

The Devil Inside

Susan K. Hamilton

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The Devil Inside is a sometimes funny, sometimes steamy fantasy novel in which a successful devil works to balance her love life with her work.

In Susan K. Hamilton's fantasy novel *The Devil Inside*, an ambitious demon scales the corporate ladder in Hell, but hides her burgeoning romance with an angel.

Mara is one of Hell's best devils in charge of soul acquisition, and she's on track to surpass centuries-old records. She has a knack for finding the right sinners and enticing them with intricate contracts; these all end with the sinners reaching new levels of corruption. However, her intense romance with Duncan, an angel, is a threat to her career plans.

Mara is also a cog within an intriguing and massive corporation, Immortal Planes, that spans both realms; it also includes angels who work to keep humans on the righteous path, even as devils try to satisfy their quotas. Immortal Planes is somewhat ordinary on the business side: Mara's office is nondescript, if also connected to an endless hallway featuring personalized, eternal prisons. And even as Mara and the other devils betray each other to stay ahead, angels in the corporation content themselves with doing as much good as possible.

Mara is mocked by her coworkers for her deviations from standard behaviors: she refuses to try to corrupt angels; she does not unfurl her wings. At work, Mara is ruthless; still, her contracts include loopholes that make her human and endearing. Her personality softens when it comes to abused children, naïve women, and otherwise good people who made the wrong decisions. She uses her devilish wiles ensure that they suffer as little as possible, foreshadowing a monumental reveal late in the book. And her romance with Duncan moves from flirty to dramatic and sensual, injecting both sexual tension and emotion into the story. The two change each other: Mara softens; Duncan becomes more attentive to his angelic duties.

Between Mara's work, romance, and scenes of corporate backstabbing, a compelling mystery is introduced concerning Mara's past, her missing parents, and her true nature; it leads into the book's emotional conclusion at a corporate retreat—a situation involving an unwanted reveal, and in which both Lucifer and God play a role. *The Devil Inside* is a sometimes funny, sometimes steamy fantasy novel in which a successful devil works to balance her love life with her work.

JOHN M. MURRAY (July 14, 2021)

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