

Resurrected

(Synopsis & excerpt)

It is only months before a new millennia and Deirdra, after nearly four years away from La Maison de Chantonnay, makes her way home. The nightmares of the past have taken their toll on her weary mind. As she anxiously awaits the reunion with her immortal family she finds herself plagued by a mysterious being who seems set on guiding her unlife in his chosen direction. With characteristic stubbornness, Deirdra ignores this entity's wisdom. Spiralling into a web of alienated self-destruction, her path leads her into the arms of the enemy she had forever sworn to despise. Broken and lost she discovers old gods born anew, wearing away at her humanity, leaving her vulnerable to the evil of her demon within.



Chapter 1

(Deirdra - November 14, 1999)

*S*now fell silently creating a serene ambiance. The car's high beams reached deep into the black of night. The light illuminated the huge white flakes against the backdrop of the night sky, making it hypnotic to watch as they hit the windshield. Mozart played softly in the background. Mozart is Elijah's favourite composer and *Requiem* was Elijah's preferred composition. Elijah loved how it revealed Mozart's tortured soul, how it exposed his touched nature. Elijah had seen so many become mad because of him. Because they remembered what he was and that he drank their blood.

I too know that feeling. I did the same thing to my beloved, Brian. I was unable to hold back my bloodlust, my desire to have him completely. To this day, speaking of him or even mentioning his name makes me want to weep, even though it was so long ago.

I wondered how it was that Elijah could possibly be as old as he actually was. To live four thousand years was something unfathomable to me. Would I ever live that long? Would I even want to? Even with the changes in the world, I can still see similarities between this modern age of 1999 and that of 1795. Many aspects have withstood the test of time, like shoemakers, bakers, and farmers. Only in the field of technology did the world really change—we have more toys for the human mind.

"Deirdra?" Elijah touched my left shoulder, "are you alright?"

"Yes, just thinking." I turned to look at his beautiful face, the light from the dashboard glowing off his white flesh. Elijah may have been born in Cairo many millennia ago, but his appearance is very Anglo-Saxon, with his steel blue eyes, short tousled blond hair, strong jaw line and chiseled cheekbones.

"You know I don't like it when you get too quiet," Elijah said with a smile spreading across his face.

"Oh, don't worry," I consoled. "I'm fine." I gave Elijah a quick glance and went back to watch the falling snow. The CD had stopped and the hum of the car now replaced its tune. I smiled and looked at Elijah while he drove with care.

"What?" he said through a laugh. I looked at him but said nothing. I wanted to collect my thoughts first.

"I'm happy," I replied simply. "I don't think I've been happy in a long time. I was just biding my time at Chantonnay, fooling myself into believing I was happy. But I know now that I am truly content."

Elijah removed his right hand from the steering wheel and took my hand in his.

"Are you sure you are all right with returning to Chantonnay now?" he asked as he eased off the accelerator.

"Yes. It has been four years without any contact with our family," I said. "It's time." My words were strong. I knew I was going to be okay. When the Blood God came, he had taken away my strength and filled the void with fear. I couldn't stay at Chantonnay long before I felt I had to leave again. I saw his image everywhere, lurking in the shadows. I

had to get away and regain control over my emotions. I knew now that the fear was gone, killed with the guidance and support of Elijah. I was no longer a weak shell, scared of anything that went bump in the night.

Yes, vampires can be afraid. They can hate, love and cherish the ones around them. We are akin to humans. We live among you. We are your customers, your friends, and your neighbours.

Elijah's voice brought me back, "... and Mylana will be so pleased to see you well and happy." He looked at me, a broad smile on his face, his fangs gleaming in the light. At the sight of them, I wanted him to touch me and caress me. Oh, how I love Elijah.

"They are expecting us at about midnight. Have you spoken to Brenna lately?" he asked carefully. "She has been trying to talk with you for some time now. Why are you so upset with her?"

"I do not wish to talk about it right now. I'll fix things later," I said, turning my head to look out the side window to hide the tears welling in my eyes. I hated to be seen crying, to be seen as vulnerable.

"She misses you. She needs you, like you need Mylana. You must remember that, Deirdra," Elijah said.

"Mylana wasn't always there for me. She left me for a while and I survived. So will Brenna," I said.

"True, but you should have learned from your own experience how important a sire is to the fledgling. Even if it has been two hundred years, the attachment will always be there." Elijah put his hand on my chin and turned it so I would look at him.

"Do you understand what I am trying to say here?" he asked, his eyes darting between the road and me. I knew he hated having this kind of conversation while he drove.

"Yes I do, and I will talk with Brenna and sort things out," I said meekly. Taking his hand, I kissed it. "I understand."

In the distance I could see La Maison Chantonay. The two storey manor was built from large rectangular multi-tonal stones. Ornate black iron bars protected the main floor windows and elaborately designed pillars flanked the staircase showcasing the arched doorway.

Pulling up to the familiar black gates, Elijah stopped the car. He hopped out and punched in the code that would open the immense iron gates. The gates rattled and squeaked as they opened. As we drove up the cobblestone driveway, the gates closed behind us. The usually well-manicured lawn was now covered in deep glistening snow. The fountain, where

water normally babbles from spring through fall, now stood frozen. La Maison Chantonnay was much like us, immortal and unchanging.

Mylana employed at least half dozen gardeners to work on the landscape itself. As for maids and butlers, she kept them to a minimum. Mylana trusted the mortals working for her and as far as I knew, they were the same group of employees as when I had left. I especially liked Stone, a young man who would be twenty-five now. Mylana had taken him in when he was eighteen. Stone had been living on the streets since he was thirteen. I could not begin to imagine the life he had lived, forced to sell his body for very little money or scraps of food. He had been robbed, badly beaten and left for dead when Mylana found him. She had planned on bringing him a peaceful death at that moment, but as she watched him fight for life, she changed her mind. He was a survivor. She picked him up, brought him to Chantonnay, and cared for him in a way he could never have imagined.

Approaching the garage, the large greying cedar door opened and we entered the warmed shelter. Stone was the first person to greet us, standing in the doorway with a wide grin.

"Elijah, Deirdra! You're finally here," Stone said as he came down the stairs and walked over to us. He embraced me, and then Elijah as he came around the car.

"Good to see you my man," Elijah said, his voice booming with joy. He loved this boy just as much as he did any member of the clan. I stood there listening as they chatted about Stone's school experiences and the new girl in his life. I think Elijah secretly lived vicariously through Stone.

Listening to their conversation, out of the corner of my eye I saw Brenna standing in the doorway, leaning against the frame. She smiled at me. Brenna's demeanour was timid yet welcoming. I walked over to the stairs and looked up at her.

"How have you been?" I asked.

"Good, I guess." She paused. "It's been a while, hasn't it?" Brenna said, straightening.

"Yes, it has."

Brenna said nothing. She looked at me with such sorrow. With outstretched arms she invited me to embrace her. Walking up the rest of the stairs, I wrapped my arms around her.

"I missed you!" Brenna said her voice cracking. She had begun to weep.

"And I have missed you too. Do not think that this time apart meant that I did not love you anymore," I said,

leaning back so I could see her face. Faint red tears streaked her white cheeks. So beautiful my child was, with her long, thin nose, big black eyes, sensuous mouth and black hair that cascaded down past her shoulders. I had created her with love and reverent honour.

"I know, but it hurt when we parted so angrily. And it has been so long! I feared you wouldn't come back at all," she said, lowering her head.

"I had to leave, you know that. However, we shouldn't have parted after such an argument. The past is the past. I was no good for you at that time. I was harmful to you and to everyone. I had to leave so I could sort things out. I had to find my strength of will and mind." I put my hand under her chin and guided her to look at me.

"Sometimes with deep rooted love and affection it can feel like one is being pulled in the wrong direction. I needed space. I tried to explain it to you, but I knew you couldn't understand and I decided it would be easier to sever all ties."

"Yes, I see... Well, I have waited for you to return with as much patience as I am capable of and I am glad you are back." Brenna paused for a moment and reached out for my shoulder. "I'm sorry for what you went through. I hope you can forgive me for my anger."

"Forgiven and forgotten, my love." Smiling at her, I placed my hand over hers and squeezed gently. "So, where is everyone?" I asked changing the subject. I was excited to see the rest of my family.

"Mylana is hunting. She said she wouldn't be long. Lacroix and Eme are in the library." Brenna was becoming more like her old self. Without further delay, I turned and summoned Elijah and Stone to come into the house. I could feel we were becoming a family again. My heart filled with a joy it hadn't felt in a long time. I had forgotten how much I loved this old mansion and the wonderful memories it conjured for me.

Entering the library the smell of leather, paper and smoke wafted past me. A couple of desk lamps illuminated the room; otherwise the library was rather dim. The ten-foot high walls were covered with mahogany shelving that was filled to the brim with various books. Placed amongst the shelving were a couple of bay windows with deep cushioned benches. All but one wall was covered in shelving. That was where the grand marble fireplace sat. Ornate filigree scrolls were carved into the upper part of the mantle while smooth cylindrical columns flanked the large firebox. A simple iron screen sat on the hearth and cast unusual shadows in the room.

The fire crackled and popped; the dry heat it created was luxurious. I spotted Lacroix sitting by the fireplace warming himself with the dancing flames. The light from the fire cast shadows on his face, which was partially covered by yesterday's paper. Lacroix looked up from his reading and smiled. His fangs gleamed in the firelight. Ah, how gorgeous he was—and he knew it!

"Ma chérie, Deirdra," he said while putting the newspaper down, "you're finally home." Lacroix nodded to Elijah, "Friends, come in." Lacroix greeted us.

Entering the room I noticed Eme sitting by the far window, gazing out at the night sky. She turned and looked in our general direction, but did not say or do anything. Her eyes were empty, as if her soul had been drained from her. To see her like that caused me to shiver with fear. She turned away from us to look through the window. Her behaviour was unsettling.

Lacroix's voice pulled my attention back to him, "...we should head to the living room to be comfortable. Shall we?"

"Oh, yes." I answered without delay. I wondered if Eme would come, but part of me wanted her to stay where she was. I didn't need her to evoke in me all the fears that I had finally overcome....

