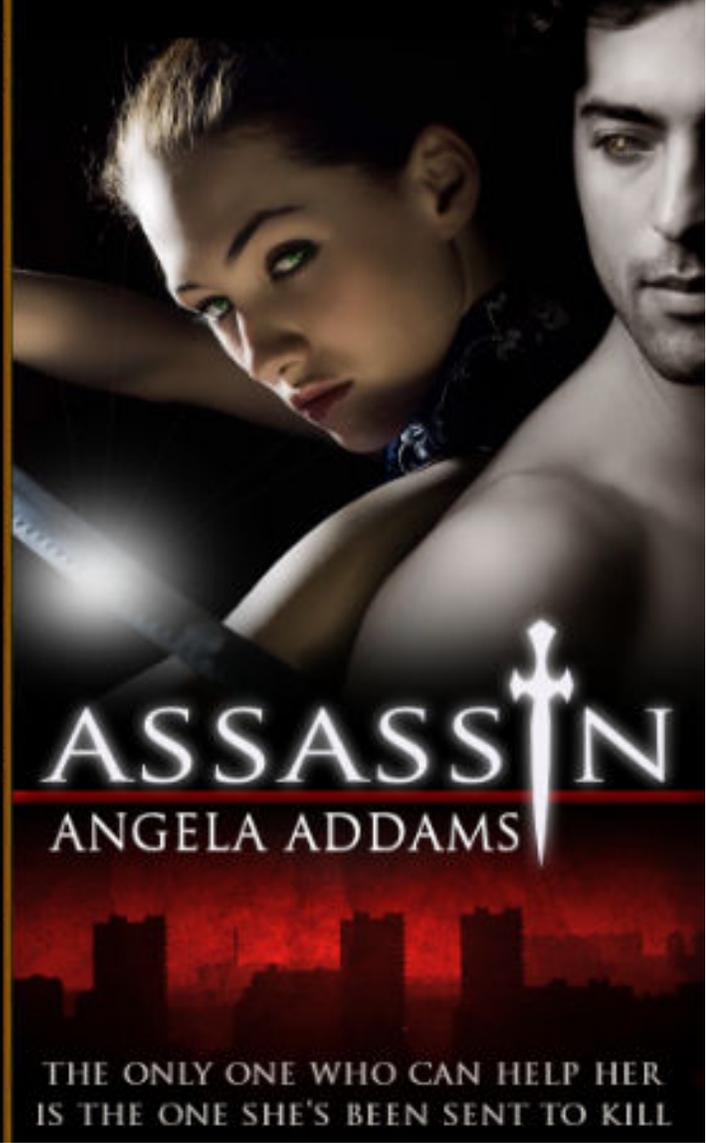


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ASSASSIN

ANGELA ADDAMS

THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP HER
IS THE ONE SHE'S BEEN SENT TO KILL

Assassin by Angela Addams

Assassin

By

Angela Addams

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Assassin

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Dedication

To Donna, Leslie and Karen, the best betas a girl could ever ask for.

Prologue

My dreams are filled with blood and death and pain. The brutality of my waking existence invades my sleeping thoughts, never granting me peace. It's a strange comfort in a way to know that when my eyes slide shut, I will see and feel what my victims do: the strangled cries cut off by my sword, the pulsing blood draining from a body. It is my mind's vengeance for the horror I inflict.

So when I feel the warm breath on my neck, I flinch, and panic seizes my gut as I wait for whatever new hell my sleeping thoughts have conjured. My body tenses, primed and ready to fight. I reach for my weapon, but it is no longer there.

And then he is behind me, his strong, hard body pressed against the length of me. I take in his smell, deeply inhaling his musk, and my muscles relax. I know that smell, I know that body.

His breath is on my neck again, soft lips brush my shoulder, a sharp scrape slides along my jugular, all so familiar.

"Mine." He growls, sending shivers down my body to the growing, pulsing need in my core. I am wet for him, my skin aches for his touch. My body coils, ready, waiting, pulsing.

His hand slips around my waist as his lips continue to press tender kisses along my neck. I can do nothing but lean my weight into him. My legs have grown useless, no longer willing to support my body. His other hand moves up my arm, his fingers trailing along my collarbone until he slides his hand past the low neckline of my shirt, gliding over my skin

until he is cupping my breast, his strong hand molding to it in a way that suggests possession.

A moan escapes my lips, and I roll my head to the side, giving his lips better access to the tender flesh of my neck. So vulnerable and yet I don't care. He is not a threat to me, that I know for certain.

His hand on my waist moves lower, snaking down to pop the button of my jeans, effortlessly slipping beneath to tease the lace of my panties with his strong, expert touch. My stomach clenches with excited anticipation as his fingers probe through the nest of silky hair until they find their target.

It's his turn to groan. His kisses grow more fierce as he feels how wet I am for him. He pushes his cock against my ass, and I can feel it pulsing and hard, growing more rigid with his excitement.

As he pumps me with his fingers, his palm cupping and rubbing my clit, his other hand keeps busy tugging and teasing my nipple until I am ready to scream, until I am ready to explode. And then I feel it again, a sharp scrape along my jugular.

"Assassin." He growls as he sinks his fangs into my neck, and all that I dream disappears into a hazy cloud of exquisite pain.

Chapter One

“Can you fight?”

The husky voice sliced through a curtain of pain, bringing me back to the agony of reality. I sucked in a deep breath and slid my eyes open.

“Yeah, I think so.”

“Here.”

The worn leather of my sword hilt touched my palm, comforting in a way that only a warrior would understand. I gripped it firmly and pushed myself to stand.

Strong hands moved under my arms and hoisted me upright. “There’s about ten of them waiting on the other side of the door. We’re going to have to exit fighting if we have any hope of escaping alive.”

I nodded, turned my head, and squinted into the limited light, searching with my enhanced vision for those tantalizing lips, those breathtaking golden eyes. He was still close behind me, pressing his hard body into me, his hand still resting under one arm. My brain tugged on a memory, but it was too locked away, too hidden in the grey of my muddled brain.

“You were foolish to come here.” His lips brushed my ear, his warm breath tickling my neck.

I shivered at the contact, desire pulsing through me. His name slithered into my head. “I came for you, Garrett.”

He spun me around, his grip tight as his hand slid down my waist to my hip. I could see his eyes, sparkling gold in the darkness of the

warehouse. Such an unusual color. My mind tugged again at those locked memories, and I grew more frustrated at the clumsiness of my thoughts. *What is it that I can't remember?*

"Why would you help me? You don't even know who I am. What I am."

I shuddered as my stomach roiled, my mind still hazy, my instincts screaming. *Oh, but I do know you. I just don't know how or why.*

"You're an Assassin. You should be trying to kill me, just like the others." His words were icy, his eyes flaring with anger.

I gripped my sword tighter and pushed myself away, steeling my body against the fresh, burning pain radiating from my arm. The others had tried to kill me. I was a traitor, no longer worthy to live. It was only their momentary shock that saved my life. The arrow had pierced my shoulder instead of my chest. I had yanked the bastard out before collapsing into unconsciousness. How embarrassing to have passed out from such a trivial wound. I was stronger than that.

I was lucky, too. Assassins rarely missed a target.

Already my body was healing. The vampire DNA entwined with my own saw to that.

They would have no mercy on me. Even those I had called friend would now strike me down if I gave them the chance. Friendship has no place in the world of the Assassins. Trained by the human government to kill.

Vampire hunters.

I was the first generation, like the others outside the door, powerful but not invincible. I glanced in his direction again, soaking in the sheer beauty of his face. I didn't really understand why I couldn't bring myself to kill him. For the first time, I had failed in my mission to rid the world of the blood-sucking Strix vampires, and it could cost me my life.

For some bizarre reason, I was okay with that.

Garrett snarled, his fangs descending as the sound of heavy, booted feet moved along the perimeter of the building. My heart thumped at the sight of those fangs, those lips, that tongue. I sucked in a shuddering breath and focused on the outside noises. They would set the building on

fire. That would be the first stage of attack now that they knew they had injured me. It's what I would have done: use the smoke to disorient and confuse, remove the clean air, create panic. Smoke us out. They wanted Garrett alive, for now anyway.

"Is there another exit?" I adjusted my vision again and scanned the darkness. I could see no other door, no windows. They had picked the location on purpose—one way in, one way out.

"No. We'll have to fight."

I nodded. "Weapons?" I shifted my sword from my injured hand to the other, choosing to favor my wound until it was completely healed. It didn't really matter, anyway. I could fight just as well with either hand.

"Daggers. A gun." Garrett moved close to me again, his eyes staring down at me as if reading my soul. "Why are you helping me?"

I clenched my jaw and stared back up at him, my conflicting desire and instinct clouding my mind. "I don't know."

"They'll kill us both." He was frowning, his eyes shadowed with pain, guilt, compassion. "You're risking your life for me. Why?"

I cocked my head to the side, choosing to ignore a question I couldn't answer. I was meant to save him, to protect him at whatever cost. I just couldn't remember why.

"Who are you?" He narrowed his eyes, his hand moving up as if to lift the tight mask that shielded my face from him.

I flinched away. "You could have killed me," I countered. "Why didn't you leave me here while I was unconscious?"

My heart pounded, anticipating his answer, wanting him to want me as much as I did him.

He swept his eyes over my body with a bold look, dropping his hand back to his side. "Why would I kill you when you risked your life to warn me of the attack? Obviously, you have something to gain by keeping me alive. I want to know what that is."

Cunning, businesslike, keeping his secrets to himself. *That's fine.* I could feel his cock hot and pulsing through his jeans as he moved close. I knew he was as aroused as I was at the proximity. I knew he was feeling what I was feeling.

I searched the darkness again, my ears straining to hear the quietest of movements. They were approaching the door. I could smell kerosene. I lifted my injured arm and rested my hand on his chest. Strong muscles under soft cotton. My passion thudded again, and I grew wet for him. His nostrils flared, and his pupils dilated.

Ah, so I can't hide that from him, either.

The curl of a smile tugged on my lips as I turned to gaze up to the high rafters above, my mind reeling with a plan. They wouldn't expect that.

"Can you give me a boost?"

"The roof is at least fifty feet."

"Can you do it or not?" I was growing impatient. Our only hope was to surprise the other Assassins. They would not consider the roof. They were too linear in their tactics, and now without a proper leader. No, they would never think of that.

He growled as he placed his firm hands on my waist and squatted. "Of course I can do it. But you're sure as hell going to give me an explanation once we're out of this mess."

I tightened my grip on my sword, my skin tingling as his touch seemed to burn through my clothes. What I wouldn't give to have those hands roving my skin, touching my body, bathing in my wetness. "Once we're out of this mess, I'll do whatever you desire."

He arched an eyebrow, a slow smirk tugging on his lips. "You better grab hold of one of the rafters up there 'cuz I'm not going to catch you if you fall."

I smiled back. "Don't worry about me. I'm an Assassin. I don't miss my target."

With a thunderous roar, Garrett used his legs to propel me up, flinging me into the air as if I weighed nothing. The rafters sped toward me, and for a moment I doubted my cocky assurance that I wouldn't miss. I thought I might be going too fast to actually catch hold of anything. I flew past the beams by a few feet then started my descent. With an expertly maneuvered twist, I landed on a rafter without the need to wrap my arm around a beam. My balance and precision were equal to a cat's. I

always landed on my feet.

A moment later, Garrett gracefully landed behind me. His strong arm encircled my waist, and his lips brushed my ear, sending tingles of desire through me once again. "Now what?"

I could smell the smoke wafting from the base of the building below. We wouldn't have long. The structure was one big funeral pyre, completely constructed of wood. I thrust my sword into the ceiling, slicing away a section of the roof with ease. The night sky beckoned, twinkling stars, half moon. It would have been romantic if we weren't running for our lives.

Garrett reached past me and yanked down two more boards. "Up and out."

I reached up and hoisted myself through the opening, my shoulder wound biting, sending shooting pain straight to my gut. I fought through it and breathed in a deep lungful of air, thankful for the fresh crispness of the night.

I moved to the side, keeping low so that my body could not be seen from below. "You can't fly can you?"

A mocking snort came with a heavy hand on the back of my neck. "No, but I can get us out of here." He pointed in front of me, his arm extending along my head. In the distance stood another building, its roof almost thirty or so feet below ours.

Disbelief washed over me. The other building was at least a hundred feet away. I'd seen vampires do some pretty spectacular things, but not that spectacular. "What? You want to jump? That's way too far." I was strong, I was agile, but I would break if I fell that kind of distance.

The sound of shouting echoed from below, and I craned my head over the side to see three of my Assassin counterparts looking right back up at me, fingers pointed. *Shit, they're on to us already.* More shouting came from within the building. Braving the fire to get to us? Now that was serious. Betrayal was a big deal to an Assassin. They weren't going to let me go without a fight.

"Not scared are you?" Garrett gripped the back of my jacket collar and pulled my body against his, a strong arm encircling my waist as he

pulled me up to stand.

"I'm not scared." I scoffed, "I just don't think you can do it."

Garrett laughed. "Hold on tight." And without further warning, without even a running leap, we were up and out, flying over the gap with one strong bound.

The look on my sister Assassins' faces was priceless, mouths agape, eyes wide. That was until they realized their prey was about to escape. They promptly raised their various weapons and began firing.

I flinched, certain that I was about to die. There was no way to protect myself, nowhere to hide. Garrett's arm closed tighter around me as he twisted so that his back was now protecting me from the bite of arrows and the deadly blow of bullets. I squeezed my eyes tightly shut, comfort and fear mixing and mingling, marinating me into a world of confusion. *What has this man done to me?*

Seconds later we came to a crashing halt, the momentum of our leap causing us both to roll and then skid along the gravel of the roof. When we came to a stop, Garrett was on top of me, his pelvis cradled between my legs, his arousal apparent and pulsing.

My heart frantically thudding, I scowled up at him. "Do me a favor?"

He cocked an eyebrow.

"Never do that again, 'kay?"

"What?" He smiled as he pressed his erection into my thigh. "Save your life? I believe the appropriate response is thank you."