

## Awakened: A House of Night Novel (House of Night Novels)

By P. C. Cast, Kristin Cast

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*"My love, speak to me. Tell me everything." Neferet went to Kalona, kneeling before him, stroking the soft, dark wings that unfurled loosely around the immortal.*

*"What would you have me say?" He didn't meet her eyes.*

*"Zoey lives." Neferet's voice was flat, cold, lifeless.*

*"She does."*

*"Then you owe me the subservience of your immortal soul." She started to walk away from him.*


*"Where are you going? What will happen next?"*

*"It is quite simple. I will ensure Zoey is drawn back to Oklahoma. There, on my own terms, I will complete the task you failed."*

Exonerated by the Vampyre High Council and returned to her position of High Priestess at Tulsa's House of Night, Neferet has sworn vengeance on Zoey. Dominion over Kalona is only one of the weapons she plans to use against Z. But Zoey has found sanctuary on the Isle of Skye and is being groomed by Queen Sgiach to take over for her there. Being Queen would be cool, wouldn't it? Why should she return to Tulsa? After losing her human consort, Heath, she will never be the same - and her relationship with her super-hot-warrior, Stark, may never be the same either...

And what about Stevie Rae and Rephaim? The Raven Mocker refuses to be used against Stevie Rae, but what choice does he have when no one in the entire world, including Zoey, would be okay with their relationship? Does he betray his father or his heart?

In the pulse-pounding 8th book in the bestselling House of Night series, how far will the bonds of friendship stretch and how strong are the ties that bind one girl's heart?

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
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### **Awakened: A House of Night Novel (House of Night Novels) By P. C. Cast, Kristin Cast Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“The mega-selling Cast team continues to reveal its pulse-pounding saga through the viewpoints of multiple characters, giving fresh insight into their hearts and motivations...Tragedy, sacrifice and choice are all themes that make this story gripping.” *?Romantic Times*

“The saga of the *House of Night* series continues to smolder in *Burned*...Overall this is a fast and furious read, but a rewarding one.” *?VOYA on BURNED, House of Night Book 7*

“*Burned* [is] a strong, moving, powerful addition to this series....The last fifty pages just wrung me out, crying and happy all at the same time. I don't know where in the world the next book will be going but I wouldn't miss it!” *?Night Owl Reviews on BURNED, House of Night Book 7*

“Cast and Cast pull out all the stops and take this story to shattering new heights with devastating consequences!” *?Romantic Times (4 ½ stars) on TEMPTED, House of Night Book 6*

“P. C. And Kristin Cast have made an absolutely amazing [YA] series. The visuals offered by this fantastic duo are entertaining and imaginative, with nonstop action... This is easily a [YA] series that can entertain adults with action, hot Vampyres, true friendship, budding romance, a loving Goddess, and a twist of the unexpected.” *?HowlingGoodBooks.com (5 stars) on TEMPTED, House of Night Book 6*

“Move over, Stephenie Meyer.” *?People on HUNTED, House of Night Book 5*

“Zoey Redbird's first-person adventures take on added danger and importance in the latest House of Night release. Forced by circumstance to grow up quickly, Zoey's emotional and spiritual evolution is fascinating. The Cast duo breathes life and vibrancy into the characters and makes each one an integral part of the saga. Awesome and unforgettable as always!” *?Romantic Times (4.5 stars) on HUNTED, House of Night Book 5*

“The Cast duo has done it again! These ladies appear to be an unstoppable force within the world of YA literature... Teenage readers will be drawn to Zoey's everyday, angst-riddled life. Not only does she need to save the world, Zoey needs to solve some major vampyre/human boy drama. These stories are surreal, yet shockingly accurate when it comes to teenagers and their lives.” *?TeensReadToo.com (5 stars) on HUNTED, House of Night Book 5*

“The most masterful part of the writing lies in how the authors take on serious issues sex, peer pressure, bullying, parental alienation, religion, and substance abuse and weave them into the text. It is a refreshing perspective that doesn't feel like preaching.” *?Tulsa World on HUNTED, House of Night Book 5*

“This is a series that should not be missed!” *?EnchantingReviews.com on UNTAMED, House of Night Book 4*

“Untamed is a fast moving and adventure filled read, with engaging characters and just a touch of romantic chemistry to keep fans guessing. This is a well-written young adult series that should easily appeal to both teens and adults.” *?Darque Reviews on UNTAMED, House of Night Book 4*

“The mother and daughter writing team have created a believable world with characters that you can't let go of. The story is addictive and the cliffhanger ending in this installment has me wishing the months till March will fly by! The fifth book *Haunted* will surely be another great book in this amazing series.”

?*ParaNormalRomance.org* on *UNTAMED, House of Night Book 4*

“Teenage issues can seem like life or death, but in this haunting series, *House of Night*, that's really the case. Through Zoey's eyes readers are led into a world that's getting more complicated by the minute, where friends and enemies can switch positions in a heartbeat. The remarkable Cast duo continues to build a world that you won't soon forget!” ?*Romantic Times (4.5 stars)* on *CHOSEN, House of Night Book 3*

“*Chosen*, The *House of Night* series book 3, is like the cream in an Oreo cookie holding the two ends together. This story is gearing up for the final showdown between Zoey and Nephret and mother and daughter team, P.C. and Kristen Cast are setting the stage perfectly for this....Again, P.C. Cast is an auto-buy author for me and this series is also on that auto-buy list.” ?*Paranormal Romance Reviews* on *CHOSEN, House of Night Book 3*

“The Cast and Cast team is back and stirring up deep trouble in their beguiling supernatural world....The issues faced by these teens are not child's play, and the stakes are life and death. This is extremely craveable reading!” ?*Romantic Times (4.5 stars)* on *BETRAYED, House of Night Book 2*

“Some would find it hard to write the sequel to a great book like *Marked*, but the Cast women obviously didn't have that problem. I laughed, sighed, and definitely cried. I thought that I knew where this series was headed but the authors took me completely by surprise. Congrats to P.C. and Kristin Cast, on a fantastic job. Bring on *Chosen*!” ?*Night Owl Romance Reviews* on *BETRAYED, House of Night Book 2*

“P.C. and Kristin Cast make a fantastic writing team. This enchanting tale is filled with non-stop action, strong relationships, and sweet blossoming romance. Whether you're a teen or an adult who loves a great paranormal read, this is a series not to be missed.” ?*Darque Reviews* on *BETRAYED, House of Night Book 2*

“This highly addicting series offers a unique twist on the standard vampyre story and is sure to please a wide variety of readers. Although she is a vampyre, Zoey Redbird's journey is one for every teen... These books will have the reader laughing hysterically and sobbing unreservedly-sometimes all at once.” ?*VOYA (on both Marked and Betrayed)*

“Zoey Redbird... is basically the most relatable vampire - sorry, fledgling vampyre - I've ever read about.” ?*MTV.com* on *MARKED, House of Night Book 1*

“The Casts have put a very interesting new spin on vampire lore. The action is fast paced and absorbing, interspersing light moments among the intensity. When you reach the climax of the tale, you'll be on the edge of your seat. Though this is labeled a young adult novel, I strongly suspect adults of any age will enjoy it.” ?*Huntress.com* on *MARKED, House of Night Book 1*

“The Casts, mother and daughter, have written a delightful book that's aimed at teens but will be enjoyed by readers of all ages. The trials of growing up are presented in the new and original context of a vampire society, and they're woven into a thoroughly entertaining story. Zoey is a dynamic and spunky heroine who has an amusing and realistic voice. She's surrounded by secondary characters who are just as engaging. The dialogue is sharp and the references to real people and pop culture add to the story. This promises to be a highly addictive series.” ?*Romantic Times (4.5 stars)* on *MARKED, House of Night Book 1*

“*Marked* is one of the best coming of age stories to come out of Oklahoma since S. E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*. It teaches about the beauty of being a social outcast, friendship, and finding your own inner

spirituality.” ?*The Beltane Papers on MARKED, House of Night Book 1*

“From the moment I stuck my face in this book it hooked me! Totally awesome new take on vampires! *Marked* is hot and dark and funny. It rocks!” ?*Gena Showalter, author of MTV’s Oh My Goth on MARKED, House of Night Book 1*

“Cast reeled me in from paragraph one. I snorted and giggled through the whole thing, and devoured it in one sitting.” ?*MaryJanice Davidson, New York Times bestselling author of the Undead series on MARKED, House of Night Book 1*

#### About the Author

P.C. CAST is an award-winning fantasy and paranormal romance author as well as an experienced speaker and teacher. Her novels have been awarded the prestigious Oklahoma Book Award, YALSA Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers, Prism, Daphne du Maurier, and Affaire du Coeur, as well as others. She lives in Oklahoma.

Her daughter, KRISTIN CAST, has won awards for her poetry and journalism. She also lives in Oklahoma, where she attends college.

Caitlin Davies is a New York City-based actor and audiobook narrator. She has performed in New York and regional theaters and is a member of the WorkShop Theater Company in New York City. She has studied acting at the Eugene O’Neill National Institute, the British American Drama Academy, the Barrow Group, and Brown University/ Trinity Rep. She has a bachelor’s degree from Vassar College. Caitlin specializes in audiobooks for teens and young adults, including *Burned* by P.C. Cast and Kristin Cast for Macmillan Audio.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### *Neferet*

A disquieting sense of irritation awakened Neferet. Before she had truly departed that amorphous place between dreams and reality, she reached out with her long, elegant fingers and felt for Kalona. The arm she touched was muscular. His skin was smooth and strong and pleasing beneath her fingertips. All it took was that small, feather-like caress. He stirred and turned eagerly to her.

“My Goddess?” His voice was husky with sleep and the beginnings of renewed desire.

He annoyed her.

They all annoyed her because they were not *him*.

“Leave me ... Kronos.” She had to pause, and search her memory to remember his ridiculous, overly ambitious name.

“Goddess, have I done something to displease you?”

Neferet glanced up at him. The young Son of Erebus Warrior was reclining on the bed beside her, his handsome face open, his expression willing, his aquamarine eyes just as striking in the dimness of her candlelit bedroom as they had been earlier that day when she’d watched him training in the castle courtyard. He’d stirred her desires then, and with one inviting look from her, he’d willingly come to her and futilely, though enthusiastically, attempted to prove that he was god in more than namesake alone.

The problem was that Neferet had been bedded by an immortal, thus she knew all too intimately just how much of an imposter this Kronos truly was.

“Breathe,” Neferet said, meeting his blue eyes with a bored glance.

“Breathe, Goddess?” His brow, decorated by a tattoo pattern that was supposed to represent ball and mace weaponry, but to Neferet appeared more like frilly Fourth of July fireworks, furrowed in confusion.

“You asked what you’d done to displease me and I told you: you’re breathing. And in much too close a proximity to me. *That* displeases me. It’s time you depart my bed.” Neferet sighed and flicked her fingers at him in dismissal. “Go. Now.”

She almost laughed aloud at his undisguised look of hurt and shock.

Had the youth really believed he could replace her divine Consort? The impertinence of the thought fueled her anger.

In the corners of Neferet’s bedchamber, shadows within shadows quivered in anticipation. Though she didn’t acknowledge them, she felt their stirrings. It pleased her.

“Kronos, you were distracting, and for a brief time you gave me a measure of pleasure.” Neferet touched him again, this time not so gently, and her fingernails left twin raised welts down his thick forearm. The young warrior didn’t flinch or pull away. Instead he trembled beneath her touch and his breathing deepened.

Neferet smiled. She’d known this one needed pain to feel desire the instant his eyes had met hers.

“I would give you more pleasure, if you allowed it,” he said.

Neferet smiled. Her tongue flicked out slowly, licking her lips as she watched him watch her. “Perhaps in the future. Perhaps. For now what I require of you is to leave me and, of course, to continue to worship me.”

“Would that I could show you how much I long to worship you *again*.” The last word was spoken as a verbal caress, and—mistakenly—Kronos reached for her.

As if it was his right to touch her.

As if her wishes were subservient to his needs and desires.

One small echo from Neferet’s distant past—a time she thought she’d buried with her humanity—seeped from the entombed memories. She felt her father’s touch and even smelled the reek of his rancid, alcohol-soaked breath as her childhood invaded the present.

Neferet’s response was instantaneous. As easily as breathing, she lifted her hand from the warrior’s arm and held it, palm outward, at the closest of the shadows lurking at the edges of her chamber.

Darkness responded to her touch even more quickly than had Kronos. She felt its deadly chill and reveled in the sensation, especially as it banished the rising memories. With a nonchalant motion, she scattered the Darkness at Kronos, saying, “If it is pain you so desire, then taste my cold fire.”

The Darkness Neferet hurled at Kronos penetrated his young, smooth skin eagerly, slicing ribbons of scarlet through the forearm she had so recently caressed.

He moaned, though this time more in fear than passion.

“Now do as I command. Leave me. And remember, young warrior, a goddess chooses when and where and how she is touched. Do not overstep yourself again.”

Gripping his bleeding arm, Kronos bowed low to Neferet. “Yes, my Goddess.”

“Which goddess? Be specific, Warrior! I have no desire to be called by ambiguous titles.”

His response was instantaneous. “Nyx Incarnate. That is your title, my Goddess.”

Her narrowed look softened. Neferet’s face relaxed into its mask of beauty and warmth. “Very good, Kronos. Very good. See how easy it is to please me?”

Caught in her emerald gaze, Kronos nodded once, then fisting his right hand over his heart he said, “Yes, my Goddess, my Nyx,” and backed reverently from her chamber.

Neferet smiled again. It was unimportant that she was not actually Nyx Incarnate. The truth was Neferet wasn’t interested in being cast in the role of an incarnate goddess. “That implies I am lesser than a goddess,” she spoke to the shadows gathered around her. What was important was power—and if the title Nyx Incarnate aided her in the acquisition of power, especially with the Sons of Erebus Warriors, then that was the title by which she would be called. “But I aspire to more—much more than standing in the shadow of a goddess.”

Soon she would be ready to take her next step, and Neferet knew some of the Sons of Erebus would be manipulated into standing beside her. Oh, not enough of them to actually sway a battle with their physical



force, but enough of them to fragment the Warriors' morale by setting brother against brother. *Men*, she thought disdainfully, *so easily fooled by the masks of beauty and title, and so easily used to my advantage.* The thought pleased her but wasn't distracting enough to keep Neferet from restlessly leaving her bed. She wrapped a sheer silk robe around herself and moved from her chamber out into the hallway. Before she'd given conscious thought to her actions she was heading to the stairwell that would take her to the bowels of the castle.

Shadows within shadows drifted after Neferet, dark magnets drawn by her increasing agitation. She knew they moved with her. She knew they were dangerous and that they fed on her unease, her anger, her restless mind. But, oddly, she found a measure of comfort in their presence.

She paused only once in her downward descent. *Why am I going to him again? Why am I allowing him to invade my thoughts tonight?* Neferet shook her head as if to dislodge the silent words and spoke into the narrow, empty stairwell, addressing the Darkness that hovered attentively around her. "I go because it is what I wish to do. Kalona is my Consort. He was wounded serving me. It is only natural that I think of him." With a self-satisfied smile Neferet continued down the winding stairwell, easily repressing the truth: that Kalona had been wounded because she had entrapped him, and the service he performed for her was a forced one.

She reached the dungeon, carved centuries ago from the rocky earth that made up the Isle of Capri at the bottommost level of the castle, and moved silently down the torch-lit hallway. The Son of Erebus Warrior standing watch outside the barred room couldn't hide his jolt of surprise. Neferet's smile widened. His shocked look, tinged with fear, told her that she was getting better and better at appearing to materialize from nothing but shadows and night. That lightened her mood, but not enough to add the softness of a smile to temper the cruel edge of command in her voice.

"Leave. I wish to be alone with my Consort."

The Son of Erebus hesitated only a moment, but that slight pause was enough for Neferet to make a mental note about being sure in the next few days that this particular Warrior would be called back to Venice. Perhaps because of an emergency regarding someone close to him ...

"Priestess, I leave you to your privacy. But know that I am within the sound of your voice and will respond to your call should you need me." Without meeting her eyes, the Warrior fisted his hand over his heart and bowed—though too slightly to suit her.

Neferet watched him retreat down the narrow hallway.

"Yes," she whispered to the shadows. "I can feel that something quite unfortunate is going to happen to his mate."

Smoothing the sheer silk of her wrap, she turned to the closed wooden door. Neferet drew a deep breath of the damp dungeon air. She swept the thick fall of her auburn hair back from her face, baring her beauty as if girding herself for battle.

Neferet waved her hand at the door and it opened for her. She stepped into the room.

Kalona lay directly on the earthen floor. She'd wanted to make a bed for him, but discretion had dictated her actions. It really wasn't that she was keeping him imprisoned. She was simply being wise. He had to complete his mission for her—that was what was best for him. If his body regained too much of its immortal strength, it would be a distraction for Kalona, an unfortunate distraction. Especially as he'd sworn to act as her sword in the Otherworld and to rid them of the inconvenience Zoey Redbird had created for them in this time, this reality.

Neferet approached his body. Her Consort lay flat on his back, naked, with only his onyx wings as a veil-like covering. She sank gracefully to her knees and then reclined, ...

## Users Review

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