



Avenger's Heat: A Moon Shifter Novel (Moon Shifter Series)

By *Katie Reus*

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To truly have her, he must free her from her dark secret....

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Enforcer Erin Flynn has dedicated her life to protecting her kind. But keeping her heart safe from Noah Campbell, the smoking-hot shifter who saved her life last year, is more difficult. The deadly beauty would love to sink into his arms and become his mate, but she knows she can't--he must never know about her dark past.

When Erin is sent to investigate the disappearances of pregnant shifters in New Orleans, Erin and Noah find themselves involved in a mystery more sinister than anyone expected. And as Erin delves further into the crimes, chilling information about her own past is revealed. The people who wanted her dead in the first place are trying to finish the job, and Noah wants nothing more than to shield her from harm. But can Erin truly trust Noah and let him see the wounded beast she's hidden for so long?

Books in the MoonShifter Series:

Alpha Instinct, #1

Lover's Instinct, #1.5 (novella)

Primal Possession, #2

Mating Instinct, #3

His Untamed Desire, #3.5 (novella)

Avenger's Heat, #4

Hunter Reborn, #5

Protective Instinct, #5.5 (novella)

Dark Protector, #6

A Mate for Christmas, #6.5 (novella, final story in series)

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Editorial Review

Review

PRAISE FOR THE MOON SHIFTER SERIES

“Reus has an instinct for what wows.”—*New York Times* bestselling author Caridad Piñeiro

“Katie Reus creates a vivid world filled with sexy shifters, explosive danger, and enough sexual tension to set the pages on fire. A fabulous paranormal romance!”—Alexandra Ivy, *New York Times* bestselling author

“Katie Reus’s...Moon Shifter series will leave readers breathless!”—Stephanie Tyler, national bestselling author

“A wild, hot ride for readers. The story grabs you and doesn’t let go.”—Cynthia Eden, *USA Today* bestselling author

“A sexy, well-crafted paranormal romance that succeeds with smart characters and creative world building.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

“This series keeps getting better and better.”—*Joyfully Reviewed*

“Reus has definitely hit a home run with this series....This book has mystery, suspense, and a heart-pounding romance that will leave you wanting more.”—*Nocturne Romance Reads*

“Simply a must read.” —*A Book Obsession*

“Impossible to put down....Ms. Reus bangs out a top-quality story.”—*Fresh Fiction*

About the Author

Katie Reus is the *New York Times* bestselling author of the Moon Shifter paranormal romance series including *Mating Instinct*, *Primal Possession*, and *Alpha Instinct*, and the Moon Shifter novella, *Lover's Instinct*, and the author of *Targeted*, in the Deadly Ops series. She fell in love with romance at a young age thanks to books she'd pilfered from her mom's stash. After changing majors too many times to count, she finally graduated with a degree in psychology. She now spends her days writing dark paranormal romance and sexy romantic suspense. She currently lives near Biloxi, Mississippi, with her family. When she's not creating stories, she can usually be found spending time with her family or one of the many animals they've adopted over the years.

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Chapter 1

Erin Flynn shot the tall male shifter next to her a quick glance as yet another female they passed on the street gave him an assessing, purely sexual look. Since they'd arrived in New Orleans an hour ago it had been the same reaction from practically every woman they'd come across. A few men too. Not that she blamed any of them, even if she did have a sudden urge to claw their eyes out.

Simply put, Noah Campbell was smoking hot. Tall, broad shoulders, sharp cheekbones, inky black hair a woman could easily imagine running her fingers through, and perfect olive coloring that showed off his Greek heritage on his mother's side. Didn't matter that it was an icy January day, he looked like he'd just stepped off a Mediterranean beach, all toned and tan. He definitely evoked thoughts of sex, sin, and sultry summer nights.

They passed a woman dressed in jeans that might as well have been painted on, a bright red coat belted around her tiny waist and five-inch knee-high boots. When she practically undressed Noah with her eyes, Erin frowned at her friend. "Are you being intentionally oblivious?" No way could he have missed how people were looking at him.

Noah's guarded dark eyes flicked her way once before he continued scanning the nearly deserted cobblestone streets. They'd parked outside the long and narrow shotgun-style house they were staying in with another shifter and fae warrior, both of whom had decided to hang back while she and Noah scoped out the city. And the tension hadn't left his body since the moment they'd stepped out of that pastel blue and pink house with peeling yellow shutters.

"Not oblivious, just not interested." A curt answer so typical of him when he was annoyed or stressed. Right now she thought he might be a bit of both. He didn't look at her again, but she could practically feel the heat of his dark eyes searing her. Knew what she'd see if he looked her way again. Lust and need.

Some days she wished he'd find a woman. A sweet beta female who would be perfect for him. It would slice up her insides to know that someone else would be touching what she considered hers, waking up every morning next to him . . . but at least he'd be happy. Maybe she'd finally be able to move on from this constant state of wanting him but knowing she could never have him.

God, she was so fucked up.

Instinctively she patted the front of her thick coat, needing to feel the two short blades strapped to her chest beneath it. She didn't go anywhere without them. Even slept with one under her pillow. "Did you finally call your father?" she asked.

"Nope."

Resisting the urge to growl at him, she shoved her hands in her jacket pockets.

Just great.

As the newest enforcer-in-training for the North American Council of lupine shifters, Erin was on her first mission by herself. Technically she wasn't in training anymore but she still thought of herself that way. Her mentor, Jayce, had told her that she was ready to go out on her own investigation so here she was. He'd sent Noah along, but it wasn't so Noah could look out for her—that would have pissed her off. New Orleans was Noah's father's territory and the situation right now had the potential to be volatile.

Noah's father shared the city with vamps, feline shifters, and fae, and she was pretty sure a few demons made their home here too. The old city just appealed to them. New Orleans was the one place in the United States paranormal beings had agreed to share. It was either that or endure a bloodbath fighting over it.

Not worth it when they were practically under a microscope by the humans they'd revealed themselves to two decades ago. Erin still thought that was a stupid decision on the Council's part but it was over and done with. Not much anyone could do about it now.

The one thing she'd asked Noah to do was make contact with his father before they'd arrived. It irked her that he hadn't, but in the past year and some odd months since she'd been friends with Noah, he hadn't said more than a handful of sentences about the powerful Alpha and she hadn't pushed. She didn't like talking about her past so she understood his need for privacy. Still, his father was Alpha of this territory and deserved the respect of a freaking phone call.

"Damn it, Noah," she muttered, but didn't continue as they rounded another street corner. The difference from the quiet one they'd just come from was vivid.

A variety of scents and noises accosted them. Tobacco, liquor, a mix of cheap and expensive perfumes, raw sex, and some kind of spicy food tickled her nose. Sometimes she cursed her extrasensory abilities. A few bars blasted music, but a steady, low-key stream of tunes flowed out from the Full Moon Bar as they neared it.

Even if she hadn't scented all the paranormal beings inside, the lower level of music was the first giveaway that the place catered to people like her. Paranormal beings had extrasensory everything, something humans seemed to usually forget. And something she was thankful for because it had the potential to make her job as enforcer easier.

"I talked to my mom earlier and she told me my father would be here tonight," Noah said quietly.

Erin knew Noah talked to his mother practically every week, but hadn't spoken to his father in years. She might not know everything about his family dynamics, but she knew enough. And this had disaster written all over it. She pulled her cell phone out of her pocket, ready to dial the number of Angus Campbell she'd received from Jayce before she and Noah had left North Carolina.

She should have just taken care of this herself but she'd wanted to let Noah do it. Even if she was on Council business she was still entering another Alpha's territory and he deserved a heads-up. Noah knew the protocol well. No doubt he was just showing up unannounced to piss his old man off. Not the way she wanted to start this investigation.

Scrolling to the number as they crossed the street, her head snapped up at a crashing sound. A giant female jaguar tumbled out of the bar they were on their way to, her fangs and claws extended. Definitely a shifter. The animal let out a loud snarl then rushed back in through a splintered blue door.

Erin's eyes widened as a shot of adrenaline punched through her.

"Shit," Noah muttered, moving into action.

Unzipping her jacket as she ran, she unsheathed her short blades from their protective casings. They weren't quite two feet long, pure silver, and her best defense in close combat. Which was the type of fighting she preferred.

She respected the hell out of snipers, but this was her game. As a shifter she was unique because she preferred to fight in her human form. Just like the other enforcers across the globe. It wasn't because she was stronger in human form—though she was strong and fast—it was because once she let her beast out, it was difficult to rein her wolf back in. For Erin, keeping the balance between her animal and human side was a bitch.

After the long drive cooped up in a car with Noah and too much sexual frustration—that she'd been battling for months—she needed to let off some steam and this was the way to do it.

To her annoyance Noah rushed into the dimly lit bar first, but she was right behind him. The gorgeous black jaguar with a faint orange background and dark spots was rolling around on the floor with a male vampire. They were slicing each other to ribbons, though Erin knew the big cat was holding back. Jaguars—regular or shifter—had powerful jaws and this one wasn't biting.

There were about two dozen people there, but no one was intervening. What the hell?

A few humans, a handful of tall ethereal-looking fae, vampires, and lupine and feline shifters in human form all lounged around the bar staring at the two in open amusement. How was this remotely funny?

Screw that. "I'm taking the male down. Stay out of it," she murmured to Noah, hoping he'd listen. Sometimes he was overprotective of her and she had no problem taking care of herself.

Without waiting for a response, she jumped into the fray. She was young for a shifter, but incredibly quick and knew one day—if she lived long enough—she'd have a better grasp on the strange power she could feel growing inside her every day.

Lightning fast, she sliced at the feline's shoulder, earning a surprised cry. The big cat immediately jumped off the vamp and backed away.

The vamp lunged at Erin and even though she could sense the power rippling off him in waves, she dodged to the side and sliced her blade across his chest as he sailed past her. Blood spurted everywhere but it wasn't even close to a killing blow. The sweet scent that filled the air was different from the normal coppery scent of human and shifter blood.

The dark-skinned vamp turned, a look of surprise on his face. She didn't know if it was because of her speed, her sex, or her apparent youth. She also didn't care. His fangs flashed, claws unsheathed as those hostile dark eyes narrowed at her. She heard Noah growl behind her.

"I've got this, Noah!" They'd fought side by side before and while he might hate her fighting, he better at least respect her enough to handle herself.

Out of the corner of her eye she realized the feline shifter was crouching, ready to pounce—on her!

What the hell is going on? She'd been trying to help the shifter out. Before Erin could move to defend herself an eerie growl and the sound of bones breaking ripped through the slight murmur of voices and low music. A flash of dark fur she recognized as Noah flew through the air at the cat.

Annoyed he'd intervened, but having no doubt he could take care of himself, she didn't lose her momentum as she raced at the vamp. Right now all she cared about was subduing this guy as fast as possible. She didn't have time to sing and dance with him. That meant going on the offensive.

Using a barstool as leverage, she jumped on it, then a table before hurtling through the air. Raising a blade with her right hand, she brought it down as if to stab him through the chest. Calculating his attempt to swivel away to the left, she swept up with her left hand, slicing him through the gut.

It wouldn't kill him, but silver burned vamps and shifters something fierce. His skin sizzled as he cried out under her blow. She didn't stop there. As he instinctively attempted to grapple with the blade, she brought the other one down on his forearm, pinning him to the floor.

Blood pooled everywhere, creating a dark river around them. The sickly sweet scent wafted up. "I'm not going to kill you if you stop struggling," she bit out, flashing her canines in a show of aggression.

Immediately the vampire went limp, but the rage in his eyes didn't diminish. "What the hell is wrong with you?" He wheezed out the words.

Before she could respond she heard a feminine cry behind her. "Don't hurt him! He's my mate!"

Instead of turning around, she quickly glanced at one of the mirrors in front of her displaying a full blue moon and advertising a new beer. In the reflection she saw a naked woman likely of South American descent being restrained by a very naked Noah, since his clothes had shredded during his change. Something sharp and deadly rose up inside Erin at seeing him tangled together with a female, but she forced it back down and focused on the crazy situation in front of her. She narrowed her gaze at the vamp still shooting her daggers with his eyes. "That's your mate?"

He nodded, his lips pulled into a thin line. "We were just having a bit of an argument. Nothing serious."

It had looked pretty damn serious to her. That's when she scented the feline on him. No, not just on him, but practically in him, living under his skin. Yeah, no doubt they were mated. Sure had a weird way of acting like it. Glancing around, Erin noted that everyone had given her and Noah a wide berth and had congregated at the back of the bar.

"Attack me or him"—she tilted her head in Noah's direction without taking her gaze off the vamp—"and I'll cut off your head." Without waiting for his response, she withdrew her blades and put a good ten feet between them in a split second. The instant she'd cleared the vamp, Noah let the female go. Erin didn't sheath her weapons though. She wasn't worried about herself, but the thought of anyone hurting Noah . . . it brought out something dark inside her. Some days she hated that feeling because he wasn't hers. It was like this constant battle waging inside her.

Ignoring everyone and uncaring about her nudity, the feline knelt by the vamp, cupping his cheek and stroking a hand down his chest. Blood pooled around him but he was already practically healed. "Are you hurt, baby?"

"For the love of . . ." Erin turned toward Noah and using strength she didn't realize she had, kept her eyes way above his belt line and steady on his face. "What the hell kind of place is this?"

Before he could answer, a booming male voice silenced the room. Even the music shut off. "Martina, Razi, get the hell out of here and don't show your faces on this street for a month."

The vamp and feline—still freaking naked—practically ran from the bar, bleeding all over the place and cursing a blue streak. But not before shooting Erin a murderous glare.

Once they were gone her attention was drawn to the back of the bar where a big male who looked like an older version of Noah, minus the dark hair, was walking through the sudden gap between the onlookers. Definitely Noah's father. Beside her, Noah tensed. It was subtle, something she noticed only because she knew him so well.

And you'd like to know him a whole lot better, wouldn't you?

The big lupine strode right toward them, stopping only a foot away after he'd given them both assessing looks. "You'll have to excuse Martina and Razi—that's just foreplay to them."

"They were fighting like animals," she said, though she had no reason to defend her actions.

"We are animals." His dark eyes looked so much like Noah's it rattled her, but she didn't let it show.

Instead Erin shrugged. "I take it you're Angus Campbell."

"And you are Erin Flynn, newest enforcer in North America. Jayce called to let me know you would be here soon, though I expected a call from you." His head swiveled to Noah and his dark eyes turned hard.

They were the same height so the two men just glared at each other. She could practically see the flood of testosterone rolling off them. Despite the differences in their appearances, because Noah had certainly been blessed with his mother's features too, the tall broad-shouldered Scottish shifter was obviously Noah's father. It was stamped in the harsh, defined facial features.

Angus looked to be about forty by human standards but Erin knew he was at least three hundred. Very old for a shifter and very powerful. He'd have to be to control New Orleans for as long as he had, which had been since the Jazz Age. Almost a century ago and long before most humans had known of the existence of paranormal beings.

Clearing her throat and drawing the big shifter's attention back to her, she took a subtle step forward placing herself in between father and son. One of Noah's hands settled on her shoulder in a way she knew he meant to be proprietary, something his father didn't miss. The feel of Noah touching her like that should have annoyed her. Instead, it soothed her inner wolf in a way she decided to ignore. Angus's eyes flicked to Noah's hand, then back to her face so quickly she would have missed the speculative look if she hadn't been watching him closely. Let the old Alpha make of it what he wanted.

When it was clear Noah didn't plan to respond to his father's statement, Erin continued. "We need to talk about what's going on. Unless you approve of what's happening in your city." It wasn't a question because no one in their right mind would want things to continue the way they were in New Orleans. But she wanted to gauge his reaction.

Those dark eyes flashed with raw anger and for a moment she saw the wolf lurking beneath the man's surface. "Six pregnant female shifters missing . . ." His jaw clenched once and she could feel his power radiating for an instant. There was a reason he was an Alpha. "Whoever is responsible will pay." As he spoke, she heard the animal, not the human talking to her.

And he was right. Someone would pay. But not by his hand. It would be by an enforcer. Her.

Erin's eyes narrowed. When she got her hands on the culprit or culprits, they'd be judged. And they'd sure as hell suffer for their crimes. Preying on a pregnant female, regardless of species, was the lowest of the low. All the women had been taken while alone. Two from their homes, one from a park, one right outside her real estate office, one from a grocery store parking lot, and one from a restaurant while her mate was in the vicinity. The two homes had been disturbed, but no serious damage. And the others taken had left behind purses and keys at their abduction sites. It was the only reason anyone had any idea exactly where they'd been kidnapped from.

Meli was the last shifter who had been taken and she was the only one linked directly to Angus's pack. The only lupine. It was the main reason the Council had sent her here. Angus was a powerful Alpha. The other five missing shifters were all feline with no pack or political pull. Erin had memorized their basic information and seen photographs of each woman.

The feline grabbed right before Meli was so young. Her name was Ciara. At twenty-five years old, newly mated for a scant six months, she was two months pregnant and the only redhead in the bunch. Her appearance didn't matter to Erin but when she'd looked at the girl's picture it had jarred her straight to her bones.

Something heavy settled on Erin's chest. Hurting a woman in that state when she was weaker, defenseless . . . it was just so wrong on every level. The heaviness seemed to grow inside her, pressing down until it was hard to breathe. The women must have been so terrified.

Noah had been silent, but his hand flexed once on her shoulder and she didn't miss the soft growl he let out. He wanted blood as much as she did. The feel of his fingers clenching around her pulled her from her thoughts and back to reality.

She was going to hunt whoever was behind this like the monsters they were. But first she had to figure out who was responsible for the disappearances and why. She just hoped Noah let her handle this investigation her way.

Users Review

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