

Eternally Damned: Chapter 21

Maven

“Maven?”

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My name is being called but I can't focus on anything other than the ash in front of me. I can't feel anything but at the same time, I feel one thing immensely.

Devastation.

I bury my hands in the ash and hang my head, crying so hard the rain can't seem to catch up. “He's gone!” I yell, the air around me vibrating from the power laced in my voice. “He's gone,” I whimper. “I can't.” I shake my head. “I can't do this without him.” My tears are riotous as they steal from my soul.

Falling forward, I shake my head, gripping the ash that's turned to mud now that it's rained. “No, no, no!” I pound my fist against the ground. “He's mine. He's mine. Come back. Come back.” I grip the middle of my chest, trying to apply pressure to the wound of my bleeding heart.

The clouds twist above me, tunneling into a twister the longer I think about destroying everything around me.

I can't think.

I can't breathe.

How am I supposed to live without him? He was... everything. He was my everything.

I fall forward, splashing into the mud. I lie there. Numb. The memories of us together rolling through me like an old film.

“Maven?” It’s Lex and he lies down on the ground next to me, cheek in the mud. His blue eyes pierce me in the dark, but they aren’t enough to bring me out of it.

I ignore him, letting my pain take over me. The twister hovers above the sunflowers, waiting to cause the destruction that’s just been placed on me.

“I know how much it hurts, Beloved. I know.” He takes my hand, and the reminder of my mate has me blinking, his love seeping into me like hot water. “It’s okay to hurt.”

A sob bubbles in my throat. “I can’t be in a world where he doesn’t exist. I don’t know how to live that way.”

“You adjust. You adapt,” he explains. “But the pain is always there, but I swear, I’m here to shoulder it with you.”

“I don’t know how to think,” I croak. “My world revolved around him.”

“I know.”

“He was my father. I never had a dad. He was... he was everything,” I weep, my shoulders shaking so hard, hail begins to fall.

I don’t care if the weather takes me, I seem to bring it with me everywhere I go anyway.

“I know,” he says again, pushing a wet piece of hair out of my face.

“I don’t understand.” I shake my head the best I can, wondering how Pa knew about sacrificing himself to save me. “I didn’t get to say goodbye. I didn’t get to tell him I loved him.” I sob and Lex pulls me into his arms. We still lie on the muddy ground, unmoving, and he knows I have no plans to get up.

“He knew,” Lex says with a ghost of a smile. “He knew how much you loved him. Your love kept him alive for as long as it did.”

His words irk me. “You knew, didn’t you?”

He sighs and nods. "I'm sorry I didn't tell you. I smelt it on him when I met him. He didn't want you to know."

"I should be mad at you for that, but it isn't on you. He should have told me, and he died anyway. I could have had years left with him. Years!" I scream, but my anger quickly fades. "I just want him back." I curl my fingers against Lex's chest. "Give him back." I press my cheek against his shoulder, and he kisses the top of my head.

"I wish I could." He squeezes me tight. "I wish I could."

I let him hold me in the storm I've created and cry. I don't know how long we lie there, but eventually my howls of pain turn to whimpers.

The tornado disappears.

The rain finally stops.

The leaves drip water onto the ground.

And Lex continues to cradle me.

"I'm so sorry, Beloved. I know how much this hurts. I wish I could take your pain."

"Can't you make me forget?" I ask, hope blooming.

He pets me, drifting his fingers through my hair. "No. Remember, I can't mystify my beloved."

"Oh. Right." I fall deeper into the puddle with resignation. It's good I can feel this.

Feeling nothing means never feeling the good.

Sometimes, even the good hurts as much as the bad when it's taken from you.

Lex finally stands and holds me in his arms. I don't move. I lean my head against his chest and let him take over. I don't want to be in control anymore. I don't want power. I just want to be a woman mourning over her loved one's death.

“I got you, my beloved. I’ll take care of you.”

I don’t say anything. I don’t care. When I see Whiskey inside, he whines, and it only makes fresh tears spill. “I know, boy. I know. I miss him too.”

Whiskey lies there and begins to cry, high-pitched whines that sound more devastating than a human.

“Dottie is okay. She’s taking care of our... guests.”

I close my eyes and when I feel a burst of wind, I snap them back open, seeing that we are in the bathroom. The soaking tub is huge, big enough to sit three, with a curtain that draws shut around it for when you want to shower. The basin is a deep purple color, and the walls are gold leaf. Any other day, I’d appreciate the beauty, but today, I don’t care.

He places me in the tub, and I shiver from being outside in the cold, drenched in mud and blood.

Pa’s blood.

Pa’s ashes.

Another fresh sob escapes me and Lex strips me of my dirty clothes, tossing them in the laundry hamper. He turns the knob of the faucet and waits for the water to become warm before turning on the shower.

He undresses next and steps in with me. No sexual expectations. His cock is impressive still, lying soft against his thigh. He squeezes a lavender shampoo into his palm, rubs his hands together to form suds, and begins to wash my hair. I turn around and look down, the tears never ending as I see the murky water tinted with blood and dust swirl down the drain.

“I have you,” his hypnotic voice is gentle as he croons into my ear. “I’ll always have you.” He rinses my hair out and washes it again for good measure, massaging my scalp along the way.

He grabs a loofah next, pouring cucumber melon body wash onto it and then scrubs it to get it foamy. Next, he washes me, making sure to get every inch of my body. I can't help but blush when he parts my legs and cleans me there. It's a different kind of intimate.

He squeezes the loofah out and grabs his bottle of body wash, a mix of pepper and rosewood.

"Let me." I clear my throat when I hear how rough it sounds.

"You don't have to. I just want to take care of you."

"And I want to take care of you," I reply, drifting my fingers down his arms while never taking my eyes away from his. The loofah fills my hand and I take it from him, inhaling his scent. It grounds me, comforts me, and reminds me I'm not alone.

Pa is gone and it hurts, so bad, but Lex is here, in the present.

And I need to be here with him and not get lost in pain.

It's easy to do. The worse you feel, the easier it is to fall into the depression pain brings.

It's a killer, pain. It waits, letting you grieve and scream, shout and protest. Then, it digs its roots deeper and it turns into unbearable hollow sadness, a void a person can get lost in if they don't have someone to pull them free.

Wicked torture is a trap *pain* likes to set.

And when it gets you in the box, there isn't always a way out.

I scrub the mud off his body, taking my time like he did with me, so he sees that I'm appreciative. That I love him.

His cock comes to life as I wash him. It's hefty weight in my palm makes me wonder how it fits inside me, but it does, oh it really does, hitting me in all the right places.

“Hey,” his fingers ghost over my shoulder. “None of that. No pressure. I don’t plan on anything sexual. I can’t help reacting to you touching me.”

That’s when I realize I’ve paused cleaning him. “I know,” I tell him. “You always impress me, that’s all.” I dip between his legs, and he hisses, standing on his tiptoes from the shock of me behind his sack. He doesn’t look away from me, but he feels the same vulnerability I did.

It’s different.

Something has changed between us. In a good way. It isn’t about bathing one another, but trust.

I trust him to take care of me.

I kiss his thigh before standing up and working suds over his broad chest, his hair clinging to the bubbles of the soap. His nipples are pink and hard, his pecs lean and defined with muscle.

It’s his back that always gets me. Muscles flex in every divot of his body, dimples settling above his bubbled butt.

A work of art, yet a lethal weapon.

A vampire living and breathing right in front of me. I get to touch and kiss him, knowing he’ll always protect me.

“You’re perfection.”

He turns around, shoving his fingers through his wet hair. His eyes a dark sapphire in this light. His lashes are wet, sticking together, yet somehow it causes his eyes to be brighter. He places one hand on my hip and the other in the crook of my neck. I lean into his touch and the love he has for me steals my breath. The air shakes in my lungs as I try to let it out.

My chin wobbles, and I shut my eyes so he can’t see the tears build.

“It’s you that’s beautiful, beloved.”

His kindness has me breaking. “I don’t know what to do.”

He wraps his arms around me to keep me upright. “Let me love you. That’s all you need to do right now. Okay? Trust me.”

“I trust you with my life.”

He pecks a kiss to my lips and pulls me to his chest. We stay under the water for a long time, his hand drifting up and down my back. The water turns cold and Lex shuts it off. He snags a towel from the rod against the wall, drying me off first. He dries the space between my legs and his eyes flicker sanguine, nostrils flaring as his fingers drag between the trimmed hair of my pussy.

He looks away to gather himself before standing, his cock still hard. “I’m sorry. It’s a reaction, I don’t plan to act on it.”

“Don’t apologize for wanting me. The day you don’t, is a day I’ll need to worry.” He is a primitive man, a predator, no matter what, his beast senses something is wrong and all he wants is to make me feel good.

He’s a protector.

And everything about that is an aphrodisiac.

He grins and his thumb brushes the apple of my cheek. “How are you?” he asks, his tone serious yet looming.

“Broken,” I answer honestly, his thumb catching a tear.

“I’ll do my best to put you back together. Remember, sometimes things are stronger once they’re mended,” he says, reminding me of our previous conversation.

He holds out a hand and helps me out of the tub. Naked, we make our way to the bedroom. The morning sun spills into the windows and every time Lex walks through the rays, I hold my breath, even knowing they are UV proofed.

I yawn, exhaustion taking over me, mourning, and a deep ache weakening my muscles. Lying on the bed, I sigh as the soft comforter rubs against my nude body. Suddenly, there's a weight straddling me, warm oil pouring onto my skin before his strong hands begin to rub my back.

Groaning, I sink into the mattress. "You don't have to do this," I slur, half asleep as if I've drunk too much.

"Like I said, I want to take care of you. Let me. It's been... a heavy day." His strong fingers dig into my shoulders and my eyes grow heavy. He massages my neck, turning me into a pile of mush before working his way down my back. A grumble sounds in the room, and I smirk as he takes my butt cheeks in his palms.

A moan falls from me. I didn't expect *that* to feel so good.

He bends down and presses a kiss in the middle of my back before swinging his leg to get off me. I stop him by gripping his wrist.

"Beloved?"

"Make me feel better."

"I don't want your muscles to be sore. You're already going to be in pain—"

"—No," I stop him. "Make me *feel* better." The yearning in my tone is too hard to miss. I flip over and crawl up his body, admiring his chest with my hands. His hair tickles my palms, and I gently tease his nipples.

He snags my hand, stopping me before I make my way lower. "Maven— I— this isn't a good idea. You're in pain. We should rest. You need rest."

"It's why I want this. You always take the pain away," I admit, touching his hips and wrapping my arms around his waist. "Please," I beg, the desperation in my voice pathetic. I kiss his neck and the Adam's apple that bobs in the middle of his throat. "Please, Lex. I need you." I drag my tongue along his collarbone, then find my way to my mating mark, sucking it into my mouth.

He bucks against me, cursing. "Maven... I... No! Damn it, you're making this impossible."

"Please." I lick my way to the other mark, loving that these are tattooed forever on him.

He pushes me down on the bed and lifts my head up, his eyes scorching mine, trying to read them to see if I truly want this. I spread my legs, inviting him in, wanting this more than I ever have.

Lex slams his lips on mine, sliding his tongue against mine passionately, kissing me so I can feel his want in my core. I return the heat, the desire, yet keep his pace. Slow and steady, wanting and desperate.

It's me.

I'm the desperate one.

His cock rubs between my folds pulling a whimper from me. I claw at his back, my body trembling every time his cockhead rubs over my clit.

I'm barely able to get a breath before his mouth is on me again, taking control of the kiss by gripping my jaw. He's bruising me with hard long strokes of his tongue. Lex continues to rock against me, coating his steel pipe with the juices he easily ignites from me.

He curls his hips, moaning every time I let out a sound for him. I don't care what anyone says, hearing a man like him fall apart and groan for me is all the pleasure I'll ever need.

His arms wrap around my body, pulling me harder against his chest, quickening his pace, piercing the swollen nerves.

"You're soaking me. Maven, fuck." He dips a hand below and pushes his fingers through my forbidden lips and teases my hole. "So, fucking wet. All for me."

"Yes," I breathe. "All yours."

“You make me feel so good,” he replies, burying his lips against my neck. “No one and nothing have ever felt as good as you.” His mouth parts, brows drawn together. “Ah. Oh, God,” he babbles from the pleasure. “You’re my last everything and I love you.”

The emotion burns behind my eyes and a weight lifts off my chest.

This. I needed this. I needed to be close to him. I needed to feel his love and he is giving it to me. He always gives me what I need.

He licks the tears off my face as they fall. “Do you like hearing how good you make me feel? I could come right now. I want to come on your body and rub it all over, marking you so every fucking paranormal can smell you’re mine. The wolves, the warlocks, and whoever fucking else exists. You have no idea what you do to me. You unhinge me. I’m no longer damned because of you.” He changes the angle and in the next stroke, he fills me, hitting every spot that causes my body to sing.

I’m already so close to euphoria.

He’s slow and deliberate, lifting my leg over his hip as he slides in and out. He sucks his lip into his mouth, his canines pronounced and evident. His eyes flip from the color of the sea on a sunny day to spilt blood. Lex glances down watching himself saw in and out of me. His eyebrows pinch together. “You look so good taking me. I wish you could see your pretty pink cunt sucking me in, those lips spread wide as I stretch you open. I’ve never seen such a sight.”

“Me either.” I stare right at him, lifting my hand to rub his fangs the way he likes. His eyes flutter shut and his pace falters, hips stuttering as they lose their rhythm.

Me. I did that.

He falls over me, turning me to my side and lies next to me. Lex pushes my leg out of his way and inches his way in my body that he has claimed.

We moan in unison until he is settled. He presses soft, open mouth kisses down my neck, gripping my ass as he plunges in deep and hard. He keeps his thrusts slow, driving me crazy, keeping me on the edge as he makes love to me.

I realize that's what he is doing. He's making me feel *all* of him. Not just physically but emotionally.

Oh, I love you. You have no idea. You'll never know the depths my heart feels for you.

Without thinking, I answer him.

I love you too, Lex. With my entire soul, with all my power.

His hips stutter and my head is yanked back abruptly by him using my hair as reins. "What the fuck did you just say?"

Turning my head is painful and the pieces of my hair hold on tight to my scalp. "I answered you back."

"In your mind, Maven. We spoke to one another through our bond," he sounds like he's in awe, but that changes as quick as it came.

A tumultuous storm lurks in his eyes, a blooming copper threatening to overtake me.

Alexander wants to make me his catastrophe.

And I'm going to let him.

Even if it means it kills me.

"I don't think you understand how rare that is. Granted, I don't know much about beloveds since we are the first in a long time, but still," his last words end on a savage gravel. "These changes things." He keeps me locked to him, wrapping my hair around his wrist to hold me still. My back is arched to an agonizing stretch.

The only warning I have is the flash of his fangs before he buries them into my neck, squeezing me tight against him as he drinks and fucks me.

No longer is he easy and gentle, but brutal and fierce, as if our bond strengthening to telepathy drove him mad.

He's unrelenting and disrespectful ramming into me, his swaying sack slapping against my ass with every hard stroke.

Manhandling me, he snakes his hand around the back of my neck and flips me around to my hands and knees, his body still curled over me and his teeth still embedded.

My blood drips onto the comforter, rolling down my neck as he takes as much as wants.

"Lex, more. More. Give me more," I needily beg from him, fisting the sheets until my knuckles turn white.

"I'll give what I want to give you," he mutters against my neck, barely taking a breath before sinking those sharp points into my mating mark.

I love knowing I'm feeding him and it's a feeling that can't be explained in a lot of words. I'm taking care of him in a way no one else can and it sends me into a tumbling, earth shattering, body convulsing orgasm.

Muscles tightening around him, clenching his big cock with my rippling walls, I lose my strength falling headfirst into the bed.

He holds me down, hand shoving my head harder into the mattress as he picks up to a speed that no human could match. I'm sent into another spiral of a soul awakening orgasm, coming around, playing me like an instrument to get the sounds Lex wants from me.

"Fucking takes it all, beloved. Take it all from me," he sounds mad, sneering as his nails scrape down my back.

The bite of pain shatters me. My legs give out and he shoves them together until I'm lying flat. He licks the wounds on my back before sitting up, grunting as he holds onto my ass for leverage.

"I want you to feel me tomorrow," he says into my mind.

"I'll feel you tomorrow and the next day, and the next," I reply, knowing the way he is battering me with his cock, it's impossible not to be sore.

"You're going to make me come, good girl. This pussy is so fucking good. I'm going to fill you up. And you're going to take every damn drop I give, aren't you?"

"Yes! Yes, give it to me. Come inside me."

He flips me onto my back, never pulling out, and slides his hand to the nook of my shoulder. Lifting me up, I'm dead weight, lying there as he uses me. The vein in my neck is occupied by him again as he eases his sharp teeth into the mating mark.

Lex pinches my clit and small tremors bring me back to life.

"One more."

I shake my head. "I can't."

"You'll come with me," he orders through his blood drenched fangs, the words muted against my neck.

His hips stutter and my own gums tingle as my canines' edges turn sharp. With the energy I have remaining, I bite, drinking him. Feeling his lust and love for me have me following his order. I come again as he plants himself once, twice, and finally buries himself to the hilt.

Lex tosses his head back and roars, a sound everyone in the house will hear. Blood drips from his chin, his teeth are stained red as his warm seed travels to my core.

I'm so tired, so out of it, drained of all my energy, the last thing I remember before sleep takes me is his hand protectively on my stomach.