

## Rise of the Demon Inferno: The Eternal Goddess of Flames Book 1

**Tamara Mayo**

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*In the high school-set fantasy novel Rise of the Demon Inferno, rival demon clans clash, threatening humanity's future.*

In Tamara Mayo's fantasy novel *Rise of the Demon Inferno*, high school proves to be more than just awful: it's downright demonic.

Luke, Matt, and Shana transfer to a Southern high school whose courtyards are laid out in the shape of a pentagram. There, the siblings run afoul of a powerful, popular group of students whose glowing red eyes contribute to the terror they inspire among the siblings' classmates. A coming confrontation between this demonic clique (whose members have designs on world domination) and the ordinary student body is implied; its implications could be monumental.

Early on, the novel establishes that a war over all of creation is underway, and is already impacting people on Earth. A massive, realm-spanning backdrop is implied, populated by godlike winged beings. The underpinnings of this supernatural confrontation are developed later; they stretch back to Lucifer's rebellion. These momentous events sometimes impede the book's more immediate drama, though; they are best supported by secondary characters who share clarifying information to spur the story forward.

In the present: the siblings are aided by demonic students without the clique's penchant for violence, including Naya, whose understanding of events helps the ordinary teenagers to connect with their inherent greatness. Their grandmother, a voodoo practitioner, also contributes insights into the events around them. Those not on the side of violence go up against Roshanara, a terrifying villain who works to create "a new world for demons, where we can finally rule." Her plans rely on her ability to access the crowned ones—special humans who are "capable of powers [that] even the angels and demons could not perform."

With its grandiose plot and extravagant action scenes, the novel is often graphic; it includes disturbing depictions of violence and evil. Roshanara's demons engage in horrifying deeds, including rituals in which people are burned alive. There are instances of parent-child incest, sadomasochistic sex, and necrophilia, too. Such torture and destruction is so frequent, though, that it becomes a repetitive device. Further, the book's dialogue leans in to obscenities to excess, undermining interest. However, the climactic battle between the demons and the teenagers on Earth proffers fresh understandings of why the rural high school's drama is so significant; there are clashes in which tens of thousands of demons battle each other for control, and these dominate the book's epics final portions well.

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JEREMIAH ROOD (February 14, 2022)

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