

Amira Press
HALLOWEEN
SPOOKTACULAR

TWINS

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Twins

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Amira Press, LLC
Baltimore, MD 21216
www.amirapress.com

“Do you know what true love is?”

The strega’s question haunted Victoria for years. It echoed in the back of her thoughts, hanging over her like a dark cloud. She blamed it for sabotaging every meaningful relationship she had. Something always went wrong. When she found herself getting close to the guys that she cared about, something happened. Her last relationship with Nick was the worst.

Victoria was head over heels for Nick. Who wouldn’t be? Blond, blue eyed, tanned god that brought in a six-figure income, amazing in bed, and thought the world of her. They were outside on his balcony eating dinner by candlelight which he had prepared. They were dating for six months. He stared into her eyes reading her soul. Her heart thumped in her chest. It was all she could do to eat her nerves were so shot. Deep down, she knew he was the one. This was the night. His hand slipped into his pocket and pulled out something small and square. Victoria bit her lip. She saw herself being with him for the rest of her life. Their children would be beautiful and her life would be something from a fairy tale.

Suddenly, when he was about to ask her those four magic words, a wind came up extinguishing the candles. The fortuneteller’s voice whispered inside her mind, but Victoria brushed it off. There was nothing wrong. She was not cursed.

“Nick?” she whispered. The darkness remained.

He didn’t answer her. There was enough light from the lights around them that she found the matches to light the candles again. When she could see again, the only thing across from her was an empty box on the chair and no Nick. Panic rushed through her. She frantically searched the apartment, called his work, called his family, and did everything she could think of before calling the police, but nothing. He was nowhere to be found.

* * * *

Six months later, Victoria heard the fortuneteller’s voice again. This time, she would avoid disaster. Nick never reappeared. Neither did any of the last of her six boyfriends. Over the course of eight years since her palm reading, Victoria had mourned the disappearance of Jeffrey, Sebastian, Antonio, Dale, Francis, and Nick. Oddly enough, she was never charged with any crime. No bodies were ever found and nothing proved that she had any wrong doing in their cases. One minute they were there, and the next they were gone. All leaving empty engagement ring boxes. Each one she loved deeply. With each one, the fortuneteller’s voice entered her mind and then her boyfriends vanished as if they never existed at all.

Victoria stared in the mirror. “What’s wrong with me?”

Her looks could have gotten her a modeling job. Chocolate brown hair hung down her back and deep dark eyes stared back at her. Her olive complexion showed her Italian heritage. She could have any man that she wanted, as her best friend and twin sister, Amelia always reminded her. But she worked hard to get past her looks and get to where she was by merit. Now she was close to opening her own high class restaurant after working for years to get

through culinary school, going back to her roots in Italy, and digging through all of her grandmother's recipes until she was satisfied with the menu.

During her second trip to Italy, visiting distant relatives that Amelia convinced Victoria to go with her to a small gypsy camp she had come across the day before. Their relatives cautioned them not to go. Gypsies were a people unto themselves that sometimes lured in outsiders and took advantage of them. Her Great Aunt Silvia warned that the matriarch of that particular bunch was a strega, a witch.

The twins thought their relatives superstitious. Amelia went becoming infatuated with one of the men from the camp. Their relationship was so hot and heavy that Victoria blushed anytime she thought about the encounter that her sister had. Other men there tried to entice her to go back to their tents, but she wasn't about to let herself be seduced. Her sister, on the other hand, was more outgoing in that department. They might have been twins, but they were not identical. Where she had model looks, her sister was short and round. Amelia wasn't heavy as she was curvy and voluptuous with their father's Irish complexion, freckles and red hair. No one thought they were sisters, let alone twins.

As they entered the camp, Amelia had dragged Victoria to the fortuneteller. Dried herbs, empty birdcages, and scarves adorned the outside of the trailer. A distinct smell of cedar and olives floated out from the inside. Something darker caught Victoria's nose and a chill ran down her back. She didn't want to enter, but her sister pushed her in. Inside was woman that could have been her great grandmother.

The old woman looked up and motioned for Victoria to sit down.

"Your sister dragged you here. There's nothing to be afraid of." The old woman spoke in English with no trace of an accent. This only added to the mystery behind her.

"Look. I appreciate what—"

"You wonder about me, about what the future will bring you. I see a restaurant and much success for you and your family. But your love life—"

"What about my love life?"

"Do you know what true love is?"

Victoria thought about it. She was in love with Jeffrey. They had talked about marriage when she got back.

"The beau that you have now won't be there when you return. There are things in your destiny that are meant to bring you into the dark. He lurks in the shadows. Watching and waiting for you. Only when you are ready to accept your destiny will you truly understand what true love is."

"Look. Jeffrey and I are in love. I know what true love is. When your heart is given to someone forever—"

“That is only part of true love. True love is when your soul merges with the darkness of another. You become a slave to desire. Nothing else matters.”

“Please, there is nothing like that. No love is that intense.”

The witch started cackling. “Just you wait and see. You think hard on my words. When you are ready. You’ll discover something few mortals have ever known. Devotion so intense it will be beyond compare to any of the human lovers that will disappear from your life. You are only meant for one being and he will not permit you to have anyone else.”

“Let me guess. He is tall, dark, and handsome, will come at night and suck my blood from my veins. All superstition. Thanks for everything, but I have to go.”

The witch grabbed Victoria’s hand. “Mark my words. He will come. And ask yourself then, do you know what true love is?”

She pulled her hand away from the old woman’s and burst out of the door. Amelia was gone and the rest of the camp leered at her. She walked back to her relatives. When she returned to the states, Jeffrey had proposed to her, but two months before the wedding he disappeared. It was as if he had up and left. Nothing was amiss, but they never did find his body. The day that he went missing, the question the strega asked whispered through Victoria’s mind. Amelia told her to chalk it up to coincidence. She was still writing and talking to the gypsy she had a fling with. Victoria was looking to further her education. But even though the fortuneteller’s question lingered in her mind, her heart wondered if Jeffrey was her true love. But she never answered that question.

* * * *

“Are you still moping?” Amelia poked her head in.

Victoria looked up from all of the cards and letters that Nick had sent her. They were all romantic. All heart felt, but Victoria was beginning to wonder. “I’m not moping. I’m just thinking. Remember that fortuneteller you forced me to see when we were visiting Aunt Sylvia?”

“Yeah. What about her?”

“I was wondering if she put some kind of a spell on me.”

“Come on, Vic? You don’t believe in all that Old World nonsense anymore than I do.”

“Really? Then how come you went back to Italy five times to meet up with Franco? And I know you’re planning on going back there again.”

Her sister blushed, turning her nose bright red. “That’s different. I love him. It’s complicated.”

“Complicated enough you only see him once a year if you’re lucky and—”

“This isn’t about me. Remember? Besides. His grandmother wouldn’t have put a spell on you. The locals only call her a strega because of their backwards beliefs. There’s nothing wrong with her. She’s really nice. She’s even been teaching me some of her secrets. I gotta say she’s a mean cook, but nothing compared to you sis.”

Her sister could barely contain a laugh. “And when did you start being interested in gypsy lore. Here I thought you were going to get your Masters. Since when the change of plan?”

Her sister shrugged. “I didn’t know when the right time would be to tell you and mom. Now back to Nick. You have nothing to worry about. Trust me. You guys were in love. He didn’t just vanish like the others.”

* * * *

That was six months ago and Nick hadn’t shown up anywhere. Now the whisperings of the strega were back, haunting her mind. Victoria wasn’t in a relationship. Her sister returned to Italy and remained for the part four months. No one heard Amelia, but Victoria knew she was all right. She always knew when something was wrong with her sister. At least on that front, she didn’t have to worry about anything. The thrill of opening her own restaurant loomed before her. Something was off. Victoria wondered if she should finally listen to the advice of the old fortuneteller that she had been fighting after all these years. Maybe she should just give into the question. Maybe she should give up on love all together.

Victoria sighed and wished that her sister were around. It made life easier when she could bounce ideas off of Amelia. Victoria didn’t know exactly what to do, so maybe it was time to think that superstition and myth might be true.

Later that night, Victoria lit a couple of candles and pushed aside her menu choices. She sat cross-legged on the floor of her living room. The candles threw flickering shadows across the room, but darkness stayed in every corner. She shut her eyes and stilled a shudder running across her flesh from a cold breeze that came into her room. The old strega’s voice whispered in her mind.

“So, what happens now?” Victoria watched the candle flames and the shadows. They wavered and she found herself rocking to the motion of the flames. *Now I wait and go crazy.*

“Now the shadows come alive.” A voice from the darkness echoed in her apartment.

She jumped and stared at the far corner noticing the thickness of the shadow. Her heart leapt into her throat. “Who’s there?”

“I’ve been here waiting for you to accept the truth. Waiting for you to delve into the darkness and answer the question that the strega put to you.”

Victoria squinted into the darkness. A shape was forming. After a moment, the form was almost tangible, but Victoria was frozen to her spot and couldn't move. "What are you? Are you the one that—"

"Yes. I was the one that stole all those that sought your hand. They were not the ones for your heart. Only I can show you that. I won't hurt you, Victoria."

"Then what happened to Nick? To Jeffrey? To all the others that I loved?"

"They are not your concern."

"What did you do to them?" Victoria yelled at the shadow.

Suddenly, her arms were grabbed and held. She was looking into dark eyes like hers. Ancient wisdom returned her gaze. Dark hair fell down his back and he was dressed in the darkness of shadows. He said nothing, but pressed his lips to hers. At the first contact all the fight drained out of her. She went limp in his arms and returned his kiss without knowing why. All her emotions were erratic. Her heart went into her throat and she was intrigued. Finally, he pulled away.

"What are you?" she whispered breathlessly.

"You are destined to be mine. I've been waiting for you to be born, and realize what true love is."

"That doesn't answer my question. What are you? Are you a demon? A ghost?"

He laughed and it made her giddy. "Victoria, my kind is older than the shadows. We are kin to the angels. We were forgotten when man was created and found darkness to give us comfort. We make dreams and nightmares come true. We can be terrible and beautiful. Mankind follows along the paths that we have shaped for them. Some cultures call us genies. Others call us daemons. But there is no true name for us. We appear only to mortals when they are truly ready to accept their destinies."

"And I've accepted my fate? You killed all the men who asked to marry me and you expect me to instantly love you?" She tried to move from the daemon's arms, but he would not let escape.

"I do not expect you to accept me at first. But you cannot deny what true love is. You are my mate, Victoria. It's so very rare that the gods create a mortal who is our equal. And you are mine. You have been since the moment your spark entered your mother's womb and I began watching out for you. How could I let another man have you for eternity? Marriage is so much more than humans realize. It binds souls."

"Tell that to all the people who get divorced."

"Even still. Part of them is tied to one another forever. Even into the next life. You've followed your path until now. Know that I can give you whatever you wish. I don't have to

live in the shadows. Let yourself learn to love me. Know what true abandon is. Let it turn into love. You might be surprised as to what happens.”

He let her go and watched as she settled onto the couch and stared at him. “What did you do with all the others? Tell me that. Did you kill them?”

“No. They were placed elsewhere to follow another destiny. But they live. They just left the life they knew behind and became something better, something more suited to them. I can prove they are alive if you wish.”

“All right. Show me.”

He stepped from the shadows. She watched as they formed to fit his body into a tight shirt stretched across his chest and tight black jeans. She licked her lips and tried to keep her mind on what he had told her. He knelt down and stared into her eyes. He smiled and moved a piece of stray hair from her forehead. As he did, Victoria had an explosion of images in her mind. Each one was of the men that had asked her to marry them. The last was Nick. She saw him laughing and holding a child in his arms. Jeffrey was making love to another man. Francois was getting fucked by two women while he was tied up and the others were hard at work. They seemed happy.

“How do I know what you just showed me was real? It could—”

The daemon leaned in and kissed her lightly. Again she lost all her fight. “I can’t lie to you. What you saw was true. Know they are happy and nothing I did hurt them. I just moved them so you would understand they were not meant for you. Only I was.”

Suddenly, he moved in and kissed her again. His lips trailed down her throat and his hands slipped under her shirt touching her stomach. Victoria relaxed into the sensation and felt like putty. There was nothing she could do against him. Everything in her wanted this unearthly creature. Part of her felt complete in a way she had never known before as he held her. His lips were silky and soft. She found her hands tearing at the buttons on his shirt so she could touch his flesh. It was as warm as hers. His fingers skillfully, slowly, undid the buttons on her shirt and peeled it away. Before he undid her bra, he stopped then and looked at her.

“Only if you want this Victoria. I’ve waited so long. I don’t want to force you. I—”

This time she kissed him and found that they both toppled on the floor. Her tongue met his. Her hands moved to undo the zipper of his jeans. He was already hard and ready for her. The longer she stayed in contact with him, the more her control slipped away. Her whole body was enflamed. She felt like she could abandon herself and give everything she was to the man beneath her.

Maybe this was what the fortuneteller’s whisper had meant. Was this what true love meant? Suddenly there were no clothes between them. He plunged into her and her back arched on its own accord. She saw stars and moaned at his long slow stroke. Her fingers gripped his back, wound in his hair.

“Do you accept me for all that I am? Will you embrace the shadows?” he asked her.

How could she say no? “Yes.”

From that moment, he began pounding into her and she was lost in a sea of moaning while he fucked her. Hard and slow, fast and soft alternating between the two. His mouth enclosed on her nipples. His tongue circled the hard pebbles and bit down bringing her even further away from earth.

When they were done, she lay in his arms thinking about what had just happened. Something had been lifted from her eyes. A veil. The shadows didn't seem as thick anymore. The darkness was not as scary and the strega's voice no longer in her head. The daemon looked up as he leaned on his arm and stared at her.

“Was I so frightening just then?”

Victoria shook her head. “No, but what happens now. Will I turn into something like you?”

He touched her face. “It all depends on what you want. You can give up yourself and become as I. You can be human, die, and then join me. I can join you in human form and we can be together. But the longer you are with me, the more you will become like me. Even my being around you will begin to change the very essence of what you are. This is why your sister only sees my brother once a year. To be with him longer would be dangerous to her. Already she had begun to show changes.”

“Amelia? Your brother and my sister? How?”

The daemon kissed her lightly. “My brother chose human form to entice your sister. She knew him as a gypsy and then he revealed himself to her. I chose the route that was less direct. I wanted you to face the question the strega posed to you when you were ready. It wouldn't have mattered if you were old and wrinkled like a prune. I still would have wanted you. We are twins. Like you and Amelia. Tell me what you want. I can taste the desire for your restaurant. But I can't wait in the shadows any longer for you.”

“I want you. I don't know why. But I do. I want both.”

“Then you will have both. We can figure it out. I'll be human for you. At your beck and call.” He nuzzled her hair. “Besides I hear that you need a head chef while you're not in the kitchen.”

“How do you know how to cook?”

“I know everything you know and a little more. Trust me. I am sure we can think of something that will make the kitchen sizzle.”

The End

About the Author

Crymsyn Hart's worlds are filled with luscious vampires, gorgeous gods, quirky witches, and brooding shifters.

Crymsyn is a crafty witch and psychic who, for many years, worked in Boston while attending Emerson College. She graduated with a degree in creative writing. When she gets bored, she sneaks away to local cemeteries and coffee shops to find peace and quiet. Graveyards might be a great place for the dead, but she still has to listen to their chattering. It can get annoying when all you want to do is write, but she can tell you quite a ghost story. Crymsyn shares her life with a small zoo including a playful puppy and her hubby Mark.

If you come after dark, you're more than likely to find her snuggled up with a gory horror movie or a bloody vampire movie.