



SOMBRA
DEMONS



MATED TO THE MONSTER

INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLING AUTHOR
SARAH SPADE

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FOREWORD

Thank you for checking out [*Mated to the Monster*](#)!

This is a steamy monster romance (intended for 18+) with explicit scenes and some profanity. It's the love story between Shannon, a human woman, and Malphas, a Sombra demon. He has two forms: a demonic form (illustrated on the hardback cover) and the shadowy shape (illustrated on the eBook/paperback's cover), both with demon traits like a bulky size, fangs, and horns. It relies heavily on the fated mates trope, as well as instalove—at least on Mal's part. For Shannon, she at least makes it a week before she realizes that she's meant to be mated to her monster.

It's also the beginning of a series of standalones with each eventual story featuring a different couple.

I hope you enjoy!

xoxo,
Sarah

CHAPTER 1

YELLOW CHALK



SHANNON

t takes me three stores to find colored chalk.

The fact that I kept looking instead of pulling my phone out and placing an order for a pack is all anyone needs to know to figure out how I tick. Once I set my mind on something, I have no *off* switch. There is no *wait*. I make decisions—sometimes recklessly so—and I never second-guess them. I'll keep going and going until I accomplish what I set out to do, or something else stops me first.

Or I get bored.

Or distracted.

Tori says I'm impulsive. She's not wrong. Still, I can also be pretty single-minded when I want to. Like now. I've had this old-fashioned, leather-bound book for a couple of weeks, ever since I bought it on a whim from the used bookstore a couple of blocks away from my apartment. To be honest, I totally forgot about it until last night after work when I was searching my closet for something else. I saw the bag I tossed in there all those weeks ago, remembered Kennedy selling me the book, then figured it might be worth it to see what was inside of it.

I knew it was a spellbook. I mean, it has a pentacle—an inverted star whose five points touch the circle surrounding it—embossed on the cover. There's no title on the front, no author, either, though the cover page simply says: *Grimoire du Sombra*, whatever that means.

When I opened it up last night, choosing a page at random, I was delighted to see that it was a true love spell. Like, really? I thought Kennedy was pulling my leg when she said it was a spellbook, but I was charmed enough by its uniqueness that I bought it anyway.

But a love spell?

Heck, *yeah*, I was gonna try that out.

Of course, that led me to the chalk conundrum. Before attempting the spell, there were instructions on what I had to do, and when one of them was to draw a protective symbol with a piece of yellow chalk, I had to hold off until this morning when I could find some. I had everything else I would need—an open space, a clear floor, cooking salt, and a willingness to be loved... seriously, that's what it said—except for the chalk.

But now I have it. Score one for Shannon!

It's mid-afternoon by the time I return to my apartment with my shopping bag. As eager as I am to amuse myself with an attempt at "spell-casting", I toss the bag of chalk next to the book and the container of salt already on top of my messy, unmade bed, then go to the kitchen to throw together a quick lunch.

Hey. Girl's gotta eat. Can't summon your true love on an empty stomach, you know?

Once I've dropped all of my dishes into my sink, I throw my hair up into a ponytail, roll my sleeves back, then rub my hands together. Snorting to myself, I think, "Time to do some magic," then go and grab the spellbook.

It's old. Like, *really* old. The pages are super thin and yellowed, and they have that musty old book smell that makes me want to curl up on my couch and read into the night.

Maybe after I check out this spell and laugh about how ridiculous I was for even trying, I'll flip through the rest of it just for shits and giggles. So far, I've only paid attention to the one page—the one spell—and now that I have my chalk, I flip right to it.

At the top of the page, the words **VERUS AMOR** are printed in a heavy block typeface. Someone has scrawled *true love* beneath it in a delicate script that takes me longer than I'll ever admit to make out. Luckily, the rest of the handwritten comments decorating the margins are in a legible print.

The previous owner of this book must've taken the spells seriously. I figure, why not, and decide to do the same. If they say to use yellow chalk to draw the protective symbol, then pour salt in a circle around that, I don't see the harm in following the instructions precisely.

Besides, it's not like it's going to work or anything...

It's the weekend. Saturday to be exact. I don't go back to the office until Monday, and I didn't have any plans except for my daily trip to The Beanery where I get my caffeine mix and moon over Derek whenever he's on shift. One of these days I might work up the nerve to let the barista know I'm into him, but since that's not today, why shouldn't I mess around with an old book of spells?

Way I see it, jokingly casting a love spell can't hurt. Either I end up with the love of my life—maybe I'll get lucky and it'll turn out to be the swoon-worthy Derek—or I have a ridiculous story to tell my co-workers on Monday.

So, the first thing I need is a piece of yellow chalk. Grabbing the bag from the dollar store, I rip open the small box of chalk I managed to find after walking around all of Jericho this morning; my neighborhood is a suburb of a big city, so while I have a car, I usually prefer to walk down our pretty stacked Main Street. Makes it a little harder to find small necessities like chalk, but when there's a will, there's a way, and now I have five different colors in a pack of ten.

Rifling through the box, I see pink, blue, green—*ah*.

"Yellow chalk, check. Let's go."

With the symbol drawn in the margin as a guide, I kick aside my throw rug and use the chalk to draw another pentacle on the hardwood floor in my bedroom. There are a couple of sigils that go around the points of the star. It takes me a good ten minutes to copy them. I only hope I did that right.

That done, I reach for the salt. The instructions say, for added protection, I should go around the drawing twice so that the circle is complete. I'm not really sure why I need protection when the point of this spell is to manifest my true love to me, but I do it anyway. In fact, I use every last bit of salt in the container, just in case, then toss the empty.

What's next?

Wiping the chalk dust and stray granules against my jeans, I peer down at the page. The old owner had drawn a bracket around one part of the printed page, then a second around a paragraph at the bottom. They also

wrote *manifest* near the first part, and *promise* plus a star next to the second paragraph.

Okay, then.

It's not in English. The printed part, I mean. Like the title of the spell at the top, it's in a weird language I don't understand; unlike the title, there is no translation. I typed a couple of words into my phone last night to see what they said, but apart from a few of them flagging as Latin, some as French, others as Portuguese, it doesn't make any real sense.

Then again, it's a spell. Is it supposed to? For all I know, the mysterious author took a mishmash of foreign words, added them to some they made up themselves, and passed it along as a "grimoire" for gullible schmucks like me.

The downside to this not being any real language is I have no freaking clue how to pronounce the words. So, hoping for the best, I give it the old college try, grateful that I live alone.

If I was back home with my parents, or I had a roommate like I did in my early twenties, I would never live this down. Of course, they'd expect something like this from me, but I'd still be razed until the end of time.

The spell's a mouthful. I stumble over the words, only committing to the bit because I went so far as to find the yellow chalk in the first place. This, I decide, is what happens when you have a three-year celibacy streak. You resort to pretending you can cast a true love spell in the sanctity of your messy bedroom.

Only... I don't think it's pretend.

I can't believe it. I really freaking can't. If it wasn't for me seeing it with my own two eyes, I'd call bullshit, but tell that to the sparking sound and plume of smoke that suddenly appears in the middle of my chalk drawing as soon as I finish saying the last word in the first section of the spell.

Something... uh, something's happening.

Welp. That can't be good.

Slamming the book closed, I toss it on the bed behind me in case I need both of my hands. I don't know why I would, but when the smoke starts to

darken, then widens before revealing a split in the air, I should probably be prepared to defend myself.

And, yes, that certainty lasts for maybe twenty seconds. After that, I'm completely paralyzed as I watch the split turn into an opening about as big as a hula hoop.

Hot air rushes out of it. Like, open a roasting oven set to 450 degrees and get a face full of dry heat *hot*. It slams into me, even a few feet away, and I have to squint to look past it.

I gasp. Can't move, but I choke on my next breath.

Is that Hell? It... it looks like what I imagine Hell might. The sky is dark. Shadowed. A bright red sun—or maybe moon—hangs low in the distance, a beacon that immediately draws my attention. Its illumination reveals a ground made of black-and-grey ash, with bleached white skulls bathed in red dotting the landscape.

The skulls... they all have horns.

"What... what the—"

A patch of the sky falls to the ground. At least, that's what I thought until I notice that it's a dark, shadowy figure arrowing toward me—and the hole that's still wide open.

The realization that I actually created some kind of portal *and* that I might have accidentally invited this shadow thing to come into my room is enough to break my momentary spell of paralysis. I jump away from the salt circle as if that's going to stop that shadow from rushing closer.

It doesn't, but there's got to be some way to shut this portal.

Only... *how*?

The spellbook, my panicked mind screams at me. I need the book.

Where did I put that stupid thing?

My bed! That's right, I left it on my bed. Without taking my eyes off of the portal to Hell, I back up against the mattress, groping wildly with my left hand. I get a fistful of blanket, fingers scrabbling against my sheet before I finally hit the pitted leather cover.

Yes!

I grab the book, quickly flipping to the page I marked with a receipt from The Beanery. I drag my trembling finger down until I hit the last line I read. I go to the paragraph printed beneath it, the one with the big star drawn in pen right next to it.

It's gotta be important. A way to close the portal perhaps?

I really hope so.

It's written in the same language. I stumble over the first two words, but before I can read the rest, I realize I'm too late.

The mass of shadows has slipped right through the portal.

Crossing from that hellish dimension into my bedroom, it stops as soon as the last vestiges of the shadow makes it through. The portal immediately winks out behind it, leaving the black shadows in the center of the circle of salt, hovering directly over my chalk drawing of the pentacle.

My jaw drops.

CHAPTER 2

SURVIVAL INSTINCTS



SHANNON

As I watch in a mixture of fear and morbid curiosity, the shadows actually take on a shape. Still mostly amorphous, there's no denying the sharp horns jutting out of the head, or the hulking body that forms next. Eyes appear about two feet higher than mine; they're a glowing golden color that seem like a pair of headlights shining out of a dark face framed with flowing, shoulder-length black hair. Weirdo characters form along the side of the shape—its arms, maybe—and they have the same glow as its eyes.

The whole shadow monster is like something out of my worst nightmares. I'm too scared to scream, to *move*, and I can't do anything but watch as it continues to form. The more I stare with my mouth hanging open, the more I can pick out other features—and *monster* is right. It has fangs. When it opens its mouth, forming a break in its shadowy lips, I see gleaming white fangs, and thick fingers that end in pointed claws.

And that's not all.

Right at the juncture of its legs, forming under my shameless gaze, is a shadowy dick that looks like a freaking *club*. It fits the monster's size, but that doesn't mean it isn't the most terrifying—and, honestly, impressive—cock I've ever seen.

It—no, *he*—he isn't done transforming. The shadows settle against my meticulously drawn chalk lines before his feet become solid. As soon as they do, the rest of him instantly changes. Instead of a floating shadowy shape, he is a seven-foot-tall horned monster with black hair, golden eyes, dark red skin, and muscles bigger than my head.

Holy fucking shit.

I blink. Mostly because I can't believe what I'm seeing, and I really, really hope that this is a figment of my imagination brought on by reading that