

FELICITY
HEATON



ETERNAL
KISS

Eternal Kiss

Felicity Heaton

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Layout and design by Felicity Heaton

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Standing in a recess of the brightly lit room, Nicholas let the delicate harmony of the string quartet wash over him and allowed himself a moments respite from the task at hand. The gentle sound filled his ears, caressing them with memories of the years that he'd lived and the countless times he'd done this. Balanced on the brink, he let the building crescendo touch his once beating heart and flood him with emotion before he shut it down.

Killed it.

Grey eyes opened up and peered out from behind his mask. They were cold and clinical as they watched the crowds below him, the groups of women and men all dressed alike, all prey for his predator, blood for the taking.

He loved this world.

It had vulnerability.

And he fed off it.

Slowly descending the steps of the mansion, his eyes roamed the people he passed, assessing each one and calculating just how much blood they would contain and just what kind of struggle they would put up. His task was made harder by the fact that he couldn't see their faces. They were all hidden behind their masks as they enjoyed a night of freedom, a night where they could be anyone they wanted to be and do anything they wanted to do. All with no repercussions.

Halloween.

The Devil he loved Halloween.

People dressing up, pretending to be something they weren't, hiding the real them.

A real masquerade.

Not a sham like this one—an old mansion full of people dressed in costumes that reminded him painfully of Venice, of happy times now passed, gone to ruin.

Reaching the bottom of the long marble staircase, he looked back over his shoulder. His eyes traced the graceful swan neck curve, ensuring that no one had gone un-inspected by him, no one had slipped the net.

Satisfied that he'd weighed up all of the people bustling in front of his eyes, he started to move through the crowd. He revelled in the way he could slip unnoticed amongst them, could get close enough to them to practically taste their scent without them even knowing he was there.

He licked his teeth and extended his senses, scanning the dance floor in an attempt to single out one that would make good prey, one that would make a fine hunt. Searching the laughing faces of the people as they danced to the slow rhythm of the band, he adjusted the black mask that covered the top half of his face and narrowed his eyes. There had to be someone in amongst the hundreds gathered for the dance, someone worthy of his attention.

It wasn't that he was particularly hungry, having eaten a stray teenager so he could have his mask, it was simply that the signs all over town had piqued his interest. The possibility of playing the hunter in a room full of prey

had proven to be too great a temptation to resist. He'd donned the mask and followed a group of men and women, slipping in with them when they'd entered the mansion.

Closing his eyes, he tensed his jaw and reached out with his senses. He could almost see its path as it weaved amongst the people, searching out his victim.

A low resounding thud caused his nerve endings to flicker with delight. It was followed by another hard beat that seemed to call to him, tugging at his very core until he couldn't deny its siren song any longer.

Snapping his head up, he opened his eyes and fixed them straight on the owner of the heartbeat that had caught his attention.

He lost the ability to breathe—it was pushed out of his thoughts by the sight of her.

Stood on the balcony at the top of the twin staircases directly opposite him was the purest woman he'd ever seen. Dressed all in ivory, the delicate features of her face were hidden from him, shut away behind the pale mask that adorned the top half of her face. All he could see of her was the beautiful curve of her red lips and the gentle slope of her neck that was partly hidden behind her tousled honey coloured hair.

She turned away from him, her lips breaking with laughter when she talked animatedly to the brunette next to her. The blonde exuded grace and beauty but there was something else about her that he couldn't put his finger on and it was that which drew him to her. He could feel it in every bone in his body, how different she

was to the fools surrounding him, how she was above them all.

He couldn't take his eyes off her and when she began to descend the stairs, he found himself moving towards her, drawn to her like she was speaking to him, luring him with silent promises directed straight at his heart.

He tilted his head to one side when the crowd parted to let her come to him. He narrowed his eyes on her clothing while she continued her descent to the dance floor. Her dress reminded him of the ones he'd seen women wearing in his time as a human. The tight bodice accentuated her delicious curves and her legs were hidden beneath a large bell shaped mass of skirts. He breathed in deeply when she passed him, trying to single out her scent in amongst the others but failing.

Lowering his head as his eyes followed her progress onto the dance floor, he couldn't help feeling there was something about her. She called to him on a deeper level and tugged at his basic instincts. He had to have her. He felt like he couldn't function when his eyes lost sight of her. His senses desperately reached out, trying to locate her.

When he spotted her again, he sucked his cheeks into a wide smile. She was dancing near the centre of the room and her friend was speaking to her. He watched the brunette disappear into the crowd, leaving the blonde angel alone. He frowned when he scanned the people around her. The eyes of all men seemed to linger on her and it stirred a fire in him. Slipping silently into the crowd, he hastily made his way towards her, his eyes not leaving her as he approached.

Breaking into the open area around her, he closed in, watching her hair bounce lightly as she danced with her back to him. He lowered his gaze when he stepped up behind her, his hands slowly coursing down her sides as he bit his lower lip. When his fingers closed around her waist, he dipped his head and breathed in deeply. There was something so enthralling about her and he felt as though he was a slave to her, unable to think for himself while she was near. He just wanted to spend the whole night breathing her in and holding her like this.

Anna gasped when hard fingers gripped her waist possessively, sending a chill sweeping up her spine. She turned in the man's embrace, her insides trembling and her knees weakening when she looked up into a pair of pale grey eyes.

He blinked.

Her heart fluttered madly.

In all her short life, she'd never seen anything like him. His hair was a mess of black waves, shorter at the back and sides, but long enough on top that they reached his eyebrows as they fell down. He pushed them back, drawing her attention to the black and gold mask that seemed to be moulded to his features. Her eyes traversed the sweeping curve of his high cheekbones and followed them down to his lips. His bottom one was slightly fuller than the top, but both were soft and tempting.

He smiled at her.

Her knees felt like they were going to buckle.

Dropping her gaze in embarrassment over the way he'd made her feel with just a smile, she took in the sharp black suit he was wearing. It was tight enough across his chest for her to be able to make out the shape of his physique. He was slim but his grip told her that he was strong. She looked back up into his eyes and found they were still watching her intently. Her heart skipped a beat and her mouth went dry. She tried to swallow without success and searched for something to say but failed.

Who was he? How could he make her feel this way with just a smile and a look?

He wrapped his arms tighter around her waist and she instinctively leant into him. Her body pressed against his and, through her dress, she could feel the hardness of his torso. She breathed shallowly, her heart racing and adrenaline pumping while her green eyes remained captured by his. He gave her another wide smile and slipped one hand free, grasping her hand in his and pulling her close against him when he began to move with her.

She swallowed hard when she realised what was happening. He was dancing with her and he seemed to be dancing the waltz. She wondered for a moment if she'd fallen over and banged her head in her bathroom this evening and this was all a beautiful dream. It was too perfect to be anything else.

She'd spent so long dreaming of a prince charming while finding herself continually in relationships with men who always fell short of the mark. She'd decided only yesterday that there was no such thing as Mr. Right, and now she was in the arms of a handsome man at a fairytale ball, and it all seemed so perfect.

Staring deep into his eyes, she couldn't deny the pull that she felt towards him. Every tiny movement he made seemed to be orchestrated to make her only want to be closer to him, to know more about the mystery man holding her tight in his arms as if he were never going to let her go.

She sighed out her breath when his grip on her waist tightened and he pulled her flush against his chest while he danced with her.

Giving her a wide smile, Nicholas couldn't help himself. At a distance, she'd been pretty and eye catching, but up close she was divine. She was a beautiful angel in his embrace. He couldn't help noticing the contrast between them—her apparel so innocent and pure while his was so black and sinful.

He resisted the temptation to growl when she moved closer to him, her hips grazing his and her eyes showing the tiniest hint of fire in their green depths. His eyes wanted to switch, his demonic visage rushing to the forefront over her actions and the obvious desire she felt for him. He steeled himself, keeping control. A room full of people was no place to reveal just what he was. Even with the mask and the fact that it was Halloween, he could still end up causing panic. He didn't want that, didn't want to cause the woman in his arms to be terrified and leave him.

Holding onto her, he swept her around the room. He knew that everyone was watching them. Some of the people had left the dance floor, leaving it to the few couples that had remained and were all dancing the waltz along with him and the mysterious angel in his arms. The crowd gathered, lining the edges of the dance floor and hemming the dancers in. It had been so long

since he'd done this, since he'd danced, and even longer since he'd danced with someone as beautiful and alluring as the woman in front of him.

He stared deep into her eyes, hoping to see there how she had cast such a spell on him. He never acted like this, at least not in the past century. Usually he would have literally dragged her outside and killed her. He would have overpowered her and been in command. But she seemed to be controlling him rather than him controlling her, and his appetite was beginning to fade with each passing second.

He gripped her hand tighter as he moved through the crowd with her, suddenly wanting to be away from prying eyes. The persistent voice at the back of his mind reminded him that he was here to hunt, not here to dance.

Whisking her out through the large glass doors that were opened onto the balcony, he breathed in sharply as the cool night air hit them. The scent of earth filled his senses as the darkness spoke to him. It reminded him of who he was, of what he was.

Looking down into the blonde's gaze, he stopped dead in his tracks as though she'd uttered a silent command he couldn't ignore. Their green depths seemed to sparkle at him in the near darkness. He blinked languidly and his eyes played on hers, watching them narrow when her lips curved into a delicate smile.

She opened her mouth to speak.

He pressed his finger against her lips.

Bending her over backwards in his arms, he cursed himself in advance for what he was about to do. He was so swept up in the masquerade that he himself was falling victim to the chance it offered him, the opportunity to be someone else for the night.

Closing his eyes, he removed his finger and softly pressed his lips against hers. She tasted divine, a mixture of cherry lip-gloss and blood. He could feel it pumping beneath her skin, her pulse playing out against his lips as he deepened their kiss.

Anna frowned at first and then melted into his arms, now sure that she was dreaming because reality was never as good as this. There was always something that spoilt the moment. Nothing was going to ruin this. She damn well wasn't going to let it.

His tongue slipped into her mouth and she ran hers along it, letting it tangle with his while she tried to make out what he tasted like. It was sweet but sharp, and something about it sent a pulse through her that made her heart beat a little quicker. It spoke of danger and excitement, and the feeling only got more intense when she realised she'd never done anything so rash in her life as this. She was kissing him, a man she didn't even know, barely seconds after they'd met, and she hadn't even been drinking. He breathed in deeply and nipped at her lower lip. She swore he'd cut her. She could taste the faint metal-tang of blood in her mouth. She swallowed hard when he sucked on her lip, on her blood. She pressed her hands against his chest, her heart pounding wildly against her own while she wondered just what kind of man he was.

He stopped.

His lips barely touched hers as she panted hard into his mouth.

She gasped when she looked up into his eyes and found they were pale blue now. It had to be the dim light of the moon, or a reflection of something. She closed her eyes and opened them again, finding his were still the same colour. Maybe she was imagining it. People's eyes didn't just change colour. Her fingers grasped his chest and her heart beat even faster when she couldn't feel his under her palms. Her imagination ran away with her, sending panic and a quiet thrill running along every nerve. Why couldn't she feel his heartbeat? Why were his lips so cold and his grip so strong? Why the hell were his eyes blue now?

She had to be dreaming. This nightmare couldn't be real and neither could the conclusion she kept drawing. There were no such things as vampires.

Her eyes dropped to his mouth and widened when she saw the tips of sharp canines showing between his lips.

"This can't be real," she whispered and swallowed again. He held her tighter and she understood his silent command not to struggle or call out as clearly as if he'd spoken it. "This is some sick fantasy, some Halloween thing of yours...you can't seriously be a—"

"Vampire?" he leaned in closer to her, his voice a quiet whisper down her ear. She shuddered at the sound of it and the way it made her body burn with desire. He caught hold of her hand, bringing it up from his chest to his neck, and pressed her fingers against the point on the side of his throat where she should have been able to feel his pulse, if he'd had one. "I assure you, I am."

Her heart pounded hard against her ribs, sounding violently in her ears and making her head ache as she tried to figure out what she should do and whether this was really happening. She was in the arms of a vampire. This couldn't be real. It was the kind of thing they put people in mental wards for saying. She'd read the stories and seen the films just like anyone else, but never once had she believed in the existence of vampires. Now she was in the arms of one, and she was nearly one hundred percent certain that he wasn't making it up. People could fake the eyes and the teeth, but no one could fake a lack of heartbeat.

Looking up at him, she realised that he wasn't making a move. He was just staring at her like he too was trying to understand what was going on. His mouth was hanging open, his eyes searching hers in the darkness as he held her tight in his arms, not relinquishing his grip on her.

He wasn't killing her like she'd expected him to. He didn't even seem that interested in her neck. Weren't vampires supposed to be obsessed with people's necks?

"What do you want with me?" she said in a shaky voice.

His eyes narrowed and she knew he was frowning. There was uncertainty in his gaze. Didn't he want to kill her? That was all right with her. She could deal with knowing about vampires and living to not tell the tale, because no one would believe her anyway. His grip on her didn't loosen, in fact it seemed to be growing tighter while his eyes became a clear silvery grey again. She looked down at his mouth and noticed the sharp points of his canines had disappeared, leaving normal teeth behind. Her heart skipped another beat and pounded painfully against her chest. She tried to squash her panic, wondering if it

would drive him into killing her if he could sense it, and remained still in his arms.

She swallowed hard as a thought entered her head and the desire she'd felt before she'd realised what he was swept through her again, this time stronger than before. If he really was a vampire then there was no escape. A voice at the back of her mind said that if he was going to kill her, she might as well make the most of it. He was handsome and she was definitely attracted to him, and he seemed to be attracted to her. Hidden behind her mask, she felt strangely safe. It was as though anything she did tonight wouldn't matter, tomorrow she'd probably wake up and find this was all a dream. But tonight, tonight she could be anyone she wanted to be, do anything she wanted to do.

For some reason, she wanted to see where this night was going to take her and what he intended to do with her.

Sliding her hands up his arms, she locked them tightly around the back of his head, her fingers trembling as they weaved into the short hair near the nape of his neck. She swallowed again as she lured his lips back to hers, feeling his cool shaky breath in her mouth as they finally touched again.

Nicholas' eyes widened when she kissed him, her lips brushing against his in a slow, undemanding way and her body quivering with nerves in his arms. He grasped her tighter and splayed his fingers out against her back as he rolled his eyes closed and kissed her.

Just for tonight, it would be all right. He could break his own rules, hide behind his mask and let the hunt slip

through his fingers. It didn't mean anything. He didn't feel anything for her.

He sighed out through his nose as her tongue pushed its way into his mouth and pushed all his thoughts away. Steeling his jaw, he deepened their kiss, crushing her lips under his as their teeth clashed. He couldn't quite believe what she was doing, but he wasn't going to turn down what she was offering. It was probably a fear of her inevitable death that was driving her to react like this, but deep in his heart, he hoped it was more. He wanted this to be about him, wanted these kisses and the desire in her eyes to be caused by him, not by fear of what he was or some false hope that she could escape if she seduced him. He'd never let her escape him. Running would only make him want the kill more and he wouldn't be able to stop himself. The calmer she remained, the safer she would be. Right now, he was hungry, but it wasn't for the taste of death, and it didn't have to be if she kept responding to him like this.

He was still surprised that she hadn't screamed. She'd taken everything in her stride. She was so different to the rest of them, so enthralling.

Anna grasped his shoulders tightly and furrowed her brows. She'd never felt anything so intense in her life. His kisses were so hungry, so desperate as his lips moulded against hers, stealing her breath away. She melted in his arms and felt his hold on her waist tighten, his fingers digging in painfully through her bodice.

He growled low and pulled her up into his arms, lifting her feet off the floor as he moved across the balcony and into the shadows with her. He pressed her into the wall and pinned her there with his body as he fumbled with her skirts, clearly trying to part them to free her

legs. She trembled, her thighs quivering when his cool hands brushed against her skin, sending tingles racing through her and making desire settle in her belly. She closed her eyes and then opened them again when his fingers swept around to her backside.

She wrapped her legs tightly around his waist when he pushed her harder against the wall. The urgency of his kisses made her head spin and the feeling of his hard body against hers made her ache inside. Her fingers wove into his hair as she held his mouth against hers, not caring about the fact she couldn't breathe and wanting him closer still. There was something strangely thrilling about what she was doing—kissing someone whose face she'd never seen, kissing a vampire. He was nothing like the men she'd been with in the past. He exuded power and sexuality. Hunger and violence seemed to echo in his kiss. She couldn't stop herself from kissing him, from letting him do whatever he wanted with her. No matter how wrong it was—it felt right.

Nicholas nipped at her lower lip and allowed her a few moments to breathe. He kissed along her jaw and grinned wickedly when she rolled her head to one side, granting him access to the untouched beauty of her neck.

He wondered if she'd even given a thought to what she was doing. Was it instinct that had made her expose her neck to him while her fingers played against his shoulders? Her heart beat out a fast, hard rhythm against his lips as he pressed a soft kiss to her neck and then licked a trail back up to her jaw. A quiet moan escaped her when he reached the top of her jugular. He pressed his tongue hard into her flesh, tasting her skin and her blood where it flowed just below the surface. His

teeth itched, wanting to descend and begging him to take what she was offering to him so freely.

He pulled away and brought his hands up to her waist, tightly holding it so she didn't fall.

Her simple act of acceptance, her exposure of her neck to him, had brought his demon to the forefront. The opportunity too good to waste, he couldn't resist the temptation of what she'd offered him for long. Her blood called to him, luring him into reacting in the only way he knew how. He had to have her. His heart told him this wasn't purely about her blood. It was about all of her. She'd captivated him, rendering him powerless to resist her.

He smiled at the way her brows were furrowed behind her mask, her teeth teasing her lip while she waited for him to make his move. They were clear signs that she was enjoying her night of freedom, her masquerade, and his company. She was so open to him, so willing, that it only made him want her even more.

Snarling, he crushed her lips hard under his, kissing her fervently as her fingers dug into his shoulders and her legs tightened around his waist.

He growled when she bit his lip, her kisses matching the hunger of his own and her teeth drawing blood. Pushing her harder into the wall, he grinned against her mouth as she sighed out her breath, forced from her by the vice like grip he had on her waist. He furrowed his brows when she sucked on his lip, pulling his blood from him and grinding her hips against his while her fingers held his head to hers.

Moving his hands to her backside, he ground into her, his body aching for a form of release as the heat of her seeped into him. He frowned and kissed her harder, a tiny part of him wondering if she'd enjoyed the taste of his blood.

Anna gasped for air as they continued to kiss, the ferocity and passion burning between them refusing to ebb away. The metallic tang of his blood lingered in her mouth. It tasted so different to her own. It was sweeter and filled her with desire, making her hungry for his touch and his kisses.

Moaning into his mouth, she slid one hand down over his back and dug her fingers into his backside. Her head span when she forced his hips against hers and he ground into her again, his erection evident through his trousers. She opened her eyes and looked around them at the balcony. It was still empty. The party was in full swing and it was early for people to be coming outside. Hidden in the darkest corner of the balcony, she could do anything with him and no one would see.

Pushing her hips forwards, she rubbed her groin against his, sighing into his mouth as the friction between them heightened her arousal. She gasped when his hand left her backside and he tore her panties off. His fingers were cool against her burning flesh and she bucked her hips against them when he parted her nether lips and ran them over her nub.

Desperate need filled her and she wrestled with the belt of his trousers. He growled against her skin and, in her lust filled haze, she wondered if it was a good sign or a bad one. She continued anyway, tugging his belt open and hastily unzipping him. His hips jerked forwards when she ran her hand down the length of his erection. He

stopped kissing her and she bit her lower lip when he drew back far enough for her to just about make out his face in the darkness. His eyes were closed, his lips parted in an obvious sign of pleasure.

She moaned when she realised that he was supporting her with only one hand, his other one still toying with her arousal. Was he that strong? Did she even weigh a thing to him?

Raising her other hand, she caught him around the back of his neck and drew her to him again. He crushed her lips under his, nipping at her lower lip and sending a thrill racing through her. She could taste her own blood and knew he could too. Did it make him want her more, as much as she wanted him?

Nicholas nipped at her jaw with his blunt teeth as he finally succumbed to his desire for her. He'd reached the point of no return. The need to have her had spiralled far beyond his control and instinct had taken over.

Sliding his hand up the length of her pussy, he brought it to his erection and ran it over hers where she was stroking its length. She let go of him, her fingers brushing lightly against his. The warmth of her was astounding. It had been so long since he'd done something like this that he'd forgotten how good it felt. He'd spent too long alone, killing to feed and taking little pleasure from it. This woman had re-ignited his desire and he knew it would be impossible to resist what she was offering him. He didn't want to.

He ran his hand down his erection and back up again. The Devil he wanted her. She had her eyes closed and her head tilted back, her neck bared to him. Wasn't she scared of what he could do to her? Didn't she care? Was

she so caught up in the fantasy of this night and the desire swimming between them that she would let him do anything?

Moving his hips forwards, he held his erection, running the tip of it over her arousal and listening to her sigh out her breath as he guided it downwards. He bit back a moan when her legs tensed, drawing him towards her. He nudged up inside, swallowing hard when he felt her hot juices coating him and then growling when he thrust up. She moaned harshly and he smiled at the sound of it.

Taking hold of her waist, he pressed her body into the wall with his and kissed her hard, his tongue playing against hers while he thrust into her.

Anna couldn't stop herself from moaning into his mouth. She was crazy to be doing this with a man whose name she didn't even know, a man who was more than likely to kill her afterwards, but she wanted this one night of passion. If he was going to take her life, she wanted him to give her something to remember it by. She'd never felt like this with anyone. Nobody had ever stirred desire like this in her veins. She writhed against him, groaning and kissing him harder when he began to move faster. There was a beautiful sense of urgency growing between them and she found herself digging her fingers into his shoulders and moving her hips against his until their movements became frantic. He slammed her into the wall, knocking some of the wind out of her lungs, and she almost laughed. This was crazy, but it felt so good.

Locking her feet behind him, she buried her fingers into his hair and held his mouth against hers. She tensed her muscles, milking his cock and making the most out of each thrust he made. He moaned against her and his

hands slid under her skirt, his cool fingertips digging into her buttocks.

“What’s your name?”

Her eyes widened in surprise on hearing his question whispered against her mouth. He’d sounded so full of need, as though he had to know right that second what her name was.

She kissed him. Her tongue traced along his lower lip and she smiled at the way it drove him on. He smashed his mouth against hers, claiming it as his own and plundering it with his tongue. She arched her back, pressing her buttocks into the wall behind her, and clenched his cock.

He moaned again.

“Anna,” she whispered and he groaned.

“Anna,” he said and breathed heavily into her mouth.

“You?” she said with a smile, unable to believe how ridiculous it was that they were introducing themselves halfway through screwing each other’s brains out. She pushed her hips down when his came up to meet them and he sneered, his nose wrinkling up with his frown. She couldn’t believe how much pleasure she got out of making him react like that. She’d never had such power over a man before. Sex had always been dull. Not once had it been as thrilling and hungry as this.

He slammed her into the wall again and held his lips barely a centimetre away from hers.

“Nicholas,” he said the word into her mouth.

She captured his lips with her own and kissed him hard, tackling his tongue as it came to meet hers and groaning when he pounded into her, his hips moving faster.

"Nicholas," she repeated it and still couldn't get over how ridiculous it was. Her thoughts were pushed away when he thrust up deep inside of her and made a pleasant tingling feeling spread outwards. She wanted to feel it again and she was damn well going to get it. "More."

Nicholas moaned on hearing her breathy command and did as she'd instructed without even thinking. He forced her harder into the wall with his body, his cock slamming into her and his fingers digging into her thighs. He pulled them further apart, giving himself better access so he could get deeper inside of her. He wanted to be so deep inside of her.

Anna.

He smiled against her mouth. She had a beautiful name to match her beautiful face and body. He didn't know why he'd felt the urgent need to ask her. Making love to her had suddenly felt wrong and it was then that it had hit him that he didn't even know her name. Knowing it made this whole insane moment feel right again. The warmth of her surrounding him was divine and he was finding he never wanted to leave. He wanted to spend eternity making love to her like this, hidden in the shadows where someone could find them, and knowing that it only added to the thrill that she was feeling from being with him. Her heart spoke a thousand words a second to him, telling him over and over again that he was the only man who had made her feel like this. He

wanted to be the only man to ever make her feel like this.

Desire spiralled up inside of him and when her lips broke apart from his and she leaned her head back into the wall, he couldn't stop his eyes from dropping to her neck.

His hand moved of its own volition, his body pinning her harder against the wall with each thrust to compensate for its disappearance. He caught her jaw and yanked her head to one side. The sound of her heavy breathing and her rapid heartbeat echoed through him. He could practically taste the adrenaline as it flooded her veins, her heart beating harder in anticipation of the inevitable.

Anna swallowed noisily when his hand covered her mouth. A sudden chill swept through her, the realisation of what he was about to do hitting her like a freight train through her lust hazed mind.

She could feel him shifting guise beside her, his vampire face emerging as his fingers dug into her cheeks. Breathing fast through her nose, she screwed her face up as his lips brushed against her skin and then there was a sharp pain that seemed to dance along every nerve in her body.

He growled when she struggled against him, her body involuntarily bucking in an attempt to halt the pain. He restrained her against the wall, and released her mouth. She didn't cry out, instead she clung to him tightly as his hard body pressed into hers. Her legs trembled around his waist and she rested her head against his. She gave in to the feelings flowing through her. Where there had been pain moments before there was now an ache, an overwhelming desire to have him closer to her and to

feel just how strong he really was. Every thrust he made sent tingles sweeping through her and she clamped her muscles around him, using the dizzying sensation of his biting her to add to her impending orgasm. She bit her lip as his teeth sunk deeper into her neck, indelibly marking her, pulling her blood from her in a way that had an edge of desperation to it.

She realised he was powerless to resist her. She had a power over him.

Nicholas pulled harder on her blood, desperate to taste her, to feel the rich warmth of it flowing through his veins. He was awed by the way that she had stilled in his arms, letting him take her body and her precious blood, and holding him tightly in the process.

He wished she'd never let go.

Closing his eyes, he lost himself in her—the way she tasted, how hot her body was against his, the way her heart beat against his chest and called to him.

He was lost.

Fallen.

Anna moaned harshly as he thrust up inside of her, his cock throbbing and pulsing. She tensed her muscles around him and shifted her hips, forcing him to continue so she could come. She was surprised when he bit down harder on her neck and the pleasure of it made her orgasm sweep through her. Her thighs quivered against his hips while he continued to thrust into her, his movements gradually slowing to a halt.

She sighed out a moan as he drew his fangs out of her neck, feeling them sliding free of her flesh before his lips wrapped around the wound. He was still drinking but it was gentler now, slower, and it dawned on her that he wasn't going to kill her like she'd expected him to. His grip on her had loosened and he was emitting a low rumble that echoed around his chest. It was almost a purr.

Resting her cheek against his, she breathed heavily and nuzzled him while he continued to drink from her. Her fingers played sleepily with the short hair on the back of his head. She closed her eyes, savouring the feeling of his cock still inside of her and the tender way he was licking her neck. She wanted to remain like this forever—held tightly by him, safe in his strong embrace.

A distant noise caused him to look up.

She went rigid in his arms.

Nicholas turned his head and slipped out of vampire guise. He frowned when he saw her friend and two men walking out onto the balcony.

Dropping her to her feet, he did his trousers and belt up while she rearranged her dress. He caught the pained look in her eyes when he glanced up and frowned. Dipping his head, he kissed her softly, his hands lingering in hers. He tried to quash the feelings inside him, telling himself that this meant nothing but knowing that he'd never be the same.

She kissed him desperately and he knew she'd realised that he was leaving.

He had to.

Closing her eyes, Anna felt his hands slip from hers. She bit her lip as she listened to him disappear into the darkness. Pushing the hurt back down inside, she tried to ignore the sudden feeling of loneliness that had engulfed her. She straightened her hair out, hiding the marks on her neck and then smoothed down her dress as she stepped out of the shadows and walked on unsteady legs towards where her friend stood.

Casting a glance back over her shoulder, she wondered if she'd ever see him again.

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Anna closed her eyes while she listened to the beat of the song. The stifling heat of the club and the closeness of the people around her caused her to feel light headed as she danced.

Bringing her arms up above her, she swayed her hips and gave in to the lure of the music. Her body writhed and she flung her head back, throwing caution to the wind.

She didn't care who was watching her. Ever since that night at the masquerade, she hadn't been the same. Her friends had noticed it, and had even told her a few times, but she didn't care.

A moment's pause in the music seemed to make it fade away. A strangely familiar feeling loomed up inside her. It was a feeling that seemed like a distant memory.

Opening her eyes, she scanned the room, searching for him in amongst the closely packed Saturday night crowd. She silently cursed herself for thinking about him

again. It had been a year since their chance encounter at the Halloween party and since then, he'd been constantly on her mind. Each night she'd felt on edge, a part of her hoping that it was the night he'd finally come back to her.

Tonight it was almost unbearable. The masses were in the mood for Halloween, but all she could think about was Nicholas and their night together at last year's party. She wished that they had held it again this year, knowing that if they had he would have come back to her like she so badly needed him to.

Heaving a long sigh, she watched her friends walking away from her, heading back to the table as the song ended and a new one began.

The feeling in her stomach intensified.

The scar on her neck caused a sweep of tingles to run through her.

Closing her eyes when she felt strong hands skimming down her sides, she leant her back into his hard body and sighed out her breath. The grip on her waist tightened and she found herself spun around to face him. She slowly raised her eyes to meet his, half fearing that it wouldn't be him and remembering that she'd never really seen his face.

Her heart beat sickeningly hard against her chest when her eyes met his and she instantly recognised the silvery grey of them. They narrowed on hers as he smiled.

"Anna," he whispered her name down at her and her cheeks coloured at the way the sound of it made desire burn inside of her.

Her knees weakened when she realised it really was him. His whole being seemed to call to hers and the sound of his voice made her head spin.

He looked exactly as she'd remembered him, but instead of a suit, he was only wearing a black shirt and trousers. She wondered if he always dressed so sharply. She looked down at her clothes. They were so much different to how they'd been that night. In place of her cream dress were a tight dark red shirt and a flared black skirt that barely reached her knees. Would her change in apparel make her less appealing to him?

He answered her question by tugging her close to him, his body pressing into hers and his hand settling against her backside. Clearly not.

Wrapping her arms around his shoulders, she wriggled her hips against his thigh while she danced. Her eyes were firmly locked on his and her skin buzzed beneath his fingers when he slipped them under her shirt and brushed them across her waist.

"Nicholas." She smiled coyly as she recognised the hunger in his eyes. She knew what he wanted. Her heart pounded faster at the idea of what she was going to do.

She closed her eyes and leant her head to one side, allowing him access to his bite marks.

Nicholas pressed a long kiss to her neck, nipping at it with his blunt teeth as he held her flush against him and then started moving with her.

He manoeuvred her backwards through the crowd and into a dark corner of the club. The music pounding

through him only heightened the tribal beat that was calling to him—the sound of her heart beating harder for him.

She gasped when he pressed her against the wall in the corner of the room, hiding them from the rest of the people. His mouth descended on hers and he sighed into it when she kissed him back with all the passion he'd remembered over the past year. It had been impossible to keep her out of his thoughts. His appetite for the hunt had disappeared more and more each night, and every waking moment had been spent thinking about her. When Halloween had approached, he'd had to come back and find her. Eternity had suddenly become something he didn't want to face alone.

He ran his fingers down her cheek when he drew back and looked into her eyes. Without her mask on, she was even more incredible. Her soft cheeks played into her smile and her red lips lured him in.

Anna narrowed her eyes softly on his. They looked a vivid shade of blue in the dim light of the club and she knew that he had changed on her again, letting his vampire side out to play. The overhead lights of the nearby dance floor seemed to make him even more handsome and she moved her body against his, teasing him into pressing her harder into the wall to make the most out of the friction.

"Beautiful," he said and she blinked.

"Was just thinking the same thing..." She smiled and lured his lips back to hers, kissing him slowly when she realised that his teeth were sharp. She frowned a little when her tongue caught on them, but didn't stop kissing him. The music filled the room around them, the low

beat of it pounding through her and only heightening the way she was feeling. The people of the club were oblivious to them where they were hidden by the shadows, but she knew that could change any second.

She rolled her eyes closed and surrendered to him when he kissed her harder, his tongue running along the length of hers. He wanted her blood. She could taste it in her mouth. Her body melted into his embrace and her arms wrapped tightly around his neck. She smiled against his lips as he kissed her more deeply and desperately, his fingers holding her waist tightly but only as tightly as her hands were holding him. A year apart from him had felt like eternity.

Panic raced through her when she realised that it was happening all over again and she drew back, desperate to see that he wasn't going to leave like he did last time. He frowned at her, concern visible in his eyes.

"What do you want with me?" she said, hoping he'd answer the question this time.

He kissed along her jaw to her ear.

"Eternity," he whispered and a thrill ran up her spine.

Bringing his lips down to her throat, she frowned as his teeth sliced into her skin again and the delicious tingling sensation played out on her nerve endings once more. She held him flush against her, never wanting to let him go and knowing that soon she wouldn't have to.

She wasn't afraid.

Death was just the beginning.

Nicholas bit down harder and drew her closer to him.

When her heart began to slow, he pulled back and looked into her eyes. He ran his tongue along his teeth, slicing it open and feeling the blood pool into his mouth. His fingers tightly grasped her waist while she held onto him, her red tainted lips luring him in with their slight smile.

Her heart and eyes told him what she wanted and he obeyed, just like he always would with her.

Forever.

Bringing his lips to hers, he joined them together with an eternal kiss.

The End

About the Author:

Felicity Heaton is a great believer in love at first sight and the romantic ideal. Having grown up reading extensively, she developed a deep love of classical literature, ranking *Jane Eyre*, *North & South*, and *Persuasion* amongst her all time favourite reads. The most romantic moment of her life was when her husband got down on bended knee on the steps of *Sacré Coeur*, Paris, at night in front of several hundred spectators and proposed. She was too drunk on love, and subsequently champagne, to care about the audience. All she could see was the man that she loved. A writer of emotion and life, she always strives to touch a chord of familiarity in her readers and give them characters they can love and a read to remember.

To see her other novels, visit:

<http://www.felicityheaton.co.uk>

Other short stories in this series:

Darkness & Light

Every witch and wizard in the Tri-Kingdom knows the Black Sleep has no cure and it means death to anyone who passes the eighth-level dark magic trials, so who on earth would subject themselves to it?

Kyra has loved Isaac from the moment she first laid eyes on him and her feelings have only grown in the year she's spent as his apprentice. When she discovers that he's condemned himself to death by taking the eight-level trial, and consequently suffering the Black Sleep, her whole world begins to fall apart.

Isaac knows exactly what he's doing. There's a reason he's put his life on the line by taking the trials. He has a plan to defeat the Black Sleep and live, and it involves Kyra. He knew from the second he met her that she was the one for him. Not only could she save him from death, but she could be his forever, so long as she agrees to the intimately physical connection the spell he's planning to use needs.

Will Kyra be willing to share his burden and join with him through a physical connection? Will Isaac's nightmares become hers or will their bond bring the balance of darkness and light?

<http://www.felicityheaton.co.uk/darknessandlight.php>

Hunter's Moon

Scott Hudson has a secret but he's not the only one on the mountain with something to hide.

The brink of winter is a bad time for hunting, but the hunter's moon attracts them anyway. Scott Hudson curses the drunken huntsmen that disturb his peace and seals himself away in his cabin, waiting for the impending storm to drive them back down the mountain. The snowfall is heavy and he's convinced that nothing could disturb his solitude now.

Then a gunshot punctuates the air, echoing around the mountains.

And a noise on the porch makes his heart pound.

But not as fast as the naked woman he finds lying outside does.

Neoma has watched Scott since he first arrived on her mountain years ago but has never dared to speak to him for fear of him discovering what she is. Shot by the hunters, she has no choice but to place herself in his care and hope that she can hold the wolf inside at bay. When she notices his attraction to her, she can't help acting on her own and prays that he won't turn her away because of what she is. Can Scott's secret be the answer to Neoma's prayers? Can a human ever love a werewolf?

<http://www.felicityheaton.co.uk/huntersmoon.php>