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Magic on the Storm

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[Free] Magic on the Storm

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurMagic hunter Allie Beckstrom returns in Magic on the Storm, the fourth instalment of this fantastic US urban fantasy series by Devon Monk - perfect for fans of Charlaine Harris, Laurell K. Hamilton and Karen Chance.'Magic stirred in me . . . I closed my eyes, wanting to lose myself to it. Wanting to use magic in every way I could. But that would be bad. I had enough magic inside me; I could burn down a city. And I didn't want to do that . . .'Allie Beckstrom knows better than most that when magic's involved, you always pay. Whether the price is migraines, amnesia, or muscle aches, she is committed to her work as a Hound, tracing illegal spells back to their casters. But her job is about to get much more dangerous.There's a stom of apocalyptic force bearing down on Portland, and when it hits, all the magic in the area will turn

unstable and destructive. To stop it from taking out the entire city, Allie and her lover, the mysterious Zayvion Jones, must work with the Authority - the enigmatic arbiters of all things magic - and make a stand against a magical wild storm that will obliterate all in its path.If you love urban fantasy, then Magic on the Storm by Devon Monk is a must have read.'Gritty setting, compelling, fully realized characters, and a frightening system of magic-with-a-price that left me awed' Rachel Vincent'Loved it. Fiendishly original and a stay-up-all-night read' Patricia BriggsDevon Monk has one husband, two sons, and a dog named Mojo. She lives in Oregon and is surrounded by colourful and numerous family members who mostly live within dinner-calling distance of each other. Devon's previous novels, Magic to the Bone, Magic in the Blood and Magic in the Shadows, have also been published by Penguin.ExtraitTwo months of self-defense classes, mixed martial arts, and weapons training did not make it hurt any less when I was thrown over my opponents shoulder and slammed into the ground.Yes, I should have tucked and rolled. Would have too, if he hadnt kept hold of my arm and twisted at just the right instant to knock my balance off and make me sprawl like a dead jumper waiting for my chalk outline.Give up? he asked.My right wrist still locked in his grip, I stretched out my left hand and grabbed his ankle, leveraged to pull down, and twisted. I broke his hold on my wrist and rolled up onto my feet. I got off the mat and out of arms reach quick.Ill take that as a no, then? Zayvion Jones asked. He was a little sweaty, a lot relaxed, standing halfway across the mat from me. Barefoot, he had on a pair of jeans that, if there were any justice in the world, would not let him flex and move and stretch the way he did in a fight, and a nice black T-shirt that defined the muscles of his chest, his thick, powerful arms, and his flat, hard stomach.He was every kind of good-looking in the dictionary.Take it as a hell no, I said sweetly.That got a grin out of him, his teeth a flash of white against his dark skin, his thick lips open enough that I suddenly wanted to drop this whole I-kill-you/you-kill-me act and kiss the man.Instead, I rolled my shoulder to make sure my arm was still in its socketZayvion Jones played for keepsand tried to come up with a game plan to tip the fight to my advantage. He might have bendy denim on his side, but I had something better. I had magic in my bones.My shoulder sore but still attached and functioning, I stepped back onto the mat.I could use magic on him. It might be worth ending up in bed with a fever just to take Mr. Superpowerful-Guardian-of-the-Gates down a notch during a practice match.The void stone necklace, a chunk of rock caught up and caged between silver and copper whorls and glass beads, rested against my sternum and made the magic in me lazy and slow. I could still use magic, but it took a little more effort when I was wearing the stone.If Id known about void stones, Id have found a way to steal one months ago. Not that they were common knowledge. The Authority had lots of tricks up their sleeve that they didnt like the common magic user to know about.Is there a particular way youd like to end up on the floor this time? he asked as he shifted his stance and waited for me to attack. Or do you just want me to surprise you?Gee, if I get a choice, how about if I end up on top this time? I gave him that slow blinksmile combination that always got him into bed.He licked his lips, and a flash of uncertainty narrowed his eyes. I thought you said you wanted to fight.I strolled up to him and paused. Out of arms reachIm not dumb. I thought you were asking me how I wanted this to end.Zay studied me, his brown eyes just brown, no hint of the gold that using magic always sparked there. As far as I could tell, he hadnt been using magic for the past couple months. Ever since my test to see whether I could become a part of the Authority, and the craziness with the gate between life and death opening right in the middle of the test room, things had been quiet.And I mean quiet. Id Hounded only a couple magical crimes for Detective Paul Stotts. My dead father, who had taken up residence in my head, seemed to be so distant, he mostly appeared in my dreams. And my trainingboth physical and magicalwith members of the Authority had been exhausting, but a long way from life threatening.Things were actually pretty good. I liked that. Liked not having to worry whether Id survive the day. And it wasnt just my life that was better for the downtime. Over the last several weeks Id watched Zayvion change from a somber, tightly controlled, dutiful man, to someone a little surprised he was enjoying life.Time off from his duties with the Authority looked good on him. Sexy.I wasnt talking about ending this, he said, and it took me a minute to remember what we were talking about. Oh yeah, the fight. But we can call it a day. Since youre surrendering and admitting you lost. Again.As if Id give up that easily. I glared at him.Light poured in through the windows, casting warm coffee-colored shadows beneath his high cheekbones and jaw. His hair was always short, but hed recently buzzed his dark curls, which somehow only enhanced his beautiful eyes and strong, wide nose. The look of worry that I only occasionally glimpsed through his Zen mask had been absent for weeks. He smiled more. Laughed more.And it made me realize how hard Id fallen for him. I didnt want what wed had for the last few weeks to change or disappear. But Id lost too many people in my life, and too many memories along the way, for me to think things would always

be this easy between us. The idea of losing him made it hard to breathe.I tried to push that fear away, but it clung like a bad dream.Allie? Zay was no longer smiling. Are you hurt? Your shoulder? He came closer and put his wide, warm palm on my shoulder.That touch gave me the faintest hint at what he was feeling: concern that hed torn my arm out on that last flip, which, yes, he could have, but noI wasnt that fragile.And that reminded me of what this little get-together was all about. Fighting. Training. Becoming strong enough to hold my own against anyone. Even the legendary Zayvion Jones.I knew I shouldnt do it. But hey, a girl has to take what opportunities present themselves, right? I had my game plan.I stepped into him and turned my hip, sweeping his foot out from under him. He went down, rolled, but I was there, got in close, getting his arm back, my arm through it, and the other over his throat.Give, I said. We were in close contact, but I was too busy staying on the winning side of the tussle to have brain cells left to concentrate on what he might be thinking.No, he grunted.Even though I am a tall woman, Zay still had me on sheer muscle. He flexed and managed to break my hold, twisting over and onto his back, his legs scissoring to catch mine.No way Id let him do that.I followed him, using his momentum to roll over him and then behind. I huffed out air, got to my knees, and tried to keep his arm pinned.He shifted, rolled. I ended up kneeling with him beneath me. Boo-ya! I was on top.I had one knee planted beside him and the other foot braced on the other side. Forget about his armI wrapped my hands around his throat, knuckles at his windpipe.He pressed his palms flat against my hip bones and tilted his hands inward so his fingers stroked upward beneath my T-shirt. I glared at him as the heels of his hands slid over the bullet scar on my left side and the smooth skin on my right. Then up and up. His thumbs tracked slower than his fingers over my stomach, pausing to dip and press at my navel. Then he fanned his hands outward, upward, and rested them beneath the curve of my breasts, supporting the weight there.I raised an eyebrow. You do notice Im choking you? I squeezed a little harder in case he thought I was kidding around.He grunted.I most certainly was not kidding around.He shifted his grip. Tried to pull me down and rolled one hip to throw me. No chance. I braced my heel to stay out of the roll and pressed harder.Mercy, he whispered.I relaxed my grip. Say I win.I win, he managed.I retucked my thumbs against his windpipe. What? You win? Is that what you said? I must not have heard you correctly.Draw, he whispered.Oh, sweet hells, Jones. You have got to be the most stubborn man I know. You lost.I agree, he said.Huh. I hadnt expected him to give in that easily. I pulled my hands away, rested them against his chest.I am the most stubborn man you know. He rubbed at his throat with one hand. Grinned at me.I smacked his other arm. My honors at stake here. You lost. I won. If you cant admit that, Im not sure our relationship will survive.He snorted, grabbed my shirt, and pulled me fully on top of him. His fist, in the valley between my breasts, was a hard pressure between us.Nothings going to get in the way of our relationship. His gaze searched my own, and the slightest fleck of gold sparked there. So long as we want this, nothing can stand in our way.Damn. Could the man get any more romantic?I tipped my head down and caught his lips with my own, soft, thick, hungry. He instantly responded, then licked gently at my mouth until I opened for him. He tasted of deep, warm mint, and his pine scent, peppered by sweat, carried the memory of the countless times we had touched, loved.I explored the textures of his lips, his mouth, savoring him slowly, and he did the same, his tongue stroking a delicious heat through my body. I moaned softly and gave in to the liquid fire burning through me.I wanted him. And it was very clear he wanted me.He flattened his fist and released my shirt, then wrapped his arm around me, holding me tightly, as if he were afraid I might disappear.A little too tightly. Claustrophobia ticked the back of my throat. It was suddenly hard to breathe.I exhaled and pushed back enough that he knew to loosen his grip. I lifted my shoulders and chest and took a deep breath. There was plenty of room here, plenty of room for us to be this close.He drew his arms off from around me, his hands at my ribs instead, helping me stay half raised above him. My right hand on the floor next to him did the rest to support my weight.With his free hand, he tucked my hair behind my ear, a gesture that was becoming habitual and endearing.Okay? he asked quietly.I nodded. Just that much space, that one deep breath, cleared my head and pushed the claustrophobia away.I wove my fingers between the thickness of his and pulled his hand out to the side. I eased back down on him and caught his other hand, and drew it outward too, so that we lay body against body, spread wide upon the floor. My breasts, stomach, hips, thighs, melted into the length and hardness of him beneath me. I wanted more of him. All of him. I kissed the side of his neck, bit gently. His hands clenched, and his body responded to my unspoken invitation.I sucked at his neck while his heartbeat grew stronger and faster beneath my breasts.Allie, he begged. Electricity rolled through me, and I caught my breath.It had been two months, and it still felt like I couldnt get enough of him.I want you, he whispered in my mind. We kissed again, his tongue tracing the edge of my bottom lip. I felt his desire burn through me like a hot wind, making

my skin prickle with tight heat.Soul Complements, they say, can cast magic with each other, matching and blending exactly how they use magic, work magic. Soul Complements, they say, can become so close, they hear each others thoughts. Soul Complements, they say, can become so close they lose their sense of identity and go insane. That made Soul Complements an unmeasured power, a combination that could change magic, break magic, make it do things it should not do.Zay and I could hear each others thoughts when we touched. We hadnt cast magic together, which was a little strange. I thought the Authority would have wanted to know what kind of strength or liability we could be for them. But Sedra, the leader, refused to allow us full testing.We hadnt pushed for it. Maybe we were both worried it would feel too good. Would make us need it too much. Maybe we were afraid if we got too close, wed never be able to let go, no matter the price.Yeah, that last thing was pretty much it.But what they didnt say was that sex, when you could feel your partners pleasure, when you knew exactly what his body craved, was awesome.I rocked my hips against his and nipped at his earlobe.Ask me real nice-like, I thought.Zay paused, swallowed. I pulled up, gazed down at him. His eyes held more gold than before, as if he was resisting the need to use magic. He slid one leg between mine. Or what? he asked.Didnt he know I couldnt ignore a challenge?I propped my forearms on his chest and tried to look unconcerned.Or we could call it a day and go get lunch.Hmm. He brushed my hair back again, tucking it behind my right ear. He traced the whorls of magic that started at the corner of my right eye and flowed like metallic ribbons down the edge of my cheek, jaw, neck. I shivered at the cool mint that licked behind his touch.His finger stopped at the pulse point at my throat, even though the marks of magic continued down my arm to my fingertips.Are you hungry? he asked.I was. But not for food. Yes.A rock hit my arm.I twisted, my palms up, ready to cast a spell.Zayvion was way ahead of me. One elbow braced beneath him, he rolled, putting me partially behind him, his right hand already outlining a glyph in the air, though he didnt pour magic into it yet.Another rock, a wet rockno, an ice cubehit my hip. More ice hit Zayvions shoulder, clattered down his chest to the mat in front of him. Ice rained down around us in handfuls.Shamus Flynn stood at the door halfway across the room, a bucket of ice tucked between his arm and chest, and a grin on his face.Thank God I got here in time. He tossed another volley our way. You might have gone up in flames. Burst into sex at any minute.Shame, Zayvion warned. Put the ice down.Like hell. No need to thank me. Its what friends are for. He tossed another cube at Zayvions head. Zay didnt even blink as it whizzed past his ear.Boy had good aim.Zay didnt take his eyes off Shame, but he shifted so that we were no longer tangled.Do you remember what happened to you the last time you threw ice at me? he asked calmly.Shame shook his head. Doesnt ring a bell.It had something to do with you not walking straight for a couple days.Shame grinned. Oh, you mean what Chase did to me. That I remember. Girls got no sense of humor. And she kicks like a mule. Bad combination.The bucket? Zay held up his hand where he still held the glyph between ring finger and thumb. Down.Shame pulled out a piece of ice, and stuck it in his mouth. He chewed itnoisilyas he strolled over to us.I swear he had a death wish.Shame did a fair job at that goth-rocker vibe. Black hair cut with the precision of dull garden shears shaded his eyes. Black T-shirt over a black long-sleeved shirt on top of black jeans, black boots. Even his hands were covered by black fingerless gloves. But behind all that black was a man who wasnt as young as he looked. A man whose eyes carried too much pain to be hidden by that sly smile.That was your last warning. Zayvion tensed, ready to pour magic into the glyph.Do not burn your best friend to a crisp, I said, sounding more like a babysitter than a girlfriend.Zay just kept staring at Shame. Hes wont burn long. Not with all that water on him.Shame laughed. Bring it on.No ones going to bring anything on. I stood, and took turns glaring at Zayvion and Shamus. No magic fights in the gym.Right. Like theyd do what I said.Time to change tactics. How about food? Zay and I were just going to do lunch, I said.Lunch? Shamus said. Is that what you kids are calling it these days? Back in my day we called it fucking.Shamus, Zayvion said, may I have a word with you? Zay let go of the spell and stood up in one smooth, graceful motion that showed just how many years this man had spent sparring.Shame didnt have time to answer because Zay closed in on him, fast and silent as a panther. He wrapped his arm around Shame. It looked friendly enough, but both of Shames arms were pinned and Shame was tucked tight against Zays side.You want a word with me, or you want to date me? Shame asked. Cause if its the second thing, youre buying me more than lunch.Zayvion forced him toward the far side of the room.I shook my head. Those two acted like brothers, even though they were physically about as opposite as they could get. I glanced at the door, wondering if Chase, Zays ex-girlfriend, might have come along with Shame. No one was there.My shoulders dropped. Chase and I were not exactly friends, even though wed had to work around each other the last couple months. She wasnt done hating me for what happened to Greyson, the man she dumped Zay for. And I was more than done explaining to her that I hadnt

turned him into a half-dead beast.What can I say? My relationships were complicated.I found my water bottle Id left on the floor, picked it up, and took a drink. Zay and Shame were far enough across the room I shouldnt be able to hear what they were saying. But Hounding for a living meant I had good ears. There was a chance Id be able to spring into action if Shame needed me to save his life or something.. . . ever throw ice at me again, I am going to beat you with that bucket. Do you understand me?Oh, please. Like I should take you seriously. You havent raised a finger in two months.Listen. Zay paused, lowered his voice. This is different than Chase and me. More than . . . that ever was. He paused again. I need you to respect what we have, or you and I are going to have real problems.Respect? Shamus asked, just as quietly. Im filled with envy.Then stop being an ass.Shame snorted. Better to ask the rain not to fall.Rain, Zay said, squeezing Shame a little harder. Dont fall. He released his hold.Shame got out of arms reach and shook his hand, probably trying to get blood back into it. Like I said, Zay played for keeps.Cant remember the last time you and I had real problems. Shame stuck his hand in the ice bucket and dug out another frozen chunk, popped it in his mouth.Itll come to you.From Shames body language, I could tell it had. Yes. Well. Lets not go there again.Then Shame raised his voice, obviously talking to me. Arent you going to ask why I came by?I shrugged the shoulder that didnt hurt. You need a reason to harass Zay?Hell no. But Im not here to talk to Zay. Im here for you. He strolled across the room toward me.Zayvion paced over to where hed left his water bottle. The man was so quiet that if I werent looking at him, I wouldnt think there was anyone in the room except Shame and me.Whats up? I asked.Shame stopped and held out the bucket. Ice?Were going to lunch, remember?You were serious about that? he asked. Huh. Well, you might want to eat quick. My mum wants to see you. He glanced at the clock on the wall behind me. In an hour, the latest. At the inn.Did she say why? I asked.Officially?At all.Theres a storm coming, he said, all the joking gone now.Zayvion stiffened. I watched as the relaxed, laughing man Id spent the last few weeks with was replaced by an emotionless wall of control, of calm, of duty.What kind of storm? I asked, even though I was pretty sure what the answer would be.Wild magic, he said. And its aiming straight for the city.Revue de presseLoved it. Fiendishly original and a stay-up-all-night read (Patricia Briggs)Clever and compulsively readable (Publishers Weekly)Imaginative, gritty, sometimes darkly humorous . . . unputdownable (Romance s Today)