

A close-up of a person's bare back and shoulder in the foreground, with a fire burning in a hearth in the background.

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FIRE
DANCE

Fire Dance

A free story by
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In CheckMate, Special Enforcer Vincent and his vampire enemy Lilia were accidentally linked by magical links of blood and sex and had to learn to work together – and love each other. Here is a small peek at their future...

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Fire Dance

The flames rose in the fireplace, long ribbons that went from the palest white to the brightest red, and every shade of gold and copper in between. They cast dancing shadows that seemed to give life to every piece of furniture in the living room, as well as to the vampire lying on the thick rug in front of the stone mantle. With a small, contented sigh, Lilia rolled onto her stomach, sliding her arms beneath the square pillow she had pulled from the sofa. Even with her eyes closed, she could sense bright flashes whenever the fire crackled and filled the room with light and another burst of smoke. The heat of the fire was seeping into her and down to her very bones, filling her with contentment.

When she drew her last human breath, sunlight had been an enemy to women of her class, and her porcelain skin had been one of her best assets. She had never sunbathed – and she never would, not unless she was taken by a sudden death wish. Still, when she roasted herself by the fire like this, she could imagine what it felt like to lie in the sun and feel its warmth.

Drifting between sleep and wakefulness, she did not hear Vincent come in, and only realized he had returned when he sat next to her on the rug. His hand, which usually felt so warm, seemed cool when he rested it at the center of her back, and she shivered.

“I don’t get it,” he said very quietly. She could hear the amusement in his voice and turned her face toward him, opening her eyes to see his smile.

“Get what?”

He stroked up and down her back, from the base of her neck to her ass and up again. “For someone who burns so easily, you’re awfully fond of flames.”

Closing her eyes again, she relaxed into his caress, coming very close to purring in satisfaction. “Most vampires are,” she murmured. “I guess we try to get the warmth we lose when we get turned.”

The gentle touch suddenly vanished. Lilia started to protest, but when she looked at him, she was treated to the always-pleasant sight of her Mate stripping naked. She rolled onto her side to get a better view, resting her head on her closed fist. As he exposed more and more skin, she made her appreciation known with quiet hums. Vincent’s widening grin tugged at the scar on his cheek.

“Does it work?” he asked, then added at her blank look, “The flames?”

He was nude now, lying on his side and mirroring her position. She reached over and slid her hand over his collarbone and chest, enjoying the small tremors she could feel beneath her fingertips. “Not really,” she admitted, now running her hand over his arm and up, back toward his neck. “But it’s the closest we can get, short of drinking a human dry.” She caressed the marks on his neck that had made him hers, and he moaned softly. “Or fucking,” she added with an impish grin.

“I see,” Vincent said, licking his lips. His eyebrows raised in mock fear. “Should I be worried now?”

Pressing her hand to the center of his chest, she pushed him onto his back. “Only that I’m going to use and misuse your body,” she said as she sat up.

He grabbed her pillow and drew it beneath his head, resting one arm behind it, while his free hand ran up and down his chest. Lilia’s eyes followed its progress with rapt interest as it brushed against one nipple on one trip, then the other on the next.

“Sounds terrifying,” he said in a low rumble. “I might just die of fright.”

Lilia knelt and moved over him to straddle his thighs. “If you’re afraid, you can keep a stake nearby,” she offered, tongue in cheek, and took hold of his hardening cock. “Other than this one, that is. I’m not sure this is the kind of wood that works on a vampire.”

Vincent’s laughter turned into a groan when she tightened her fist over him and started slowly stroking him from root to tip. He was beautiful like this, lying in front of her in the changing light of the fire, his body quivering beneath her touch.

“It seems to work well enough on you,” he pointed out, now chuckling lightly.

She didn’t reply, or at least not in words. Accelerating her pace, she spread the precome that had leaked from the slit of his cock along his length, then raised herself to her knees. His hands came down to settle on her hips and guide her, but she resisted them when he tried to pull her down onto him. Poised over him, with just the tip of his cock brushing her wet folds, she locked eyes with him.

“Say it,” she demanded.

Vincent didn’t even ask what she meant. His expression as bare as he was, he raised a hand to her neck and touched the rounded scar that marked her as his. “I love you,” he murmured.

Lilia thrust herself down onto his cock, forcing him deep inside her all at once. They both cried out, then both stilled, gazes locked again, enjoying that first moment when they were one again, like they always did.

The need to move overwhelmed Lilia first. Resting her hands on his chest, her eyes never leaving his face, she rode him

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hard and fast. Sometimes, she drew out their lovemaking, tried to make it last for as long as she could – for eternity. This was not one of those times. Consumed by desire like the logs were consumed by fire, she danced over him, taking strength from his gasps and from the words of love that rose from his lips.

At first he let her find her rhythm, but when need started blurring her vision and slowing her hips, he began moving with her, reinforcing her pace, driving her always closer to pleasure until they soared together, embracing like flames rising together toward the sky.

As she lay on his chest afterwards, his arms closed tight around her and warming her better than a blanket, better than the dying fire, Lilia realized she had been wrong. Lounging by a fire had nothing to do with being in the sunlight. But to be in his arms like this, to be with her Mate, to hear his heart slowly calming down, to feel his lips whisper 'I love you's against her temple – that was to know the full power of the sun.