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## **An Excerpt From: THE NIGHT OF MAYA**

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### **Chapter One**

She didn't recognize the place, yet the muffled thunder of distant crashing waves subdued her confusion. Somehow, she wasn't frightened of the strange meadow, unearthly flat and lacking traces of human influence as if civilization had never taken place. She rightly feared, though, not being there alone. Long before she could see him, she sensed his presence and understood, suddenly, that she had come looking for him. Nonetheless, he was the one who summoned her there.

Maya knew this man, how he emerged from darkness with a confident gaze that probed her soul. She forgot the many times she'd met him like this, and how, every time, she feared. When he came for her this night, she went to him, just as she had before, but she clutched her sense of self as if she would get lost in him, as if after this tryst, there was no going back to being herself again.

She didn't know his name. She had never heard his deep, warm voice. He was hers. She wanted him, had always wanted him. Never before could she believe there existed wanting like this. It wasn't just sex. It was the essence of being alive. Maya smiled at the full moon amidst thick, gray clouds. It was destiny.

They reached for each other at the same time. A gust of wind rushed between them, and they were in the air. His smile steadied her heart as she looked to the ground, at least ten feet below. He held her, hovering, and she didn't care right then to know how. She shut her eyes just to get a better sense of herself, which, like gravity, was fast slipping away. She couldn't even feel the clothes on her back, nor the folds of her dress shimmering around her legs. He was here, holding her hands, holding her in the air.

Who was he? Would he answer if she asked? When she opened her eyes to study him, he was naked, as was she. How and when their clothing disappeared, she couldn't say, nor did it matter much. Her gaze cascaded down his body. Just like that, need replaced destiny. While she admired his athletic perfection, his gaze held to hers with

unrestrained belonging. He was truly hers. All hers. When he embraced her and whispered “my Maya, my light”, her heart stopped. His words sounded like prophecy.

She tightened the grasp around his waist as she drew closer. Her tear fell on his shoulder when she pressed a kiss to his neck. “I love you,” she sighed and trembled. Why would she say that to him? The words, though, came on a deep whisper that was hardly accidental.

He enveloped her then, not with his arms because she already filled them, but with warmth that bound their two bodies into one, their breaths into a single breath. Still, his eyes didn’t tinge with the hunger of passion but beamed with surrender of an open heart.

Now, she had no body at all. She didn’t even have a thought, but her heart glowed in her chest like the moon above. She was full of him. He hadn’t even kissed her when she felt bitten on the shoulder. She staggered as the unyielding rush tore at gentler sensations. The ocean sounded much closer when his lips found hers. She dug her nails into his flesh. If she answered him, could she hold on, or would she be swallowed by eternity?

Before she could ponder the question, her lips parted. Like a desert storm, he plundered her mouth, burning up every thread of the tenderhearted surrender he showed before. They were no longer upright either but reclined on the soft, airy bed, his body over hers, taking her as much as melting into her. Dazed by the tumultuous possession, she gasped at the fire in her skin. Beneath her lips, his skin turned cool. His sighs stirred a moist breeze that quenched her fire. Clarity whipped through her, tightening her senses like a high wire. Arching back, she offered her breasts. His teeth nibbled on one, his thumb stroked the other. With legs clamped around him, she ground her hips into his.

His head came up, his fierce eyes binding hers before he descended again to feast on her mouth.

“Hold me! Hold me!” she screamed when he free fell into her. She went mad. He reached so deep, so completely, that her arms flailed against the air they floated on as if to fight away the ecstasy she couldn’t contain. Already, she quickened in shattering pulses as he lifted her higher still.

“Hold me,” she cried out again when she started to plummet. Desperately, she clawed the air, but he was beyond reach. She was falling into a bottomless pit, falling forever.

“No! No!” The ground was—

Everything was wet when Maya’s eyes fluttered open in panic. Her jaws were squeezed so tightly that her teeth hurt, and the knuckles were white from clutching the plush panda bear. Although naked in the cool morning air, she was covered with sweat, and the sheets were soaked. Lifting a hand to wipe her forehead, she took a deep breath.

“That dream again,” she sighed. “Dear God.”