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A Demon Slayer
for Christmas
Sydney Somers

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A Demon Slayer for Christmas
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Splinters were a real bitch.

Danielle sucked her index finger into her mouth and glowered at the pile of chopped wood in front of her. She clearly hadn't been in her right mind when she thought it would be cozier to spend Christmas in front of a roaring fireplace instead of staring at the four walls of an impersonal hotel room. At least hotels had thermostats and room service. The charm of building her own fire and sipping apple cider in an old cabin had long faded by her third trip outside to gather wood. And the real estate broker who had rented her Jacques's old cabin until her new place was ready failed to mention the poor cell phone reception this far out of town.

But as Dani peered through the thick flakes of snow that had been steadily falling for the past couple of hours, she remembered why she'd chosen this place—the view.

Mount Carleton, the highest peak of the Appalachian range in New Brunswick, rose in the distance, flanked by miles of snow-covered evergreens. On a clear sunny day, the lake at the edge of the property glistened like a field of diamonds, and the sky... Nothing on hotel satellite or pay preview offered anything as breathtaking, even if the surrounding wildlife was all the company she had.

She frowned, realizing how quiet it had suddenly grown. Curious, Dani ventured a few feet away from the last of the wood she needed to get inside before the nor'easter moving into the area really took hold. She might have spent the last nine years living in Vancouver, but she hadn't forgotten how fast the weather could turn nasty on the east coast.

Dani shivered, wishing she'd pulled on more than the down vest over her sweater. Of course, she hadn't planned on taking this long. She started to turn back to the wood only to freeze in her tracks when something speared across her peripheral vision.

Her gaze snapped to the dark blur moving in her direction, the heavy snow making it difficult to immediately make out the shape of a man. Heart pounding a little faster at the man's sudden appearance, she instinctively backed up, tripping over a piece of split wood and landing on her ass.

The man drew closer, his speed erasing any doubt he was lost or simply passing though. Old Jacques had been known to welcome strangers who might need a place to stay for the night and, when she'd been younger, many took advantage of his open door policy. Probably had right up until he died a few months ago.

Even as Dani scrambled to her feet, a cold gust of wind biting right through her clothing, the icy certainty that the man wasn't looking for Jacques took hold of her. The approaching stranger stalked closer, and she noticed he carried something in his hand. A...knife?

She turned to bolt for the house, but her feet locked in place, brought up short by a flash of red. Her mind denied what she saw even as she forced herself to look back over her shoulder to be sure. Impossibly close, the man's menacing stride wasn't hindered by the deep snow. But his speed wasn't what she struggled to deny as the past reached out to snare her, it was his eyes. Homicidal, red-rimmed eyes.

Fuck.

Pulse rocketing, she sprinted for the door, her steps clumsy in the slippery snow.

A hand snared the back of her vest, spinning her away from the cabin. Her feet slid out from beneath her, and she slammed into the side of the woodshed. Pain radiated up

her side, but a burst adrenaline drove her to her feet despite the vicious pounding in her head.

“Help me!” The scream was instinctive even when she knew no would hear her.

Alone out here, she had only herself to count on. A weapon. She needed something to defend herself.

The axe by the woodpile.

She dove forward, her hand inches from the stained handle when her attacker gripped her ankle and jerked her backward. She screamed again and kicked out, digging her hands into the snow for leverage.

Another blur dove over her, colliding with her attacker and taking him to the ground.

Dani rolled to her back, digging her heels in until she came up against the shed. The two men were already on their feet, circling each other. She stared at the newcomer, never so grateful to see another person as she was at that moment. And then he withdrew a...

Holy shit.

The man closest to her waved a fucking sword at her attacker. All traces of relief turned to ice in her veins.

Get inside. Call for help.

A reasonable woman would listen to the warning screaming through her mind, and Dani would have if the newcomer hadn't glanced in her direction.

Recognition hit her with the force of an oncoming truck. “Connor?”

The sound of Dani's voice, shaky and dripping with disbelief, erased any question in Connor's mind as to where she had hidden herself since she'd come home. He slanted a quick glance to his right, forced to sacrifice a thorough once-over for a fleeting scan to confirm the hostile hadn't hurt her.

He didn't need another reason to vanquish the stealth demon that had evaded him for the last twelve hours, but if the bastard had cut her, his death would have been a slow, painful one.

Cold and bleeding from the last slash of the demon's sacrificial dagger, Connor wanted this over with. Wanted to deal with the woman who had up and left after graduation, taking his eighteen-year-old heart with her. There were some things a guy just didn't forget. His first hangover. The first time a girl went down on him. The first girl he fell for. It wasn't often the same person could be linked to all three milestones in a guy's life, but Dani sure as hell was.

He might have gotten over her and stopped being angry, but that didn't mean they didn't have a lot to talk about. Like how she let a spontaneous two week vacation out west turn into a permanent move with little more than, 'have a nice life'.

Dressed in jeans and a green plaid jacket, brown hair buzzed military-style, the stealth demon smiled at Dani. Connor instantly clamped down on the emotions Dani's return evoked. He couldn't afford to let the hostile feed off them. The stealth demon's heightened speed and senses were enough of an advantage without giving it any more of an edge.

He adjusted his grip on his sword, positioning himself between the hostile and Dani. The demon's grin widened at the obvious challenge, and like most hostiles to breach its prison realm and cross over, it underestimated Connor's determination and skill, and went for Dani.

Slashing his sword down, he met the upward swing of the demon's dagger at the last second, giving Dani time to scramble to her feet. But with the path to the house blocked by them, she bolted across the yard.

"No!" Inviting the demon's pursuit made it that much stronger of an adversary.

More familiar with his surroundings, Connor cut the demon off, delivering a blow to the hostile's shoulder and chest, but missed its neck. A hard as steel fist snapped Connor's head back, and he stumbled then righted himself. That was all it took, however, for the hostile to get enough distance between them to sprint after Dani.

Son of a bitch.

He went after them, painfully aware of the burning in his side. The demon had gotten in more than one hit, and Connor knew from the wetness inside his jacket that it was more than just a flesh wound.

Ahead of him, Dani tripped. The stealth demon was on her in an instant, the strike of its dagger held off only by the shaking arm she thrust up to defend herself. Connor closed the gap, knocking the bastard off of her.

Pain ripped across his abdomen, and a flood of crimson stained the snow at Connor's feet. With one hand pressed against the new wound, he dragged himself to his feet. The wind picked up, gusting hard and turning the once drifting flakes of snow into crystal shards that needled his skin.

The stealth demon, a little more wary now, retreated.

Connor advanced, stalking his prey the same way a Shadow Demon stalked an innocent. Hungry to feed off the emotions they'd been stripped of thousands of years ago, demons could be counted on for two things—to victimize the human race and leave a trail of violence and terror until they were vanquished.

"Ice," Dani yelled, and Connor realized they were over the lake now.

The demon didn't appear to care, backtracking further and forcing Connor to follow. The hostile had nearly killed an middle-aged woman last night. Connor couldn't afford to let it get away a second time, not with the worsening weather conditions making it harder to see more than ten feet in front of him. The stealth demon continued to meet each strike, and though some blows slipped past its fiendish defense, it continued to protect its vulnerable neck.

Until it lost its footing.

And then Connor moved in, severing the hostile's head from its manifested body with one lethal slash. Blue flames brought on by an ancient chant used by all Shadow Destroyers, devoured the demon and its aura permanently.

Connor's knees buckled, the agony in his middle and side overwhelming him. A cracking sound cut through the howling wind, and he struggled to get up even as he felt the ice breaking up beneath him.

"Connor!"

"Stay back." He knew he wouldn't make it as he edged in Dani's direction.

The ground shifted beneath him, and he plunged into the lake.

Water closed over his head, shock from the freezing temperature nearly locking his limbs. But instinct kicked in and he thrashed hard to break the surface. He wasn't sure if it was the shock or the storm that turned everything around him to a complete whiteout. His lungs compressed in his chest, his breathing harsh and uneven and too fast to catch enough air.

A flash of color to his right snagged his attention, but his movements already felt awkward and jerky as he struggled to move toward it. The ice around him continued to break apart every time he tried to haul himself out of the frigid water.

“Grab it!”

He barely heard Dani’s voice over the wind, but managed to reach the red vest she stretched toward him. It took a second to stop shaking enough to get his frozen fingers to grip the material, and even more of an effort to use it as leverage to get himself out.

It felt like hours had passed between hitting the water and rolling to his back on the snow. The chilling wind blasted his drenched clothing, making him feel naked—and so fucking cold. He closed his eyes, needing to rest a second, needing to get control of the tremors that wracked his body.

“Come on.”

He vaguely registered Dani tugging on his hand, coaxing him further from the broken ice when all he wanted to do was curl into himself for warmth. He knew how easily hypothermia could strike, how fast it could kill you if you didn’t keep a clear head, but none of that made his limbs any more cooperative.

Dani hovered over him, concern drawing her gorgeous face into a nest of worry. He tried for a smile, but couldn’t stop shaking long enough to pull it off.

“Welcome home...Dani.”

A fresh wave of panic seized Dani’s heart when Connor eyes slid shut. “Hey!”

His lashes fluttered.

“We need to get you inside and out of these wet clothes.”

“That’s moving...faster than I planned. But...I’m game.” He opened his eyes, and she wanted to punch him for the stupid remark when he could have drowned.

“Up.” She slid her arm around him, propping her shoulder under him when he got to his knees.

“Still...bossy.”

They managed two steps before the added weight nearly toppled her.

“How about you just focus on putting one foot in front of the other.” She bit down as the bitter wind seeped through her soaked clothing, her vest abandoned behind them somewhere.

The house felt miles away, visible only between gusts of snow. Their pace had slowed to a crawl by the time they hit the back porch. Snow was caked to their clothing from stumbling along, each step harder than the last as Connor relied more and more on her to keep him upright.

Dani shoved the back door open, guiding him inside, which turned to breaking his fall when his legs gave out. They went down hard, her arm pinned beneath him.

“Connor?”

His eyes were closed and he’d stopped shivering. Why the hell wasn’t he shivering any more? He couldn’t have been in the water long enough to lower his body temperature that much, could he?

“Connor?” She squirmed out from beneath him, noticed the blood covering her arm.

Oh god.

“Connor.” She hovered over him, peeling back his wet clothes in search of the source of his bleeding. Maybe it wasn’t from him.

Black, red-rimmed eyes flashed through her mind.

Don't think about it.

That didn't stop her from spinning around, slamming the door closed and locking it.

On her knees, she returned to checking Connor over, finally getting beneath his shirt and jacket. Blood poured from the five-inch gash that curved from his side to his stomach. Another stab wound oozed blood at a slower rate. He needed to get to a hospital, but even if her cell cooperated, it would take too long for an ambulance to get here, if they even could with the distance involved and the storm conditions.

She'd need to take him herself, but first she needed to slow the bleeding and get him warmed up. The wounds wouldn't matter if hypothermia killed him first.

"Connor? You're hurt really bad. I'm going to slow the bleeding and get you out of those wet clothes, and then I'll figure out a way to get you to the hospital."

"No," he groaned, his brow furrowed in pain. "No...hospital." The faint plea carried a steel edge.

"It's bad." Really, really bad.

"Bandage...fine."

She shook her head, her mind already on gathering supplies.

He grabbed her wrist, and though she continued to shiver herself, the arctic grip was enough to make her suck in a sharp breath. "No hospital. Promise...me."

"Connor, I need to stop the bleeding."

"It'll heal." He struggled to keep his eyes open, his gaze unfocused. He frowned as though he forgot what he was saying, then, "Promise...me, Dani."

Heal? God, he was already in shock. She needed to stop the bleeding, needed to get him warm.

"Dani?"

"Okay." She'd tell him whatever he needed to hear to keep him calm.

His pained expression eased, and what could have been a smile flickered across his blue-tinged lips. "Missed you." His hand relaxed and he lost consciousness.

It took less than a minute to gather basic first aid supplies and kneel next to him once more. Having only a rudimentary idea of the best way to slow the bleeding, she worked his jacket off and cut his shirt open—and stared at the largest wound. Blood only trickled from it now and the smaller wound had stopped bleeding altogether.

Was that because he'd fallen into the lake or were the wounds not as bad as she'd first thought?

She grabbed his wrist, reassured by the strong pulse under her fingers.

"Connor?"

He stirred but didn't respond. What the hell had he been doing out there to begin with? And armed with a sword, one he damn well knew how to use.

Knowing there would be no immediate answers to the questions whirling through her head, she focused on his injuries. She dabbed at the largest wound that looked even smaller now.

Just what in the hell was going on?

Dani came awake slowly, clinging to the dream that felt entirely too real, too incredible to give up. Connor's mouth slid up her throat, his lips hot against her skin. With one hand, he cradled her jaw as though he wanted to make sure she didn't get

away before he could claim her mouth in a searing kiss. One she ached for, just like all those nights when she'd lain awake, alone in her bed.

Only when she dared to touch him, sliding her hand down his chest and brushing the edge of his bandage, did her dream and reality collide.

Her eyes snapped open and though it had grown dark out and the wind continued to howl, the fire and the Christmas lights strung over the mantle offered enough light to clearly see Connor. But seeing him wasn't half as incredible as *feeling* him. His mouth sucking at the sensitive skin at her neck, one hand sinking in her hair as his other boldly cupped her breast. Her nipple puckered beneath her bra, and she instinctively arched into his touch.

Relief that he hadn't succumbed to hypothermia was quickly overtaken by the heat steamrolling through her, and she whispered his name.

Connor went completely still, and in the span of a few seconds Dani went from curling into him to finding herself flat on her back, her arms pinned above her head. Connor loomed over her, a cold alertness transforming her friend and almost lover into a distant stranger who had her completely at his mercy.

"Dani?"

Connor stared down at the woman trapped beneath him. How in the hell had they ended up wrapped in blankets in front of a dying fire, him naked and her...in bra and panties? The second he'd heard she was moving back—alone—he'd begun anticipating how to get her exactly where she was, and it annoyed him that he didn't have a clue as to how he'd accomplished it.

"You're okay." Relief edged her voice.

Okay? Confused, he glanced toward the door and the piles of discarded clothes. The memory of plunging into the lake slammed into his mind.

He searched her face. "You pulled me out."

She nodded hesitantly, and he softened his grip on her wrists, but didn't release her. Not yet. The uncertainty in her eyes promised that she'd roll away from him. He wasn't ready to sacrifice the feel of her warm, soft body while he struggled to remember...

The stealth demon. "Did it hurt you?"

"No. Not me."

He looked down his front and spotted the two bandages.

"You were stabbed but it wasn't as bad as I thought." Her brows drew together as though she didn't really believe that, but didn't know what else to think. "And you were so cold from falling in."

"So you patched me up and curled up on the floor to keep me warm." Given the heavy ache in his cock, she'd accomplished more than warming him up.

"Blankets weren't enough. I needed to use my own body heat to get your core temperature up."

"Oh, I'm not complaining." Not even close.

"I hadn't planned on falling asleep."

"Or waking me up by rubbing your breasts against me."

Indignation flashed in her eyes. "I did not."

He arched a brow. "You sure about that?"

She rocked her hips as though to dislodge his hold on her, and he grinned. Increasingly aware of how aroused he was—and positive that he hadn't imagined the way she'd responded to him—he dropped his gaze to her mouth.

Dani trembled beneath him, her lips parting on a soft exhale.

He lowered his head and opened his mouth over hers—and tasted heaven. A hot, sweet heaven he'd been missing for far too long, and when Dani moaned, her tongue pushing into his mouth, he didn't know how he had ever let her go.

A thousand times he had thought about going after her. His pride had stopped him in the beginning, his ego crushed when she told him she wasn't coming back. And then the rare gene he carried had been mutated by a war demon. The near fatal encounter may have left him with the ability to heal rapidly, but it came with a millennia old legacy he couldn't turn his back on.

But no matter how many people he'd saved or how many demons he'd slayed, he hadn't forgotten Dani.

Connor laced his fingers through hers, deepening the kiss until she arched against him. The hard tips of her nipples grazed his chest. He rolled to his back and, keeping a grip on the nape of her neck, continued to devour her mouth. Gripping her hips, he rocked her against his shaft. The lingering discomfort from his injuries paled in comparison to the feel of her sliding along the hard length of cock.

She nipped at his bottom lip, and he groaned, knowing it would take so much more than one night to get enough of her.

Dani's eyes snapped open, and she scrambled off him. "Oh god. I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking. Did I hurt you?"

"Stopping hurts."

She stared at him as though he'd lost his mind.

"I'm fine, Dani."

She studied the bandages covering his abdomen, confusion tightening her face as he pushed himself to a sitting position. "Why aren't you in pain?"

"Well it doesn't exactly tickle," he admitted, wondering how bad a shape he'd been in when she treated his injuries.

She arched a brow, gently probing at the edges of his bandages. Her gaze turned critical as she watched him for a reaction.

Eager to pick things up where they'd left off, he didn't try to pretend she was hurting him. He'd worry about how to explain his ability to heal later. Preferably after he satisfied the awakening need to yank her back into his arms and keep her there. "Dani, I'm really okay."

"My clothes have your blood all over them."

"If I had realized that a little bit of the red stuff would get you naked, I might have managed to get past third base when we were eighteen."

"Don't," she warned, and when he grinned, she poked him in the abdomen.

Although a little tender, he still laughed—right up until she gripped the corner of the bandage and ripped it off.

Dani stared at the bloodied skin, but couldn't find a trace of the gash she'd worried over earlier. Her gaze darted to his. "How is this possible? I saw what that thing did to you."

"Thing?" he inquired, his expression curious. "You don't mean man?"

Snatching the closest blanket up, she wrapped it around herself, thankful the one riding low on his hips hadn't slid any lower. As much as she wanted to forget what happened outside and crawl into his lap, she had come home to deal with her fears, not run from them all over again.

She stared at the multicolored lights decorating the mantle. She hadn't been able to resist putting them up, but found it easier to leave the rest of the old decorations in their box. She'd grown used to Christmas without her parents, but until a few weeks ago, she'd always had her aunt. Aunt Edith wouldn't have understood her need to come home. Dani barely understood it herself.

Conscious of Connor's heavy gaze, she fiddled with the edge of the blanket. "It was a Shadow Demon, wasn't it?"

She felt more than saw his surprise.

"How do you know about them?"

"My aunt."

"I never would have pegged Edith as being part of the D-Squad."

"The what?"

"Demon squad. It's what a few of the locals who know about Shadow Demons dubbed themselves long before my slaying days. I was sorry to hear about Edith's passing."

Dani snorted. "She always gave you a hard time."

"Only because she knew how crazy I was about you."

The sincerity in his eyes would have melted her to the floor if she wasn't already on her knees. She looked away before she foolishly asked him if he was half as crazy about her as he used to be. She'd been gone for nearly ten years. Judging by what happened a few minutes ago, there was a lingering mutual attraction left between them, but that didn't mean he'd want more than that. She'd barely had time to think about it herself.

"You saw one," he added. "The night when Lauren was attacked. You saw one and your aunt freaked out and moved you away from here."

Dani nodded.

"And now you're back."

"And now you kill these things." There was no other explanation for what she'd witnessed this afternoon. She ran her finger across his healed skin, struggling to believe what was right in front of her. "You could have died today."

"Occupational hazard."

She scowled at him, then climbed to her feet. Needing some distance to try and wrap her head around everything—impossible to achieve when he sat so close, the blanket around his waist threatening to slip past his hips—she headed for the kitchen.

She planned on making them something warm to drink, but found herself peeking back into the living room. He kneeled in front of the fire and tossed more wood on. The flames steadily grew, the flickering light dancing across his skin.

As though he sensed her watching him, he turned.

They had been all but attached at the hip throughout high school. First as enemies, then friends and finally something so much more than that. She wondered if she would have been able to leave him behind if he'd looked at her then, the way he looked at her now—like a hungry predator smart enough not to make a move until he was sure he could snare her completely.

Her fear had ruled her after the attack following graduation, but it hadn't compared to how terrified she'd been when she saw Connor fall through the ice. As uncertain as she felt trapped in his searing gaze, she couldn't remember ever feeling so...safe.

Shaken, she turned away from him. Looking out the small kitchen window at the darkness and swirling snow, she knew how wrong she'd been. Moving back hadn't been just about facing her fears and returning to the only place she'd ever really thought of as home. She'd come back because of Connor.

The blanket slipped from her shoulder, but no matter how cold she was, she couldn't bring herself to pull it close. Figuring out what to do with her little epiphany seemed a whole lot more important, especially when the man at the center of it was in the next room.

Or not.

Her heart kicked up at the sound of footsteps behind her.

He stopped, pressed his face against her hair. Dani closed her eyes. Her stomach grew hot and tight, her nerve endings straining for his touch.

"Why didn't you tell me?" His tone betrayed only a trace of hurt.

"I was scared. Scared of what came after me. Scared you wouldn't understand, or worse, that you wouldn't believe me."

"You should have given me the benefit of the doubt."

She glanced over her shoulder at him. "Did you know about them then?"

"No."

"Then you can't know whether or not you would have thought I was crazy."

"Aside from sanity being overrated," he countered, "you could have told me you were being stalked by a giant purple dinosaur and I would have believed you."

She snorted. "I'll bet."

"Anything would have been better than wondering what I did to make you not want to come back."

"It wasn't you."

"And now?" He lowered his voice, his rough jaw grazing her shoulder blade. "After today will you disappear again?"

"No," she whispered.

He nipped at her neck, his lips closing over her skin. "What was that?"

"No." Louder this time. "I'm staying."

"Good." He spun her around, and trapping her jaw in one hand, slanted his mouth across hers.

Tender at first, a slow, sweet slide of lips and tongue, the kiss quickly grew hungry. One minute she stood with her feet rooted to the floor, her blood thickening in her veins, and the next Connor turned and set her on the kitchen table. He moved between her parted thighs, tugging at the blanket until she released it.

She gripped the edge of the table as he devoured her throat. His fingers worked at the edge of her bra and, when he peeled back the material, claimed one aching nipple with his mouth.

Dani cried out, tangling her hands in his hair.

His greedy lips pulled at her, each wet tug coiling the need tighter and tighter inside her. Her back touched the table before she realized he'd coaxed into lying down. His thumbs caught the sides of her panties, tugging them off as he gave the tip of her breast one last teasing flick before sliding lower.

She arched beneath the hot trail that inched down her abdomen, to her hip. By the time his lips brushed the inside of her thigh, she thought she'd go out of her mind with how much she wanted to feel—

His tongue parted her cleft with one long, hot pass that made her shudder.

"Connor," she murmured, rocking her hips and grasping at the edges of the table above her head.

He pushed her thighs wider, taking a longer, deeper taste of her.

Mindless, she lifted her bottom, seeking the friction he denied her with every lazy stroke of his tongue. Every time he grazed her clit, she trembled a little harder.

"Connor, please," she managed through panted breaths.

"Please, what?" He hovered above her, his blue eyes burning into hers.

Her heart clenched. "I need you."

With a wolfish grin, he bent and sealed his mouth over her clit.

She cried out, clutching at his shoulders.

In one smooth motion, he caught her hands, trapping them against her sides as he lifted her bottom, changing the angle. He didn't give her a chance to tell him to slow down, but took her with his mouth the way he slayed his demon—ruthlessly.

Lost to the carnal fever spreading through her system, she struggled against his grip, wanting to drag him closer. He no longer sought to tease, but to consume, each sweep of his tongue driving her harder to the edge. She rocked her hips to meet his mouth, and then everything inside her shattered.

Seconds melted into minutes as she fought to catch her breath.

Connor dropped a soft kiss on her stomach. "Spend Christmas with me."

"Once we dig our way out of here you mean?"

"It's Christmas Eve and I refuse to spend tomorrow in a place without a Christmas tree."

Suddenly feeling far too vulnerable, she fumbled to drag the blanket over her and sit up. "You don't have family stuff you want to do?"

"I want to spend tomorrow with you. And the day after that, and the day after that..."

He frowned when she didn't say anything. "Dani?"

"I just don't want to move too fast." Fall too fast.

As if it's not already too late for that.

He straightened, staggered, needing to grip the chair to keep himself upright.

She slid off the table. "You need to lie down." He'd been stabbed twice and nearly drowned. No matter how fast he healed—and boy did she have a boatload of questions about that—he shouldn't have been moving around so much.

Slipping an arm around his waist, she steered him toward the living room. "You need to rest."

"You're probably right." His expression remained guarded as he leaned into her. "The floor is better," he said when she headed for the couch.

She'd no sooner helped him sink to the floor than he hooked an arm around her waist and rolled her beneath him. When she got her breath back, she glared up at him. "You were faking?"

He grinned. "Now why would I do that?"

"Oh, I'm sure it has nothing to do with the illusion of control pinning me down gives you."

“Control, huh?” He bent his head, stopped just short of grazing her lips with his. “The kind of control that would make you move in with me?”

“Connor,” she began.

“It’s not moving too fast,” he insisted. “It’s making up for lost time.”

She opened her mouth, only to be silenced by a long, drugging kiss that touched her very soul.

He lingered over her mouth. “But if that’s too much to deal with after today, I’ll settle on you spending Christmas with me. For now,” he added.

She took a breath, knowing it was finally time to move forward. “Okay.”

In a heartbeat, his smile turned from determined to devastating.

She caged his face in her palms and as she drew him down to meet her mouth, murmured, “Merry Christmas.”

Author Biography

A born and raised Maritimer, Sydney Somers fell in love with writing at the age of eight. Since finishing her first book in 2002, Sydney has written over twenty-five romances—one of which will forever remain hidden under her bed.

When she’s not tracking down remote controls, chasing two very energetic little boys or exterminating rogue dust bunnies, Sydney can be found curled up with a good book or working on her next sexy, paranormal romance. She loves to hear from readers and invites them to e-mail her (sydney@sydneysomers.com) or drop by her website (www.sydneysomers.com) any time.

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