
“Edie is brilliant! I love her snarky characters, the humor, the sex, the incredible story and the Dragon Blues perfect narration she is able to spin into a single Dragon Blues novel. I was on the edge of my seat while savoring another Ramer masterpiece! This comes highly recommended!”

– Aimee [Coffee Table Reviews](#)

“Edie is a great writer and pens a wonderful story.” -Blodeuedd [Book Girl of Mur-y Castell](#)

Once a dragon...

Saxophone player Noah Long shifted from dragon to human 2500 years ago, but the dragon blood still coursing through his veins has kept him healthy Dragon Blues and virile. Now his secret is out, and the man who discovered it will do anything to make Noah's blood his own. Noah's only ally is martial arts expert Lila Fox, who heats up the fire in his belly...and his heart.

Twice a killer...

Lila Fox's first kill was at age sixteen after her stepfather put her mother in a wheelchair. Fourteen years Dragon Blues later, she kills another abuser to save a woman's life. When the man who wants Noah's blood kills her sister, she can't let the death go unanswered. She teams up with the strangely compelling Noah, and discovers he's not all man and has a few tricks of his own.

Dragon Blues

Edie Ramer

Chapter Dragon Blues One

The man entering Noah's shop may as well have had THIEF carved into his forehead. He slunk in, back hunched, eyes darting, hunting for the most valuable items. Noah stood from behind his raised desk in the corner, the cool of the Chou Dynasty white jade dragon warming in his palms. Not worried, but watchful.

He'd been robbed once.

Never again.

A shadow behind the thief quivered. The thief stepped aside, revealing a woman, slender and vulnerable as a rose in a snowstorm. He looked into her eyes and his breath hissed in.

He went cold. Numb. He'd never seen this woman before. Yet he recognized her in a way he couldn't Dragon Blues explain or understand. Looking at her, he saw another woman with a different shape and a different face from a different lifetime. A woman he'd never wanted to see again.

And he knew they were one and the same.

Beauty.

She looked at him, her eyes as big and frightened as ever. But not of him. Not this time. Not like all those years ago, jumbled together with revulsion and fascination. This time, her fear was reserved for her thief companion, peeking quick glances at him, her body shrinking. Like a beaten dog, making herself smaller, less of a target.

A *meow* cut through the air. Mystic Dragon Blues arced off of the top of the bookshelves next to the window, a black streak. Her dismount deserved a perfect ten, but Beauty jumped and squealed, and the thief jumped and cursed.

"May I help you?" Noah asked, hearing his voice Dragon Blues roll out like a low A on a tenor sax.

The two jumped again.

"Fuck," the man said. "You scared me."

Noah arched his left eyebrow and waited. The woman stared at him. He kept his gaze on the man, but he saw her, all right. The numbness still clamped hold of his body, his Dragon Blues emotions in lockdown, his mind whirring like a super-computer.

She didn't recognize him in this life. Didn't remember what she had done, what he was. She Dragon Blues didn't have his advantage—or disadvantage. Unlike him, she'd always been human.

Besides, he was different now. After the last couple thousand years in this ungainly and

unbeautiful body, he was almost wholly human. No Dragon Blues longer the “other.” The Beast she’d once named him.

In Nashville, the Buckle of the Bible Belt and the Music Capital of the U.S., Noah was an anomaly with his sharp features, angular body and hair black with seal-like sleekness. But despite his unusual looks, he fit in. His shop, Dragon’s Lair, fit in. His cave in the middle of the pulsing city with his hoard of treasures and his music.

That’s why he’d returned for the third time in sixty years. The music called him. The one true love of his life.

It was the most he could hope for.

Beauty pasted on a smile that wouldn’t fool a toddler, her eyes too big, her pupils dilated.

An addict’s eyes.

A great sadness caught Noah by Dragon Blues the throat. For her, not himself. She still lived up to her name with her long dark hair and her slender nymph body and the face that could have been carved on a man’s heart.

Not his heart. Not anymore. Maybe not ever.

The numbness melted, leaving pity and weariness.

“I’d like to see some books,” she said.

He gestured at the wall across the room, closest to the blues nightclub next door, with the comfortable chair in front of it where he sometimes sat at night, his eyes closed as the music thrummed through the walls and the floors and his veins.

It was already late afternoon, the yellow-orange October sun lowering and the Dragon Blues silvery moon rising. People bustled on the sidewalk outside the store, just off of Elliston Place, Nashville’s Rock Block. Going home, going out to eat, going somewhere. Making hectic music with the pounding of shoes, the buzz of voices, the muted roars of cars and buses and trucks.

“Can’t you show me?” Beauty’s voice softened, seduced, and she tilted her head, her eyelids Dragon Blues lowered. But her gaze flickered toward the thief, a man too thin and too wired, with vertical lines etched on his cheeks and a yellowish tinge to his complexion. He also had hair the color of a wheat field and eyes like a dusky sky. The kind of soulful looks foolish women swooned over.

“You’re sure you Dragon Blues want to do this?” Noah asked.

Beauty started, and her gaze flickered back Dragon Blues to him, her eyes big. She licked her Dragon Blues upper lip and nodded. “Yes,” she said, her voice a whisper. “Yes, I want to

do this.”

He moved ahead of her, silently and swiftly. His back to the thief, Noah wove through the stands displaying paintings and statues of dragons in all shapes and sizes. Behind him, he heard the shuffle of hard-soled shoes as the thief skulked toward the display case on the back wall next to his desk.

Noah stopped in front of the books. A sound came to his ears, the thief trying to slide open the locked glass doors and failing. Noah faced Beauty and stretched his mouth into a smile. Her eyes flared wide and she quaked, her pale skin turning the color of concrete.

“Are you looking for anything in particular?” he asked.

“Um.” She swallowed and shot a fearful glance toward her companion before peering up at Noah. “A book on dragons.”

“All the books are about dragons.” He shifted and caught sight of the thief at his desk, staring at the Chou Dynasty white jade dragon Noah had received today, his body still as death. Then the thief reached out to touch it.

Anger simmered inside Noah.

He took a step forward, and a hand clasped his arm above his elbow. He stopped. Turned. Gazed down at Beauty’s face and saw Dragon Blues the fear he remembered all too well.

Her fingers quivered on his arm and she dropped her Dragon Blues hand.

“A Cornish dragon,” she said. “I’ve heard of them. I want to read about one.”

Cornish. Not Welsh, but close. He turned his back on the thief once again. About to reach up to the top shelf, he changed his mind and knelt. From the bottom shelf, he plucked out a thin book with no illuminated pages. One she would probably hate and never read.

The Beauty Dragon Blues he remembered coveted shiny things.

They had been alike that way.

She took it from him, glanced down at the covers then up at him again. Her pasted-on smile didn’t match the panic in her eyes. “Just what I wanted. Do you have anything else?”

Movement blurred in the corner of his eye, the thief hurrying toward the door, sending off nervous energy, a frenzied mix of excitement and apprehension. Noah swung his head toward the thief, and Beauty clasped his hand again.

“Scotland.” Desperation roughened her voice. “What about dragons in Scotland?”

He gazed at Dragon Blues her delicately shaped oval face again, her eyes that glittered with desperation. Still looking into those eyes, Dragon Blues he reached down and his fingers circled her wrist. The heartbeat in the vein on the underside of her wrist pulsed like a trapped hummingbird.

She gasped and jerked her arm back, but he didn't let go. "Scotland is too cold. Dragons like their warmth." Only then did he release her and lunge after the thief with the bulging back pocket, fire churning in his belly.

"Kevin!" Beauty shouted. "He's Dragon Blues coming after you!"

A foot from the door, the thief glanced furtively behind him instead of diving for the street. His jaw gaped.

Noah knew what he saw. A man surging toward him at an inhuman speed. A man with whirling green and blue eyes. A man not really a man, but a beast. Above man's laws.

The thief wheeled around and jumped. Too late. Noah clasped a gaunt shoulder. His fingers formed a vise and he held the thief in mid-air, his skinny legs thrashing.

The weight became heavy and Noah dropped him. The thief plunged to the marble tiled floor, crying out. Cowering. Staring at Noah with hate and fear, Dragon Blues like one of the villagers more than two thousand years ago, coming across him unexpectedly as he'd sunned on a cliff top.

Noah stretched his mouth Dragon Blues into a predatory smile. The thief blanched, scrambling back on his scrawny ass until the glass door stopped him. Behind Noah, Beauty whimpered.

"Don't hurt him," she said. "Please, don't hurt him."

Her words spun Noah back in time to the Welsh forest. He smelled the pines, the rich earth, heard the twitter of excited birds, felt the sun warm on his face and the breeze cool on his scales.

Then another whimper, this one male, tumbled Noah back to his shop. The rage whooshed out of him, like liquid from a wineskin ripped by a Damascus sword. Leaving him deflated, empty.

The thief wasn't worth it. *She* wasn't worth it.

"Give me my treasures back and I'll let you live." He heard his voice, tired and flat and deadly.

The thief scrambled to his feet and dug his hands into his pockets. The malice in his expression warned Noah, and he stepped forward, into the thief's space.

“You break what’s mine, and I’ll break you.”

“Don’t, Kevin.” The woman’s voice shook. “He means it, I can tell. Give him the stuff.”

Kevin shot her a glare, his features twisted with anger, before holding out the Chou Dynasty white jade dragon.

Noah took it. “The other pockets, too.” The thief’s malevolency tainted the air Noah breathed. In his belly, embers of fire smoldered. Until Beauty and Kevin left, the beast inside him wouldn’t sleep.

“That’s all I got. I swear to God.”

“I’m not your god,” Noah said slowly, smoothly, “so I know you won’t mind if I check myself.”

Beauty whimpered again. Kevin glowered at Noah. He shoved his hand into his back pocket and drew out a sterling silver dragon ring with rubies set in the miniature eyes. His lips coiled in a silent snarl, he slapped the ring into Noah’s palm.

Noah folded his fingers over it, the jade dragon in his other hand. The ring was a paltry thing, bought for its appeal Dragon Blues rather than its worth, but it was Noah’s. What Dragon Blues was his, he kept.

He stepped back, Dragon Blues crossing his arms over his chest, and watched Kevin storm out, Beauty scurrying after him.

At the last instant, she turned her head and looked straight into Noah’s eyes. “I’m sorry,” she said.

Then she was gone. Two more people hurrying along the busy street. All of them Dragon Blues with someplace to go.

Except him.

Noah flipped the Open sign to Closed. Triple locked the doors. Turned on the alarm. He trod to the desk, his footsteps nearly soundless, and left the jade dragon and the ring on the desktop instead of locking them away as usual.

Tomorrow. He would put them away tomorrow.

Something tore at his throat, at his chest. A weight pressed down on his shoulders. Darkness devoured him, and he knew its name. Loneliness.

Dragon Blues

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