



Burning Dawn (Angels of the Dark Book 3)

By Gena Showalter

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New York Times bestselling author Gena Showalter returns with a sizzling Angels of the Dark tale about a winged warrior renowned for his ruthlessness, and the woman who becomes his obsession....

A tormented past has left Thane with an insatiable need for violence, making him the most dangerous assassin in the skies. He lives by a single code: no mercy. And as he unleashes his fury on his most recent captor, he learns no battle could have prepared him for the slave he rescues from his enemy's clutches—a beauty who stokes the fires of his darkest desires.

Elin Vale has her own deep-rooted scars, and her attraction to the exquisite warrior who freed her challenges her every boundary. But Thane's unwavering determination to protect her means she must face her greatest fears—and enter a world in which passion is power, and victory means breathtaking surrender.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Showalter's signature blend of sizzling attraction, breathtaking worlds, and lethal stakes rocks me every time!"-Sylvia Day, #1 New York Times bestselling author

"Showalter does her magic with an intricately developed world, complex and intensive character arcs and dark, compelling paranormal themes. She releases that literary punch to the gut with excruciatingly detailed scenes that haunt the senses long after reading the pages."-USA Today on Wicked Nights

"The Lords of the Underworld series...keeps getting more satisfying. Sometimes with a long-running series, characters or storylines can run their course, but not with Showalter's talent. The chemistry has never been hotter and both the characters and the world they live in are beautifully detailed."-RT Book Reviews on The Darkest Craving

"One of the premier authors of paranormal romance."-#1 New York Times bestselling author Kresley Cole

"Passion, humor, pulse-pounding action and just plain fun...Showalter's books are always a refreshing escape!"-New York Times bestselling author Lara Adrian

"One of Showalter's biggest strengths is her ability to create wounded characters who are riveting and intense, but who also hold out the hope of redemption."-RT Book Reviews on Beauty Awakened

"Bold and witty, sexy and provocative."-New York Times bestselling author Carly Phillips on Animal Instincts

"With compelling stories and memorable characters, Gena Showalter never fails to dazzle."—Jeaniene Frost, New York Times bestselling author

About the Author

Gena Showalter is the New York Times and USA TODAY bestselling author of over fifty books, including the acclaimed Lords of the Underworld and Angels of the Dark series, and the White Rabbit Chronicles. She writes sizzling paranormal romance, heartwarming contemporary romance, and unputdownable young adult novels, and lives in Oklahoma City with her family and menagerie of dogs. Visit her at GenaShowalter.com.

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He lived sex. Breathed sex. Ate sex. He *was* sex.

Maybe that was his name.

No. That wasn't what *she* called him. She-his heart. His reason for being.

She would straddle his waist, feed his aching length into her hungry body, and say, "My slave needs me more than air to breathe, doesn't he?"

My Slave. Yes. That was his name.

My Slave wanted his woman. Craved her like water to drink.

Must have her.

Only she would do. He couldn't live without her smoke-and-dreams scent. .mmm, or her too-close-to-the-sun heat...or her fiery claws. How deeply those little daggers cut into his bare chest. And her peekaboo fangs...how deliciously they nipped at the vein in his neck.

She was perfect, and only when she was with him, her strong body taking and receiving pleasure, was the gnawing hunger within him finally satisfied.

Must. Have. Her. NOW.

But...he looked around. She wasn't with him. He tried to rise from the bed. Something bound his wrists and ankles again. Not rope. Not this time. Too cold, too hard. Steel? He didn't care enough to look.

Problem. Solution. My Slave gritted his teeth and jerked with all his considerable might. Skin tore, muscle ripped, and bone snapped. Pain. Freedom. He grinned. His woman was out there. Soon he would find her. He would thrust inside her and slake his need for her. Again and again and again...

Nothing and no one would stop him.

"He's loose again," someone grumbled.

At the pond washing clothes and dreaming of salted caramel cupcakes...and frosted brownies...and, oh, oh, oh, peanut butter cookies, Elin Vale lumbered from the over-warm water. Brittle grass covered the small bank provided by the gorgeous desert oasis of Sahel, abrading her bare feet. As the sun glared from the clear morning sky, golden sand dunes undulated on every side; she sought shade under one of the handful of trees. A gentle breeze carried more grit than she was ever able to wash away.

At least there was a silver lining. A free daily body scrub meant her sunburned, freckled skin always glowed.

Yay me.

Now, if only she could accomplish her life goals so easily. 1) Escape the Phoenix warriors holding her captive, 2) make big bank, and 3) open a bakery. She would sell desserts good enough to induce orgasm...except peanut butter cookies because she would single-handedly consume the entire stock.

Life would be over-the-moon crazmazing. She would be doing what she loved and eating what she craved. Except, for one wee problem-she hadn't yet managed to cross number one off her list. Phoenix were immortals with the ability to flame to ash and rise from the dead, stronger than ever before. They were vicious. And, ironically enough, they were cold-blooded. They enjoyed pillaging and plundering, and killed for grins and giggles.

Elin had seen the worst of their handiwork up close and all too personal, and even now, a year later, the memories were formidable enough to break her down. Memories she couldn't stop...*please, please stop*...but there they were, flashing through her mind. Her father's head rolling across the floor-without his body. Bay's pain-filled moan echoing in her ears as he sagged to the floor, a sword sticking out of his chest. Silence descending. Such dreaded silence.

Even now her heart rate went full throttle, with enough horsepower to break records. *Going to vomit.*

"Catch him!"

The frantic shout was a welcome and wonderful distraction, the only life raft in a sea of horror, halting the oncoming breakdown.

Her gaze scanned-there.

Oh, blimey. *He's magnificent.*

Because of Elin's supposedly disrespectful mouth- some people couldn't tolerate the truth-she had spent the past two weeks stuffed inside a small, dank hole, unable to see the new prisoner "worth toppling an entire empire to possess."

The quote had come from every female in the village.

For the first time, Elin had to agree with her captors. The princess's immortal slave was a god among men.

He stomped through the sand, flinging expert soldiers out of his way as if they were stuffed animals.

He did this *despite* the fact that his wrists and ankles looked like raw hamburger meat.

His scowl was dark, frightening, and despite her fascination, she instinctively lowered her gaze.

Oh, wowzer. Hello, massive erection. The beast was in no way concealed by the leather loincloth the slave wore.

The ability to breathe abandoned her. Who knew pe-nises did actually come in size magnum, as romance novels proclaimed? And, sweet fancy, as the scrap of material rose...and rose...and eventually fell to the side, she saw a glint of silver. Was the head of his shaft- It was! It was actually pierced with a long, silver barbell.

Her knees went a bit weak.

Eye-raping the princess's slave, Vale? Really? Stop!

First, entertaining lustful thoughts for another woman's man was a crime punishable by death. Second, it was 100 percent skeevy.

That was why she would look away...in a second. A peek at the rest of him, that was all she needed. He was at least six and a half feet of primal male aggression, with the defy-me-at-your-own-peril muscle mass of a dedicated, centuries-old warrior. But what truly snagged her attention-besides the jumbotron, of course-were feathered wings of the most luminous pearl and gold arcing behind wide, bronzed shoulders. Actual, honest-to-goodness wings, fit for the most cherished of angels.

But if the whispers and giggles she'd heard about the male were to be believed, he wasn't actually an angel, and calling him one would have been an insult, since angels were lower on the totem. He was a Sent One. An adopted son of the Most High, the ruler of the highest realm of the heavens.

Sent Ones were expert trackers and merciless demon slayers. Defenders of the weak and helpless. They were honest to the point of seeming brutality. And, okay, wow, that was like a checklist of awesome. But the things that were supposedly specific to this male's character: cold, calculated and demented. *Not* awesome.

Apparently, he laughed when he killed his enemies...and laughed when he killed his friends.

But...that couldn't be true. Could it? He was too pretty to be so cruel.

Shallow much?

What? She was starved. A mind was mush when a body was hungry.

According to gossip, he was part of the Army of Disgrace, one of the Most High's seven heavenly defensive forces. Six of those forces were well respected and admired. The AoD, not so much. They were a group of wild, untamable mercenaries in danger of losing their homes, wings and immortality; in other words, permanent time off for wicked behavior.

The twenty or so men and women were on a yearlong probation, their every action scrutinized. One more screwup, and they would be adiosed forever.

The grapevine hadn't stopped there. The male directly below the Most High was named Germanus, and he was the Sent Ones' boss. Or rather, had been. Germanus was killed recently by demons. But before his death-obviously-he controlled the Elite Seven, the seven men and women who were the fiercest of the fierce, and the leaders of those seven defensive forces. After his death, the Most High appointed a new second-in-command, Clerici, and this Clerici guy had tweaked some long-standing rules.

Before: do not harm anyone or thing but demons.

After: unless a fellow Sent One is being held against his will.

Then, and only then, the entire race could play a Kill Everyone Card.

Elin's takeaway: once Sex On Legs' army buddies found out what had happened to him, everyone in the village would bathe in blood. And-if the expert-tracker thing proved true-bath time would come soon.

Have to be long gone by then.

"Woman!" he bellowed, his voice more smoke than substance. And yet, that one word dripped with command, expectation and raw animal carnality.

She shivered with vibrant anticipation.

Reacting to him, too? Why don't you just chop off your own head and call it good?

He belonged to Kendra the Merry Widow, Princess of Clan Firebird; she'd addicted him to the poison her body produced, a nonlethal substance worse than any drug, making him desperate for her touch. *Then* she'd cinched the deal by tricking him into killing her.

With Kendra, everything began and ended with death.

Shortly after drawing her final breath, she flamed to ash, reformed and rose again, the bond between mistress and slave firmly in place.

Apparently, she'd done the same to six of her husbands-and was currently doing it to her seventh, who was away from camp at the moment, the lucky jerk. Because, when she tired of her men, she cut out...and ate...their hearts, ensuring they stayed dead.

A shudder crawled the length of Elin's spine.

As punishment, the late King Krull, Kendra's father, had bound her with slave-chains to negate her abilities and sold her on the black market.

Where and when the Sent One had come into play, Elin wasn't sure. She only knew he'd returned Kendra to camp decades later, dropping her from the sky and flying away. Krull, thinking the time apart had mellowed her, had removed the chains and given her to his third-in-command, Ricker the War Ender.

But with her abilities fully restored, she'd been able to addict Ricker to her poison, and gain his permission to leave the camp to hunt the Sent One.

The princess was sweet like that.

"Woman! Now!"

Elin swallowed a dreamy sigh. Even laced with anger and annoyance, the Sent One's voice elicited images of strawberries dipped in warm, rich chocolate. *Mmm. Chocolate.*

Maybe I should help him.

The thought struck her, surprising her. She wasn't exactly on speaking terms with courage, and to be effective, she'd have to endanger her own life. But if she could free the male from the princess's bond, she could use him to escape.

Elin pored through every bit of information she'd gleaned during her enslavement but came up with only a few ways to free him. None that were particularly helpful. She could kill him, but that kinda threw a wrench in her plan, because he wouldn't come back to life. She could kill Kendra (again), but the princess would come back to life, and Elin would have a very determined enemy for the rest of her (probably) short,

(definitely) miserable life. Like the Sent One, death was the end for her.

Elin was half Phoenix, half "weak, lowly human," with zero abilities to show for her dual parentage. And it sucked, because here-or in any immortal colony, really-halflings were an abomination. A stain against the race. A threat to the vigor of the bloodline.

She'd known she was half-immortal, but she'd had no idea she was so despised, living in happy ignorance until a group of Phoenix ambushed her mother, Renlay, a little over a year ago. All because her mother-a full-blooded soldier-had fallen in love with Elin's father- a human-and had deserted her clan to be with him. As punishment, the group murdered Elin's father, as well as sweet, innocent Bay.

So much loss... She tried to ignore the knot growing in her throat.

She and Renlay were taken prisoner. Then, four months ago, Renlay experienced the ultimate death. It happened to all Phoenix eventually-even if their hearts weren't eaten-leaving Elin alone, *so alone*, suffering in the crudest of ways, battling loneliness, grief, sorrow. Heartbreak.

Oh, the heartbreak. It was a constant companion. Cruel and merciless, darkening her days and soaking her nights with tears.

To be honest, the beatings and degradation did not compare to the torture of her emotions. Not even when she was treated like a dog, told to eat her meals on her hands and knees, without the use of her hands. Not even when she was made to take care of her bladder's needs in front of a laughing audience.

Elin blinked away tears.

In a sick, twisted way, she kind of...welcomed the abuse, she supposed. After all, she deserved it. Her parents and Bay had been strong and brave. She was a weak coward.

Why had she lived and not them?

Why did she continue to live?

As if you don't know.

Her mother's final words echoed in her mind. *Whatever proves necessary, my darling, do it. Survive. Do not allow my sacrifice to be in vain.*

"Woman! Need. Now." The Sent One once again ripped her from the past. He neared the river...neared her....

Soon, he would pass by, and the opportunity would be lost....

Her hand twitched as she debated whether or not to palm the glass shard another prisoner-now gone- had given her. A shard she'd hidden in the fabric of her leather dress, just in case one of the males decided to stop looking at her and start taking. She would have to do something drastic to break through the Sent One's obsession long enough to capture his attention. Maybe cutting him would do the trick. Maybe not. Maybe it would enrage him, and he would snap her neck with a single flick of his wrist.

Should she risk punishment? Death?

Decision time.

Pro: there was no better time for an escape. Many in the camp were distracted, as King Ardeo-who'd replaced the late Krull-had taken his most trusted men to who-knows-where to hunt Petra, Kendra's aunt, the Phoenix who had murdered Malta, Krull's widow and

Kendra's mother and, for a short time, Ardeo's most beloved concubine.

Ugh! What a mind-maze of names.

Ardeo had waited centuries to claim Malta, only to lose her two days later when a jealous Petra stabbed her in her sleep-and, taking a page from Kendra's *How To Be A Psycho* book, ate her heart.

Con: Elin wasn't in possession of Frost, a new "medication" for immortals, and the only thing capable of diluting Kendra's poison.

Pro: she might be able to get some.

Krull had purchased a handful of cubes right after Kendra's marriage to Ricker. Kendra now kept them inside a locket she wore at all times.

If Elin could steal that locket..

Another pro: never again having to worry about Orson.

He was away with Ardeo, but when he returned...

She shuddered as she recalled his parting words to her. "I *will* have you, halfling, and the way I'll take you, there'll be no chance of a babe."

Hellmongrel!

Con: she could die horribly.

The Sent One was almost in front of her. Any second now.

If her mother were alive, she would tell Elin to go for it, despite the risk.

Well, then. *Decision made.*

Moving as fast as her reflexes would allow, Elin palmed the shard and swiped the jagged edge across the Sent One's arm.

As crimson droplets trickled down his skin, she gagged. Dizziness struck her, and a burning tightness bloomed in her chest.

Panic threatening to consume her.already restricting her airways.

No! Not this time. She focused on her life goals- freedom, money, bakery-breathed in and out with purpose, and the storm passed.

The Sent One ground to a halt.

He's a slave, like me, and I'm his only hope. Heck, he's my only hope. I can do this. For my family.

He turned his head, looking at her over the arch of his wing, and she shivered. Curly blond hair innocently framed the face of a born seducer...exquisite, flawless. In contrast, his bedroom eyes were at half-mast, beseeching a female to naughtiness.

Anything for you.

Too bad those eyes were so poison-fogged she couldn't guess their color. Long, spiky lashes of the deepest jet rimmed his lids, and his soft, full lips practically begged for reckless kisses.

A ring of angry scars circled his neck, and she frowned. Evidence of an injury, no matter how great or small, did not usually remain on an immortal's flesh. Had someone tried to kill him before he'd been old enough to regenerate?

Even with the imperfection, he was beautiful. A visual feast. A rare eye candy. A delicacy to be savored. *And now I'm struggling to breathe again, drowning, seriously drowning in his utter masculinity, and now in guilt...grief... I haven't lusted for a man since Bay, my sweet, darling Bay, my husband of only three months, dead now, and I should be ashamed...*

"Female."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Vivian Bennett:

Do you certainly one of people who can't read satisfying if the sentence chained inside the straightway, hold on guys this kind of aren't like that. This Burning Dawn (Angels of the Dark Book 3) book is readable by means of you who hate those straight word style. You will find the facts here are arrange for enjoyable examining experience without leaving actually decrease the knowledge that want to offer to you. The writer regarding Burning Dawn (Angels of the Dark Book 3) content conveys the thought easily to understand by many people. The printed and e-book are not different in the content but it just different available as it. So , do you nonetheless thinking Burning Dawn (Angels of the Dark Book 3) is not loveable to be your top list reading book?

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Janice Wilson:

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