

# *Cursed*

*A Demon Kissed Novel*

BY

H.M. WARD

# *Cursed: A Demon Kissed*

H.M. WARD

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## *Chapter 1*

A speck of pure red light shone through the darkness. I could see him. My breath caught in my throat. Collin lay on his side with one hand extended before him, like he was trying to crawl away from something before he collapsed. I swallowed hard at the sight of his appearance trying not to let my emotions overcome me. His filthy clothing was torn to shreds and his dark hair was matted to his scalp. Deep black lines were etched into his body. It was as if long blades pierced his flesh and the wounds were left open to putrefy. A surge of rage shot from deep within me, curling my fingers into fists. I had to get to Collin. If I could get to him, I could get us both out of here. But I had to reach him first.

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My eyes darted through the darkness. The red light formed a jagged circle in the rock surrounding Collin's body before it fell into darkness. He was separated by a chasm that stretched between us. Collin groaned, and the hollow place in my chest felt like it would burst. I had to get to him. Now. But, time was limited. I only had until someone actually saw me. And in this darkness, someone could have been standing next to me the whole time, and I wouldn't have known. My Martis vision didn't work as well down here, though I didn't know why.

Silently, I moved forward. My throat tightened in response. Crouching low to the ground, I moved slowly towards him, stretching out one leg at a time. My eyes darted through the shadows looking for other signs that demons were near, but there were none. Why was he alone? Did they really think that I would stay away? Did they think I would abandon him? My other leg stretched forward, as I shifted my body slowly toward the rim of the abyss. It was illuminated with the slightest trace of red light that moved and flickered like fire.

Suddenly the shadows that shrouded my body tried to retreat. They attempted to sever themselves from within. The sensation made me want to scream out, but I held onto them tightly. I bit my lip to muffle the sound, hoping I could hold them in place a little bit longer. Without their protective layers I would be exposed. The demons would sense the Martis blood that flowed through my veins immediately. As I neared the rim, I saw that there were

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demons on the other side. They were behind Collin's limp body with their deformed backs facing toward me.

As I slid closer to the edge of the rim the red light licked across my face, and I peered over. It was then that I felt the bond tug sharply. I looked up at Collin. His blue eyes were wide open, staring at me. He didn't move, but the expression on his face conveyed more pain than I could bear. His thoughts brushed my mind, *Don't come closer. He's here. He kept me alive, waiting for you. Don't come.*

*I'll get you out,* I replied silently. *It'll be all right... As soon as I can reach you, you'll be safe.* Collin's blue eyes slid closed as he lost consciousness.

My heart raced, thundering in my ears. The shadows that shrouded me were trying to sever themselves from me. I clenched my stomach hard, knowing I had to hold them in place. But, I was losing. There was a force greater than my own, calling them away. I could no longer contain them. Slowly the shadows were stripped from my body. Their cold presence was ripped painfully out of my throat, one by one. As the shadows retreated, the demons slowly turned. I sucked in a sharp breath as dozens of glowing red eyes landed on me. There was a moment when nothing happened. I wasn't certain if the demons would recognize me or not, but there wasn't time to think about it. The shock that held them motionless broke, and the demons rushed towards me with their razor sharp teeth exposed through sneering lips.

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Fear threatened to freeze me in place, but I wouldn't let it. There was no time left. I focused all my attention on the ruby stone on my finger and effonated. Searing heat shot through my body in a single burst before I reappeared next to Collin. Crouching quickly, I gripped his limp hand in mine. There was a commotion among the demons as they tried to figure out where I went. A smug smile slid across my face as the crushing fear in my chest began to ease. I'd made it. We'd be gone before they could stop us.

But, all my attention was focused on the demons, and I didn't notice the enormous inky shadow that had stretched out above us. As I looked up, my voice ripped out of my throat in a raw scream. Massive black scales covered the beast's body as it descended on us like a hawk, poised to strike. Four gnarled finger-like claws curved grotesquely as black blades elongated from its flesh. The winged monster descended rapidly with the wind screeching around it. It made a horrid cat-like shriek as it descended, amplified to a deafening volume. Between the ear piercing cries from its massive maw, the razor sharp claws, and the cracking of its enormous black veined wings, uncontrollable terror shot through me.

My voice rang in my ears as I screamed. Shaking, I pulled Collin into my arms, and focused on the ruby. Effonating two people was dangerous, but I could do it. It was part of the powers that I possessed from the tainted blood that flowed through my veins. If I did it wrong, I would kill us both. But if I didn't do it fast enough, we would both die. The heat that preceded effonating blossomed quickly and licked my belly from within. Only a few more seconds and that glorious burst of agonizing pain would transport our bodies away

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from here. We would be safe. But, fate didn't allow us a few seconds. It didn't allow us any. As the heat licked my stomach, the beast's massive taloned paw materialized above us. The gnarled bones flexed as the serpent cried out. With a single swift movement the creature slammed its massive claws down on top of us.

Sweat covered my face as I sat up screaming. My fingers desperately tried to find Collin's hand, but only grabbed air. Sucking in sharply, I wiped the tears from my eyes, and pulled my knees into my chest. "That's the third time that I had the same vision," I rasped in a shaky voice.

Shannon's hand was on my shoulder. She squeezed it, as the trembling worked its way out of my muscles. "The one with the dragon?"

I nodded, feeling too freaked to talk. That was the third time that I'd seen my attempt to save Collin fail. And it was the third time that I'd seen my own death



**ANTICIPATED RELEASE DATE OF CURSED BY H.M. WARD:**

**AUGUST 31, 2011**

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*CURSED* IS THE 2<sup>nd</sup> BOOK IN THE *DEMON KISSED* SERIES.

Pre-ordering for a limited number of signed copies of *CURSED* will appear on the official site this summer.

For more locations selling *DEMON KISSED* please visit:

[www.DemonKissed.com/order.htm](http://www.DemonKissed.com/order.htm)

Stop by and say hi on our official facebook fan page:

[www.facebook.com/DemonKissed](http://www.facebook.com/DemonKissed)

## **REVIEWS OF *DEMON KISSED* BY H.M. WARD**

### **Codi Malpass' Review – May 8, 2011**

#### **5 out of 5 stars**

"I was sucked into this book as soon as I read the first few pages. The amount of detail about the setting and the characters is amazing as well as the length of imagination in this book. There's enough romance in the story to keep you satisfied...even if it is kind of challenging for it to happen. I don't really like books with sloppy kisses and "I love you"s on every page. I can't really think of any other word for it other than phenomenal. H.M. Ward deserves a freaking award to rival all awards ever given. Another thing I like was the ending line...that made me smile and laugh when I read it. I can't wait for the second book to come out and I just hope that it's as good as this book was. Something else I'd like to say is that if I was a producer, I'd probably do anything to make this into a movie and if they ever do...they will have a lot of weight on their shoulders because it'd be hard to make a movie as good as this book."



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## **Amy's review Apr 10, 2011**

### **5 of 5 stars**

"Wow! The story line was great, and the concept of the book was something I've never read before. There were so many twists that I couldn't predict anything that happened. I was kept guessing the entire time. Books like this are a rare find, especially when not that many people know about them. So I'm spreading the word! Read this book! You won't regret it! The sequel can't come out soon enough!"

## **Allie B.'s review – April 20, 2011**

### **5 out of 5 stars**

"This is one of the rare finds where the story draws you in and refuses to let go. Narrated in such detail, you are taken on an epic journey that will make you feel a part of Ivy Taylor's world, with a vested interest in each character. It takes an extraordinary piece of literature to drive the emotions and senses felt while reading this novel. Demon Kissed is the beginning of an amazing adventure...."

## **Michelle C's review – May 3, 2011**

### **5 out of 5 stars**

"Demon Kissed is a must read!! I was hooked on it just from chapter on during the free preview by H.M. Ward on the Demon Kissed Facebook page (Go check it out if you haven't yet!!)It drove me crazy waiting for it to be published but it was so worth the wait!! I couldn't put it down until I knew Ivy Taylor's epic story!! You get pulled into her world and feel every turn of event like it's truly happening!! H.M. Ward is a very, very gifted author and I love

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how the book is full of her voice; it's in no way fake or robotic like some other books. You get the sense of a real person's thoughts from Ivy's point of view, the exact way you and I think too!! I can't wait to read more of Ivy's world and see how her life turns out!! I advise you to buy this NOW!! You won't regret it!! I'm off to re-read Demon Kissed for the umpteenth time while I wait for the next in series...please hurry Holly and big guys publishing it a little faster would be beyond awesome, oh and start filming the movie too please, please, please!! :D”

**Jennifer C.'s review – May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

**5 out of 5 stars**

Demon Kissed exceeded every expectation I had prior to beginning the first chapter. I believe a great book engages the reader's imagination, and provides opportunities for an emotional connection with the characters. As one that should probably join BA (Book-a-holics Anonymous), more often than not I have already forgotten the title, story line, and characters of my latest read as the cover is closing. However, before long I was emotionally invested in Ivy and hitting the “next” button with bated breath. I found myself having moments of cardiac arrest, and wildly swinging from one emotion to the next in a single heartbeat. At times I even wanted to throw my reader across the room, except I would never get to finish the book as my reader would then be broken. Demon Kissed is one of the few books I've read since January that has held my attention beyond the final page. With the book's end, H. M. Ward gives one last gift to her readers. Her last gift to the reader is the anticipation of rejoining Ivy as she attempts to find truth in the omissions, lies, and darkness that surround her new life. And of course as she continues to follow her heart. I look forward to taking the journey with Ivy as she matures into a woman of strength and principle despite the uncertainty of her future. :D (And I must say thank you ... I now glance at the right eyebrow of everyone as I approach - ya know - just in case. :P)