

A Samhain Publishing Freebie



Winter Angel

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Scott watched the sunrise from atop the wall while stifling another yawn. Sixteen hour shifts were necessary, but coupled with his inability to get a good night's rest they were killing him. He'd already tried the room darkening curtains and soothing music suggested by a fellow soldier, however his mind couldn't seem to shut down during daylight hours. Another week like the one past and he'd be useless. Chill winter air filled his lungs as he breathed deep and released it slowly. This was his favorite part of the day, watching the sunrise just before leaving the wall and ending his shift. If he'd had a peaceful night it was even better. There'd been only one incident last night that ended quickly. Scott thought back to his first weeks of duty, when he'd hungered to draw shifter blood, and laughed to himself. He'd been immature and prejudiced, eager to kill the shape-shifters that tried to cross into human lands.

He glanced back at Georgetown, full of humans still asleep at that early hour. Christmas decorations in red and green dominated the buildings, almost overpowering in their garish presence. He faced Circe again and the contrast of its drab plainness. He'd heard the shifters had reverted to the pagan ways and shunned Christianity. He snorted, knowing most human Christmas decorations had little to do with religion anyway.

Movement below drew his eye to the street level, where three kids rummaged through a dumpster. He looked away but his sight was invariably drawn back. From atop the eighteen-foot concrete and metal barrier it was nearly impossible to tell their ages, but they didn't look old enough to be out alone so early. Their clothes showed the hardships of living on the streets, and their slight build told of many hungry days. Scott tried to swallow down pity and concern. They were shifters. He no longer hated them with a vengeance, but didn't care about them much either. He was about to turn his back when a vision in white stepped around the corner of the nearest building.

She was an angel. There was no doubt in Scott's mind the red-headed woman clad in a denim jacket, white t-shirt and khaki slacks was straight from heaven. White tennis shoes protected her feet and a black backpack was slung carelessly over one shoulder. She began to rummage through it the moment she spotted the boys. They hadn't noticed her yet, so intent were they on whatever prizes the dumpster held. Scott heard her call out but her words were lost on the slight breeze. The boys froze and turned as one to watch her approach. She held out bottled drinks and the boys immediately left the dumpster to accept them. Scott watched in awe as she proceeded to remove wrapped food from her bag and hand it over. She stood talking as the boys ripped into their meals and devoured them in heartbeats. Scott didn't know if they were even listening to her, but her face was so animated he couldn't help but wish he could hear her.

As soon as the food was gone the boys amazingly tossed their trash into the dumpster, rather than onto the ground, and surrounded the woman. Scott tensed, but she didn't seem to be concerned. She kept talking and smiling at the boys, even as the smallest one grabbed for her bag. Scott drew his weapon, a Glock 36, but kept it in one hand pointed at the ground. The woman continued to talk and the boys stopped moving toward her. She calmly removed the youngest ones hands from her bag and opened it more so they could all look inside. Then the boys stepped forward as one, intent on getting into the bag, and Scott raised his gun. However, the woman pulled the bag out of reach and said "No" loudly enough for Scott to hear. To his amazement the boys stopped and waited.

It was the longest minute of Scott's life as he too waited to see what would happen. The woman appeared human, which meant it was his job to protect her. However, she was in Circe, on the shifter side of the wall. Had she been in Georgetown he would have jurisdiction, but unless they threatened him directly he could do nothing. The woman continued talking, the smile no longer on her face, and the boys stood listening calmly. Then to Scott's amazement, two of them stepped back and allowed the smallest one to step

forward and reach into her bag. One by one, the boys stepped forward and peeked into the bag before taking a few items out. Scott couldn't tell what she was giving them, but the colorfully wrapped packages looked more like gifts than drugs. He assumed it was food. As soon as the last boy made his choices the three of them turned and walked away. The woman watched them with a slight frown on her beautiful face. She wiped her eyes then zipped her bag back up.

Scott was tempted to call out to her, to run to the stairs and try to get into Circe before she disappeared. However, his replacement for the next shift hadn't arrived yet, leaving him stuck on the wall for awhile longer. He glanced at his watch with a scowl, and then watched in frustration as she turned and left his sight.

"Hey, man, how's it going? Anything happen last night?"

Scott turned to see Bryan, his daytime replacement, walk up and sighed in annoyance.

"Nope. You're late...again."

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Angela was exhausted after another long night of feeding the shifter kids nobody wanted. She didn't understand it since most animals tended to be excellent parents. It annoyed her that so many shifter children had been left to fend for themselves after the human-shifter war. This time of year always seemed worse. The human homeless had shelters, but the shifters fended for themselves. Like their animal brethren it was survival of the fittest in their world.

She rubbed her neck with one hand as she approached one of the checkpoints allowing her through the wall and back into Georgetown, her home. After a quick DNA scan the guards waved her through and she headed for her lonely apartment. Three years had passed since her divorce but she still remained alone. Helping the kids on the other side of the wall filled a void no other aspect of her life could reach.

She walked along lost in thought, navigating the familiar streets on autopilot. The sun was steadily rising and she needed breakfast. She walked briskly around a familiar corner...and right into a hard, muscular chest.

"Whoa."

She gasped as large hands gripped her arms and held on to prevent her from falling backwards. Looking up, she remained speechless as she took in the handsome face looking down at her with concern. The stranger's brows arched as recognition lit his eyes.

"It's you."

His deep voice rumbled from his throat. Dark hair curled over his forehead, still damp as if he'd recently showered, and she inhaled the fresh scent of his aftershave. At least six-two with an athletic build, he was the sexiest man she'd encountered in a long time. There were slight lines at the corners of his dark brown eyes and the grin that spread across his face revealed dimples. Suspecting she'd never met this man before didn't stop a spark of feminine interest from igniting low in her belly.

"Uh...do I know you?"

His grin widened. "No. We've never met but I watched you this morning."

That confession immediately made her wary, and she tried to take a step away from him. His grip tightened and the amusement in his expression melted into concern.

"I work on the wall," he said quickly.

She froze. "Oh."

His intent gaze filled her with apprehension and she looked around nervously. The street remained empty, but Angela swallowed down her fears. Never in her life had such a sexy man looked at her with hunger burning in his eyes. It was frightening and exhilarating at the same time, but she sensed he wouldn't hurt her. She always trusted her instincts. She looked up into his brown eyes and he seemed to relax.

"I'm Scott. I patrol the wall overnight. You are?"

"Um, Angela...Angela Smyth."

His smile returned, widening as his blatant hunger seemed to intensify.

"Angela. I knew you looked like an angel when I saw you this morning."

Her pulse sped up and heat infused her face. Flirting never came naturally to her and men as good looking as Scott rarely looked her way.

"Um...thank you."

"You're welcome. I was just heading to the pub for a bite to eat now that my shift is over. Would you care to join me?"

Angela bit her lip in indecision and tried to think of a polite way to decline. Scott still held her arms, but his touch was gentle as was the tone of his voice. She already knew a couple of soldiers who patrolled the wall, so finding out about him should be a piece of cake. The question was did she really want to eat alone again? She took a deep breath and looked into Scott's eyes, noticing for the first time the slight wariness he hid behind his confident grin.

"Sure. Why not?"

His smile broadened even further and the wariness disappeared. Releasing her arms, he placed one hand at the small of her back to propel her down the sidewalk. The entire five blocks to the pub, Scott questioned her about her life and work. She answered him honestly, reveling in the rapt look of attention he kept throughout. She'd always been very passionate about her work with the abandoned shifter children and never cared what others thought. Being a soldier, she'd expected Scott to scoff at her efforts. However, he surprised her with praise for her caring.

They reached the pub and sat down to a pleasant meal where Scott told her about himself and what inspired him to become a soldier. His initial hatred of shifters had mellowed over the years as he worked on the wall and saw all aspects of life on both sides. They finished eating as the sun rose high in the sky, and Angela planned to head home alone. Scott wouldn't hear of it and walked her to the door of her apartment building.

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Scott watched Angela dig into her pocket for her key and barely stifled a groan. She was gorgeous and he still couldn't believe some idiot had willingly divorced her. Throwing a smile over her shoulder, she opened the door and stepped inside. He remained in the hallway as she turned to face him. Nervousness screamed from the tense lines of her body, and he looked down at the doorknob considering how to ease her wariness of him.

"I can't believe you still use these old fashioned locks."

He looked up to find surprise on her face as she too examined her door.

"It's what was here when I moved in. I haven't had any problems so never considered upgrading to a scanner."

He shrugged and played with the doorknob. Leaving her was the last thing he wanted to do, despite his body screaming for sleep. Exhaustion was finally setting in after the adrenaline rush of unexpectedly coming face to face with Angela. He still couldn't believe his luck.

"Are you working again tonight?"

He looked up and watched her nibble on her plump lower lip. His hungry gaze tracked the movement and his cock twitched.

"Yeah. We're on sixteen hour shifts right now so I go in at noon."

She gasped and glanced down at her watch. He already knew it was after eight. He'd be lucky to get three hours of sleep.

"Scott, why didn't you tell me? I kept jabbering on when you needed to get some sleep."

He grinned and shook his head, taking a step closer to her warm presence. Her eyes widened but she didn't back away.

"Sitting in a pub with you, getting to know you, was well worth one sleepless day, baby."

Her breath hitched and she licked her lips, making it impossible for him to resist

temptation. He leaned in slowly, giving her time to protest, but she didn't as he moved his mouth against hers. He kept the kiss simple, afraid of revealing the hunger building in him for this one delectable woman. She responded in kind, allowing the press of his lips and sighing as he swept his tongue across the seam. He pulled back rather than pressing into her open mouth, knowing he wouldn't be able to stop from going further.

"I don't want to leave you already."

She smiled and the blush that stained her cheeks only made her more beautiful.

"You need to get some sleep. Wall duty is dangerous enough with proper rest. I don't want anything happening to you because you're tired."

He nodded with a sigh. "What time will you be up in the morning? My shift ends at six."

Wariness filled her eyes and she took a step back.

"Um, I don't know."

She began to turn away and Scott gently grabbed her chin with one hand. He turned her to look at him.

"Angela, I think you're wonderful. Please don't brush me off, baby, my heart can't take it."

She blushed again, and looked away for a moment before meeting his gaze. Her brilliant blue eyes reminded him of the sky in springtime. He longed to run his fingers through her bright red hair and kiss every freckle on her pert nose.

"Scott, we don't even really know each other—"

"Yet. That can be easily remedied if you have breakfast with me again."

Angela gave a short laugh and shook her head, but the smile she gave him kept him hopeful.

"Breakfast? Where, the pub again?"

"Wherever you want, baby. I'm not a bad cook. If you'll trust me enough to follow me home, I'll make you an omelet."

Angela seemed to think it over as Scott held his breath in hopeful anticipation. After a few seconds she finally nodded her consent.

"All right, I'll have breakfast with you. But since you bought breakfast today, I'll cook tomorrow. Just come by after your shift."

"Perfect. I'll be here just after sunrise."

"Fine."

Without another word she took another step back and slowly closed the door, leaving Scott with a silly grin on his face.

*

Angela fought the urge to look at the clock, knowing Scott would have to shower and change after his shift. Her nerves were shot and she wondered if he'd gotten enough sleep. After he left, she'd spent the remainder of the morning calling her friends in the military. A couple of them had met Scott, but didn't really know him and one actually worked with him. As nonchalant as Angela tried to sound, Tina wasn't fooled for a moment. She told Angela everything she knew about Scott. The overall consensus was that he was a keeper.

Angela tried to push away thoughts of keeping a man she barely knew and finished cutting vegetables for the omelets. She hadn't cooked for a man since her divorce and it felt like such an intimate thing to do for someone she'd just met. But Scott had gotten under her skin. He was intelligent, funny, sexy and a complete gentleman. The kiss they'd shared lit a fire in her veins she couldn't ignore. Even if Scott wasn't looking for a relationship, jumping into bed with him would be no hardship. Over three years had passed since she'd had sex and she was more than ready to end the unintentional celibacy.

A sharp knock at the door startled her from her musings and the knife slipped across the onion she'd been chopping. She cried out as it nicked her skin.

"Angela? Angela!"

She stuck her finger in her mouth as blood began to bead at the slight cut, and

headed for the door. Scott banged on it and the old wood groaned.

"I'm coming, Scott. Hold on!"

She unlocked the door and opened it to find him nearly vibrating with tension on her doorstep.

"I heard you yell. What happened?"

Without waiting for an answer he stepped into her apartment and pulled her hand away from her mouth. He frowned down at the small cut as blood beaded up again, and pulled her behind him to the kitchen sink.

"Scott, the door. I'm okay. It's just a small cut."

He ignored her and turned on the tap, thrusting her finger under the cool water.

"I'll close the door in a second, baby. I just want to stop the bleeding."

Angela sighed and let him rinse her finger. He gently dabbed at it with towel until he was satisfied the bleeding had stopped.

"Is it all right? Is it going to stay attached? Should I invest in a pair of four-fingered gloves?"

Scott glared at her for a second before striding toward the front door and closing it, clicking the lock into place. Then he turned and came back to stand before her. She leaned her back against the kitchen counter and crossed her arms against her breasts. He ran a hand through his hair and sighed.

"I'm sorry. You scared me, okay? I heard you yell and you have those damn flimsy locks on your door and...I just imagined the worst."

Her slight hint of anger melted at the genuine concern on his face. He really cared about her. Angela swallowed the lump in her throat at that revelation.

"It's okay. I'm sorry I scared you."

His wariness eased away and he leaned forward, placing his hands on the counter to either side of her hips. She was caged within his heat, his hard chest a thought away from her suddenly aching breasts. His breath whispered across her lips and her nipples hardened.

"If that's the worst that ever happens to you, I don't mind a scare every now and then. Especially if you'll let me kiss it better."

She would've smiled if her brain had continued to function properly. All she could do was stare up at him. One swipe of her tongue across her bottom lip and he groaned, taking her mouth in a brutal kiss as he wrapped her in his strong arms.

He licked her lips and she opened for him, moaning as his tongue slid against hers. He tasted of mint and his own unique flavor, a heady combination when coupled with his masculine scent. Angela couldn't help squirming against him, fighting to get closer. As if sensing her impatience, he slipped his hands beneath her shirt and pushed it above her breasts, revealing her lacey bra. A shiver ran up her spine as the cooler air hit her heated skin.

He pulled away from her mouth and she began to protest, until her t-shirt was whisked over her head. He immediately removed his and pulled her back against his chest.

"Kick off your shoes."

His whispered words barely penetrated her lust-fogged mind, until he unhooked the clasp of her bra. She had a second to doubt the wisdom of having sex with him so soon before he bent to the task of suckling her breast.

"Oh, Scott."

He groaned with her flesh still in his mouth before unbuttoning her jeans. The rasp of her zipper reminded her of his request, and she leaned against his arm around her back to kick off her shoes. He switched to the other breast while pushing her jeans over her hips and she wiggled until they hit the floor.

"Your turn," she whispered.

He lifted his head and peered down at her exposed body. Clad only in white lace panties, Angela had never felt so exposed. Scott made her feel sexy and wanted, two things she'd lost with her husband long before the divorce.

Shaking away any thought of other men, she straightened from Scott's embrace and reached for the clasp on his jeans.

"Where's your bedroom, baby?"

She unbuckled his jeans then looked up and smiled. His heated gaze was made more intense by the panting breaths rasping from his chest. A light sweat beaded on his forehead and he looked primal. Angela bit her lip and pulled his zipper slowly over the impressive bulge of his erection.

"Just down the hall behind me. Second door on the right."

Without another word, Scott scooped her up into his arms and headed for her bedroom. She yelped in surprise, then laughed at his eagerness. He grinned down at her and her chest ached. It felt so good to laugh with a lover. This was what had always been missing in her life.

Scott gently placed her in the center of the bed before kicking off his boots. He peeled his jeans and briefs down his muscled thighs, revealing his straining erection. A little larger than average, his thick cock was already tipped with moisture. Slickness formed between Angela's thighs in answer and she hooked her thumbs in the top of her panties.

"No. Let me, please."

She froze at his whispered plea and moved her hands above her head. She left herself open to him like a feast, allowing him to look his fill as he slowly stroked his cock from root to tip.

"Please, Scott. Don't make me wait."

As if she'd flicked a switch he was suddenly in motion, pulling her panties down her legs and crawling over her on hands and knees. His sweat slicked skin moved against hers and she moaned in approval.

"I've had full meds, baby. But I might have a condom in my wallet if you want."

She shook her head, panting as she tried to make sense of his words. Each citizen in The Combined Human States had a full medical work up of shots given every five years, preventing everything from chickenpox to pregnancy. She knew they'd both be protected and didn't want to wait a moment longer.

"Now, Scott, please."

She reached down and clasped his muscular ass for emphasis, pulling him to her. He grinned and gave her a quick, hard kiss, before slipping a hand between their bodies. She felt the head of his cock rubbing against her pussy, then he was pushing for entry. She raised her knees high against his ribs, opening to him fully, and he pushed inside. She cried out and he groaned against her neck. He found a rhythm and began to thrust harder, ratcheting up her arousal and pleasure.

"More, Scott Harder."

He took her commands to heart, pounding his hips against the backs of her thighs until she was screaming in an all-consuming orgasm. Her muscles tightened around his cock, milking it as he fought for control. Three more thrusts and he lost it, coming deep within her with a shout of completion.

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Scott rolled off of Angela's soft body and pulled her against his side. Contentment filled him and he wanted nothing more than to drift off to sleep with this woman in his arms.

"We haven't had breakfast."

Her drowsy comment made him smile and he glanced down to find her eyes closed. She was so beautiful, her light brown lashes fanned against her freckled cheeks. He imagined waking every evening to that sight and his gut clenched.

"I'm more sleepy than hungry, baby."

"Mhm."

He chuckled at her mumbled acknowledgment and reached over to pull a blanket over them. They may have met only yesterday, but he planned to keep her in his life for a long time. He sighed at the thought of what tomorrow might bring and tried not to dwell on

his duties. For now, he decided to be content with the angel that had come across his path, and pray he could keep her past winter.

About the Author

Ms. Missy Jane is the alter ego of a Texas mother of four who has been married to the same wonderful man for thirteen years. About five years ago Missy finished reading a book by Mercedes Lackey and thought "Now, what if..." and a monster was created. Missy now spends most of her time lost in worlds of her own making alternately loving and hating such creatures as vampires, shape-shifters and gargoyles (to name a few). When not writing, she spends her time reading, taking photos of her beautiful daughters and training her husband to believe she's always right. Excerpts from Missy's work can be found at www.msmissyjane.com.

Missy's first book, They Call me Death is available from Samhain Publishing.
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