



DEVIL'S DEAL

JAGA AND THE DEVIL

— BOOK 1 —

LAYLA FAE

DEVIL'S DEAL: A DARK FANTASY ROMANCE

LAYLA FAE

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CONTENT NOTE

Triggering Content

Please, be aware this is a dark fantasy romance. It is not safe in any way, and both the romance and the world are rife with dark elements. There is a lot of triggering content in this book. To see the full, uncensored list of triggers, please visit my website www.laylafae.com. Stay safe!

Folklore Representation

While this book is based on Slavic myths and folklore, it is not a completely accurate representation of either. Story and characters always come first for me, and besides, there is not one agreed upon version of Slavic mythology. There are multiple versions of every myth.

And of course, gods are bound to change once you turn them into book characters. Mythology gods and beasts are often flat and one-dimensional. I

couldn't allow them to stay that way.

That said, I did research in preparation for writing the *Jaga and the Devil* series. To see my sources, check the bibliography attached at the end. My sources are all in Polish.

This Is a Work of Fiction

All the characters, locations, events, the philosophy, ontology and metaphysics of the world, as well as other elements in this book are fictional. The world presented is not modeled on any existing place or historical period. This is a fantasy novel.

The opinions and judgments expressed by the characters do not reflect the author's opinions and judgments.

Plot Arc

This is the first book in this series. While the individual arc for this book's plot is resolved at the end, the story of *Jaga and the Devil* is far from being over.

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

This book uses the original Polish spellings for character names and folklore concepts. The spellings don't include Polish diacritics to avoid formatting issues.

To make reading this story easier for readers unfamiliar with Polish or other Slavic languages, here is a brief guide to teach you the original pronunciation of the Polish words if that's something you're interested in.

General Rules

Wherever you see a *w* in a Polish word, it's to be read like a *v*, so *Woland* is to be read *Voland*.

A Polish *sz* corresponds to the English *sh* sound, and a Polish *cz* – to the *ch* sound.

The Polish *c* isn't read as the *k* sound, like in English, but as *ts*.

And *j* is read as *y*, so for example, *Jaga* will be pronounced *Yaga*.

Some of the Polish sounds have no English equivalents.

Below is a detailed pronunciation guide for key words and names that appear throughout the book. If you don't think it will improve your reading

experience, feel free to ignore it!

Main Characters

Jaga – *Yah-gah*

Woland – *Voh-lah-nd*

Other Characters

Alina – *Ah-lean-ah*

Alojzy – *Ah-loy-zi*

Alutka – *Ah-loot-kah*

Benia – *Beh-nyah*

Bogdan – *Bog-dahn*

Bogna – *Bog-nah*

Chors – *Kh-ors*

Czart – *Cha-rt*

Czeslawa – *Che-swah-vah*

Dadzbog – *Dah-zh-boog*

Daga – *Dah-gah*

Darobor – *Dah-roh-bor*

Diabel – *Dyah-behw*

Diwa – *Dee-vah*

Dola – *Doh-lah*

Helena – *Heh-leh-nah*

Ida – *Ee-duh*

Jacek – *Yah-tsek*

Jana – *Yah-nah*

Janek – *Yah-neck*

Jagusia – *Yah-goo-sha*

Jaromir – *Yah-roh-meer*

Jarota – *Yah-roh-tah*

Jutrzenka – *Y-oot-shen-kah*

Kalina – *Kah-lean-ah*

Kusy – *Koo-si*
Lotta – *Lot-tah*
Lubka – *Loo-b-kah*
Ludwika – *Loo-d-vee-kah*
Magda – *Mag-duh*
Maja – *Mah-yah*
Marika – *Mah-ree-kah*
Marlena – *Mah-r-leh-nah*
Milka – *Meel-kah*
Miroslaw – *Meer-oh-swav*
Mokosz – *Moh-kosh*
Nyja – *Ni-yah*
Ola – *Oh-lah*
Perun – *Peh-rune*
Rod – *Rod*
Rodzanica – *Roh-d-zah-nee-tsa*
Roza – *Roh-zah*
Sagna – *Sah-gnah*
Sara – *Sah-rah*
Sobiemir – *Soh-byeh-meer*
Strzybog – *St-shi-boog*
Svarog – *Sfah-roog*
Swietko – *Sfyeh-tkoh*
Szatan – *Shut-ahn*
Tolimir – *Toh-lee-meer*
Tomek – *Toh-mehk*
Waclaw – *Vah-ts-wahv*
Wanda – *Vah-n-duh*
Weles – *Veh-less*
Wiosna – *Vyoh-snah*
Wisla – *Vees-wah*

Slavic Mythology and Folklore

Bies – *B-yes*

Domowy – *Doh-moh-vi*

Dziady – *D-zyah-di*

Klobuk – *Quo-book*

Kobold – *Koh-bold*

Kupala – *Koo-pah-wah*

Licho – *Lee-kho*

Mamuna – *Mah-moon-ah*

Nawie – *Nah-vyeh*

Nawka – *Nah-v-kah*

Poludnica – *Po-wood-nee-tsa*

Rusalka – *Roos-ah-w-kah*

Slawa – *Swah-vah*

Strzyga – *St-shi-gah*

Upir – *Ooh-pee-r*

Wila – *Vee-wah*

Wyraj – *Vih-rah-y*

Zerca – *Zeh-r-tsah*

Zmora – *Z-moh-rah*



DEDICATION

*If anyone ever said you need Jesus in your life, let me correct them. You need the devil in your life—the kind who will f**k all that's holy out of you.*



CHAPTER ONE

SACRIFICE

If the digital book opened on this page, please scroll back to see the Content Note.

I'm running through the dusky forest. Tall ferns whip my face, but I have no air to scream or even moan with pain. Every breath hurts, my lungs and stomach burning with effort. I don't know how long I've been running.

All I know is that I'll never make it.

I grab the trunk of an oak to turn faster, veering left. The rough bark scratches my palm, the salty sweat stinging. *Please*, I beg in my mind, but I know no one will answer. The chasm of helplessness in my chest grows bigger with every whoop of laughter behind me.

"Run, little devil! It will be over soon!"

I don't dare look back. I know I stand no chance. They are older than me, their long legs navigating the undergrowth with ease and confidence. They cackle and howl like wolves. I'm terrified. My heart can't beat any faster, my body can't grow any tenser.

A wild raspberry bush leaves gashes on my bare arm as I hurl past it. I have no air left to hiss with pain.

“Run, run! Lead us to your beastly father!” Daga’s scream is raw with rage and much closer than the others.

Panic slams into me. I try to speed up, but my legs are already blurs of white in the dappled green. I’m twelve years old, fast and strong for my age. But I can’t compete with a fourteen-year-old girl who eats to satiety every day.

My breath wheezes out of me, as loud as the bellows in the smithy. Daga’s father is the village smith. When my mother went to him because her sickle broke, he gave her a price twice higher than normal. She paid in silence, keeping her head low.

But that was a few moons ago. It’s autumn now. Late autumn that leaves frost on the grass at night. It’s chilly today, but I don’t feel the cold, my body heating up from exertion.

“I’ll get you, devil’s spawn!”

That’s Jaromir, Daga’s beau. He’s sixteen and the biggest of my three chasers. He’s an apprentice at the smithy, and his parents own the largest field by the village.

He could have caught me hours ago, but Jaromir likes to draw out the pain. Last fall, he tied me up and lowered me into an old well hardly anyone uses these days. I hung there from a rope, half-submerged and shaking from the cold, until my mother found me in the evening.

He could have just thrown me in the river where the current is the strongest, but then, I’d be dead in minutes.

And I don’t think he wanted to kill me back then. Just make me suffer.

“The devil can’t save you, witch!”

My chest burns so badly, I want to cough. Every breath is a struggle. I know I’m doomed. Before, they only tormented me for fun. They called me a witch back then, too, but it wasn’t for real. Not like it’s now.

I’m not the devil’s child. Everyone knows my father, Ratko, was a good-for-nothing bard. He left shortly after I was born and came back two years later so sick, he only spent a week in my mother’s cottage before he died. Wiosna told me. I wasn’t old enough to remember him.