to pound. "I'm Christmas dinner!"

Her traitorous nipples hardened as a wash of longing took her by surprise.

“Cut that out,” she growled at them. “He’s a freakin’ monster.” Pain slid into her heart like an icepick. Her handsome, seductive David was now a vampire. The man she’d have trusted with her life six months ago might well kill her before the sun came up.

Unless Varina had told the truth, and David was the man he’d always been.

But hanging around to find out could get her killed. She’d try contacting him again on her own terms; the thing to do now was get the hell out. The question was, how?

Obviously the first step was to free her hands, which meant rolling off her bound wrists. Gingerly, Amelia began to wiggle her way out from beneath the tree. At the same time, she shot a look around the room, trying to figure out where she was.

Damn, the Vampire Queen had money.

The room was huge, with a soaring cathedral ceiling dominated by an immense chandelier. A thick Persian carpet spread over the honey gleam of the hardwood, providing a soft cushion for her bare back. Nearby, a marble fireplace dominated one end of the room, decorated in swags of fresh pine. A set of French doors and floor-to-ceiling windows lined the other wall, inset with stained glass in swirling abstract patterns.

An elegant couch, loveseat, and two armchairs upholstered in rich, vibrant red stood before the blazing fire, and scarlet candles stood here and there, casting a warm golden light over the room. The air was full of a Christmasy blend of spices -- cinnamon, nutmeg, and peppermint. Carols played in the background, a soft, blues arrangement featuring lots of sax and somebody with a really nice baritone.

None of which was enough to get Amelia to hang around.

She worked her way a little further out from under the tree, decided she was clear enough to work, and rolled onto her side for a go at whatever it was around her wrists.

Amelia was hoping for Velcro cuffs like the ones she used to wear during the bondage games she and David once played, but no such luck. These cuffs felt like tough leather, linked by a short, thick length of chain. Twisting her hands awkwardly, she searched for a way to unfasten them.

She was just starting to panic when the French doors opened at the other end of the room, admitting a draft of cool night air -- and David.

He stopped short in surprise, blue eyes widening. Despite the dictates of common sense, Amelia found herself staring at him with starved longing. His dark hair was longer than she remembered, as if growing out of the stern cut he’d affected as a cop. He wasn’t as deadly pale and drawn as the last time she’d seen him. If anything, he looked even more tough and fit, and those broad shoulders looked even wider.

Then again, it might have been all the black. David was dressed in a black turtleneck and black trousers, with a long leather duster swirling around his booted feet. The clothing looked so expensive and well-cut, Amelia wondered if Varina had bought them for him. The thought was accompanied by another stab of irrational jealousy that made her grind her teeth. Her inner green-eyed monster didn’t seem to care that Varina was married.

It was easy to see why anybody would want to cheat with such a stud. David had one of those starkly

masculine faces, broad across the cheekbones and wide at the jaw, with intriguing hollows here and there. His nose was a trifle long and hawkish for a true *GQ* male beauty, but his mouth made up for it, with a full lower lip and a hint of a dimple. He'd hated those dimples, though they, along with those dark-lashed blue eyes, made him irresistible to anything female.

Including vampires, apparently.

God knew Amelia had never been able to resist him. And still couldn't. Despite everything, pain and need lodged in her heart.

It had been so long.

As she gazed at him in besotted fascination, he smiled slowly. Amelia realized that while she'd been checking him out, he'd been returning the favor. And since she was stark naked, his view was a hell of a lot more comprehensive.

"Well, well," David purred finally. "Look what Santa dragged in." He started toward her in a seductive male swagger, his eyes fixed on her breasts with an intensity that made her nipples peak.

"Touch me and I'll scream," Amelia managed. Her voice was embarrassingly hoarse.

His smile was wicked and starkly erotic. "You always were a responsive little thing."

"I meant I'll scream for the police," she gritted.

David shrugged. "Go ahead. In the unlikely event that anybody hears you, I'll send them away."

The same way Varina had made her get in the car. "You really do have psychic powers?"

He sank gracefully to one knee beside her, his eyes very hot and blue. "Vampirism has its privileges -- one of which is undisturbed quality time with naked blonde Christmas presents."

Before she could shrink back, he reached for the bow around her neck and plucked free the card. Amelia watched his long, strong hands as he opened it and read. Her heart was pounding as if she'd run a marathon. She couldn't seem to keep the plea between her teeth. "Don't hurt me."

Blue eyes flicked to her face. "Don't be insulting. Besides, the terrified captive act would be a lot more convincing if your pussy wasn't wet."

"It is not!"

He reached between her thighs. As Amelia gasped in outrage, a long, strong finger thrust into her sex, sliding easily into her slick depths. The jolt of pleasure that zipped through her almost tore a humiliating moan from her lips.

David's eyes blazed hot and blue. Slowly, he drew the finger back and pushed it deep again. "You do realize I haven't had a woman in six months."

Her gaze flicked below his belt. The bulge in those expensive slacks was a vivid testament to his hunger. She sneered anyway. "What about the Queen of the Damned?"

“The Queen of the --” His brows flew upward as he withdrew that deliciously probing finger. She suppressed her groan of disappointment ruthlessly. “You mean Varina?”

“Yeah, ‘Varina.’” She felt remarkably petty even as the words left her mouth. “This is her house, right? And unless I miss my guess, she paid for that Armani you’re wearing. Have you got a threesome going with her and the blond, or what?”

Male satisfaction lit his gaze, and he rocked back on his heels. “Jealous, darling?”

“Of a bloodsucking monster?”

David flinched. Such stark pain flashed across his face, she caught her breath. Then he looked away and picked up one of the wrapped presents. “Is that why you hung up on me -- you don’t talk to bloodsucking monsters?”

Amelia hesitated, thrown off-balance by that moment of anguished vulnerability. He started ripping the paper off the gift, his big hands quick with anger. Cautiously she said, “I didn’t think there was anything to say.”

Blue eyes flashed up to meet hers. “Evidently not.” Flipping the lid off the box he’d unwrapped, David glanced inside. His eyes widened. “Well, what have we here?” He withdrew a tube from the box and read the label aloud. “Ass Master Lube.” He smirked, glancing down at the card. “And it’s from Dimitri. I don’t think he likes you, darling.”

She stared at the tube like a bird at a snake. *Ohboy* .

“As I recall,” he drawled, “you once said you’d had fantasies about my buttfucking you. I wonder why the hell I said no. God knows I was seriously tempted.”

Amelia licked her lips. “You were afraid of hurting me.”

David shrugged those broad shoulders. “I’ve got a big dick.” Eyeing her bound and naked body, he gave her a deliberate leer. “Luckily for me, bloodsucking monsters don’t worry about the damage they do to tight little virgin assholes.”

Her mouth went dry even as her sex clenched in hungry anticipation. It seemed her body didn’t share her mind’s fear.

His dark smile broadened as he made a show of inhaling. “And judging by the smell of that pussy, I don’t think you’re worried about it either.”

“Bastard.”

David shrugged. “Of course. Comes with the whole bloodsucking monster package. And speaking of packages...” He picked up another gift and tore it open with a flourish. Lifting the lid, he grinned into it. “Ahhh. Perfect. Nipple clamps.” He gave her a toothy smile. “Varina doesn’t seem to like you much either.”

“It’s mutual.” As Amelia watched, he slipped one of the clamps onto his own pinky, then winced and adjusted a tiny screw. “What are you doing?”

He glanced down at her. "Tightening it, of course. I want to make sure it gives those little nips a good bite."

She frowned. It had looked to her like he'd loosened the screw. Which was completely in character for David -- but not for the soulless undead thing she'd thought he'd become.

Had Dimitri and Varina been telling the truth? Could David be the same man he'd always been?

No. She hadn't imagined the bloodlust in his eyes that first night. Whatever he was now, he wasn't the man she loved.

Amelia was still wrestling with that thought when he suddenly bent down and enclosed her nipple in the wet heat of his mouth. Remembering those deadly fangs, she tried to twist away. "No! Don't hurt me!"

David's head jerked up, and once again she saw that flash of pained vulnerability. "I have no intention of hurting you, sweet -- yet." One big hand came up to cup her breast, cupping her gently. His fingers were very warm as he caressed her stiffened nipple. "I just want these pretty pink nips nice and hard."

Despite her fear, pleasure rose in a warm, tingling wave as he skillfully twisted and pinched the sensitive tips. Watching her face, he smiled, slow and male.

He lowered his head again. This time she felt too much anticipation to protest.

David flicked his tongue tip over a blushing point, once, then again. Then he gave her a slow, sampling swirl before settling down to suck until hot lust danced along her nerves like sparks from a campfire.

God, he was so good at that. He always had been.

Despite her fears, her body insisted this was her David, her lover, the man she'd ached for every day of the past six months.

The man she loved.

Still suckling her right breast, he reached for her left with his free hand. Cool metal brushed over the hot peak. Closed tight. Amelia arched against him, gasping in a shivering blend of arousal and pleasure and just the slightest hint of fear.

He'd put the clamp on her.

Instinctively, she tried to pull it off, only to realize again that her wrists were still bound. She was helpless. Amelia moaned, the sound half protest, half pleasure.

This was nuts. He was a vampire. If he hadn't been bound to the bed that night all those months ago, she had no doubt he'd have killed her.

Yet here she lay, trussed up under the Christmas tree while he tormented her tits, her arms going to sleep even as her pussy grew steadily more creamy. She knew good and damned well he planned to bang her ass with that big cock of his. And when he was done with that, he'd bite her on the neck and drink her blood. He could easily kill her.

Except...

She didn't really believe it. Oh, Amelia had no doubt she was in for an anal grudge fuck that would make it impossible to sit for a week, yet she didn't believe David would really hurt her. He'd always loved playing dominant as much as she'd loved playing submissive, but there wasn't a cruel bone in his body.

At least, there hadn't been when he'd been human, Amelia reminded herself. He wasn't human anymore. She didn't really know what he was capable of now.

But it looked like she was going to find out.

### Chapter Three

David was twisting the clamp now while he licked and suckled her breast. Reaching between her thighs, he slipped a strong finger into her core, tearing a gasp of pleasure from her mouth. "Mmmm," he purred. "You are wet, aren't you? Too bad, really."

"What?" She sounded pleasure-drugged even to her own ears. "What do you...?"

He flashed his fangs at her. "It's not your pussy I'm gonna fuck, Amelia." Sliding his index finger from her slick core, he pressed it to her anus and began working his way inside. Amelia caught her breath. The sensation of being slowly stretched was both painful and unbearably arousing. "Oh, yeah," he breathed. "I'm in the mood for a tight little asshole. And given those six months of celibacy, you're in for a very rough ride."

She swallowed and made herself sneer. "Yeah, right."

His mouth tightened into a hard line. "Believe me or don't. Your ass is mine one way or another." Withdrawing his finger, he picked up the tube of lubricant and squirted a generous dollop into his hand.

Amelia watched helplessly as he reached between her spread thighs. Two fingers went in this time with a strong, hard thrust that made her gasp. She blinked up at him, heart pounding in reluctant, ferocious arousal as he pumped in deep.

"I'm going to fuck you hard, Amelia," he told her in a deep, rough rasp. "I'm going to grind my cock in your ass and make you come until you scream."

She licked her lips, fear and desire warring in her. "And then what?"

He bared his fangs. "What do you think? I'm going to drink your sweet blood."

Amelia shivered. This time it was definitely fear. "Don't... take too much. Please. If you ever cared anything about me..."

There it was again, that slight, telling flinch. A muscle flexed in his jaw. "I may be a bloodsucking monster, but I'm not a killer. It doesn't take that much to satisfy me."

David stood, rising to his feet to tower over her. Reaching for the hem of the black turtleneck, he pulled it off over his head. His chest was deliciously broad, tight and lean with sculpted muscle. He threw the sweater aside and balanced on one foot to pull off his boot. It dropped with a bang that made her jump. She watched breathlessly as he pulled off the other boot, then reached for his belt. The buckle rattled. His zipper hissed as he pulled it down and started stripping off his pants. His cock leaped free, thick and hungry, flushed dark with lust, so hard it angled upward. It looked even longer than she remembered.

And he was going to drive it into her virginal ass. Amelia whimpered softly in mingled fear and anticipation. God help her, she did want him.

He wasn't the only one who'd been celibate for six months.

David looked down at her, feet braced apart, cock jutting. Slowly, tauntingly, he stroked the massive shaft. "Yeah, whimper. I'm going to take my time with that tight little butt, baby. Slow, deep, and hard." He sank to his knees beside her bound body. "So I suppose the least I can do is make sure you're good and hot."

Amelia cleared her throat. "That's sweet of you."

Fangs flashed. "I'm a prince." He uncuffed her ankles from the spreader bar, then tossed it aside and settled between her legs. She caught her breath in anticipation as he draped her knees over his brawny shoulders and lowered his head.

Fingers spread her vaginal lips, giving him access to her helplessly creaming flesh. His first lick made her close her eyes and clench her teeth against a desperate moan. "Damn, baby," David breathed against her flesh, "*you are* wet. If I didn't know better, I'd think you were looking forward to getting your ass reamed by a bloodsucking monster." She flinched at the bitterness in those last two words.

Then his tongue swirled over her clit and between her lips, and she found it impossible to think about anything else. Even as he lapped and suckled with wicked skill, his fingers went to work on her ass, sliding deep, pumping slowly, stretching and preparing her for his cock. The thought of what he meant to do to her only added to the excitement.

But as her need spiraled higher and hotter, his stroking tongue slowed. No. Oh, please, she was close, so close, and so hot. . . Driven into a hot frenzy, Amelia began pumping her hips against his face. David drew back slightly, denying her the stimulation. With a frustrated groan, she circled her hips, grinding down on the two fingers impaling her ass. The penetration, painful as it was, was also intensely erotic. Imagining what his cock would feel like opening and stretching her, she shuddered in helpless hunger. "Fuck me!" The pleading in her own voice perversely added to her arousal. "God, David, fuck me!"

"Careful what you ask for, baby. You know where this cock is going, and it ain't your pussy."

She shut her eyes, shuddering. "Yes. Sweet Jesus, yes."

"Beg me."

"Fuck my ass, David. Please!"

David laughed, a note of hot male triumph in his voice as he sat up between her thighs and reached for the lube. "I hope you're not expecting mercy, Amelia. You're not getting any."

Dazed with raw lust, she lifted her head and watched him squirt a shining line of lube down the length of his cock. He stroked himself, getting the big shaft good and slick.

David grabbed one of her ankles and lifted it, pressing upward until her cheeks parted and her asshole lay undefended and ready for the thick head of his cock.

The shaft nuzzled the tiny hole gently, then sank forward slowly as he started forcing his way inside. Pain rose, cutting through Amelia's desperate arousal with the sensation of brutal impalement. She groaned. David's eyes blazed with hungry triumph and dark pleasure, and he panted as he drove deeper. "God," he growled, "that's good."

Amelia gritted her teeth. "It hurts!"

He stopped only halfway in. Startled, she looked up at him. Frustration and need tightened his face as he looked down into her eyes, reading her face. Delicately, he reached a big hand down and circled her slick clit with his thumb. The swirl of delight made her catch her breath. He began to pull out, slowly. After the pain of entry, the lush sensation of his exit was darkly seductive. It was the exact opposite of vaginal sex, when the pleasure was in the entry.

By the time only the head of his cock was still inside her, she was panting with lust, intrigued by the painful pleasure.

"Do you want me to stop?"

Startled, she met David's gaze and caught her breath. His eyes glowed with that odd ruby light she'd seen in Varina's. He clenched his teeth, as though against his own savage need, and his fangs curved down in stark reminder that he was no longer human. But the warm concern beneath the hunger was pure David. "Tell me to stop and I'll stop." His voice was low and strained with hunger.

"I thought you said I wasn't getting any mercy."

His smile flashed, a little bitter. "Seems us bloodsucking monsters talk a better game than we play. I can't stand to hurt you."

That's when Amelia knew.

It was him.

Relief poured through her. Despite the fangs, despite whatever he did or didn't drink, he was still the man she'd loved. Her resistance shattered as she realized how she must have hurt him. Yet he obviously still loved her. Hot tears stung her eyes. "David," she whispered. "God, David, I'm sorry."

His face closed. He pulled out and sat back on his knees, obviously about to stand up and walk away.

He thought she was rejecting him.

"No!" Amelia gasped. "Don't stop. Please, take me. Take my ass. Take me however you want."



David hesitated, searching her face. "Baby, my cock is too thick."

"I don't care!" And she didn't. It wasn't just the desire to atone for the pain she'd caused -- it was a hunger to surrender herself to him in this hot, alien way. "I need you to fuck me. It felt good when you pulled out. I want more."

Indecision flashed over David's face, lust and fear and love battling in his eyes. Then he met her gaze, and whatever he saw there decided him. He knelt again.

To her surprise, he flipped her over onto her belly and did something to the cuffs. They sprang apart, and she gasped in relief as the tension vanished. Pins and needles raced across her skin as blood and sensation poured back.

"Now," David said, rolling her over onto her back once more. "Let's try this again." He lifted her legs until her heels rested against his shoulders, then presented the thick head of his cock to her ass once more. But this time, he started thrumming her clit with his thumb, sending a sweet surge of pleasure through her even as he pressed for entry.

Slowly, carefully, he sank inside. The sensation of being stretched and taken was still edged in pain, but it was offset by the delight he sent vibrating along her nerves with every stroke of his thumb. Panting, aroused, she watched him come down over her, his face dark and intent. He looked so damn big looming over her like this, all chiseled muscle between the spread vee of her thighs. His cock stretched her ass brutally wide in a slow, fiery possession as he took her one slow inch at a time. She writhed, maddened by the searing pleasure.

Until, finally, his balls rested heavy and full against her ass.

Carefully, David leaned down until he could brace his fists on the floor. The pose bent her double and seated his massive shaft that last fraction up her ass. Amelia panted, loving the sensation of being surrounded by his hard, hairy male body. Somehow it made her feel delicate and female and deliciously helpless.

"Jesus," she moaned, "I never realized how damn big you are."

"While you're so damn tiny." David threw back his head, his eyelashes fanning dark against his cheeks. The cords of his strong neck flexed with effort. "God, your ass feels good milking my dick like that. It's all I can do not to blow right now." Licking his lips, he started pulling out.

Amelia gasped. God, it felt even hotter this time than it had the first, a slick, sliding pleasure, wicked and darkly erotic. She whimpered, the sound stark with pleasure and lust.

When he pulled out to the tip, he stopped. "Push out this time," he growled. "Take it."

Biting her lip, she obeyed.

He sank in easier this time, though there was still a savage ache and fullness to his possession. "Ohhh, yeah," he growled. "That's right. Here I come, baby. I've wanted to fuck this perfect little ass for a long, long time. Every time you bent over, I'd get hard." He stopped to gasp. "But I was afraid of hurting you."

"You're not..." She sucked in a breath and shuttered her eyes. "You're not hurting me. More!"

“Oh, yeah.” David braced his big hands on her helplessly bent thighs and started thrusting, picking up speed until he was grinding. She couldn’t move, could barely breathe as he rode her, that big rod pistoning deep in her rectum, stretching and tormenting on the way in, pleasuring on the way out. And with every thrust, his pelvis ground against her sex, dragging her closer and closer to a hot, glittering orgasm.

She’d never felt so thoroughly fucked in her life. Or so hot.

Until suddenly he slammed in all the way to the balls and arched his back, roaring out his pleasure through bared fangs. The roll of his strong hips ground against her clit just right, and she exploded with a mindless shriek.

The pleasure tore through her like a glittering hurricane, on and on and on.

Endless moments later, he collapsed over her, then rolled off her with a groan, sliding free of her violated ass. Amelia whimpered with a combination of relief and regret. The whimper became a moan of pleasure as he drew her into his arms.

She lay there, unable to move, her body quivering and jumping in the aftermath of her savage orgasm. His chest worked like a bellows against her cheek, and his heart pounded. Wrapping her arms around his sweaty chest, she met his gaze. “You didn’t bite me. You didn’t feed.”

David frowned, searching her gaze. “I didn’t think you wanted me to.”

Suddenly shy, Amelia had to look away. “Dimitri told me about the... the blood bond.”

He went still. “And?”

“I hurt you, and I’m sorry for that. I was afraid, but I should have trusted you.”

He sighed and shook his head. “Anybody would have been afraid, Amelia. For all you knew, I really had become a bloodsucking monster.”

“But you didn’t.” She gazed into his handsome, beloved face with desperate hunger. If he said no... But she had to take the chance. “David, we should have been married by now. Let’s do it. Right now. The blood bond first and then maybe a church.” She broke off and bit her lip. “Unless you can’t...”

David smiled reluctantly. “Churches and crosses don’t bother me. I’m not undead.” His smile broadened into a grin. “And I kept your wedding dress.”

Her eyes widened as she remembered the beautiful gown she’d abandoned the night he turned. “You’re kidding!”

He sobered. “It was all I had left of you.”

For a long moment they gazed at one another, remembering the last lonely months. Finally Amelia said softly, “I never want to be separated from you like that again. I want us married in every sense of the word.”

He searched her face. “You mean it? You really want the blood bond?”

“Yes.”

“But Amelia -- if anything happens to me, it would kill you. Literally.”

“These past months without you, I might as well have been dead. It’s been like somebody tore a hole in my chest. I just wouldn’t let myself admit it.”

“Yeah.” His mouth tightened. “It’s been the same for me.”

“I need you, David. I love you. Love me.”

“God, Amelia,” he said, rolling her beneath him. “I already do. And I always will.”

Quickly, he dragged a thumbnail along his wrist, opening a shallow cut. He lowered it to her mouth.

As she gently began to suck, his fangs sank into her throat with a quick sting. She moaned in relief, hearing his rumble of pleasure.

Then light and heat burst into her mind, and she felt his mind touch hers -- strength and will and fire, backed by a purity of spirit she knew.

And most of all, she felt his love.

Her own rose in a tide of sweet joy. They came together and fused in a wash of warm light.

Home for Christmas.

The End

Angela Knight

Angela Knight has worked as a comic book writer, a newspaper reporter, and a novelist. Her stories have won several awards, including the South Carolina Press Association award.

Her first writing love has always been romance. In 1996, she discovered the small press publishing and realized her dream when her first Romance was published in Red Sage’s *Secrets 2* anthology.

Angela is now multi-published, as both an author and a cover artist, and enjoys success under several names, but that success would be hollow without the love and support of her friends and family. It’s no surprise Angela Knight considers herself a profoundly lucky woman.

