

Eternally Damned: Chapter 11

Maven

Oh god.

Oh my god.

I just had sex with a vampire in my room with my grandpa downstairs. I can only hope he didn't hear anything.

Anything being *me*.

My throat is still sore from shouting.

I fuss with my hair, not that it matters, because my cheeks are burning and there is no way he won't be able to notice what we were up to.

As I walk down the hall, the roses and vines take over the walls, the black petals slowly wilting as if they have been there without water and sunlight.

They are gorgeous, but I don't know why they won't recede like they did in the bedroom.

Just thinking about the bedroom and the aching between my legs makes me want a replay of what happened. I don't think I could, not today.

I'm already sore.

"I can still smell your lust, beloved." Lex's whisper sends my skin in a frenzy, giving me goosebumps. "It's making me crazy. We're in a mating heat. You better behave."

I spin around, my hair slashing through the air when I hear his words. "Ah, what?"

He pins me against the wall, shoves his knee between my legs and presses it against my overstimulated clit. My eyes roll to the back of my head as my mouth falls open.

Lex's hand muffles my moan by lying it over my lips while bracing the other hand against the soft vines curling along the wall.

"A mating heats." His teeth snap together, and his eyes flick back and forth from red to blue, as if he can't control himself. His fangs lengthen and I want his bite again. My mating mark tingles with need and my heart pumps harder, readying my blood for him. "Because we are just mated, our bodies are in overdrive with need as we adapt to those changes." He closes his eyes and tilts his head back, the curve of his neck showing tendons and muscles. He inhales, growling as he scents me. "Anytime of the day, any time of night, you're going to want me to fill you just as I need to." His chin drops to his chest and the sharp points protruding from his gums make me want to dare him to prove their carnality.

"We need to hurry because I can't take you again in this house." He drops to his knees and buries his face between my legs, groaning as if he is high. "You have no idea how delicious you smell. Your virgin blood, your come, my come, all mingled together to create a gourmet concoction that has my fangs aching."

I whimper, forgetting where we are. My restraint is gone. He can take me. Right here. Right now. I don't care.

"But good things have to be savored, so I'll wait." He stands, his hand grasping the side of my neck and tugs me forward, his lips meeting mine in a harsh pace. His tongue flicks and his fangs nick my bottom lip.

I barely have time to register the pain before his tongue lashes over it, healing the small prick immediately.

"So delicious," he says satisfied. "Come. We have explaining to do, don't we?"

Oh, I'll come alright...

I take a deep breath and nod, taking his hand in mine as we walk down the stairs. The house is quiet. The only sounds are the creaking of the steps as we descend. The roses continue to wilt, and the vines shrivel.

Something doesn't feel right.

When we get to the main floor, I pause, glancing around the room to see what is off. Everything is where it should be. The couch is still crappy with sagging cushions, the remote is on the arm of the recliner, and the lamp is on.

"What's wrong, Maven?" Lex's voice is on edge.

"I don't know. Something feels different." I watch the vines along the floor and crane my neck back to see them across the ceiling, petals drifting from above us as they turn to ash mid-air.

His hand lands on my lower back and I gasp, my body coming to life under his touch as I walk along the vines veining across the floor. "Maybe you shouldn't touch me while we are here." I swallow, hating the words as soon as they leave my mouth. "I don't think I can take it."

An expression that can only be described as desire etches across his face and his vampire shines through his blue pools. "I'll try, but I might fail." His talons lengthen and he curls his fists, pressing them into his palms until blood drips freely.

"Lex!" I reach for him, but he pulls away from my touch.

"Pain reminds me to be in control." He releases a breath. "I can't be in control with your hands on me."

Arousal zips down my spine. We need to get out of this house.

He uncurls his fists to show me he is healed. I have this odd urge to bend down and lick his blood, to drink it like he drinks mine.

Where does that urge come from?

Is that part of the mating heat?

“Pa?” I distract myself with the matter at hand. “Pa, are you here? We need to talk.” I head into the kitchen, confused when I see dinner on the table, but Pa isn’t sitting there.

He’s by the sink.

And he isn’t moving.

I run to him, the roses crunching under my feet. “Pa? Pa, can you hear me? Pa!” I shake his shoulders, but his eyes are trained out the window, a slight smile on his face. Tears gather in my eyes. Oh god, he is dead, isn’t he? “Pa?” my voice falls to a crackling sound. I press my ear against his chest and hear the steady beat of his heart thrumming inside.

I slump, relieved. “Thank god.” I press my hand against my forehead, willing myself to calm down.

“Is he okay?” Lex asks, standing on Pa’s other side.

“He’s fine. He is frozen, though.” I wave my hand in front of his face. “I don’t understand.” I follow his line of sight and notice the leaves in the air, usually swirling and flipping as they fall to the ground, paused mid-fall. “Lex.” I point and his brows arch, surprised, but then his eyes travel beyond them.

“What?” I question, not liking the look on his face.

“The sun is coming up. See?” He points.

Now that I’m not focused on Pa and the leaves, I do notice the orange and pinks painting the sky just above the tree line. The dark is receding, replaced by the morning rays.

“That’s impossible. It’s morning?” I rush to the living room and turn on the TV, needing to see the date since my phone is dead.

The remote falls from my hand, clattering to the ground when I see the numbers staring back at me. Lex is at my side in an instant.

“What?” He nearly barks, concerned that I’ve hurt myself. “What is it?”

“It’s been two days since we’ve come here. Two days, Lex. We were in my bedroom for that long, how?”

He gives me a look that tells he knows how. “It has to be the mating heat. I don’t know specifics. Maybe the answers are in a book back at the estate. Perhaps, you slowed down time, Beloved. You’re new to your power. You aren’t in control of them yet.”

“I didn’t just slow it down, Lex! I made it stop. Pa is frozen!” I shout, panicked. “I don’t know how to undo this.” I rub a hand down my face and shake my head. “I don’t know what to do,” I yell.

“I bet it was a protective instinct. We wanted to be alone. It was a big moment for us. I should have waited until we were at the estate. I’m so sorry, My Sweet. Forgive me?”

He truly seems pained, taking the responsibility for my actions.

“It isn’t your fault.” How could it be? He can’t help that he made me feel so good that all I thought about was that moment, us in bed, lasting forever.

“What?” he questions curiously when he sees my face light up.

“I thought about... you know when we were—”

“—Fucking,” he rumbles, his chest vibrating with power.

I tilt my head down and my eyes lock on the growing bulge behind the sweatpants I gave him, courtesy of Pa’s closet.

I nod, my face hot with being caught. “I wanted it to last forever. That’s all I thought about.”

“And to achieve that, you must have frozen everything around you.”

“How could two days pass? It doesn’t feel like it.” Oh damn, I bet I missed the calls from Dottie and definitely the security guard turned construction worker who was supposed to drop off the materials for the house.

“We got lost in love. There are worse ways to pass time.” He brushes his lips across my cheek. “Perhaps, if you think you want time to move forward, you just need to think about it,” he suggests. “And please do it soon,” he groans, eyeing my throat. “I can’t wait much longer to take you again.”

I melt under his words, my body becoming pliant and free for him to do whatever he wants.

“I want to bend you over my knee, spank your ass until it’s red, then sink my fangs in the hot flesh. Your blood will be right at the surface for me. You’ll take it won’t you? You’ll be a good girl for me.”

“Yes, I’ll be a good girl,” I half moan on a lost breath.

This is not helping the situation I need to fix.

With more willpower than I seem to have, he steps back, but the heat in my body stays.

“Pa, and then I’ll take you home and fuck you until you feel me tomorrow.”

“I already feel you,” I admit as I press my thighs together.

His irises morph into twin flames. “Go tend to your Pa, Maven, before I do something to set us back fifty years,” he warns.

Nearly tripping over myself, I back away, my eyes lock on the expanse of his broad chest and muscular arms. His breathing is fast and like the predator he is, his eyes never leave me. If I move too fast, he might attack.

Those black talons gleam and promise wicked torment, the flash of him tearing up my skin slamming against my mind.

It didn't even hurt.

And what's odd is that I want it to happen again.

The inky black tendrils fall across his face, hiding the animal that lurks.

I keep slowly backing away until I find myself in the kitchen. Letting out a gust of air, I stand next to Pa, refocusing my attention to where it is needed most.

"Pa, I'm so sorry," I say to him, brushing his white hair from his eyes. I think about wanting to have dinner with him now, wanting to remodel the home now, everything needs to happen right this moment, but nothing changes.

The vines are still on the floor, dying.

As are the roses.

Why are they there? What can I do?

I snap my fingers in front of his eyes, but like a statue, he remains still.

Stomping my foot against one of the roses, I scream. "Just put everything the way it was. I don't know what else to do!" Harmonic sounds echo in my tone, the glass on the counters tremble and the vines finally begin to trickle away, the roses dissipating into ash. A blizzard of dead roses fall until the last flake hits the ground.

It all melts away as if it was never there.

Pa begins to wash the dishes as if he hasn't been frozen for the last two days.

I'm not sure how I'm going to explain that.

He whistles and I throw my arms around his neck. Bubbles from the soap fly in the air as I knock him off his feet.

Pa grunts. "Goodness. I didn't see you there," he chuckles. "Did you get Mr. Monreaux settled?"

Yeah... I did.

"I'm so glad you're okay," I say into his shoulder.

"I'm fine, Fireball. I'm just fine." He pats my back, forgetting his hand is wet. "Oh, sorry."

I know Lex is behind me because I can feel him. I can feel the pull of my heart dying to be close to him.

"She has been very... accommodating, Mr. Wildes."

I narrow my eyes at Lex because his words have a double meaning.

"Pa, I accidentally froze you for two days because Alexander is my mate or I'm his beloved and I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to." I blurt it out, leaving out the details.

He needs to be spared some truth.

"You froze time?" he gawks, dropping the plate in the sink.

"Only you and I assume Whiskey. I can't tell." I turn to see Whiskey still asleep near the stove.

"And the leaves outside," Lex adds. "And who knows what else."

"And I assume, in order for this to happen, you were in a state of mind that you weren't able to control?"

I open my mouth to answer, but Pa continues. "Your powers are so strong, Maven. I wish I had books on it, but I don't. I'm afraid I won't be much help. I can only do the simple things. My power, since I didn't have a coven to protect, has weakened over time. Eventually, it will stop existing. It's why so many of us witches and warlocks are rare these days. You stopped time," he repeats to himself. "How?"

"I don't know," I say honestly. "I wasn't sure I could bring it back, but I just got so upset and yelled? I guess I projected. I don't know."

“I have all of Sarah Wildes books at the estate. Since she was the last true coven witch, I’m sure they have valuable information we all need to know.”

“What I do know, is a witch is at her strongest with a coven. We draw power from vampires. They enhance us when we are theirs and they are ours,” Pa explains. “You might not have a large coven, but you have Alex. Your bond is a rare one, which is stronger than any strength a coven can provide. You two are the coven now.” He grabs our hands and locks them, unknowingly heightening my arousal when Pa causes me and Lex to touch.

Lex tenses and a quiet, strangled hiss escapes him.

My blood begins to heat, sweat adorns above my brows and at the base of my neck.

Unsteadily, I say, “Why is that? Why are witches and vampires linked?”

“I don’t know,” Pa shakes his head. “I only have what was told to me, which was passed down from generation to generation.” He snags a glass and fills it with water before waving us over to the kitchen table, where the food has gone cold. He pulls out a chair and he is about to do the same to mine like he always does, but Lex beats him to it.

There’s a moment where his eyes crinkle and his mouth frowns, breaking my heart, but his sadness is replaced by a smile just as quick.

“I apologize, Mr. Wildes. I didn’t mean to overstep.” Lex takes the seat next to me, our hands no longer touching, but I can tell by how uncomfortably hot I am that he feels the same. There’s a glistening of sweat on his arm and I imagine the dew covering his entire body.

“No, no, nonsense. I’m so used to doing it for her, but I’m so glad she’d found herself a proper gentleman. I’m so thirsty but that may be because I haven’t had anything to drink in two days,” he teases, taking a long swallow of cold water.

I avert my eyes down, embarrassed, hoping he doesn’t ask why.

“Witches have been around longer than vampires. It is said, now, I don’t know if this is true, it’s just a story. Stories change with every mouth that tells them, keep that in mind.”

I nod, wanting to listen.

“It’s said that witches created vampires to help split the power and to also have a companionship unlike any other. People burned witches at the stake, so the witches made it to where vampires didn’t burn in the sunlight. Silver was used for cursed magic, so vampires repel silver. A witch sacrificed her blood, her power, and the vampire was born. From that moment on, we couldn’t live without one another, and I guess we didn’t. Until now. You two need to be careful.” He suddenly leans forward and takes my hand. “Promise me, Maven. You’re a new witch, but the power doesn’t just appear and disappear. Paranormal live. Everywhere. In hiding. Your awakening could be a beacon. This could change everything. Another war might happen before long because there is always someone who wants the power more than any life he or she would have to sacrifice. The longer you spend with Mr. Monreaux, the stronger you will become. You feed off one another, but in order to... join your powers, to lock the connection of the coven, it isn’t just your blood he must drink. You have to drink his too. If not, your magic will be out of control without another powerful force to anchor it. Witches and Vampires are cut from the same cloth. We exist for them as they exist for us. You have seen what has happened, Mr. Monreaux, when a coven doesn’t have a witch. They get...”

“Obliterated,” Lex says, agony and sorrow dripping from every syllable. “We’re strong, but not strong enough. I remember the war. It felt like something was missing. The wolves were just too much. I wish I knew why we were so weak against their venom. I hate them having an upper hand,” he snarls.

“Every creature has a weakness, Mr. Monreaux. You just need to find theirs. They were created too. No one is perfect, no one can be strong against everything.” The house phone rings, interrupting us at a perfect time.

Pa stands and tiredly walks to the landline. “Yellow?” he answers, then grins. “Hi, Dottie. Yes, she’s here. She’s fine. You’ll have to ask her. She has all those answers.

She'll call you. Okay? I know." Pa rolls his eyes and huffs. "Yes, I took my vitamins." He gives me the side-eye before turning his back and whispering in the phone. "Yes, I've eaten. Stop fussing over me like I'm an old man." He hangs up the phone before Dottie can say another word.

I snicker. That sounds like Dottie. I catch Lex's eye and his jaw twitches as he clenches his teeth together. This isn't passion.

This is anger.

"What?" I ask him, keeping my voice low.

"Nothing," he smiles, but I can tell he is hiding something from me.

"I suggest you—"

Lex hisses and pushes away from the table, clutching his arm.

I stand just as fast. "What? What is it?" I rush to him and take his arm. It's red and irritated, the flesh healing faster than I can piece together what happened.

"I don't know," he admits, confused.

"Maybe you got bit by a bug. Mosquitos like blood too." Pa cackles at his own joke and Lex's mouth tilts to the left. "I still got jokes."

"Don't let it get to your head," Lex teases. "It didn't feel like a bug bite. It felt..." he tries to find the word and I can tell when it dawns on him.

"What?" I push, getting impatient.

He reaches toward the sunlight. "It's like I got burned." His fingers breach the rays piercing through the window and smoke begins to lift from him, his skin reminding me of embers burning in wood.

He screams and blurs away into a corner where it is the darkest, the smell of burnt flesh lingering in the air.

“Lex!” I cry for him and dash to his side, holding his arm as the burns heal much slower this time. I give him my wrist, uncaring that Pa is there, and Lex bites down, sucking in long drafts of blood.

I can see when he gets enough. The burns vanish as if they never happened and he lets go, licking the two wounds shut.

I didn’t get overheated with lust.

I guess nature knows when survival instincts need to be more important.

“What the fuck?” He sneers on a broken breath. “I’ve never been able to not be in the sun. Ever. Vampires have always been able to go into the sunlight, Mr. Wildes. Can you explain this?”

I’ve never seen him so desperate for answers, so frantic. He seems like a lost child right now, his eyes darting around hoping to find answers.

“Does this mean I can never feel the sun again? Why?”

The words are laced with fear and they break in two when emotion grabs hold.

I take his face in my hands, sliding my fingers across his shaved cheek. His skin is cold, but there is sweat beading at the top. He seems sick, like he might throw up.

“I cannot go through my new life without feeling the warmth of the sun. I can’t. Warmth is made to be felt. I don’t want to live in the dark.”

I tilt his head down by gripping his chin. His eyes meet mine, the red gone and replaced with so much uncertainty. The blue irises are expanded, a light grey filled with exhaustion.

It’s a new weakness for him. A weakness that can easily take him from me and I won’t allow that to happen.

“I don’t care what I have to do, my love. I will make sure you are able to walk in the sun again. I will fix this. I will find the answers.”

Even if it means I sell my magic to the highest bidder in order for him to live in the day, I will.

This changes everything. We will have to remodel the house at night now. He won't be able to go back. The home has too many holes for the sun to peek through. I think back to the times we have seen each other, but in his ghost form, he couldn't feel the sun and every moment after that when he woke up, we've been together at sundown.

"You can stay here. I'll get some blackout curtains for the guest room. You'll be safer here," Pa says, taking the words right from my mind.

"I can't leave my brother. I'll stay in the catacombs during the day."

"That's no way to live," I say.

"I won't leave him." His tone is stern and unrelenting. "He wouldn't leave me." He grips the back of my neck, placing his forehead on mine. "I wouldn't be a good man if I kept a woman like you in the dark."

"If it means that's where you are, then that is where I want to be."

"Crazy witch," he mutters with a smile.

"Stubborn vampire," I tease in return.

He kisses me. It's fast and I barely have time to savor it.

"Things are already changing, you two. We need those books," Pa's words bring me out of my head.

I hold my hand over Lex's heart, the beating not as fast as it was, but I know this news will haunt him until we figure out what is causing this.

"I'll vampire proof the house." Pa slaps Lex on his shoulder. "Don't worry, son. You're safe."

I wouldn't think Lex was 191 years old with how he softens from Pa's words. He no longer has his family, so I'm sure Pa saying that means a lot.

Stepping away, I hold out my hands at my sides. "I bet I can do it. No need to waste sheets." I hope I can. I don't say anything, I just imagine. I imagine keeping Lex safe with no sun allowed inside.

I hear a gasp, but keep working, my mind bringing up every nook and cranny in this house I can think of.

"Fireball, I think you did it."

I open my eyes one at a time just as Pa lights a candle.

"Black roses and kudzu intertwined together and block the windows. I never thought I'd live to see the day," Pa states, brushing his hands over the plants. "You can manipulate the elements. You have no idea what power you hold, Fireball. Amazing," he whispers.

"How long will they last?" I ask, afraid they will die and the sun will send Lex up in flames.

"As long as they are connected with you, for as long as you need, as far as I know."

Lex plops down in a seat and holds his head in his hands.

This is a temporary fix to his problem, but I swear I'll find a permanent solution.

Even if it means sacrificing everything I've come to be.