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# LARISSA IONE



APOCALYPSE:  
*the LORDS of DELIVERANCE*  
COMPENDIUM

# **Apocalypse: The Lords of Deliverance**

## **Compendium**

**Larissa Ione**



New York Boston



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# The Introduction

One of the most common questions I hear is, “How did you come up with the idea to write about the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse?”

Well, put simply and vaguely, it just popped into my head. No, really. I can’t remember any kind of trigger, like an article or a TV show or even the sight of four horses standing in a field. I just remember that several years ago, before I’d even sold the Demonica series, I wanted to do something with the Horsemen.

I just didn’t know what.

It wasn’t until I was writing Ecstasy Unveiled that I had the glimmer of an idea of what to do with them. I could create a brand-new series with a brand-new world... or I could incorporate them into the Demonica world.

But how?

The answer came during revisions to Sin Undone.

See, I wanted to stay in the Demonica world, but Underworld General needed some time to recover from five books of mayhem. I also needed a little space, but at the same time, I didn’t want to stray too far from my beloved hospital and characters.

Enter the Horsemen. On horses. With deadly weapons and nerves of steel and bodies of solid muscle. These boys were meant to fight. Except, oops, one of them was female. Limos tossed a wrench into my plan. She’s mischievous that way.

So the Horsemen were born, and oh, the possibilities for their stories! Right away I envisioned some of the big events, while others came during the course of writing and revising. But all the while, I had a specific arc in mind, one that would keep our Demonica characters front and center and then take us right back to Underworld General.

As the Demonica/Lords of Deliverance world expanded, so did the need for another compendium. There are more characters, more species, and more supernatural abilities to keep track of. And, of course, there’s a short story to give you more background into how it all began. “Eternal Damnation” will take you back to the Horsemen’s very roots, when they were but a twinkle in Lilith’s evil eye.

Read on, Riders, and enjoy!

# The Key Players

Born of a match between good and evil, four siblings stand between hell's minions and everything they want to destroy. They are the Lords of Deliverance, and they must live their lives walking a line between two prophecies, one set forth by the Bible, and one penned by the prophets of the demon holy book, the Daemonica. Two prophecies, both ushering in Doomsday, but whether the Horsemen fight on the side of good or evil is yet to be determined...

**First Horseman of the Apocalypse: Reseph aka Pestilence**—Born to the evil succubus Lilith and the angel Yenrieth and given up as an infant to an Akkadian princess who believed herself to be a goddess. Reseph was spoiled, given everything, anything, and anyone he wanted. Though he had a rude awakening when he learned the truth about his origins and was cursed to be a Horseman, he never truly lost his carefree attitude or playboy lifestyle. He lives to have fun. His favorite things include country music, margaritas, women, and vacationing anywhere it's warm.

Height: 6'8"

Hair: Very light blond

Eye color: Ice blue

Location of home: Caves in the Himalayans Mountains

Personal weapon/symbol: Bow

Tattoos/identifying marks: Stallion glyph on right forearm

Horse's name and description: White warhorse named Conquest

Agimortus (trigger for breaking Seal): An event defined in prophecy

Weakness: Drawn to scenes of great disaster and disease

Armor: Plate metal armor that must be fed blood in order to stay strong

Most memorable historical event: The Black Death

Daemonica Prophecy: **She of mixed blood who should not exist, carries with her the power to spread plague and pestilence. When battle breaks, conquest is seal'd.**

**Second Horseman of the Apocalypse: Ares aka War**—Raised to be a warrior from the moment he was switched at birth with a human child, Ares lives to fight. The curse brought down upon him and his siblings that turned them into Horsemen made him even better at warmongering... and it also causes humans to become agitated and violent when in his presence. Because of this, he has lived apart from humans and keeps his distance when forced to deal with them. He is a fan of classical music, Greek food, and ouzo.

Height: 6'9"

Hair: Brown with reddish highlights

Eye color: Black

Location of home: Private island in Greece

Personal weapon/symbol: Sword

Tattoos/identifying marks: Stallion glyph on right forearm

Horse's name and description: Blood bay stallion named Battle  
Agimortus (trigger for breaking Seal): Death of person as defined in prophecy  
Weakness: Drawn to scenes of large scale battles; close proximity to his agimortus-bearer dulls senses, strength, and weapons, softens armor  
Armor: Leather made of Gerunti demon hide  
Most memorable historical event: The Battle of Hastings  
Daemonica prophecy: **An angel's mistake shall bring about War, and her death shall break his sword. But be wary, a hound's heart may yet defeat.**

**Third Horseman of the Apocalypse: Limos aka Famine**—Limos, the only female Horseman, is also the only one of the four to be raised by the mother that gave birth to them. Brought up by Lilith and betrothed to Satan, Limos became an expert at deception and lies. When she left Sheoul, the demon realm known as hell to humans, she found and united her brothers. She is a girly-girl to the core, preferring to dress in ultrafeminine, bright-colored clothes. Her favorite color is pink, she loves fruity drinks and flowers, and painting her nails is practically an obsession.

Height: 5'8"  
Hair: Black  
Eye color: Violet  
Location of home: Secluded island in Hawaii  
Personal weapon/symbol: Set of weight scales  
Tattoos/identifying marks: Horse glyph on right forearm; set of scales on shoulder; navel piercing  
Horse's name and description: Black hell stallion named Bones  
Agimortus (trigger for breaking Seal): Tiny cup  
Weakness: Drawn to scenes of any mass shortage, usually food; unable to give herself to any man  
Armor: Croix viper-skin, Samurai-style tunic and breeches  
Most memorable historical event: Irish potato famine  
Daemonica prophecy: **A Horseman, should he drink from the Cup of Deception and Lies, will loose Famine to ravage the Earth.**

**Fourth Horseman of the Apocalypse: Thanatos aka Death**—Of all the Horsemen, Thanatos was the most changed after he was cursed. Raised in a peaceful pre-Druidic clan, he grew up happy and well adjusted. When cursed as the Horseman who is fated to become Death upon the breaking of his Seal, he sank into an abyss of misery and pain. With the help of his siblings, he adjusted, but his inability to control his anger leads to death and destruction, requiring him to live a solitary life. The things he has done torture him, and the only escape is to have his emotions “transferred” to his skin in the form of tattoos. A serious bookworm, he has an extensive library and spends his spare time hunting for rare, ancient tomes to satisfy his thirst for knowledge—and his father. He loves classic rock, Mountain Dew, and pineapple upside-down cake.

Height: 6'8"  
Hair: Shoulder-length blond, usually braided at the temples  
Eye color: Pale yellow  
Location of home: Castle in Greenland  
Tattoos/identifying marks: Entire body is covered in tattoos, layered on top of each other, but each

distinct; most prominent tattoos are stallion on right forearm, scorpion on neck; both nipples are pierced

Horse's name and description: Pale dun stallion named Styx

Agimortus (trigger for breaking Seal): Believed to be his virginity

Weakness: Drawn to scenes of mass casualties; armor loses strength as it loses souls

Armor: Bone plate armor that collects the souls of those he kills

Most memorable historical event: Construction of the Notre Dame cathedral

Daemonica prophecy: **Behold! Innocence is Death's curse, his hunger his burden, a blade his Deliverance. The Doom Star cometh if the cry fails.**

**Arik Wagner**—Soldier in the U.S. Army's Ranger-X Regiment, which is responsible for dealing with supernatural phenomenon and demonic activity. Also brought into The Aegis as a middleman, allowing for exchange of information and cooperation between the two agencies. Brother to Runa.

Height: 6'2"

Hair: Short, dark brown

Eye color: Dark brown

Profession: Soldier

Species: Human

**Cara Thornhart**—Formerly a veterinary assistant with a supernatural ability to both communicate with, and heal, animals, Cara is now married to Ares. She bears Ares's agimortus, meaning that if she dies, his Seal will break. Fortunately for her, she is bonded to nearly all hellhounds in existence, and their life forces have given her immortality.

Hair: Sandy blond

Eye color: Blue-green

Species: Human

**Conall Dearghul**—Vampire paramedic at Underworld General Hospital. Mated to Sin.

Height: 6'5"

Hair: Blond

Eye color: Silver

Species: Vampire

**Decker Cready**—Like Arik, Decker is a soldier in the U.S. Army's Ranger-X Regiment and a member of The Aegis.

Height: 6'1"

Hair: Short, blond

Eye color: Gray-blue

Profession: Soldier

Species: Human

**Eidolon (EYE-duh-lawn)**—Head of Underworld General Hospital, a medical center he built with brothers Shade and Wraith. All Seminus demons possess gifts meant to aid them in seduction and

reproduction, but these gifts can also be used to heal. Eidolon's gift allows him to heal most physical injuries with little more than a touch.

Height: 6'4"

Hair: Short, dark brown-black

Eye color: Dark brown

Profession: Physician

Species: Incubus

Breed: Seminus demon

Tattoos/identifying marks: Tattoolike symbols extending from tips of right fingers to shoulder

Personal Seminus symbol: Set of scales on throat

**Gemella (Gem) Endri**—Half-demon doctor at Underworld General Hospital. Sister to Tayla. Married to Kynan Morgan.

Hair: Length and color changes frequently; usually shoulder-length and black with streaks of blue, red, or pink

Eye color: Green

Profession: Physician

Species: Half-human, half-Soulshredder

Tattoos/identifying marks: Pierced tongue, eyebrow, ears, navel; long-stemmed rose tattoo running the length of her left leg; dragon tattoo on her abdomen; tattooed Celtic bands around ankles, wrists, and neck

**Gethel**—Formerly assigned as the Horsemen's Heavenly Watcher. She is now assigned as an Apocalypse angel... a small group of angels whose duties include investigating apocalyptic signs.

Hair: Blond

Eye color: Green

Species: Angel

**Harvester**—Assigned as the Horsemen's evil Watcher. Before her fall from grace, she was an angel of justice.

Hair: Black

Eye color: Black

Species: Fallen angel

**Idess**—Ex-angel of the Memitim class, falsely believed by many—including by Memitim—to be the only class of angel that is born, not made by the hand of God. Mated to Lore. Father is Azagoth, the Grim Reaper. Her ability to speak with the dead has made her invaluable as a staff member at Underworld General, where she helps guide trapped souls to their final destination.

Hair: Brown

Eye color: Honey

**Kynan Morgan**—One of twelve Aegis Elders who lead the demon-slaying organization. Joined The Aegis after being injured by a demon while on a mission as a United States Army medic in Afghanistan. Married to Gemella Endri. Keeper of Heofon, a necklace bearing a piece of Heaven. As



the Keeper of Heofon, he was charmed as a Marked Sentinel by angels, giving him immunity to harm from anything except an angel.

Height: 6'2"

Hair: Short, spiky, dark brown

Eye color: Navy blue

Profession: Aegis Guardian

Species: Human

Tattoos/identifying marks: Gravelly voice from vocal-cord damage; scarred throat

**Lore**—Half-brother to Eidolon, Shade, and Wraith. Twin to sister Sin. Half-breed Seminus demon and former assassin who now works in the Underworld General Hospital's morgue. As a cambion, a human-demon half-breed, his Seminus gift went awry, leaving him without the ability to heal, but to instead kill everything he touches with his right hand.

Height: 6'6"

Hair: Short, black

Eye color: Dark brown

Species: Half-human, half-Seminus demon

Tattoos/identifying marks: Tattoolike symbols extending from tips of right fingers to shoulder

Personal Seminus symbol: None

**Reaver**—Heavenly Watcher to the Horsemen. A former fallen angel, he has no memory of anything prior to the event that caused his fall thirty years ago. His angel status was restored following a battle in which he helped save Heaven from being invaded by demon masses.

Height: 6'6"

Hair: Shoulder-length, pale blond

Eye color: Blue

Profession: Watcher

Species: Angel (of the Battle Order)

**Regan Cooper**—Aegis Elder. Born to a human mother and a father who was possessed by a demon at the time she was conceived, Regan possesses special abilities that make her both valuable and dangerous to The Aegis. With limited psychometry, she can read emotions and sometimes see visions by touching ink on skin, including parchment. She also possesses the ability to wrest the soul from any living thing. Unfortunately, she cannot control the soul once it is free of its body, and it will seek the nearest body to possess. The results are deadly. Her abilities have made a normal life impossible, and she was passed around by several Aegis families as she grew up, until she finally went to Aegis headquarters to live and complete her training.

Hair: Brown

Eye color: Hazel

Species: Human

**Runa (RUE-nuh)**—Mated to Shade. Brother to Arik Wagner.

Hair: Shoulder-length, caramel brown

Eye color: Pale champagne

Species: Werewolf who, because of military experimentation, can change at will instead of only during the full moon phase

**Serena Kelley**—Mated to Wraith.

Hair: Long, blond

Eye color: Brown

Profession: Treasure hunter

Species: Vampire

**Shade**—Paramedic at Underworld General Hospital. Brother to Eidolon and Wraith, half-brother to Lore and Sin. Mated to Runa. His Seminus gift allows him to control a patient's organ functions.

Height: 6'3½"

Hair: Shoulder-length, dark brown-black

Eye color: Dark brown-black

Profession: Paramedic

Species: Incubus

Breed: Seminus demon

Tattoos/identifying marks: Tattoolike symbols extending from tips of right fingers to shoulder; pierced left ear

Personal Seminus symbol: Eye on throat

**Sin**—Only known female Seminus demon. Half-sister to Eidolon, Shade, and Wraith. Twin to brother Lore. Mated to Conall Dearghul. Like her brother Lore, she's a cambion, so her Seminus gift was mutated into something different than what her purebred brothers possess. Instead of healing, she causes disease. In fact, by causing a werewolf plague, Sin inadvertently caused Reseph's Seal to break, turning him into Pestilence.

Hair: Black

Eye color: Dark brown

Species: Half-human, half-Seminus demon

Tattoos/identifying marks: Tattoolike symbols extending from tips of right fingers to shoulder; tattoo on the back of her neck

Personal Seminus symbol: None

**Tayla Mancuso**—Regent of a New York Aegis cell. Mated to Eidolon, sister to Gemella.

Hair: Red

Eye color: Green

Profession: Aegis Guardian

Species: Half-human, half-Soulshredder

**Wraith**—A freak combination of Seminus demon and vampire. Works with brothers Eidolon, Shade, and Lore at Underworld General as an acquisitions specialist. Mated to Serena. A charm bestowed upon him by Serena has left him impervious to harm except at the hand of a fallen angel. His Seminus gift differs from his brothers' in that he can access the mind instead of the body,

controlling thoughts and projecting images.

Height: 6'5"

Hair: Kept between chin and shoulder length, bleached blond

Eye color: Blue

Profession: In charge of acquisitions for UGH

Species: Incubus

Breed: Seminus demon

Tattoos/identifying marks: Tattoolike symbols extending from tips of right fingers to shoulder

Personal Seminus symbol: Hourglass on throat

# The Four Horses of the Apocalypse

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are intimidating all by themselves. But with their massive stallions, they gain not only a big boost in height, but powerful weapons between their thighs. (Oh, come on... you knew I had to go there.)

The horses are also vital for transportation. Yes, the Horsemen can use portable Harrowgates to move around, but there are some places where gates can't be opened. Also, you don't want to summon a gate anyplace where you might accidentally slice someone in half when it opens. The stallions allow for the Horsemen to gate themselves into a remote area and then ride where they need to go without risk of killing people.

Plus, horses are just cool.

But who are these horses? Let's start with Battle, whom we first see in Sin Undone.

Battle, a blood bay warhorse, is Ares's mount. He's a little grumpy, but then, he's had to live with Ares for thousands of years. Battle does have his own quirks and sense of humor... sure, it's a sick and twisted sense of humor, but he has one. For example, he thinks it's hilarious to rip the wings off demons. And he likes sugar cubes. Well, he likes sugar in general. He once broke into Ares's kitchen and stole an entire bag of sugar.

Limos's stallion, Bones, makes Battle look like a cuddly kitten. Bones was a gift from Satan. He's a jet-black hell stallion with a nasty temper and a nearly uncontrollable nature. Oh, and he's a carnivore. Bones is not a nice horse. Limos keeps him happy with dried meat treats. He prefers elk and hellrat jerky.

And then there's Styx, the dun beast belonging to Thanatos. Styx is quiet, watchful, and when you aren't looking, he's protective of those who can't protect themselves. He's playful and mischievous, taking great pleasure in whipping his favorite toy, a bubblegum-pink horse ball around Thanatos's keep... and aiming at Than's servants. His favorite treat is beer, preferably cheap beer. No one knows why the horse doesn't have more sophisticated tastes. Thanatos is particularly disturbed.

Reseph's sleek white steed, Conquest, is a rambunctious, good-natured animal. Before Reseph's Seal broke, Conquest was impish, with a penchant for nipping people and running. Of all the horses, he was freed the most often (the horses exist as glyphs on the Horsemen's skin when not in physical form). He loves rubdowns from pretty women, sweet molasses grain, and an exhilarating race with the other Horsemen's stallions once in a while. He likes the races more than the others, because he generally wins.

The Lords of Deliverance series takes place in the Demonica world, which is filled with as many species of demons as there are animals in the human realm. In addition, the world is populated by vampires, shapeshifters, were-beasts, and angels.

But where the Demonica books focused mainly on Underworld General, the Lords of Deliverance series takes readers all over the world and underworld... even to a pub in the bowels of Sheoul called, wait for it—The Four Horsemen.

The Four Horsemen pub, located in Sheoul's Six-River region, was founded over two thousand years ago, named because as a pub known only as "the hole," it was the favorite hangout for the Horsemen and their groupies. Limos only made hit-and-run visits, because she couldn't afford to be found in Sheoul lest her Prince-of-Demons fiancé caught her.

Gradually, The Four Horsemen pub expanded—financed by the Horsemen—into a less scroungy place with back rooms for pleasurable... uh... activities. It never lost its "old world" charm though, and still boasts straw on the floors, skeletons hanging from chains, and some unidentifiable black slime oozing from the walls.

The Four Horsemen is a must-see for anyone on a tour of the underworld.

Your tour might also include a layover at Limos's Hawaiian paradise, where the party never stops. Her werewolf and wolf-shifter servants are very accommodating, and the full bar in her party house will keep the fun going. If you're hungry, there's usually a suckling pig roasting in a pit (though sometimes, if the guests are particularly evil, you might find a skullboar in the pit instead). Don't miss a game of beach volleyball—there's always one going on. But a word of caution: Never play with Oni demons. They hate to lose and are notorious for using the winners' heads in their next match.

Another fun must-see is Ares's Greek island in the Aegean Sea. You won't be able to get inside his sprawling white manor, but who needs to? There are miles of beaches to enjoy, vineyards to stroll through, and hellhounds to play with. Ares is rumored to be starting up a small winery, and everyone is waiting with bated breath to see what the label will be called.

There are literally millions of sights in the supernatural world, so try not to gape if you come across some of the more fantastical settings and beings. Most people don't know what to do with themselves when they see an angel, for example. It's also advisable to carry an extra set of underclothes. You never know how your bowels will react when you come face-to-face with a Soulshredder.

## **Regions in Sheoul**

Sheoul, like the human realm, is divided into hundreds of regions with their own characteristics, populations, and climates. The largest region includes Sithbludd, Dread, Six-River, and Horun. The smallest, Soyl, is a hundred-mile-long, three-hundred-mile-wide chunk of uninhabited fire swamp.

The most popular is Carnage, which, with its endless stretches of black-sand beaches along the River Acheron, is a favorite vacation spot.

## Weapons You Might See in Use

- Gargantua-bone dagger**—Very, very rare, and coveted by pretty much everyone. Once the dagger's blade tastes the blood of an enemy, its aim is always true when used against that enemy.
- Heavenly light**—One of the most power weapons an angel can possess. The light shoots from an angel's pores, destroying nearly all evil beings within a certain radius (radius depends on how powerful the angel is). While this is a very lethal weapon, it has extreme limitations. It can only be activated in Sheoul, and because it uses up most of an angel's energy, it's often invoked only as a last resort.
- Hellfire**—As nasty as it sounds. Most often used by fallen angels, hellfire can be streamed into a thin rope of molten lava, it can be hurled as a ball, or it can spray in a fan of flames. A very versatile weapon of midlevel power.
- Hellhound saliva**—Good luck getting a hellhound to give up his saliva, but if you can, it is one of the few known substances that can neutralize a Horseman by temporarily paralyzing him or her.
- Holy fire**—This is an angelic weapon, used on low-level evil only. Angels possess an arsenal of low-level weapons that vary depending on each angelic order. Battle angels, for example, are the most well armed and have the widest variety of weapons available to them.
- Infernal fire**—Known as “underworld napalm,” infernal fire is extremely powerful, burning everything it touches. Fire spirits infest the flames, hunting down every living thing within range of the fire's heat. Forbidden to use in the human realm.
- Qeres**—Aegis potion that can be used to coat weapons for use against fallen angels. It was originally developed by the ancient Egyptians, but the recipe has been lost, and what little there is... is all there is.
- Scythe**—Signature weapon of Memitim angels and Thanatos. In use in Sheoul for thousands of years before it made its appearance in the human realm.
- Shear-whip**—This is a whip with a white-hot scourge. Angel weapon forbidden to use against another angel.

# The Demons

List of demons taken from the Demonica: A Demon Compendium, and updated with new demons discovered in the Demonica/Lords of Deliverance world.

Note: Most demons are invisible to humans unless they want to be seen, the humans are trained to see them, or the humans possess either magic or some inherent ability to see them. The notable exceptions to the invisibility rule are ter'taceo—demons who, by nature, look like humans, or who can take on human appearance. Seminus demons, for example, are ter'taceo.

When any non-ter'taceo demon dies in the human realm, it disintegrates within moments unless it dies in an area specially designed to prevent disintegration, an area built by demons, or some underground locales.

Most demons spend the majority of their lives in Sheoul, the demon realm deep inside the Earth. When demons die, their souls are sent to Sheoul-gra, which is, in essence, a holding tank where souls wait to be reborn. Sheoul-gra is also where evil human souls are sent to either serve demon souls waiting to be reborn, or to be reborn themselves... as demons.

All demon species and breeds can be classified by their Ufelskala score—a number ranging from one to five on the scale of evil, with a score of five being the evilest. It is important to note that the Ufelskala judges “evil” by a species or breed’s love of pain, suffering, and death, as well as on its self-awareness of its own behavior. So a demon animal that eats its prey alive, causing great suffering, may only score a two on the Ufelskala, while a demon that doesn’t kill, but instead merely torments for fun, might score a four.

Humans, for the most part, are unaware that demons walk among them, and that is the way most demons—and most humans—like it.

**Acid sprite**—Delicate, rat-size, moves faster than a human eye can track. Winged and colorful, they can be seen by human children who believe the sprites are fairies. They inhabit very dense, very wet European forests, where they hunt small rodents and make the most of their mischievous natures by tormenting human travelers. A favorite game is to ensure that campers and hikers become lost in the woods. While rarely fatal, an acid sprite’s bite is toxic to humans and is often mistaken for a spider bite. **Ufelskala score: 2**

**Alu**—Rare, ghostlike demon who appears to humans in the shape of a black dog. They have been known to carry diseases such as bubonic plague and leprosy. Usually found haunting graveyards. **Ufelskala score: 4**

**Angelgoth**—Fallen angels who have done something to earn being turned into winged, skeletal monsters. Living in a constant state of misery in hellish dungeons, angelgoths serve Satan with ruthless abandon when they are called to do his bidding, for an assignment means a respite from their prisons. **Ufelskala score: 5**

**Baruk**—Wrinkled, white-skinned creature that feeds exclusively on Umber demons. They inhabit caves worldwide, where they can hibernate for centuries until an Umber demon moves in. Though humans rarely encounter the baruk, when they do, the results are... messy. **Ufelskala score: 3**

**Bathag**—Mine dwellers, violet eyes, pale skin, silver-white hair. They possess power over the Earth

and can cause earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, mine collapses. They like to live deep in gem and mineral mines, where they cause minor accidents to feed off the energy of those in pain. **Ufelskala score: 2**

**Bedim**—Very attractive, sensual humanoid race. Dark skin, dark hair. Males keep females in harems. When harems grow too large for one male to service alone, harems are often shared with friends or “rented” out in order to keep females sated and calm. **Ufelskala score: 1**

**Bone devil**—Three feet tall, carnivorous. Lives in forests all over the world. Eats its prey (usually deer) alive. One of the few demon species that exists exclusively in the human realm and never enters Sheoul. **Ufelskala score: 2**

**Charnel Apostle**—A race of demon born into the Charnelist religion that celebrates pain, violence, and bloody sacrifice. All Charnel Apostles top six feet tall as adults. Gray skin, black eyes, and hair composed of porcupinelike quills that extend down their back and along their broad, flat tail. They make their home high in the Mongolian mountains, using their magic to conceal their existence from humans. **Ufelskala score: 5**

**Croix viper**—Giant demon snakes with horns. They exist exclusively in Sheoul unless brought above ground by another demon. **Ufelskala score: 2**

**Croucher**—Three-eyed, scrawny creatures. The size of a small man, they live near dwelling entrances, waiting to pounce. Though they are invisible to humans, as most demons are, they are capable of powerful evil. They harm by bringing bad luck to a house, thereby causing illnesses and accidents, from falling down stairs, to sudden death. **Ufelskala score: 4**

**Cruentus**—Skeletal chests, thorny fingers, blunt, hairless snouts. Extremely vicious race that feeds only on fresh meat. They will hunt anything, including each other. **Ufelskala score: 4**

**Daeva**—Harmless to humans unless threatened. Thin, tall, and pale with lidless, glowing eyes, they appear more frightening than they are. They exist mainly in the darkest reaches of Sheoul, and come aboveground to the human realm only at night, to gather trash for food and entertainment. **Ufelskala score: 1**

**Darquethoth**—Very large, ebony-skinned demons with glowing orange eyes, mouths, and thick slashes in their skin. They live in the hot, inner regions of Sheoul, feeding off prey species who also reside there. A warrior race, they can be hired for any job that promises violence. **Ufelskala score: 4**

**Dhampire**—A rare hybrid of vampire and werewolf, dhampires both feed on blood and change into wargs during the full moon. Males are prone to blood addiction if they feed from the same female too often, ultimately leading to the female’s death. Though dhampires are immortal, they can be killed. When a dhampire dies, if his or her body is returned to clan soil, he or she will rise as a vampire with certain extra immunities, such as resistance to holy water and sunlight. **Ufelskala score: Varies**

**Dire mantis**—Human in appearance until they’re ready to kill. In preparation, they develop an extra row of sharp teeth and grow long claws. The female’s bite is paralyzing, allowing her to render her victims helpless as she eats their heads. Males, lacking the paralyzing agent in their saliva, must rely on brute strength and their sharp claws and teeth to kill. **Ufelskala score: 3**

**Drec**—Hunchbacked creatures with slimy gray skin and long tails. Loners, they live near lakes and streams, where they can easily catch their main source of food: fish. They are extremely cowardly, making them perfect minions for more evil demons who capture and force them to labor as slaves.



**Ufelskala score: 1**

**Drekevac**—Spindly, long-limbed, oversize head, fangs as long as a human's forearm. They enter buildings through open windows and sicken humans with their breath. **Ufelskala score: 4**

**Fallen angels**—Fallen angels fall into two categories: those who have entered Sheoul, and those who have not. Angels expelled from Heaven face two choices—they can enter Sheoul and become the most powerful of demons and lose all hope of ever returning to Heaven, or they can reside in the human realm and pray to someday earn the opportunity to return to Heaven. **Ufelskala score:**

**Varies except for those who have entered Sheoul—these fallen angels are ranked as a 5**

**False angels**—Males and females alike are flawlessly beautiful. Highly sexual, they enjoy pleasures of the flesh, but they are very particular in their choice of sex partners, and will only engage in sex with the most attractive humans and human-appearing demons. A cunning and easily bored species, they make life interesting for themselves by tricking humans into thinking they are true angels, and then leading the humans astray from their chosen religion and into another. **Ufelskala score: 3**

**Gargantua**—Massive, rare demons that live in the deepest ocean trenches and come onto land once every hundred years to mate. Mostly, they scavenge the carcasses of large mammals and fish that sink to the ocean floor, but they have been known to hunt squid and octopus, as well as to sink ships and devour the crews. **Ufelskala score: 2**

**Gerunti**—Thirty feet tall, Tyrannosaurus rex jaws and claws as long as a man. Only a handful are believed to still be in existence, a result of long gestation periods and high infant mortality rates. They live underground in mountainous regions in the human realm, coming aboveground to gorge themselves on humans and animals once every fifty years. **Ufelskala score: 3**

**Ghastbat**—Demon bats that feed on living flesh. Their sharp teeth and claws can penetrate the toughest hides. The spikes on the ends of their leathery wings are often used to pry off scales of larger creatures with plated armor in order to get to the soft flesh beneath. **Ufelskala score: 1**

**Grim Reaper aka Azagoth**—Very little is known about Azagoth, except that he lives in a realm of his own, inaccessible to most. He is the father of all Memitim angels and is rumored to be the Four Horsemen's father as well. **Ufelskala score: Unknown**

**Griminions**—Servants to the Grim Reaper. Believed by some to function for demons as angels do for humans... escorting the souls of dead demons to Sheoul-gra. **Ufelskala score: Unknown**

**Guai (gwah-eye)**—An Asian species, approximately four feet tall, stocky, and resembling a wild boar on two legs. Omnivores, these demons hang out near rice paddies, where they raid rice fields and eat the occasional snake or rat. **Ufelskala score: 1**

**Harpy**—Best described as a “winged woman,” or as a cross between an eagle and human female. Human-size, harpies have the legs and talon-tipped feet of eagles, and wings instead of arms. Clawlike hands extend from the tips of their wings. Harpies are social creatures, living in groups in large wilderness areas, feeding on demon prey species. When females reach maturity at the age of one hundred, they can take human form once every ten years to mate with a human male. She will then lay a single egg, which will hatch two years later. The eggs, believed to impart immortality if eaten, are highly prized by some demon species, and have become a black market commodity.

**Ufelskala score: 1**

**Hell stallion and hell mare**—Black, horselike creatures the size of Clydesdales. These demon equines are carnivores that spit fire and kill with razor-sharp hooves. Few species can tame and ride hell stallions and mares, but once these horses give their loyalty, it is given for life. **Ufelskala**

**score: 2**

**Hellhound**—The size of a buffalo, hellhounds are massive black canines with paws the size of dinner plates, glowing red eyes, and a mouthful of bloody teeth. Unlike Earthbound canines, hellhounds have catlike retractable claws, which they use to devastating effect. Their main method of killing involves first raping their prey, and then disemboweling it and feasting while it still lives. Notoriously hard to control, hellhounds must be handled only by a professional—hellhounds are known to turn on their handlers with terrifying frequency. **Ufelskala score: 3**

**Huldrofox**—A seasonal and social demon that emerges from Sheoul in the fall to raid farmers' fields ready to harvest. They especially enjoy gourds. They are a fragile, nonviolent breed, but with six-inch fangs and clawed hands and feet, they are capable of defending themselves when necessary, and are extremely protective of their young, flossa, which emerge from eggs after six months.

**Ufelskala score: 1**

**Imp**—Around three feet tall, these demons are the worker ants of the underworld. By far the most common demons, they are treated more like beasts of burden than equals. They are thin, hunched over, with big heads and eyes that are disproportionately large for their faces. They eat anything they can put into their mouths. They breed like rats, giving birth to litters of four to eight young, most of which will not survive to adulthood, as they were considered a prey species by many demons.

Harmless to humans. **Ufelskala score: 1**

**Isfet**—An unusual race of demons, all of whom are enslaved by the Neethul. A tall, thin species with unusually large eyes and long fingers, their skin changes color in reaction to their environment. They are unique in that they are incapable of learning the complexities of any language but theirs, and no one can speak their language fluently. **Ufelskala score: 1**

**Judicia**—Justice demons. Humanoid in appearance, with dark hair, green skin, and white antlers. Males always wear long beards. Females shave theirs. Some justice demons work within the Sheoul penal complex. Others are summoned by private individuals or species and breed councils for matters of justice. Justice demons possess the power of mind to inflict painful punishment as they see fit. **Ufelskala score: 1**

**Khilesh devil**—Looking like a cross between an alligator and a gorilla, this predatory species hunts in packs, often killing more than necessary. Their favorite food is Umber young, but they will kill any helpless demon unlucky enough to cross their paths. Khilesh devils live in Sheoul, but usually hunt in forests aboveground. **Ufelskala score: 3**

**Khnive**—Summoned demon tracker bound by its master to do his bidding until the spell times out. They smell strongly of decay, and resemble giant, skinless opossums. When not being forced to track, khnives roam Sheoul in packs, scavenging for other species' leftover kills. **Ufelskala score: 1**

**Lava beast**—Elephant-size demons that live within volcanoes. They are the only known species that can survive exposure to hot lava. Orange-red and black in color, they can blend into cooling lava flows. Thought to be the physical incarnation of evil humans killed in natural disasters, lava beasts feed on the negative energy produced by a volcano's destruction. **Ufelskala score: 3**

**Leonine beast**—Believed to be the first demons created as a cross between humans and animals. Some demon scholars are certain leonine beasts are the result of a failed attempt at creating lion shapeshifters. Whatever their origins, they resemble lions, but are capable of walking upright. None exist in the wild—these creatures are kept only as pets by the most wealthy and powerful demon

lords. **Ufelskala score: 2**

**Mamu**—An Australian desert-dwelling species of man-eating, shapeshifting demon. These tall, pointy-headed ugly demons hunt for solitary humans. They can disguise themselves in many forms, from animal, human or inanimate object. Crude clubs are their weapons of choice. **Ufelskala score: 5**

**Mara**—Humanoid demons that can reside in either the human or demon realm. Voracious carnivores, these demons are responsible for negatively impacting the human realm's animal population through massive poaching. When threatened or hunting, they sprout an extra set of sharp teeth, and their jaws unhinge for greater bite damage. Each Mara is a carrier of a disease unique to that individual... which means that the antidote resides with him as well. **Ufelskala score: 4**

**Moraki**—Spiderlike demons the size of a small car. Their bodies consist entirely of bone and teeth, and the clacking noise they make is said to drive some demons mad. Their bones are coveted as weapons—a club made from a Moraki's leg can fetch top dollar at any demon market. Being struck by a Moraki-bone weapon renders most victims temporarily confused to the point that they will attack their own allies in battle. **Ufelskala score: 3**

**Nebulous demon**—These rare, malevolent spirits suck souls out of humans. They are shapeless, appearing as patches of fog or steam. Some breeds take only the souls of those who are comatose, while others prey mostly on children, the mentally ill, and the elderly, leaving them alive, but with no sense of right and wrong. The human souls are stored within the demon, providing it energy for as long as the human body lives. The souls can only be freed by killing the demon. **Ufelskala score: 4**

**Neethulum**—An extremely intelligent and cruel race who breed, raise, train, and sell other species as slaves and food. Their uncommon beauty has given rise to the rumor that they are descended from fallen angels. They reside wherever they want to within the vast confines of Sheoul. **Ufelskala score: 5**

**Nightlash**—Humanoid, with clawed feet and sharp teeth. Very tall, often topping seven feet. They will eat anything they can catch, and they hunt in family packs, mainly because they are all inbred. There are no social taboos with these demons. They reside only in Sheoul, usually the colder regions, but they consider all of Earth their hunting ground. **Ufelskala score: 4**

**Null**—The rarest of demons, void of life and souls. They exist as shadowy creatures with gaping maws and jagged teeth. Often bound to demon holy places, there is no known weapon against them. **Ufelskala score: 4**

**Obhirrat**—Among the most hideous, vile demons in existence. At around seven and a half feet tall, these snouted beasts have foot-long claws they click together when agitated, beady, red eyes, snakelike tongues. Their skin is transparent, revealing their primary means of defense: flesh-eating maggots that squirm constantly beneath the skin. Few can look upon an obhirrat without becoming nauseous. **Ufelskala score: 3**

**Oni**—These rather stupid demons are troublemakers. The party animals of the underworld, they eat, drink, and have sex to excess. Onis may live in the human realm or the demon one, but they are always present at the sites of natural disasters, and they love to hang out in places where diseases reach epidemic proportions. Ranging in size from half that of a human to three times the size, they also vary in color, from pale peach to bright pink to blue. Their three fingers and toes on each hand and foot end in sharp talons. They boast three eyes, a flat face, and a gaping mouth full of fangs.

**Ufelskala score: 3**

**Ramreel**—Rumored to have been created from human and goat stock, these burly, small-eyed demons with curled horns tend to make their living by hiring themselves out as guards. As small kids, they train with blade weapons, giving them a head start in the crowded but lucrative security market.

**Ufelskala score: 2**

**Rusalka**—Freshwater species that can shapeshift into fishes and frogs. Rusalkas are female, pale green in color, with green hair. They are perpetually lonely, and they lure human men into the water to mate with them. Unfortunately, their partners always drown after they give up their seed, leaving the Rusalkas lonely once more—that is, until their eggs hatch nine months later. Despite the fact that they always kill their partners, Rusalkas are not evil; they never intend to drown their partners, and they always forget that it happened, so they can't learn from their mistakes. **Ufelskala score: 1**

**Seminus**—A rare, specialized breed of incubi. Members of the breed are exclusively male, with the exception of a half-breed named Sin, who is the only known female Seminus. As a ter'taceo species, they appear human. As incubi, they are always attractive, and their sexual pheromones can loosen up even the most prickly females. At one hundred years old, Seminus demons gain the ability to shapeshift and impregnate females of other species through a maturation process called s'genesis, which also causes them to lose any sense of compassion and rationality unless they are bonded to a life mate. Because individual Seminus demons are raised by different species, their Ufelskala scores vary wildly. **Ufelskala score: Varies**

**Sensor**—Ter'taceo demons who live and work with humans in order to seek out and destroy the infant half-breed offspring of humans and demons. Though their natural form is humanoid, their skin begins to deteriorate after too much time in the human realm. They must return to Sheoul every six months to endure a two-week regeneration ritual. **Ufelskala score: 2**

**Shapeshifter**—Shapeshifters (as their own distinct species, as opposed to a demon who can shift his shape) are human-animal hybrids and differ from weres in two main ways: 1) Shapeshifters turn into true animals, not human-beasts; 2) Shapeshifters can shift at will and are not affected by the full moon. All true shifters have a telltale birthmark, a red, star-shaped mole behind the left ear. According to the Daemonica, the demon bible, shapeshifters, like turned weres and vampires, have human souls. **Ufelskala score: Varies**

**Silas demon**—The mercenaries of the underworld. These pale white, eyeless demons live in Sheoul, in large communities where no other species is allowed. They sell their war services to the highest bidders as groups, not individuals, and they will destroy anything and anyone they are paid to kill. Their clothing is made entirely of the hides and skins of their victims. **Ufelskala score: 4**

**Skullboar**—Named because this carnivorous piglike creature's head resembles a skull covered by only a thin layer of gray skin, the skullboar is a favorite game animal in the soggy forests of Sheoul. Its body is protected by inch-long quills that, if used as weapons, will burrow deeply into the victim's flesh until they reach a vital organ. Killing and dressing these creatures requires skill—and protective armor. Tastes like chicken! **Ufelskala score: 1**

**Slogthu**—Apelike demons with long, tufted ears. They often have exaggerated underbites, overgrown lower fangs, and patchy fur. A cold-weather species, they live high up in mountains or in icy regions of Sheoul. They are extremely dexterous, famous for their finely woven garments and rugs.

Omnivores, they prefer their meat cooked. **Ufelskala score: 1**

**Sora**—Red-skinned, attractive, black hair and tiny black or white horns that change shade with their

mood. Often described as looking like cartoon devils. Very sexual beings, they rarely form pair-bonds and usually have multiple partners composed of several species, though they can only breed with their own kind. **Ufelskala score: 1**

**Soulshredder**—Both feared and respected throughout Sheoul, Soulshredders are vicious even by demon standards. They feed off pain, misery, and terror. They rarely kill outright, instead spending years, even decades, haunting and torturing their victims. They resemble skinned gargoyles, with membrane-thin wings, serrated talons on red, scaly paws, and barbed penises. **Ufelskala score: 5**

**Spiny hellrat**—Similar in size to muskrats, these scavengers populate Sheoul by the millions. Supposedly tasty, they are considered by many demons to be food only “poor demon trash” would eat. Their spines, about as long and thick as a hedgehog’s, are venomous, as is their bite. **Ufelskala score: 1**

**Trillah**—A sleek, catlike species. Tall, toned, and graceful, they have bronze skin in the summer and a velvety coat of golden fur in the winter. One of the few non-ter’taceo species visible at all times to humans, they were forced into Sheoul when the human population grew too large for Trillahs to remain out in the open. Though Trillahs are not evil, they resent mankind for their banishment to Sheoul. **Ufelskala score: 1**

**Umbur**—Humanoid bodies with gray skin, charcoal hair, and gunmetal eyes. Very gentle, cave-dwelling species. They are good judges of character, having a natural ability to sense evil and good inside someone, and depending on their level of skill, Umbers can lessen or even remove the darkness-guilt that weighs an individual down. **Ufelskala score: 1**

**Vampire**—It is believed that vampires were created from fallen angels. Any vampire may turn a human into a vampire, but after a population explosion in the Dark Ages, followed by a vampire civil war, the Vampire Council was formed, and rules were created to regulate not only turnings, but behavior in general. Many of the popular vampire legends are true, but vampires do not believe that their souls are doomed. They live with the belief that if they willingly walk into the morning sun, their souls will be carried to Heaven for judgment before God. However, any vampire killed in any other manner is doomed to suffer eternal torment in Sheoul-gra. **Ufelskala score: Varies**

- **Subspecies: Daywalker**—The existence of vampires who can walk in the daylight has not been confirmed, but reports of these vampires have been increasing, most notably since Pestilence’s Seal broke. RUMOR ONLY.

**Vapor wraith**—Ghostlike demons whose origins and habitats are unknown. They are never seen except when bound by a spell to an object, usually Harrowgates. Their height can vary from twelve feet tall to fifty feet and they have a mouthful of shark-sharp teeth and claws that can grow up to seven feet in length. **Ufelskala score: 3**

**Viper ghoul**—Ill-tempered, nasty, man-size reptile that resembles a cobra that has been dead for a month. Viper ghouls are easily controlled by sorcery, and are often summoned by humans who play with black magic without fully grasping its power. The results can be deadly. **Ufelskala score: 2**

**Were-beasts**—Weres are humans who shift only during the three nights of the full moon. They turn into large, two-legged, furry beasts with both human and animal features. Only a few species of were-creatures are known to exist: werewolves (who call themselves wargs) werebears, and wereleopards, though werewolves are the most common. There are two classes of were-beasts; those who are born weres, and those who are turned after being bitten. Born weres, especially wolves, tend to live in packs, while turned weres usually lead solitary existences. There are rumors

of a rare breed of werewolves called feast wargs, who change during the new moon instead of the full moon. It's said that feast wargs were bred by demons to hunt regular wargs. **Ufelskala score: Varies**

## [Q&A with Larissa](#)

I love getting questions from readers, so when I decided to put together this compendium, I asked my readers what they wanted to know. Here are some of the questions I get asked the most, as well as a couple of curveballs!

### **What was the hardest book to write and why?**

That would be a tie between *Ecstasy Unveiled* and *Lethal Rider*. *Ecstasy Unveiled* got off on the wrong foot and required a complete rewrite, so that was definitely a difficult book to write (and write again). Plus, I had to do much of the work during a move from Virginia to Wisconsin. My husband drove while I sat in the passenger seat with the laptop! *Lethal Rider* put me through the wringer in part because, with so many ends to tie up and there was so much going on in the book, and in part because I had a very difficult relationship between the hero and heroine to deal with.

### **How often do you change your hair color? Do you have a hobby or interest not related to books or animals?**

I change my hair color whenever I get bored. Which is a lot! As far as my hobbies, I love role-playing video games of the *Dungeons & Dragons* sort. I also like to bowl, watch movies, and camp (as long as my husband does all of the work, like cooking). Oh, and I love to travel! Hubby and I are planning a month-long European vacation after he retires from the Coast Guard. I can't wait!

### **How did you come up with the Demonica and Horsemen symbols?**

The Demonica symbol came about because I wanted something similar to the medical caduceus that's familiar to people worldwide. But since the symbol would be used for an underworld hospital, I needed it to be a little more... sinister. Enter author Amy Knupp and her fabulous husband, Justin. He designed the caduceus according to my specs, and voilà, we had a symbol! For the Horsemen symbol, I went to my husband, who, besides being an officer in the U.S. Coast Guard, is a talented artist with publishing credits of his own. He based each of the four horse heads on each of the Horsemen, and though the design was simplified for publication purposes, it still made it onto the covers. I'm very proud of him!

### **Would you consider writing a book featuring the Demonica kids as they grow into teens?**

Tempting, very tempting! Actually, I have thought about how it could be done... writing books for them when they become adults. Right now, it's just in the processing center of my brain because I need some time away from them (they're still babies to me) but you never know!

### **What is your favorite book you've written?**

Ooh, it's a three-way tie here! I adored writing *Unleashing the Storm*, my Sydney Croft (with author Stephanie Tyler) alter ego. When authors say that a book "writes itself," I used to scoff. (And maybe curse them a little.) But *Unleashing the Storm* really did write itself. I can't believe how fast we wrote it and how well it came together. The other two favorites are *Passion Unleashed* and

Rogue Rider. They were just really easy to write. I've discovered that writing men who are scoundrels creates a very pleasant author experience!

**Which of your female leads is your favorite? Who is your favorite heroine and why?**

Hard question, because I genuinely love all my heroines when I'm writing them, though some are easier to write than others. Kira from *Unleashing the Storm* is a favorite because she's such an animal lover, and I also love Sin and Limos a lot. I've found it interesting that those two heroines (plus Tayla) who I loved writing the most, are the ones that many readers like the least!

**What is your all-time favorite book and why?**

EEK! This is a hard question, but after much consideration, I'm going to go with *The Eye of the World* by Robert Jordan. It's genius. Dark and scary, and yet fantastical and fun. The entire *Wheel of Time* series is amazing, and I re-read it every time a new one comes out. I love it so much that I've had to buy *The Eye of the World* several times because I keep loaning it out and never getting it back!

**I'm curious about your writing process. Do you write the main plot points down first and then go back and fill in between, or do you usually write a book straight through, start to finish?**

Sometimes I think I'm the only author in the world without a process. I really don't have one. I write every book using a different process. In general, I write the scenes in my head that are calling to me, and then I fill in around them. I start out with an outline, but I'm terrible at plotting, and the book never turns out like the outline says it should!

**How do you handle criticism of your work?**

I'll be honest... it's not always easy. It was worse in the beginning, but thankfully I've developed a thicker skin. In the past, a bad review would paralyze me for days. Now I'm over it in a couple of hours, if that. Unless the review is special in some way—sent to me with the intent of hurting my feelings/is a personal attack/is from a reader who has previously loved the other books but is now disappointed (I hate disappointing readers!), et cetera. But for the most part, I cope by not reading them. As a new author, I read all the Amazon reviews, all the blog reviews, I pored through Goodreads... yeah, not healthy at all. Lesson learned, and for my own mental health, I stay away now!

**Even the animals in your stories have strong personalities. Why is that?**

Because I've never met an animal that didn't have a unique, strong personality. I grew up on a farm, and I learned that even animals like cows and chickens are individuals in their own ways. People think a cow is a cow is a cow, but the more time I spent with them, the more I saw the personality differences in each one. And in many ways, what I learned growing up on a farm helped me understand the demons in my *Demonica* world better. Just as humans tend to see cows as just cows, so do demons see humans as just humans—to many demons, we not only all look alike, but we act alike.

**What inspired you to write about alpha demons and give them the noble, loving personalities and sex appeal that we all drool over? Most writers make them a bunch of nasty beasts.**



### **Why did you choose a different route?**

I went a different route for exactly the reason you just mentioned: because most writers make them a bunch of nasty beasts. Yep, I wanted to do something different. Of course, I was a little behind the curve, because by the time *Pleasure Unbound* came out, there were these other amazing authors, like Gena Showalter and Kresley Cole, writing these loving, cuddly demons. Okay, “cuddly” is probably more accurately stated as “hot as hell,” but you know what I mean!

### **How do you come up with the types of demons from your series? Their names and the way they look? Are they from your imagination?**

I’d say that 40 percent come from mythology—demons from various cultural and religious backgrounds. The rest are from my imagination. My scary, scary imagination...

### **How do you go about picking, or making up names for your characters and is there a meaning, or purpose behind the names you choose for them?**

The names I choose for the main characters usually have some sort of meaning or purpose. When the names aren’t made up, there’s generally something behind them that makes them special. For example, Eidolon, Shade, and Wraith are all linked by the fact that their names are real terms that identify some sort of ghost or spirit. I tend to do a ton of research when it comes to names, demon species, and terms like Maleconcio, which is an organization representing every demon species... basically, the U.N. of the demon world. The word combines *malus* (Old French *mal* based on Latin for “bad”) with *concio* (Latin for “incite, assemble”). I’m very picky when inventing a term or name, and although they may be made up, they must still have a basis in something, be it a language like Latin, a place, or a historical event.

### **Are you ever going to make the Demonica series into a movie or TV show?**

I would love that! Unfortunately, I don’t have the resources. It takes a Hollywood-type person to express interest in order to get something like that going.

### **How can I find out about appearances and book signings?**

You can check my website. I list all upcoming events in the right sidebar of my blog at [LarissaLone.com/Blog/Blog-Home](http://LarissaLone.com/Blog/Blog-Home).

### **Will Sin and Con finally bond the way male Seminus demons do, and will they have kids?**

Sin isn’t even sure she can bond the same way male Sems do, but she and Con might try someday. Right now, after being enslaved by and bonded to others for so long, she and Con are both content to take things slow, which includes having kids. When and if these things happen, I’ll be sure to write scenes for inclusion in *Demonica: Overkill*, which is where I update readers on the lives of the *Demonica* cast and crew: [LarissaLone.com/Blog/Books/Demonica-Overkill](http://LarissaLone.com/Blog/Books/Demonica-Overkill)

### **Will the Sem brothers come through for Lore and Idess as sperm donors, and how will that be possible?**

Yes! And I even know whose little sperm is going to be the winner! As for how it would be possible, given that Seminus demons not only must have a partner to climax, but once mated, they can only be with that partner, well, let’s just say that our boys and their mates will have to be a

little... creative in collecting the samples. And if all else fails, there are always medical methods.

### **Where do you get your ideas?**

Everywhere! Sometimes things just pop into my head. Other times they'll come from the news or from a movie or book or TV documentary. For example, the Demonica series came to me when I was watching an episode of Angel, and Angel got hurt. He needed a hospital, but as a vampire, he couldn't just head to the nearest emergency room. Clearly, there was a need for an underworld hospital, and UGH was born!

### **What's next after the last Lords of Deliverance book?**

After Reseph's book, we're heading back to the Demonica world. Rogue Rider will kick off a book for Reaver, which I'm super excited about. For updates about what's coming next, please feel free to sign up for my newsletter at [Larissalone.com/Blog/News](http://Larissalone.com/Blog/News).

# The Legend

So this is what the legend, immortalized through thousands of years of storytelling, says about the origins of the Four Horsemen:

Her name was Lilith, and she was an evil succubus. His name was Yenrieth, and he was a good angel.

After hundreds of years of seducing humans, Lilith got bored. So she set her sights on Yenrieth, the ultimate challenge. He resisted. She pursued. He resisted some more. This went on for decades, until the inevitable happened. She was, after all, beautiful, and he liked his wine a little too much.

No one knows what happened to Yenrieth after their night of passion, but nine months later, Lilith gave birth to four children, three boys and a girl. She named them Reseph, Ares, Limos, and Thanatos. Lilith kept the girl, Limos, with her in Sheoul, and she planted the males in the human world, switching them out with the infants of wealthy, powerful families.

The boys grew into men, never suspecting the truth about their origins. At least, not until demons rose up, spreading terror and seeking to use Lilith's sons against the humans. Limos escaped from Sheoul, found her brothers, and revealed the truth about their parentage.

By this time, the brothers had seen their lands and families destroyed by demons and, blinded by hatred and the need for revenge, Lilith's children encouraged (manipulatively and forcibly, sometimes) humans to help them fight violent, never-ending battles against the underworld abominations.

This didn't go over well in the heavenly realm.

Zachariel, an Angel of the Apocalypse, led a legion of angels to Earth, where they met in battle with demon hordes. When the earth and waters ran red with blood, and humans could no longer survive on the poisoned land, Zachariel struck a deal with the devil.

Lilith's children were to be punished for slinging mankind to the brink of doom in their selfish bid for revenge. Because they had nearly brought about the end of days, they were charged as the keepers of Armageddon. Defenders or instigators; the choice would fall on their shoulders.

Each of them was given a Seal, and with each Seal came two prophecies. Should they protect their Seals from breaking until the prophecy laid out by the Bible came to pass, they would save their souls—and mankind.

But should they allow the Seals to be broken prematurely, as written in the Daemonica, the demon bible, they would turn evil, and would forever be known by the names Pestilence, War, Famine, and Death.

And thus were born the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

Awesome, right? Lilith was bored... humans are so vanilla... and Yenrieth resisted for centuries

until she caught him one night all shitfaced on some crappy wine. Well, not so fast. Read on, dear reader, because here's what really happened...

# Eternal Damnation

Lilith was horny.

As a succubus, horny was her default state, but there had been something different about her level of need lately. She'd been edgy, achy, and oddly picky about her partners. She'd shunned females, ugly males, and any male with fur. Or scales.

Well, scales had always been a deal-breaker anyway.

Now she found herself seeking specific qualities in a male. She wanted beauty. Ruthlessness. And wings. Definitely wings.

She shivered in lustful anticipation. She loved wings. Leather ones, feathery ones, even the ones that were nothing but skeletal frames. A good, strong set of wings on a male stirred her like nothing else, except maybe a huge cock.

So that was how she found herself perched on a boulder and covertly watching an angel bathe in a sparkling crystal pool.

The male was... magnificent. He'd disappeared below the surface a few seconds ago, and she held her breath as she waited, her body tightening, her tongue dry. The waterfall on the far side of the pool churned the water into a froth and when he surfaced, the bubbles swirled around him, caressing his perfect skin and driving her mad with envy.

He rose up out of the water like a god, his flaxen mane cascading over the broad expanse of his shoulders, glistening water droplets streaming in the valleys between slabs of thick muscle. His thick arms flexed as he looked up at the heavens and slicked back his hair. When his tongue flicked out to catch a shimmering bead of water on his lower lip, Lilith breathlessly licked her own lips.

Closing his eyes, he turned his face to the sun, which bathed him in a golden glow. And then, to her utter wet-between-the-legs joy, he flared his wings high. They were as white and flawless as virgin snow, spanning wider than he was tall. They hadn't developed color yet, which meant he was young. Virile. Full of stamina.

Now if he would just move to the shallow end of the pool, she could see what he had going on below his trim waist.

Not that she hadn't already seen it. This was the third day in a row she'd spied on Yenrieth, and today, she'd decided, would be the day she approached him. Today was the first time he'd been here without the female angel who doted on him like a groveling cur. Yenrieth seemed to be oblivious, but to Lilith it was blatantly clear that the stupid bitch was both in lust and in love with him. She was just too shy or uppity or just plain daft to do anything about it.

Lilith wasn't any of those things, and she was definitely going to do something about it. No, not the love part. The sex part. Yenrieth didn't know it yet, but he was going to help her relieve the deep-down ache that had been driving her mad.

Oh, yes, this demon was going to finally get a little angel in her.

Someone was watching him.

Yenrieth grinned as he eased toward the shore, moving slowly to give whoever was watching a show they wouldn't soon forget. Verrine would cluck her tongue at him and tell him he was too vain for his own good.

That was probably true.

He looked around for his fellow angel, wondering where she was. They'd been assigned the most tedious duty any angel could be given, and for two years they'd spent their nights patrolling the nearby forests for hellrats.

Hellrats.

The assignment was supposed to be some sort of training to teach them to develop their skills with holy fire. Hunting hellrats was fledgling work, and Yenrieth had progressed beyond that a decade ago. Unfortunately, his superiors didn't agree.

He strode up onto the bank and donned the plain white robe that was standard issue for all novice angels. As he slipped into his calfskin boots, a rustling from the forest caught his attention. He waited for a sense of evil to alert him about the nature of whatever was skittering through the underbrush, but nothing struck him as odd.

But then, sensing evil was Yenrieth's weakness, even though he didn't admit that to anyone. His skills with holy fire couldn't be topped, so did it matter if he was a few seconds slow when it came to identifying evil?

A gray shape flickered in his peripheral vision, and he whirled, catching sight of the spiny hellrat as it darted toward the pool for a drink. In a flap of an angel's wings Yenrieth summoned a hot stream of holy fire and turned the demon rodent into a pile of ashes.

"Impressive."

Yenrieth whirled, his hand burning in preparation for hurling another blast of fire at whoever had snuck up on him. Instead, when he saw the black-haired, violet-eyed female standing at the edge of the water, her curvy body wrapped in a sheer purple sheath, his palm cooled and his body heated.

He reached out with his angelic senses for a telltale vibration that would alert him to evil inside her, but he didn't get as much as a tingle. She must be human.

"Who are you?"

Her gaze dropped, taking a long, slow ride over his body before she met his eyes again. "I'm Lilith."

He had to tread carefully. He wasn't getting a malevolent vibe off her, but if she was human, she didn't seem to be particularly bothered by the fact that he'd just ashed a rat with fire from his hand. It was possible that she belonged to The Aegis, a ragtag group of humans who had recently banded together to fight demons. Or she could be some sort of priestess who practiced mystical arts.

Yenrieth was going to lay odds on the latter.

"You've been spying on me, Lilith." He returned the measuring look—measuring her for a hole in the ground if she was an enemy, or a bed if she wasn't. "Why?"

Lilith shrugged and padded on bare feet to the pool. "I find you to be... intriguing."

Casting a sultry look over her shoulder, she waded into the water. He swallowed a sudden lump in his throat as she went deeper, until tiny ripples were lapping at her chin. Her lustrous raven hair spread out on the water's surface, and when she started to emerge, it molded to her shoulders and back, draping her in a mantle of silk. Her purple wrap, now soaked, was completely transparent and skintight, revealing high, round breasts tipped with firm nipples, rolling abs, rounded, wide hips, and

a shadowy V between slim, endless legs.

“That wasn’t much of a swim,” he said, for lack of anything cleverer to say. This female had scrambled his brain.

“I needed to cool off,” she purred. “It has been far too hot for comfort.”

Yenrieth casually dropped his hand and shifted to hide his rebellious manhood.

She took her lower lip between her teeth, and he swore she undulated as if under a male, engaging in sensual foreplay. “What about you? Have you been... hot?”

Hot? He was on fire. Steam coursed through his veins instead of blood and his skin had practically melted to his muscles. With effort, he pushed aside his lust long enough to regard her with a critical, if not appreciative, eye. She was clearly a sexual woman, perhaps a kept consort for one of the local royals. Kept or... paid.

“Are you a whore?”

Her deep, throaty laughter rolled through him in another wave of lust. “Some may say so.” She smiled wryly. “But they don’t say it twice.” A breeze rustled the bushes near the spot where he’d incinerated the hellrat, and Lilith’s smile widened, as if she approved of what he’d done.

“How is it that you weren’t surprised by what you saw me do?”

One dainty shoulder rolled in a shrug. “I have bedded men who have shown me many things.”

A vague answer, but one that made sense. She very well could have bedded someone versed in magic, or an Aegis warrior, or even a demon.

He nearly curled his lip at the thought of bedding a vile spawn of Sheoul. Not only was sex with a demon a violation of heavenly law, but there were always consequences. No, as an angel, he was required to limit his intimate play to angels and humans, and even then, there were strict rules.

“Are you married?” he asked, and once again, she laughed.

“Never.” She moved toward him, her hips swaying hypnotically. “Do you want me?”

More than he’d ever wanted anything. “No.”

“Truly,” she murmured, reaching out to trail her finger along his jaw and down his neck. Pleasure blazed along the path she drew. “Then I’ll leave you with this.”

She went up on her toes, and without thinking, he dipped his head to meet her welcoming mouth. In an instant, the fire inside him turned into an inferno, scorching him. This female was lightning wrapped in shimmering skin.

He dragged in a ragged breath, taking in her scent, seeking a sign that she might be fertile, because it was forbidden for an angel to breed with a human. But all he got was a rich, spicy aroma, as if a flower had bloomed in a field of cardamom.

Her lips were velvet against his, her tongue silk. She arched, pressing the length of her remarkable body into his. Her breasts flattened against his chest, her nipples rubbing, and he wondered how they’d taste. Her core met his hard staff, and he hissed at the contact. He felt her smile, and then she stepped back, breaking away from him so abruptly he nearly lost his balance.

Which only made sense, since this female had him off balance since she’d arrived.

“Farewell,” she murmured. “I’ll return on the morrow, if you’d care to join me.”

With that, she strolled into the forest, disappearing before he could so much as catch his breath.

Tomorrow. Maybe once his head cleared, he’d decide it was a bad idea to meet her, but right now he was wondering how to make the sun rise faster.

Lilith was in dire need of sex by the time she arrived at the shack she shared with her sister, Sabbet. She hated living in the human realm, but until a succubus of her species became pregnant, she couldn't make a proper home in Sheoul. And the bitch of it was that her species wasn't fertile until somewhere between their five hundredth and one thousandth year.

She found Sabbet midcoitus with a half-demon male who had serviced them for decades when they were too lazy to find a human male to fuck. Sabbet continued to ride the male, Ashan, who was on his back on her pallet, as Lilith entered the shack. The scent of sex drove Lilith mad with want, and she clenched her teeth against the desire to either shove Sabbet off the demon or go back to the pool to see if Yenrieth was still there.

She would do neither. Just a few days ago, she'd have spent hours with Ashan, but she was saving herself for Yenrieth.

Saving herself? She shook her head to clear it. Why in the name of all that was unholy would she save herself?

Frustrated, she snarled, kicking the demon as she strode past, seeking the flagon of wine they kept on their rickety wooden table. She drank deeply, hoping the liquid would ease the fever in her body. Yenrieth's kiss had stirred her into a frenzy, and it had taken more self-control than she'd ever needed to keep from palming his cock while they kissed. Visions of dropping to her knees and taking him in her mouth had filled her head. She took almost as much pleasure from watching a male come as she did from coming herself, and she instinctively knew that Yenrieth's climax would be nothing short of remarkable. His hard body would strain, and all that magnificent vitality and strength would be unleashed inside her.

Finally, the sounds of sex reached the peak, and a moment later, Sabbet joined Lilith at the table, wrapped in a sheer robe. Ashan dressed quickly and scurried out the door.

"Where have you been?" Sabbet asked.

"I was seducing an angel."

Sabbet went taut, her eyes narrowing into angry silver slits. "Yenrieth?"

Interesting. "Yes. Why?"

Sabbet's hiss sprayed droplets of spittle. "I want him for my heat."

"Your—" Lilith sucked in a breath.

Heat. Dear dark lord, that was what was wrong with her. It also explained why she'd walked away from him instead of pressuring him into copulation. A breeding succubus needed a male to be as worked up and fertile as possible when she took his seed.

Her fingers fluttered to her belly, which, if things went right, would soon be swollen with an angel's baby. And oh, giving birth to the offspring of an angel would take her far in Sheoul. She could use the child in so many ways to bring herself power and glory.

Smiling, she brought the clay flagon to her lips, but Sabbet knocked it away, spilling wine the color of blood down Lilith's chest.

"Stay away from him," Sabbet growled. "He's mine."

Fury twisted Lilith's heart, wringing out every drop of affection for her sister. Now was not the time to play fair. This was Lilith's future at stake, and the angel's passion would secure it.

Spinning, she grabbed one of the knives hanging on the wall and brought it down in the soft spot between Sabbet's neck and shoulder. Her sister screamed, then screamed louder when Lilith plunged the dagger into her abdomen. Sabbet staggered backward, tripping over her pallet and crumpling to



the ground. Lilith fell with her, stabbing over and over into her sister's belly, reveling in the grotesque, squishy sounds.

When her sister fell silent, Lilith stood, bathed in blood. Oh, how she'd love to get Yenrieth here to fuck in the slippery warmth. Not that he would. Angels, by all accounts, tended to be prissy.

Lilith licked the blade as she hovered over what was left of her sister. Oh, Sabbet would recover in time, but it would be a decade, at least, before her ruined womb could support a child. By then, her heat would have passed and she'd have to wait another couple of centuries for another. In the meantime, Lilith would become a force to be reckoned with, and Sabbet wouldn't dare challenge her once she arrived in Sheoul.

Oh, yes, Lilith had it all figured out. If all went according to plan, she would become a legend in Sheoul, practically godlike... perhaps she could even take a place next to the dark lord himself.

All she needed was Yenrieth. And tomorrow she would have him.

Yenrieth spent the longest day of his life in the forest hunting hellrats with Verrine. She'd noticed he'd been distracted, and she kept asking what had happened and if there was something she could do to help. How could he tell her that the only thing on his mind was wicked, raw sex with a woman who all but oozed sensuality?

No, Verrine, who hadn't yet been intimate with a man, would have no understanding of the pleasures of the body. He'd asked her once why she'd never bedded a male, not even during the maddening cycle of maturity when an angel grew his or her wings. Sex could hasten the painful process... or in the very least, take one's mind off it.

But Verrine had simply shrugged and said she was waiting for the right male. She was an angel of justice in training, so Yenrieth figured that maybe she saw consequences more clearly than others. Possible, he supposed, since, as a battle angel, he was much more prone to hard living, ruthlessness, and rash actions.

And true to his nature, he'd acted rashly and he'd kissed Verrine. Today. In the forest. He was still kicking himself for that. But when she'd touched his cheek with the greatest of care, asking him what was weighing so heavily on his mind, he couldn't tell her the truth. So he'd kissed her.

It had been the sweetest kiss he'd ever shared with anyone. For a few heartbeats, Verrine had wiped Lilith from his thoughts. The desire that had been coursing through his veins all night and into the morning had shifted into something less frantic but no less heated.

Then Verrine had torn away from him, her eyes wild, her entire being wrought with distress. Before he could apologize, she'd flashed away, leaving him feeling like a brutal clod. She'd been waiting for the right male to take her to bed... what if she'd been waiting for the right male for her first kiss too?

Ashamed, he thought about going after her, but he doubted she'd be receptive to his apology right now. Or ever.

Yenrieth cursed himself for a fool and flashed to the pool, needing a distraction. Lilith would be perfect for that.

Sure enough, the moment he caught sight of her, his rashness with Verrine melted away, leaving his focus narrowed on the naked female swimming with leisurely abandon. He remained at the edge of the clearing, his heart pounding in a nervous, erratic rhythm. He was never nervous, especially with

females, but this one left him dangerously off kilter.

Frankly, it pissed him off.

Lilith floated to the shallows and gracefully eased out of the water and onto the shore. As she walked toward a blanket spread in the lush grass farther up the bank, she squeezed her hair, creating a stream of water that trickled down her breasts. Yenrieth wanted to lick her dry.

Then lick her wet.

Droplets on her skin shimmered in the sunlight as she sank down on the blanket and poured a cup of wine from the vessel beside her. She brought the cup to her lips, and as she drank, she looked directly at him.

Caught.

His heart beat faster. Harder. The throbbing pulse went all the way to his sex. In an almost dreamlike state, he moved toward her, his gaze fixed on hers, his mouth practically watering in anticipation.

Smiling, Lilith shifted, letting her thighs fall open to reveal her smooth female flesh, the delicate pink center glistening. His body reacted to the sight, hardening and buzzing with every step.

"I wasn't sure you'd come," she said, patting the blanket.

"I wasn't sure I would."

Her knowing smile said she knew he was lying. "Sit."

Her command, softly spoken, brought him to a stop. He didn't like being ordered around, least of all by a human.

Again, she seemed to have intimate knowledge of his thoughts, and she reached out to him.

"Please. I meant no offense. I simply can't wait to have you next to me."

He took her hand, marveling at how soft it was, and allowed her to pull him down. Her remarkable eyes darkened, and he swore that for a moment her entire body did the same. She held the cup to his lips.

In a husky voice, she said, "Please. Take what is mine."

Yes. He already felt like he'd imbibed a barrel of wine as he allowed her to tip the cup up, spilling the sweet nectar into his mouth. A tiny rivulet dribbled down his chin, and she leaned forward to trace the stream with her tongue. He barely held in a moan as she followed the trail of wine to his lips, and then inside his mouth.

Unbidden, his hand came up to one of her breasts. That one touch undid him. In a powerful surge, he swept aside the wine flagon and cup and pushed Lilith onto her back. They both groaned as he covered her, her legs coming up to clench him around the waist. The next moments were a flurry of hands and tearing cloth, their desperation to get him as naked as she was all consuming.

Strange urges wracked him, desires to take her in ways he'd never indulged. Wicked, sinful ways. She knew, encouraged him. Time became a blur as he brought her to dozens of peaks, and somehow, he found the willpower to hold off his own climax. Or maybe he held off because she'd squeeze his sack at precisely the right moment, preventing his seed from spilling with only a touch and an odd trickle of heat from her palm.

"Not yet," she kept whispering.

This time, when she cupped his balls while he was buried in the heat of her mouth, he rebelled.

"Not again," he growled, pulling out and flipping her onto her back. Her eyes shot wide, and he resisted smiling at her dismay.

He mounted her, settling over her toned body, and when his shaft rubbed against her mound, she undulated, the raw hunger in her expression replacing her surprise at his defiance. As he dipped his head to suck a berry-red nipple into his mouth, he ground his hips, sliding the tip of his cock through her slit, drawing a cry from her sweet lips. He was so sensitized now that he had to pant through a near climax, because while he was so very ready, he would be inside her tight sheath when he spilled.

Pushing against her opening, he lifted his head to watch her as he slid slowly inside. He hissed as her inner walls clenched around him. Sweat broke out on his skin, and then she was tonguing his neck and tilting her pelvis to take him deep.

“Yes,” she breathed. “Give yourself to me.”

Surrounded by the rush of the waterfall and the rough slap of skin against skin, he pumped into her, the throbbing pressure in his shaft building beyond what he’d ever thought he could endure. White-hot pleasure seared him, and the sight of her full breasts bouncing with every thrust took him over the edge.

Ecstasy took him harder than anything he’d experienced before, penetrating to what felt like his very soul. He roared with the force of it, his seed filling her, flowing in a nonstop rush that made him dizzy. Lilith cried out in what sounded like a combination of pleasure and triumph, and suddenly, the bliss coursing through him morphed, tinged with an edge of darkness. Of shadow.

His head swam as he collapsed on top of her, dazed, a little confused by what had just happened. How could the best orgasm of his life turn into something that left him feeling not only exhausted, but... wrong?

Lilith pushed him aside, easily, as if he didn’t weigh twice as much as she did. Instead of being wrung dry, she seemed to be energized. Glowing.

Her smile was sensual but satisfied as she went to her feet, leaving him sprawled almost helplessly on the blanket.

“Thank you, Yenrieth,” she murmured. “Your angelic gift is going to take me far.”

Bewildered and still fuzzy, he watched her saunter away and disappear into the woods. And wait... Yenrieth? Angel? She’d known what he was?

Wobbling, he sat up. His palm came down on the spot where she’d been, and now that he was no longer vibrating with lust, a new vibration traveled up from his hand to his soul, a soul that seemed a little soiled now.

Demon. He was sensing a demon.

No. Oh, sweet Heaven, no.

Fury and anguish welled up from deep inside him. Lilith had seduced him, tricked him, used him. Sickened, he staggered to the pool, desperate to wash her touch from his skin.

He would never be able to wash her from the wreckage that was his soul.

As he scrubbed his body with an urgency that bordered on crazed, all he could think about was Verrine, and how right she’d been to run away. He was filth, and he wondered what the consequences of his actions would be... and who would pay the price.

Verrine spent several minutes vomiting, her heart aching. She knew Yenrieth wasn’t celibate—no battle angel was. Unlike some angels of other Orders who weren’t allowed to—or couldn’t—have

sex, sexual need seemed to be part of the battle angel genetic code.

But to see him with a... succubus... especially after the kiss he'd shared with her, had torn Verrine wide open.

Nausea twisted through her again, but she fought the urge to spill what little was left in her stomach. Maybe this was her fault for not telling him how she felt about him. Maybe she should have confessed that she'd wanted to feel a male's body against hers.

But not any male. She wanted Yenrieth to be the one to show her the wonders of making love.

And maybe she shouldn't have run away from him like a frightened rabbit. She'd sent him straight into that female's arms.

She wanted to scream.

When she'd come upon the pair in the final throes of ecstasy, it had been horrifyingly clear that he didn't know the female he was releasing into was a demon. Damn him!

Verrine had warned him that his undeveloped ability to sense evil would get him into trouble if he didn't work on honing the talent. Instead, he concentrated on learning to fight and turning holy fire into a powerful weapon—all admirable undertakings, but he'd neglected to develop other important skills.

And because he was a male, his reproductive instincts were blocked by a succubus's charm, and he'd missed the most crucial fact about the demon: She had been fertile.

Trembling fiercely, Verrine had followed the demon to a Harrowgate, and just before the succubus stepped inside, Verrine had gotten close enough to feel her life force... and the four angelic life forces inside her.

The succubus was pregnant.

Verrine collapsed onto the ground, closing her eyes to the horrible reality. No one could learn about this. Yenrieth's punishment would be severe, and Verrine loved him too much to let that happen.

She also loved him too much to tell him about the succubus's pregnancy. Not now, while he was still a novice. She knew him well enough to know he'd scour Sheoul to find the female, and as a novice, he wouldn't survive down there for an hour.

No, this was something she'd keep to herself. He might wonder what, exactly, the demon had stolen from him—succubi stole lives, souls, energy, and seed, often a combination of any of those—but with any luck, he'd believe energy alone had been her goal. After all, he was still alive, and he'd have changed if she'd stolen his soul. The seed... well, Verrine would just have to pray he was so drained from the sex that he'd believe the succubus had been after nothing more than the power she'd gain from his angelic life force.

Oh, Verrine would tell him the truth, but not yet. When, she didn't know. What she did know was that she would move Heaven and Earth herself to find his children. She would make sure they were safe.

"Yenrieth," she whispered. "I swear upon my heart that I will protect your children if I have to go to hell to do it."

Somewhere nearby, thunder rolled, as if the heavens had heard her oath.

Inside, her stomach rolled, because somehow she understood that both she and Yenrieth had just been set on a course that would change their lives forever.

## About Larissa Ione

Air Force veteran Larissa Ione traded in a career as a meteorologist to pursue her passion of writing. She now spends her days in pajamas with her computer, strong coffee, and supernatural worlds. She believes in celebrating everything, and would never be caught without a bottle of Champagne chilling in the fridge... just in case. She currently lives in Wisconsin with her U.S. Coast Guard husband, her teenage son, a rescue cat named Vegas, and her very own hellhound, a King Shepherd named Hexe.

You can learn more about Larissa and her books by visiting her website at [www.LarissaIone.com](http://www.LarissaIone.com).

You can also find Larissa on various social media sites:

[www.Facebook.com/OfficialLarissaIone](https://www.facebook.com/OfficialLarissaIone)

[www.Twitter.com/LarissaIone](https://www.twitter.com/LarissaIone)

[www.Pinterest.com/LarissaIone](https://www.pinterest.com/LarissaIone) (Here you can check out Larissa's Novel Inspiration/Research board, which contains pictures of various demons, sketches of items found in her Demonica world, and photos of settings used in her books, including the crystal cave described in Immortal Rider!)

**Unless she can touch his heart, this Horseman may be the death of everyone...**

Please see the next page for a preview of

**[Lethal Rider](#)**

Available May 22, 2012

Regan Matthews was going to die.

She knew it as sure as she knew the sky was blue. Knew it as sure as she knew the baby inside her was a boy.

Knew it as sure as she knew the baby's father would be the one to end her life.

Screaming, she bolted upright in bed, her eyes focusing on the glow of the nightlight in the bathroom. It took a second to realize she was awake, safe and secure inside The Aegis's Berlin headquarters.

The dream had come to her again, the one where she saw herself lying on a floor and covered in her own blood, too much blood. Thanatos, known to much of the human population as Death, fourth Horseman of the Apocalypse, knelt next to her, blood coating his hands, dripping from his pale hair, and splashed across his bone armor.

She took a deep, calming breath, forcing herself to relax. Thanatos couldn't touch her. Not here, in the apartment complex deep below the headquarters building that housed the twelve Elders who ran the ancient demon-hunting organization. Most of the Elders used their apartments only when they came to Germany for Aegis business, but Regan had called this spartan apartment home for years, and despite the fact that she was due to give birth in less than a month, she hadn't done a single thing to prepare for the baby. There would be no decorating, no toys, no cribs.

She'd always hated pastels anyway.

Her hand, so pregnancy-swollen that she no longer wore her Sigil ring, trembled as she rubbed her belly through the cotton fabric of the maternity nightgown, hoping the baby would stay asleep. He was one hell of a kicker, and her organs were still recovering from his last round of hacky sack.

Regan fumbled in the darkness for the bedside table lamp. Her hand fell first to the hellhound-spit coated Aegis dagger all twelve Elders were required to carry as defense against evil Horsemen, and then to the bit of parchment next to the lamp. She allowed herself a moment to smooth her fingers over the inked lettering. The Latin words were a prayer of sorts, but that wasn't where Regan found comfort.

No, as a psychometric empath, she could divine information with a touch or, more specifically, feel the emotions of the person who put ink to skin. This particular bit of writing had been penned while the author was feeling serene. Regan had kept the page with her for years, borrowing the emotions of the author like some sort of psychic vampire, and she'd needed it more than ever over these last few months.

With one Horseman turned evil, his Seal broken according to the prophecy in the Daemonica, the demon bible, Earth was falling into chaos. No Apocalypse promised a party, but Regan often wondered why they couldn't be dealing with the Bible's prophecy instead. At least in the biblical version, the Horsemen would be fighting on the side of good instead of evil.

But that was only part of why she'd needed the parchment. Her regret over what she'd done to

Thanatos ate at her, and while she didn't deserve anything less, for the baby's sake she had to find peace where she could.

She allowed the parchment to soothe her for another thirty seconds, thankful to have it. The final page from a tiny book penned by an angel who had given her life to save a Guardian, it was beyond priceless. Regan's fellow Elders had been after Regan to give it up for years, but they'd have to wait. She wasn't giving it up until she was dead.

Which might be sooner than she'd like, if Thanatos got hold of her.

She lifted her fingers from the parchment, but before she found the lamp switch, a noise froze her. It wasn't a loud sound, and in fact she thought the echo of footsteps might be in her head. But what she couldn't dismiss was the trickle of awareness that filtered through her system, an internal alarm that made no sense.

No place on Earth was safer than where she was right now.

Still, she found herself fisting her dagger and easing out of bed. Heart pounding, she crept across the room and put her ear to the door. Nothing. So why was her entire body quivering with static undercurrents that warned of danger?

You're just being paranoid. The nightmare about Thanatos must have freaked her out more than usual.

But it couldn't hurt to check things out. Her Guardian instincts had never failed her, and she'd known more than one Guardian who had paid the price of ignoring that deep-down sense that something was amiss.

As quickly and silently as possible, she tugged on a maternity blouse and a pair of khaki pants, and at her hip she secured her pregnancy-modified weapon belt and cell phone clip. She didn't go anywhere without being armed. She traded out the dagger with a stang, preferring the double-ended, S-shaped blade in battle.

Clutching the stang in a white-knuckled grip, she opened the door and slipped out into the hallway. The darkness, usually her friend, now became a liability without her Aegis ring, which would have lent a measure of night vision.

Regan put her back to the wall and moved toward the light switch outlined in a faint green glow. But when she flipped it, nothing happened.

"Just a burned-out bulb," she whispered to herself. She even said it again, but a niggling sense of doubt joined the feelings of danger.

She glanced back toward her room, wondering if her smartest option was to go back inside and lock the door, but duh... anything that was a threat to her inside Aegis Headquarters wasn't going to be stopped by even a thick slab of wood and a deadbolt.

Besides, she had a secret weapon, one she'd been forbidden to use—unless the baby's life was in danger.

She crept forward, the hairs on the back of her neck prickling with every step.

"Who's there?" There was no answer, but then, no demon would happily offer up his name.

The baby had clearly turned her brain to mush, and she'd become a classic horror movie dipshit who got killed in the first five minutes of the film. Awesome.

She thought she saw a flicker of movement ahead, near the entrance to the auditorium. Where was everyone? Even in the middle of the night, Guardians patrolled the building or spent shifts researching in the massive library or organizing worldwide operations. This was The Aegis's nerve center, and it



was never this quiet.

She moved closer, and as she reached for the door, her foot slipped in something warm and wet. Her stomach did a flip-flop. She didn't have to look to know she'd stepped in blood, didn't need lights to know that the dark lump against the wall was a body.

Not good. This was so not good.

Something rustled behind her. Instinct kicked in, propelling her forward through the auditorium doors. It was set up like a large college classroom, with several rows of stadium seats and two aisles of steps. She moved as fast as she could to the stage at the bottom. If she could get to the exit on the far side, she'd come out near the reception desk, where she could sound the alarm—

A soundless blur streaked past her. She pivoted, stang at the ready, adrenaline coursing in a hot rush. Crimson eyes stared at her, and she swore she heard the sound of saliva dripping to the floor.

“Whore.” The deep, masculine voice rumbled, and in her belly, the baby kicked.

“I don't know who you are,” Regan said, “but you might think twice about insulting a Guardian inside her own house.”

Rumbling laughter accompanied a snap of fingers, and suddenly, the auditorium lights popped on. A vampire stood on the stage with her, over six feet of hulking, fangy, undead. His gaze fell pointedly to her belly.

“It isn't an insult if it's the truth.”

She ignored the barb that hit a little too close to home. “Who are you? How did you get in here?”

At some point, Regan had placed her hand over the baby, as if doing so would keep it safe. Idiot. The stang in her other hand would do more—but only if she could cut the bloodsucker's head off.

The vampire moved so fast Regan didn't see it until its backswing connected with her cheek. Pain ricocheted from her jaw to her cheekbone and up to her skull as she slammed into the wall, her left shoulder taking the brunt of the impact.

“Who I am won't matter when you and the Horseman's bastard are dead.” He hissed, his enormous fangs dripping saliva like a rabid dog.

There was something very... off... about this vampire. Not that most vampires weren't “off,” but she'd noticed a subtle difference between Thanatos's daywalker vampires and your everyday variety nightwalker. Namely, Than's vamps seemed bigger, their fangs especially so.

“You're one of Thanatos's servants, aren't you?”

He snarled. “I belong to no one. I'm not one of the Bludrex's neutered pets.” He came at her again, and as she struck out with the stang, she lost her balance and managed only a glancing blow that nicked his biceps.

The vampire's hand snapped out, catching her around the throat. Smiling coldly, he squeezed, cutting off her breath.

Panic wrapped around her, squeezing as hard as the vampire's fingers. She might have had a chance if she weren't almost nine months pregnant, but even though she'd kept herself in excellent shape, she tired quickly, and her uneven weight made her awkward.

She couldn't die like this. She couldn't let this baby die. But as her lungs began to burn with a lack of oxygen, she knew this could be it.

Inhaling hard to find even a molecule of oxygen, she reached deep inside herself for the ability she'd kept tightly leashed for most of her life. The ability that had gone out of control the night she had gotten pregnant.

Not the time to dwell on that.

The tingle started low in her gut. Coaxing it as if it were a stray kitten, she called it forth, but it seemed to retreat, going from a pinpoint of light to a sickly glow. And then it snuffed out completely. What the—

“Die, bitch.” The vampire hissed in her face.

Shit! Her power... she couldn't access it. Suddenly, the vampire inexplicably eased up on his grip, giving her a sweet gulp of air, and when he smiled, she knew why he'd done it.

To drag out her death.

“Fucker,” she rasped. She clawed at his shoulders and kicked at his shins, but he didn't budge. Again she searched for her ability, the one that would drag his soul right out of him, but now it was as if it didn't exist at all.

Her mind went sluggish, her struggles weakening as oxygen deprivation took its toll. Images flipped through her brain, but not the ones she'd have expected while on the brink of death.

People lied about your life flashing before your eyes, because all she could see was Thanatos. She remembered how he looked when he was coming, how his body strained and his muscles bunched and rolled. She remembered the sound of his voice, his laugh.

And she remembered the expression on his face when he realized she'd betrayed him.

She was going to die, and it would all have been for nothing.

In her belly, the baby kicked, harder and harder, as if it too knew the end was near. The vampire smiled.

“I can sense the life within you,” he said. “I'm going to enjoy feeling it snuff out.” His hand went to her swollen abdomen, and in her mind, she screamed.

“Could you two be any louder?” A stranger's voice joined the scream in her mind and the thud of her pulse in Regan's ears, just as a breeze whispered over her skin.

In the next instant, the vampire flew sideways and she was ripped out of his grip. She had only a split second to see the other vampire who had joined the party before he flung her aside. She hit the floor behind the podium and sat there, gasping for air as the newcomer, one she definitely recognized as one of Thanatos's daywalker servants, attacked the vampire who had been trying to kill her.

The newcomer slammed his fist into the first vamp's head, sending him reeling into the wall. Before he could recover, the new vampire shoved a splinter of wood—where he'd gotten it, she had no idea—into the other vamp's chest. The first vampire hissed even as his body began to blacken and crack into dust.

The surviving vampire limped over to her, fury and pain mingling in his eyes. “You betrayed Thanatos,” he growled. “You betrayed us all.”

She wasn't sure about the “all” thing, but the rest was true enough. “Then why did you save me?”

“Save you?” The vampire gestured to the ashy mess that used to be his brethren. “He was merely going to kill you. I'm taking you to Thanatos.” He grinned. “Trust me, I didn't save you.”

The only thing worse than being paralyzed and trapped inside your own skull, unable to move or speak, was being kept like that by your own brother and sister.

For eight and a half endless, insanity-inducing months, Thanatos, fourth Horseman of the Apocalypse, had been kept in a bed with nothing but a TV for company. Well, every twelve hours he was visited by someone from Underworld General Hospital to inject him with paralyzing hellhound saliva, change his hydrating saline IV bag, and give him a humiliating sponge bath before changing his sweat pants. But usually whoever visited was wham, bam, thank you, ma'am and all business. And sure, his sister, Limos, third Horseman, and Ares, second Horseman, hung out with him, but Ares wasn't all that talkative.

Limos was a chatterbox, but Than didn't really give a shit about what color nail polish she'd put on that morning or how she and her husband, a human named Arik, were planning a European honeymoon after the Apocalypse was over.

And seriously, a honeymoon? Wasn't it a little late for that? And it wasn't as if Limos didn't live on an island paradise anyway, so every freaking day was a honeymoon for them.

Bitter much, Than-boy?

Yeah, there might be some jealousy there. Because as sick as it sounded, the one thing that had kept Than sane over the thousands of years he'd been alive was the fact that Ares and Limos were as alone as he was. But now Ares and Limos were both married and happy, and he was left paralyzed, miserable, and ripping a massive hatred for the female who had put him here.

Regan.

Ever since he'd been cursed as the Horseman who would become Death when his Seal broke, he'd believed that his Seal was his virginity. He'd guarded his dick like it was the freaking Hope Diamond. He might have been an unpinned grenade ready to blow with sexual need, but dammit, he'd kept himself all virginal and shit.

Until Regan came along, with her seductive body, her devious plot, and her drugged mead. She'd managed to get him naked, get him immobilized, and get him off. The why of it still wasn't clear, since not once, in all of Limos's and Ares's ramblings, had they brought up the Aegis Guardian. And the fact that she was a Guardian, one of the human warriors who existed to rid the world of demons, only made her actions more mystifying.

Guardians didn't want to start the Apocalypse, so either she was secretly working against The Aegis, or she hadn't thought that fucking him would break his Seal.

But if it was the latter... why had she gone to extremes to get him in bed? As a larger-than-life legend, he might have starfucker appeal, and sure, he knew he was handsome, but resorting to drugs and her supernatural ability in order to get what she wanted?

Fury slithered through him, as hot as the lust he'd felt when he'd been beneath Regan, her wet heat clenching around his cock. God, it had been good. For centuries he'd fantasized about being with a

female, had imagined all the ways he'd take her. His favorite fantasy had always been with her on all fours and him mounting her from behind, his chest sealed to her back by their sweat, his weight holding her steady for his thrusts.

For these past months, when his mind had drifted to sex, Regan had been that female on her hands and knees.

His cock jerked in response to the direction of his thoughts, pissing him off. His dick had no business getting hard for her, and on his arm, his stallion, Styx, kicked, sensing his master's emotions. The horse, currently in a tattoo-like form, had been stuck on his skin, as paralyzed as Than had been

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Wait. His cock was hard, his horse was stirring... which meant the hellhound venom was wearing off.

Thanatos's heartbeat went double-time as hope shot through him. Maybe his siblings were finally allowing him to be free. Oh, man, if so... he had serious plans. First, he was going to kick Limos's and Ares's asses. Then he was going to have sex.

Lots and lots of sex.

Before Regan, avoiding sex hadn't been difficult because he hadn't known what he was missing. But now he knew, and his body craved it almost as much as it craved revenge. And wasn't revenge going to be sweet. He couldn't decide if he was going to kill Regan or fuck her. Maybe both. Not in that order, though. He wasn't a complete sicko.

The door creaked open. Ares's heavy footsteps were accompanied by Limos's whisper-light ones and the click of hellhound claws on the floor.

"Hey, bro," Limos chirped, as if Thanatos was hanging out for fun. His hands began to clench, but quickly, he locked up his muscles, forcing himself to remain still.

Ares changed the channel on the TV they'd mounted above his bed. "Sorry about that," he grunted. "Someone must have bumped the remote. A cubic zirconia-fest on the Home Shopping Network couldn't have been too exciting."

Oh, no, really. I was just thinking about how great a gold filigree necklace and teardrop earrings would look on me, and at seventy-five ninety-nine plus shipping, it's a freaking steal. But damn, I missed the deal because, oh, that's right, I'm fucking frozen.

Limos's hand came down on Than's biceps, and he struggled to keep from twitching. "Hey... look... we have to tell you something." Her voice was low and serious, and shit, this couldn't be good. "I know you can probably feel the disruption in the world, and it's gotta be making you crazy."

Crazy? Try ceiling-licking, rabies-frothing, dish-ran-away-with-the-spoon in-fucking-sane. Limos and Ares had been keeping him up to date on Pestilence's exploits, but they hardly needed to. Thanks to his curse, Than could feel mass casualties around the globe, was drawn to them like a junkie to heroin. Obviously, being paralyzed had put the brakes on his ability to travel to them, but the pull was still there, swirling around his insides like smoke from a crematorium.

"It's about to get worse," Ares said. "Pestilence's plagues have caused war and famine and death all over the globe. It's why we haven't been around much. We've been spending way too much time at the sites of the worst of it."

Limos and Ares suffered similar curses as Than; Ares was drawn to scenes of large-scale battles, and Limos was tugged to famines. And yeah, Than had noticed that they hadn't been around to keep him entertained. At least Cara, Ares's wife, had been there. She read to Thanatos a lot, and he didn't

think he could ever thank her enough for that.

So why is it about to get worse? He wanted to scream at them, could feel his left hand, which was concealed at his side, begin to curl into a fist.

“Last week, Pestilence claimed Australia in the name of Sheoul.”

Oh, shit. Demons who were normally bound to Sheoul—what humans called hell—could now occupy Australia. A country that size could host millions of demons and allow for them to set the stage for a massive global attack. Demons had, since the beginning of time, desired to kick off the Apocalypse in order to defeat mankind and take the Earth as a trophy, and with Australia in their pockets, they’d just lobbed the ball that much closer to the end zone.

What about the humans?

Limos, who had always been in sync with his thoughts, answered as though she’d heard him. “Any humans who didn’t evacuate are... lost.”

“We got a few out.” Ares’s voice turned bleak. “Kynan, Limos, Arik and I got a few.”

“It’s bad,” Limos said. “But the good news is that The Aegis found a way to close the hellmouths. It’s temporary... the magic they’re using is being eaten away by demon countermagic, but it’s slowed mass demon movement.” She patted his arm. “Be patient, Than. Only a couple of weeks left to go, and we’ll release you.”

A couple of weeks? Why then?

Ares squeezed Than’s foot. “Someone will be here in a couple of hours for your next injection. We’ll be back when we can.”

He and Limos left, and hell, no, Thanatos wasn’t planning to be around for the next injection. For some reason, he could move again, and he was getting the fuck out of here.

Summoning all his willpower, he rocked his body until he built up enough momentum to roll out of bed. Hitting the floor hurt like a son of a bitch, but the pain only spurred him on. Something was tugging at his insides. Danger. Death. Both. Except the pull toward danger was a different sensation than anything he’d ever felt. It was almost as if he was the one in danger... but the feeling was distant. Whatever it was, it called to him, and he had to go.

He ripped the IV catheter out of his hand and dragged himself to the sliding glass door. Grunting, he shoved onto his hands and knees and crawled outside. Death and danger still yanked at him, two distinct ropes pulling him in opposite directions. The danger rope seemed more... urgent, but in his current, weakened state, he couldn’t risk dropping himself into what could be one of Pestilence’s traps. Death, however, filled him with energy.

Right. Death first, danger second.

Letting the tug to death guide him, he opened a Harrowgate and lurched through it. Instantly, hot, humid air hit Than like a furnace blast. The stench of rotting flesh and burning wood stung his nostrils. Weakly, he lifted his head and frowned at the sight of scorched earth and fallen trees. Than’s internal GPS was telling him he was Down Under, but he’d never seen it like this before.

So much death. Explained why he’d been drawn here.

“Hey there, man.” Thanatos jerked his head around to the shirtless male in skin-tight pants that kept shifting colors to blend in with the smoky gray and black background.

“Hades.” His voice sounded like he’d swallowed shards of glass. “Is this... Australia?”

“Yeppers.” Hades strode several feet, his boots crunching down on charred bones that appeared to be both human and demon. “Since it’s been claimed in the name of Sheoul, I can hang out here.”

Of course. Hades was as bound to Sheoul as a demon, although for a very different reason. A fallen angel, he'd been forced to run Sheoul-gra, the place where demon and evil human souls were kept, unless Azagoth, also known as the Grim Reaper, allowed him out.

"Azagoth let you... leave Sheoul-gra?"

"He gave me an hour," Hades said, his voice degenerating into a sarcastic drawl. "His generosity knows no bounds." He nudged Than with his boot. "Now I guess I'm stuck helping you. Recover quickly. I want to hit one of those new succubus whorehouses before I have to head back to the Gra."

A million pinpricks stabbed Than's muscles as he struggled to prop himself against a fallen tree. The blue-haired bastard just stood there and watched.

"Why... help... me?"

Hades's face went as hard as the landscape around them. "Because your fucking brother is pissing me off. While I can appreciate what he's trying to do, starting an Apocalypse and all, I get ticked off when he noses in on my business."

Thanatos wiggled his toes, relieved to feel them again. "What are you talking about?"

The blue veins that spiderwebbed Hades's pale skin grew brighter and started to pulse. "He's trying to dismantle Sheoul-gra and destroy Azagoth."

"Oh, shit." Without a Sheoul-gra, any demon or evil human killed in the human realm would be free to wreak havoc in their phantom form.

There was also a running theory that Azagoth might be the Horsemen's father, but so far, no one had been able to verify that. Until the rumor could be confirmed, Thanatos would rather the guy not be killed.

"Oh, shit, is right. Who'd have thought your screwball brother could have gone so serial-killer fucktwat insane?"

And that was the big problem. Reseph had been the kindest, most even-tempered of all of them. For him to have turned so evil did not bode well for Ares, Limos, and Than.

He became aware of a branch biting into his back, and at the same time, a low-level vibration started in the pit of his stomach. His body was coming to life.

And it was hungry.

Along with the hunger, the tug toward danger grew stronger, became a pulsing awareness in the back of his brain. What the hell was it?

"He grows stronger every day, Thanatos. The souls I watch over are starting to reincarnate at rates I've never seen."

Than frowned. "You think Pestilence is responsible for that?"

"Maybe not directly, but as the Apocalypse grows closer, souls are leaving me faster than they're coming in. Pestilence is getting a big boost in the demon population, and I'm growing weaker. You need to kill him."

Thanatos rocked his head back against the tree trunk. "I intend to repair his Seal, not kill him." Than had found evidence that Reseph's Seal could be repaired, but only if Than stabbed him with a specific dagger at a specific time. Problem was that he hadn't figured out the "time" detail.

"Criminy. Whatever. Just do something. My very life comes from those souls. I need them."

"Criminy?" Than stared. "Seriously? Big, bad, mohawk-haired demon says 'criminy'?"

"Yes, criminy." Hades rubbed his bare chest. "And, fuck off."

Than closed his eyes. "That's better."

The vibration in Than's core became a gnawing hunger, threaded with malevolence. The scent of blood hit him, and he snapped open his eyes. Hades was on his haunches next to Than, a knife in his hand. Blood flowed from his slit wrist, and Than's fangs punched down as the starvation that had been kept at bay for eight months roared to the surface.

He lunged at Hades, but the male caught him around the back of the neck and slammed his bleeding wrist against Than's mouth. Thanatos's brain blanked out as his body was hijacked by fierce hunger and pure animal instinct.

"Ow, fuck." Hades's rough voice was a mere buzz in Than's ears.

At this point, he didn't give a hellrat's ass if he was savaging the male's arm. All that mattered was filling the hole inside him that, when emptied, led to indiscriminate feedings and a lot of death. Fortunately for Than, Hades was one of the few people who knew about Than's need, although he didn't know the extent of it.

Time swirled in multi-colored circles until finally, Hades pulled away and left Than leaning back against the tree, his body completely charged. The hunger was gone, but the other, odd tingle of impending danger still vibrated at the base of his skull. It was like a homing beacon, screaming at him to go.

"Thanks, man." Shoving to his feet, Than flexed his muscles, testing them after so many months of disuse. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw a flicker of movement in the burned-out forest, and knew he'd get a good workout in a minute.

They had company.

"No problem. I owed you one."

Keeping one eye on the creatures slinking from out of the shadows, Than casually flicked his finger over the crescent-shaped scar on his neck, and instantly, his bone armor snapped into place. Next, he summoned his scythe. "More than one. I've sent you a lot of souls, asshole." He was about to send Hades more.

"Yeah, fuck you."

He started to flip out his standard response of, "Can't have sex," but he remembered that yeah, he could. Thanks to Regan and her betrayal, he knew he could. But Hades was a dude, and Than wasn't that desperate.

But the urge was there, so powerful he suspected that it was similar to what Ares felt, a coil of tension that, if not released, resulted in death and destruction.

Good thing then, that Thanatos was in the mood for a little D&D, and not the role-playing game.

"So, what are you going to do now that you're not frozen solid?"

"First, I'm going to kill those demons and that fallen angel behind you." The scorpion tattoo on his throat began to sting his neck, its tail moving like a pulse, reminding Than that death was what he was meant for. Never one to argue with fate, he swung the scythe in a powerful arc, lobbing off one of the demons' two heads. He glanced back at Hades, who was looking like he might want popcorn to go with the action. "Then I'm going to do the same to the woman who betrayed me."

Regan sat on the floor, staring at the vampire who had saved her from one threat and was planning to deliver her into the hands of another.

“You can’t take me to Thanatos. He’s incapacitated—”

“Stupid female,” he barked. “I’m taking you to his keep until he returns. Several of us have come up with a plan to get him back.” His voice softened. “And there are things you need to know, warnings I can’t tell you here—” Blood spurted from his mouth, and he jerked forward, catching himself on the podium.

A crossbow bolt pierced his sternum.

“Get away from her!” Lance, one of Regan’s fellow Elders, rushed toward them, crossbow in one hand, wooden stake in the other. More Guardians followed on his heels, including Suzi, who had moved into headquarters to assist Regan in her final months of pregnancy. From the side entrance, Elders Kynan and Decker burst through the doors.

“Don’t kill him!” Regan shouted, but Lance ignored her, driving the stake through the vampire’s heart.

“Dammit, Lance!” Kynan rounded on Lance as the vampire smoldered. “That’s not how we do things.”

“That’s not how you do things,” Lance said. “Not everyone in The Aegis agrees with your squeaky clean new way of treating the enemy.”

Suzi crouched next to Regan. “Are you okay? Should I call your doctor? Oh man, I should have been with you—”

“I’m fine,” Regan assured her, but Suzi wrung her hands, worry bleeding from her pores. “But you know, I could use a cup of your awesome honey chamomile tea.” Suzi grinned, clearly relieved to be able to help. As she took off, Regan remained on the floor, gathering both her thoughts and her breath. “Why were Thanatos’s vampires here? How did they get in?”

Juan, another Elder, kicked at the remains. “We captured them a couple of weeks ago. We needed to see the daywalkers ourselves. Somehow they escaped their cells.”

“You morons,” Regan snapped. “Don’t you think we’ve done enough to Thanatos?”

“We didn’t do it to the Horseman,” Lance said, his expression so smug she wanted to slap him. “It was your report that brought his vamps to our attention. We needed to study them.”

Oh, damn. Once again, she’d managed to screw Thanatos, just in a different way. Her guilt manifested into bitter anger, which she aimed at Lance.

“The Apocalypse is on our doorstep,” she growled, “and you wasted time with vampires? Nice.”

Lance scowled. “You’re the one who volunteered to take over as vampire expert when Jarrod died last year. You should have known that when you discover a new breed, we’re going to want to dissect it.” He cast her a nasty glance. “You aren’t going to cry about it or some shit, are you?”

God, she hated when he did that. He and a couple of the other Elders seemed to think that as a



woman, she'd break down into tears about every little thing. They'd been the negative voices when Regan's promotion into the Sigil was on the table, and now she never passed up an opportunity to show them she was just as capable as they were. She didn't have a chance to rip into him though, because Kynan intercepted and steered them back on topic.

"Dissect it." Kynan shoved his stang blade into its slot on his hip belt. "We have standard operating procedures for new species, and those include informing other Elders about plans to capture. They don't include dissection."

"You've been busy with your happy little demon family," Juan said. "We didn't see the need to make a big production out of capturing a couple of bloodsuckers."

Regan fought the urge to scream in frustration. "What if the Horsemen see this as yet another betrayal? Did you think of that?" The Aegis's relationship with Limos and Ares was already strained, thanks to what had gone down between Regan and Thanatos, and this could only make things worse.

"I'm more concerned about the impending Apocalypse than what the Horsemen think, but the fact that the vampires escaped is definitely troubling." Lance nodded at Juan. "Let's check the cells to make sure no other nasties are loose."

As they took off, Decker glared after them. "I hope they get eaten," he muttered.

"How are you feeling?" Kynan offered her a hand, but Regan refused it and pulled herself to her feet on her own. She'd had enough of being touched tonight.

"I'm feeling surprisingly good." She winced as a tiny foot caught her in the ribs. "When I'm not being kicked."

Kynan unzipped his leather bomber, revealing a weapons harness loaded to kill an entire legion of demons. "Gem said the same thing when she was pregnant." Ky's daughter, Dawn, was almost a year old now, and the cutest little dark-haired thing ever. Regan wondered what color hair her child—a boy, she'd learned a couple of months ago—would have, given that Thanatos's hair was blond and hers was dark brown. "I know we talked about this before, but if you need someone to talk to about pregnancy stuff, Gem is there for you."

Ugh. This had been an uncomfortable subject ever since Juan had brought up the fact that Regan didn't have a mother to share the experience with or to ask for advice. No, Regan's mother had committed suicide-by-demon after giving birth to Regan. As Lance had once put it, "You should feel lucky she didn't off herself the second she found out her demon-possessed lover knocked her up."

He was such a dick.

Regan offered a polite smile. "Thanks, Ky, but I'll be fine."

He nodded. "Offer still stands. When's your next doctor appointment?"

"Tomorrow. Dr. Rodanski is concerned about the baby's size, so he's going to do another ultrasound and decide if we're going to do a C-section instead of a natural delivery."

"You really should see—"

"No." She cut Kynan off before he could suggest allowing a demon doctor from Underworld General to take care of her. It was one thing to be working with demons to prevent the Apocalypse, but allowing one to touch her intimately? Not unless things got dire. Way dire.

"Regan," Ky said. "Your body reacts badly to medication. You can't have a C-section without meds and pain management."

"Rodanski said he'd figure it out." She hoped so, because what Ky, a former Army medic and physician at Underworld General, mentioned was a huge concern. The baby's delivery could be

potentially dangerous. Still, she wasn't ready to deal with demon doctors and their alternative therapies.

Her stomach growled loud enough for Decker to hear. "Want me to get you something to eat?"

"I don't suppose you have a chocolate milkshake in your back pocket." She'd always been a bit of a health nut, but pregnancy had given her a major craving for all things ice cream.

He wrinkled his nose. "That crap will kill you."

An image of Thanatos popped into her head, and no, it wouldn't be the milkshakes that killed her.

"So," she said. "Tell me why you're here at this hour of the morning." The boys exchanged glances, and her gut twisted. "What is it?"

Beepers went off, three at once. Decker grabbed his phone first. "It's Lance. Fuck. Demons loose in the building."

Instantly, Ky and Decker drew weapons and closed rank around Regan. "What the hell is going on? If we hadn't come to discuss rousing Thanatos, Regan could be dead."

Regan gripped the podium so hard her nails dug into the wood. "You were thinking about rousing him? Now?"

"Long story, but yeah. We came across new information. We need to consider waking him right away."

"You're a little late for that, Aegi." The deep, rumbling voice from the doorway drained every drop of blood from Regan's face. She broke out in a cold, clammy sweat as she looked up to see Thanatos at the auditorium entrance, his big body radiating danger even his armor couldn't contain.

And she knew, without a doubt, that her nightmare was about to become reality.

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“A breath of fresh air. Larissa Ione never disappoints and she will have you hooked...[Ares is] not

only sweet but sigh-worthy... I can't wait for [Immortal Rider]... You won't be able to put down this tasty treat!"

—[GoodReads.com](http://GoodReads.com)

## **SIN UNDONE**

"4½ stars! Tense, sexy, and touching."

—RT Book Reviews

"Some of the hottest [sex scenes] I've read in a paranormal romance. You can practically taste the desire... Sin Undone doesn't disappoint and makes way for yet a new set of characters and books, in her soon-to-be-released Lords of Deliverance series."

—[FreshFiction.com](http://FreshFiction.com)

"Ione's Demonica series is one of my favorites... Sin Undone is a hot, sexy read... As much as I regret the end of the Demonica series, I am looking forward to the upcoming Lords of Deliverance series."

—[ParanormalBites.com](http://ParanormalBites.com)

## **ECSTASY UNVEILED**

"4½ stars! Ione is a master world-builder, and one can't help but fall headlong into this imaginative and compelling story."

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"Compulsively readable... intensely interesting... this book was awesome."

—[LikesBooks.com](http://LikesBooks.com)

"Great... fast-paced... a strong tale that has the audience believing that demons and angels walk the earth."

—Midwest Book Review

## **PASSION UNLEASHED**

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—RT Book Reviews

"Fast-paced from the onset and never slows down until the exhilarating climax... Readers will be enthralled by the action and the charmed lead couple."

—Midwest Book Reviews

“Larissa Ione pulls no punches... The love scenes are scorching hot and grab at your heart with their emotional intensity. Dark moments are written with just the right touch of hope that leaves the reader begging for a happy ending. I couldn’t have loved *Passion Unleashed* more and hated for it to end. Raw, gritty, and tremendously passionate... It was awesome!”

—[RomanceJunkies.com](http://RomanceJunkies.com)

## **DESIRE UNCHAINED**

“4 stars! Rising star Ione is back in this latest Demonica novel... Ione has a true gift for imbuing her characters with dark-edged passion... thrilling action and treacherous vengeance... a top-notch read.”

—RT Book Reviews

“A fabulous tale... The story line is fast paced from the opening sequence... fans will relish a visit to the Ione realm.”

—Midwest Book Review

“Warning! Read at your own risk. Highly addictive.”

—[FreshFiction.com](http://FreshFiction.com)

## **PLEASURE UNBOUND**

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“What a ride! Dark, sexy, and very intriguing, the book gripped me from start to finish—totally recommended.”

—Nalini Singh, New York Times bestselling author of *Mine to Possess*

“4 stars! [Ione’s] hard-edged style infuses the story with darkness while taking it to sizzling heights.”

—RT Book Reviews

“5 stars! Fascinatingly innovative... full of fervent encounters and shocking disclosures... compelling scenes and dynamic characters.”

—[SingleTitles.com](http://SingleTitles.com)

“Fast-paced... never slows down... Romantic fantasy fans will appreciate the first Demonica tale.”

—Midwest Book Review



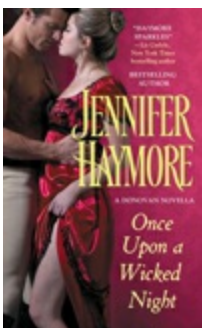


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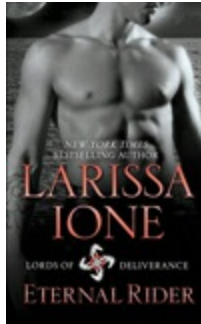
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Available November 20, 2012

Pestilence, first Horseman of the Apocalypse, was destroyed, but instead of dying, he was sent, whole-bodied, to Sheoul-gra, the demon holding tank for dead demons, and returned as Reseph. Jillian Cardiff has been in hiding for almost a year—ever since she was attacked by a demon and nearly killed. When she comes across a naked man lying in the snow, she will risk everything to save his life. It's one thing to save an innocent man, but when Reseph's dark past is revealed, Jillian may not be able to see past his previous sins.

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

# LARISSA IONE



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