



Welcome Friends!

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ARC READER SIGN UP

I am so excited that you're here. Thank you for coming. Blood and Heaven is the first book in a series that is full of vampires, angels, shifters, and more at the end of the world.

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

Elias Masters, a ruthless vampire king holds a drug lord's daughter and virtuoso cellist captive after her blood takes him to Heaven. Aljendro, his lover of one hundred years, convinces him that she is worth saving. Though Elias still wants to kill her, Noraya shows signs of magic and is discovered to be an angel shifter and the king begins to see her value. Together the three of them embark on a journey of danger, infatuation, challenge, and romance that will test the strength of their spirits and the depths of their souls.

Hi. I'm reaching out to see if you're interested in an Advanced Reader Copy of Blood and Heaven; The Realms of Eschaton. It's a dark dystopian, MMF, vampire, enemies to lovers, romance and it's epic and fun spanning lots of paranormal realms and creatures and it's a very intense love story with complicated characters. :) Let me know if this is something you're interested in reading. Thank you for considering my book.

It's a beefy 150K but a fun start to an action packed series.

TRIGGERS

- Alcohol
- Anxiety
- Assault
- Attempted murder
- Autism
- Blood
- Cancer
- Child abuse
- Death
- Depression
- Emotional abuse
- Gore
- Immolation
- Kidnapping
- Non traditional view of traditionally Christian characters (God, Jesus, Mary Magdalene)
- Physical abuse

- Plague
- Poisoning
- Pregnancy
- Profanity
- PTSD
- Satan/The Devil
- Sexual assault (off page)
- Sexually explicit scenes (MMF, MM and MF)
- Terminal illness (off page)

I'm grateful to have you here.

Here is CHAPTER ONE, in case you're curious.



Blood and Heaven:
The Realms of Eschaton Book 1
Azriel Hope

Chapter One

Noraya

Red --- like the flames of rage and the color of blood, marred my lips and the dress that exposed me. I looked at my reflection and was bludgeoned by red. Thick varnish glinted in the candlelight bouncing off of the gloss which was suffocating my mouth.

Rita had meticulously applied the sticky substance and was proud of her expertise. Acid burned my stomach as I pushed my mind away from images that forced their way through. *What would happen after the wedding? Could I run? What if I refused to marry?*

“You look so pretty, Noraya,” Rita said, marveling at her artistry, as she gazed up from a bejeweled strap she cinched closed across my ankle.

I wasn't sure I could walk in the shoes she had just put on me, the heels were too thin and too high to bear weight. My father was selling me off to the highest bidder, I had to look expensive. A man, well not a man, but a dangerous criminal, would soon win my hand in marriage. I'd be made his slave in matrimony, so I had to look 'put together' my father said.

But the men in my father's home knew who they were bidding on. Cameron Markum's little girl had recently become a woman. They'd watched me bow in obedience to my father and likely hoped I'd be just as subservient to them. I wouldn't be. If it weren't for my autistic brother, I'd have already run, or killed myself to escape them, but I couldn't leave Orion unprotected. Instead, I decided I'd withhold my loyalty, my thoughts, and all the parts of me they couldn't steal. I'd be a dead thing dressed in red.

The door crashed open and swung hard against the wall, digging a deeper hole into the existing divot as Orion rushed into my room.

“Ayeeee,” he yelled, screaming for his life.

I put my hands out and he stopped, looking sad and terrified. I couldn't hold him, he hated being touched. I just smiled, he needed smiles, they made him feel safe.

“Orion,” my brother's caregiver yelled, looking sallow and exhausted as he raced into my room a moment later. “You have to wear the tie.”

He dangled the thin strip of silk in his hands, delicately as if he were handling a snake.

“I got it,” I snapped, as Perry came to a halt, making it just past the door to my receiving room.

“Damn, Noraya.” His eyes scanned down my form. “Fuck.”

“Please don’t speak like that in front of him,” I scolded Perry, who was the perfect gentleman when in the company of my father, and a piece of shit the rest of the time.

“Why? He certainly won’t say anything,” Perry side-eyed my brother and my face crumbled into a glare, at least I hoped it had.

“He knows exactly what you’re saying and when he figures out how to say it, he will, likely as often as you do,” I huffed and returned my focus to Orion.

“So,” I slid the tie out of Perry’s grasp. “Tonight is a fancy dress party, you have to wear a tie, Rie.”

Orion batted the strip of cloth away and I felt the same. If I could have pitched my shoes across the room and wiped the red stain from my lips I would have.

We were in our father’s world, however, any act of rebellion was a death wish granted, especially for my autistic younger brother.

The tie felt constricting and he hated tight things as much as I detested the color red. He had sensory issues and I had emotional ones. We were the world to one another and today that world was about to be annihilated.

“He has to wear it,” Perry complained as he helped Rita up from the ground.

Rita, my servant, wasn’t too old to gain her footing, but tired — we all were.

“I know,” I snapped back, not really meaning to be testy. “Rie,” I turned to my brother. “I’ll make it loose, okay. You won’t feel it.”

“If he looks messy, your dad will string me up.” Which probably was a legitimate worry for Perry.

“You claim to be an expert on Autism Spectrum Disorder,” I knew that was a lie, Perry probably looked over a list of Enclave Visa Exclusionary Employment options and figured he could fake an ASD expert. “You know better than to bind something around his neck. His clothes don’t have tags for a reason. Sensory processing disorder... ring any bells?” I was so irritated.

It wasn’t really Perry’s fault.

“Your dear ol’ dad sets people on fire for fun. When he says Orion needs to wear a tie, he’s going to fucking wear one.” I didn’t envy Perry’s job at all.

“And he’ll wear it, just give me a minute.” I tried to slow the train, careening us towards destruction, down by stalling anyway I could.

“Your father is waiting,” Rita chimed in. “He’s texted twice already.”

My father be damned.

“Rie,” I refocused on my brother. “I’m going to put this around your neck.” He glared at me and flinched. “But, I won’t tighten it, just let it go loose. Dad says you’ve got to have it on.” I looked straight at him, though his eye contact was a little dodgy. “Because it has magical powers. So when someone looks at you or says something, touch the tie and it will make you invisible. That way no one will bother you.” I wasn’t above lying to Orion to keep him safe.

I loved Orion too much to see him hurt. I’d rather he believed a whimsical lie than suffer disparaging words. I also didn’t need my father hurting anyone for not making this day perfect, because that was the game he wanted to play. I had to be stunning, because he was powerful, and tonight would see me married off with an alliance forged. My father was

omnipotent, but in order to survive in New York, post All Death, you had to be a God.

The plagues were before my time. The last mutated strain killed off most of the world's citizens, then petered out seventeen years ago when I was about two, but the aftermath of death remained. My brother and I lived with our drug lord father in New York, the last state left of the United States, which had conquered the remaining allied states when resources disappeared.

New York was the only territory to have the forethought to create an enclave system where communities were separated into faiths, beliefs, and shared interests, allowing for harmonious living and smaller populations to house and feed.

Today New York covered the uppermost part of the former United States to the Canadian border. All of what was previously Canada, the Northwestern United States and the West Coast, was wild and housed shifter communities. Vampires co-existed with humans in New York, England and New Beijing, which incorporated the remaining inhabitants of China, Mongolia, Russia, and India. Small vampire and human populations lived in Japan and Africa, known as Kenya Common, covering the majority of Africa, and the Kenyan Coast along the southern shoreline, though the communities were far apart and scattered. The last region inhabited by humans and vampires was found in Belize composed of inhabitants from South and Central America. The rest lived wild and unincorporated in the empty lands of fallen countries.

Paranormal citizens showed up just after the plagues. I'd never known a world without vampires, shifters, angels, and various other humanoid creatures. I didn't interact with them, but I knew they existed. My world, however, was just me, my brother — and our father, the king of the New York drug cartel.

"Oh thank God," Perry said and heaved a heavy sigh when I lightly cinched the tie up to Orion's neck, "you got it on."

"You look so handsome," I told Orion, ignoring Rita and Perry as I offered him my arm. "Shall we go to the party? I want cake, do you want cake?" A smile, finally Orion gave me a smile, it was small and skeptical, but I'd take it over nothing.

I wanted so much more than cake, even though we were never allowed to eat it. I wanted freedom and a way out of this arrangement, because, at the very least, I was going to be forced to live with a monster for the rest of my life.

"You will be a beautiful bride," Rita said with little enthusiasm, as she shepherded us into the great hall where hundreds of men meandered about.

My father's enclave filled a converted Catholic church formerly known as the Church of Jesus and the Holy Father with all of the volume and intricate detailing of an ornate place of worship. This marvel of religious architecture kept his enterprise safe from the unincorporated, the vampires, the shifters, and those God turned his eyes from. And that included us. I doubted God ever looked upon my father and his associates with any great love. How could he? Why would he?

Modern furnishings created a strange esthetic juxtaposition to all of the religious relics. Soft, steel blue, suede couches and chairs with heavy wooden tables complimented flowing, sash clad angels and naked cherubs. Somehow it all felt like a mockery of God. Heady scented candles, ornate wooden boxes hiding hallucinogenic contraband, women wearing too little, men wearing too much — this was my father's world.

As the only daughter of his second wife. I had a role to play in his empire, but not in his heart, since I wasn't biologically his child. I didn't have his love or acceptance and he'd never known mine. We both regarded one another with subtle contempt. I sought to help those in need, my father was intent on destroying them. With my mother, who he had purchased from an artist enclave, now dead, his goal for the evening was simple. It was time to cash in on me.

"Red suits you Noraya, you're stunning," Rita assured as Perry left us to tell my father we'd come downstairs to join his garish gathering.

"I don't want to be stunning." My heart beat erratically and my palms slicked at the thought of facing so many men, while wearing so little.

Orion fidgeted beside me, seeing the great room filled with strangers.

"Ahh, mm," he protested and moved from side to side.

His anxiety was going to escalate if we didn't get him somewhere with less stimulation.

"Hey," I touched his hand. "Look at the light," I pointed up to the stained glass window with the depiction of the Virgin Mary holding her precious son swaddled in draping cloth, clutching him to her chest.

At sunset the light filtering through the window cast a golden glow that made me think of Heaven with its rays of amber streaming onto the polished floors. Orion loved the light as much as I did, and so we watched it while we waited for my father.

By morning, I'd be given to a murderer, a drug manufacturer, or someone who had made a high enough bid. No good person had that kind of money post All Death and anyone who would buy an unwilling bride and force her into marriage, was the Devil.

Worse, I'd be leaving Orion at my father's mercy, he hated my brother and I shivered to think of what he might do to him. He wouldn't abuse his son outright, as he had me, Orion was his legitimately, but there were other ways to use Orion's special needs to my father's advantage. Those I feared. I was leaving my beautiful brother to monsters just as terrifying as the one I'd soon face — and I'd miss him.

"I can't do this," I told myself, in a whisper as I stayed close to Orion.

Rita heard me.

"Of course you can," she said, as she plastered a fake smile onto her face. "It's the happiest day of your life."

I gave her a pained look. "Please don't."

She flattened her lips.

"Maybe he won't be as bad," she said in a soft whisper, referring to the abusive man who pretended to be my father.

"He'll probably be worse," I whispered back.

My father would likely give me to the cruelest man he knew. Cameron Markum had little regard for his children. He'd said on many occasions that we were just the byproduct of a night in bed and so we were raised by nannies and guards. For me, I got the back of his hand, the sting of his whip, and the bite of his cane, because I looked like my mother and the man who my father allowed to sleep with her for a price. We were only commodities, never more, to him.

"You are too beautiful and you think that gives you power," he said when I refused to

play my cello for his associates.

"I don't, Father," I bowed my head, the dutiful child. "Mr. MCGovern is going to give me another geometry test and I must pass this one." I tried to explain.

"Is he more important than your father?" My dad leaned into me with his hands on his long wooden desk, that held a razor thin databoard and nothing more.

A man as powerful as my father needed just a few keystrokes to do his bidding. He was king enough to command the universe with an email. "No," I said quietly, standing before him.

"I am your master." His cruel eyes glared.

"Yes, Father." I marveled at the finely polished wood on his desk where dark cracks had been painted over with thick varnish, every imperfection sealed.

Anything to distract me from him, from what he was about to do. His footsteps tapped across the floor. Click. Click. Click. Stop. A metallic creak. I knew the sound too well. It haunted my dreams, as did other more horrific sounds, ones I heard in the dark recesses of my subconscious. He opened the cabinet where he kept his liquor — and his implements. A whip cracked and I sank to my knees.

"You think you're better than us." His steps moved unhurried across the floor until a metal tipped fall struck my back with such a punishing lash I fell forward, but quickly righted myself.

Another strike and my gown split. Air breezed through the tiny tear in my dress, as his whip came down again and red hot pain bloomed. Wetness, blood. Another crack and the striking tip had opened my skin.

I bit my lip until I tasted my own blood. That was all I needed, it softened the blows, the taste of skin, the wetness of my blood. No matter how many hits he delivered, I was able to pull myself away from it — from the searing pain and the sharp lances that sliced my flesh. The sting of agony brought me to a place that was neither here nor there. Nowhere. I became nothing.

I stayed silent while being beaten. I didn't whimper and hardly breathed. When my father was done he helped me stand because I couldn't do it on my own. His finger traced the injuries, admiring his work. I felt them drawing every line.

"Stay," he commanded, like I was a dog.

On his desk now was a pot of homemade salve, he must have brought it out with his whip. He dipped his finger in. The musty smell of medicinal mushrooms overpowered the air as he ran slick fingers over the wounds. "Never forget who you owe your life to." His words were slow, and deliberate. "I own you." Like a possession, not a progeny. "And I can kill you." I never understood why he hadn't.

"Yes, Sir," I whispered, bile rising from my belly at the feel of his oily fingers on my skin.

"Now get out there and play for them, all night if you have to. Let them see the consequences of your insubordination. Make them proud of your father's might."

He took me by the arm and dragged me into our parlor where men and a few women, dressed in nearly nothing, lounged shooting up synthetic heroin and snorting hot house cocaine. They did debauched things to one another, while I played the cello. My back burned with the fire

of my father's abuse, but I learned to never refuse him. He was the best teacher. I thought of escaping and taking my brother with me. All we had to do was get outside of the gates. We could run into the streets and face the vampires, or into the woods and be captured by shifters. Perhaps the disenfranchised would take us in? I didn't know what was beyond the walls of our compound. I'd only been outside a few times and on all of those occasions we took a car with blacked-out windows. I was willing to risk the unknown, because even death would have been better than living with a monster.

I stood in front of my father again in a room full of men. One of them would win me. My brother and my cello weren't on offer. When the auction ended I'd leave that ancient church, the only home I'd ever known, and become a wife without the last two things I had left in the world.

My father stood before me now, gleaming with joy? Pride? More likely it was triumph that put the glint in his eyes. I'd be out of his home, but not away from his abuse, as he kept his associates close. I'd be back to the church, perhaps daily, on the arm of a monster.

"Get him out of my sight," my father hissed under his breath to Perry. "I don't want him anywhere near her," my father said, looking at Orion, who had been mumbling and fidgeting with stress.

"Yes, of course," Perry said, nearly jumping on Orion.

"No," I blurted out, and I thought for a second my father might slap me, but he glanced over the endless sea of men in black suits, varied only by their sizes, hair styles and the colors of their skin.

My father realized that everyone was watching him and so he placed a well crafted smile upon his face, and bent to my ear so only I could hear him.

"I want the focus to be on you, Noraya," My father's gravel-toned voice did little to hide his irritation. "So many have come and I expect more to arrive all throughout the evening. You're worth too much money. I don't want him to scare them." The last words were said with venomous hatred.

"More likely he'll be scared by them." I talked back, knowing he wouldn't hit me in front of men who were willing to pay more than they had for their homes to secure me, so my father only sneered as I took Orion's hand.

"Just get him to his seat." Spit launched out from behind my father's clenched teeth, projecting with the effort he had made to stay his wrath.

Perry handed Orion the toy he'd hidden in his pocket for just this sort of diversion. It was a worn metal plane, Orion's favorite, with its blue paint faded and chipping, and suddenly that's all Orion cared about. He released my hand and grabbed for the plane, clutching it in his fingers. Before Perry could whisk him away, perhaps forever, well not forever, but we'd probably not get the chance to share the same kind of closeness again, I touched Orion's shoulder and he turned to me.

"I love you," I said, with tears welling in my eyes. "You are so beautiful and perfect. Don't let anyone make you believe differently. I know you Rie, I know the truth. Okay." He smiled, that bright brilliant smile that lit up his gray-blue eyes; he had heard me.

"Come on Rie, let's get to our seats," Perry said, dragging Orion away and that was it. I

watched my brother go.

All day I'd been keeping my feelings back trying to be as numb as possible, but watching Orion walk away, broke me. I muscled back tears. I didn't want to look weak, but inside, everything weighed me down like I'd been filled with boulders. The night had become hazy and heavy.

My father raised his hand and gestured to me while making his proclamation, "Noraya Markum, gentlemen!" Loud cheers and catcalls erupted as my father placed a cold kiss on my cheek. I nearly vomited when his hand came down on my shoulder. "This is going to be fun," he whispered, while gripping me hard enough to leave a mark with one hand as the other drifted effortlessly over my ass, touching too close to a place he knew he didn't belong.

I didn't say anything in response. I had been conditioned not to speak in public unless asked a question directly. I'd lost count of how many times he'd struck me for speaking my mind while my mother wailed in protest.

One of the men in that room, or on a journey to get there, would be the winner of the night's conquest. From the thousands of candles lighting the cavernous church to the quail that would be served, my father spared no expense, it was time to be rid of me.

"Shall we start our meal and open bids for this gorgeous creature?" My father's voice danced over the din of breathing, whispers, and hollering. He waved his arms in the air, a ceremonial gesture of commencement, squeezed my shoulder, and returned to his seat. "May the best man be married."

A servant pulled out a chair for me, next to my father, and poured red wine while another placed a whole quail on my plate. After the bird slobbered onto the white porcelain, sliding on its own juices, the servant garnished it with a heaping scoop of roasted vegetables. I marveled at the meal's exorbitant expense. Out on the streets, people were eating bugs and rats, but my father had quail and vegetables for all.

"Thank you," I said softly, without any intention of eating.

My insides rioted and food wasn't going to mix well with the tempest. The servant nodded and moved to the next guest seated at the table beside ours. Each person brought an envelope stamped with their seal and a sum of money inside. The one with the largest amount would be my husband. I picked at my vegetables and drank the wine as one man after the other came forward to place their bid. My father's face fluctuated between surprise, elation, and disappointment. I wouldn't know my fate until morning. As the bidding continued, guests would enjoy a burlesque show and later drugs, women, and unmentionable things.

Rooms were provided to sleep off the evening for those who wanted to awaken and know my father's choice, others would party all night long. The next night, I'd be wed in an elaborate ceremony. I raised my hand for the servant to pour more wine and my father glanced at me.

"Don't drink too much," he growled as he opened another envelope from the stack in front of him.

"Yes Father," I waved the servant away with an apologetic look.

I thought one more glass of wine would give me the confidence I needed to survive, but as it turned out, my father's careful control over everything would not allow it.

“Sir, May she be excused for a minute?” Every nerve in my body tensed, as Rita made her request.

“For what reason?” he barked, angry with her for speaking.

“To use the powder room, Sir, so I might fix her makeup.” This elicited whispers from around the room.

“Fine,” my father conceded.

“Come with me, miss,” Rita said, standing while summoning me to follow.

I didn’t say anything as I got up from the chair and walked with her into the hallway.

“Keep quiet,” she said, then marched into the nearest bathroom ahead of me and began to undress. “Take off your clothes,” she ordered. “You want to get out of here right? Do as I say and put this on.”

I didn’t ask questions, just undressed while she handed me pieces of her maid’s uniform. She took a neatly folded bundle from behind the sink and quickly put on a man’s tuxedo, then swept her hair into a felt hat. “Follow me.”

I left the bathroom with my heart racing and followed her down the candle-lit hallway to a door that led to the car park. Only the wealthiest people had cars and there were several parked in my father’s garage. Most were his, but not all. The guest’s drivers sat either smoking weed or gambling in small groups. Rita didn’t say anything, just led me past the other drivers, out of the garage, and down the driveway. A black car with dark-tinted windows and a massive solar reflector on the roof stopped in front of us. Rita opened the door to the backseat and pushed me in with too much force.

For a second I thought the driver might have been kidnapping me as a means to bypass the silent auction. I started to panic, but before he sped off into the empty streets, Rita jumped in next to me and slumped back against the soft black leather seat.

“I’m going to get killed,” she breathed as her entire body tensed.

“Mikael will protect you,” the driver’s voice had an otherworldly tenor, and because of it, I knew he wasn’t human.

“Where am I going?” I looked at Rita and asked.

“I’m sorry, Noraya,” is all she said. “They offered me and Christopher sanctuary. I’m finally free.”

I had no idea who Rita had sold me to. At least with my father’s disciples, I’d be living in a world I understood. If shifters or vampires abducted me, I’d be at the mercy of vicious beasts worse than those who were fading into the landscape behind me. I didn’t want to leave Orion, but if I were being kidnapped, there was no way I’d be able to get back to him. If the driver of our car was a vampire or worse, I’d be up against much more than one of my father’s thugs. I didn’t think that I might have gotten hurt or even killed if I jumped out, my rational mind had gone offline, and all I could feel was the need to run.

“Get my brother somewhere safe,” I begged and Rita gave me a pained look.

I was going to die one way or the other and since I wanted it to be on my terms, I opened the door and threw myself out of the speeding vehicle. The road bit into my arm, my leg, and my hip as my body bounced once, then once again. My head hit something hard and the rest was blackness.

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