



Deathless

By Selina A. Fenech

Complete summary including spoilers.

On the plane, Owen reels from the news that Kaitlyn is pregnant, fearing that it's not his—but Kaitlyn confirms that it is. She brings up the possibility of abortion, but Owen says he won't consider that for his child, and Kaitlyn gets upset, feeling that he's being narrow-minded. The flight attendant delivering them their meal interrupts their conversation. Owen begins to feel that something is off, and finds it almost too coincidental that they have the same flight attendant that they had on their first trip.

The flight attendant seems to intentionally spill absinthe on him. Owen calls their Ebonguard companions, Joss and

Val, who grab the flight attendant. Owen reveals a green-black mark of a knife surrounded by a ring of fire tattooed beneath the flight attendant's collarbone. This means she is a member of Alam's Blades—vampire hunters.

Owen knows he cannot allow the woman to escape with her knowledge about him, but the Blade quickly dispatches a cloud of Nemexia, weakening the masked Ebonguard. The flight attendant withdraws a high-tech weapon and lasers waves of false sunlight through the cabin, killing Val. Joss evades the attack, but the laser fires through the cockpit door, causing the plane to spin. The Blade blasts a hole through the plane and parachutes away—and Kaitlyn gets sucked out of the plane.

Joss dons her own parachute and follows the Blade. Owen jumps out of the plane with nothing, desperate to save Kaitlyn.

As Kaitlyn plummets toward the earth, all she can think is that she wants to have this child. Midair, Joss attaches her chute to Owen and sends him barreling to Kaitlyn's rescue, then collides with the hunter in the sky. Owen catches Kaitlyn and they land together. On the ground, Joss leaves Kaitlyn and Owen with a bag of supplies before heading off to go find the hunter, who has fallen out of sight.

Owen and Kaitlyn find clarity after their near-death experience and celebrate their impending child, while Owen privately contemplates whether he is strong enough as a human to protect Kaitlyn and their baby. Joss returns and reports that the hunter is dead, but they need to get moving in case word has spread. If the Blades know about the vampire cure, they'll have a massive problem on their hands. Joss says she couldn't find the hunter's pack, so they have to assume that Kaitlyn and Owen are now targets of Alam's Blades.

A helicopter picks them up and brings them back to Umbravallis. On the way, Kaitlyn learns that Alam was one of the original seven who ended up training humans to hunt his vampire kin.

They return to the Synedrion, where Dante proclaims that they never should have been allowed to leave, especially in light of recent developments—meaning Kaitlyn’s pregnancy. The council members argue about the prophecy concerning Kaitlyn’s child. Lance reminds them that Kaitlyn and Owen belong to him, and he brings them home to his house for safety.

Lance has a section of his house set up for humans, and one woman named Dusky currently resides there. Kaitlyn is surprised to learn that Dusky is there of her own accord and is not enthralled or imprisoned. A new Ebonguard named Heim arrives and takes over for Joss, seemingly unimpressed with the events in the airplane. Owen and Kaitlyn ponder how they can escape this time—and decide on another plan instead: try to cooperate, gain some leverage, and see if they can somehow lessen the vampire influence on their lives.

Later, Kaitlyn wakes up to find Joss and Lance dueling with swords. She and Dusky hang out to watch, and Dusky admits to Kaitlyn that she has asked Lance to turn her, but that he refuses to do so. She feels that Lance would care for her more if she were his equal.

Kaitlyn asks Joss to train her to fight so that she can prepare for future threats, and Joss agrees.

The next night, Owen, Kaitlyn, Lance, and Dusky attend a masquerade ball at the Synedrion. Kaitlyn resents being forced to attend the party by their captors. When she gets caught up in the dances, she finds herself whisked away by a female vampire she doesn’t know. The vampire tells Kaitlyn that Owen lied to her about how she died, and about how Tiamet’s Ring really works. With horror, Kaitlyn makes the connection: It’s Adelle, Owen’s ex—and she’s back for revenge.

Kaitlyn brings the news to Owen about Adelle, who plans to destroy everything he cares about. Owen realizes he needs to tell Kaitlyn the truth: the ring doesn’t really choose its victims. Kaitlyn is upset to learn that Owen killed Adelle on purpose. He emphasizes that him secretly possessing the ring is punishable by death.

Kaitlyn now understands that Owen purposely killed her old agent, Harvey, and worries that she doesn’t know Owen as well as she thought.

All of the council members except for Dante join them to discuss the news of Adelle’s apparent return from the dead. It seems that Dante brought her back to life using Kissare’s chalice along with Ri’s flute and Damkina’s veil, two other artifacts in possession of the Synedrion. Now, Dante and Adelle have run off.

Back at Lance’s house, Owen expresses to Kaitlyn that if he were a vampire again, he could protect her, but this angers Kaitlyn. Privately, Lance offers to turn Owen, but Owen decides against it. Instead, he asks Lance for help getting to Slovakia, where he wants to collect a ring for Kaitlyn.

Meanwhile, Kaitlyn is saddened by the loss of control over her life. Lance accidentally lets slip where Owen has gone, and Kaitlyn is hurt that Owen didn’t take her with him out of their prison. Lance believes that Owen has gone to retrieve an engagement ring for Kaitlyn, but Kaitlyn believes that he has gone to fetch Tiamet’s Ring, which she finds upsetting. Nonetheless, she feels proud when Lance informs her that Owen turned down his offer to turn him back into a vampire. Then Dusky arrives, angry that the group left her alone at the masquerade ball. Kaitlyn tries to convince Lance that he should end things with Dusky before things turn sour with her.

When Owen returns, they decide that they should try to track down another artifact that once belonged to Marduk, one of the original seven—maybe then they can protect themselves. Kaitlyn resolves to stop thinking like a victim, and start thinking like a predator, knowing that their unborn child's life might depend on it.

Owen goes to the archive in hopes of finding information about Marduk's lost artifact. Bertha finds him there and informs him that there is no news of the missing Adelle and Dante—and that they stole Ri's flute and Damkina's veil when they left. She also sees what he's looking at and informs him that the sketch in the book isn't accurate, giving Owen a clue. When Bertha leaves, Owen makes a copy of a sketch of Marduk's statue and hides it in a ring box at Lance's.

At Lance's, Dusky bursts into the room declaring that Kaitlyn needs help. Joss departs at once to answer the call. Alone now without Joss's protection, Owen finds himself surrounded by thralls who clearly intend him ill will.

In the lab, Lin confirms to Kaitlyn that everything is progressing normally with the pregnancy, and that she has continued work on the Remortalis project using Kaitlyn's blood. Joss arrives and says that Dusky told her Kaitlyn was in danger. Realizing that Dusky lied, Joss and Kaitlyn quickly make their way back to Lance's house, where they find Owen gone and the living room trashed with blood on the floor. Frightened, Kaitlyn finds the ring box. Expecting to find Tiamet's ring inside, she opens it—and instead finds an engagement ring. Heim is angry with Joss for allowing her charge to be taken, and tells her this is her third strike; as such, she must be punished and exiled for her failure. Joss flees, refusing to succumb to her fate.

Kaitlyn is beside herself: Joss is gone, Dusky betrayed them, and Owen has been taken.

Owen's enthralled captors deliver him to the previous lair of the Starved where Adelle and Dante await him. They take Tiamet's Ring from Owen who had it on him, having collected it along with the engagement ring. Adelle shares her plan with Owen: she wants to turn him back into a vampire and then make him feed on Kaitlyn. She begins to feed on Owen violently, then forces him to take some of her own blood. As he turns, Owen tries desperately to hold onto his humanity.

Kaitlyn finds that the Synedrion council does not care about Owen's abduction, and they won't help her. Lance blames himself for not sending Dusky away sooner. Kaitlyn finds the drawing of Marduk that Owen left, but doesn't know what it means. Then Bertha arrives: she has convinced the council to let Kaitlyn take a vision from Kissare's chalice with the hope that it will help them track down Adelle and Dante.

Inside the vault where the chalice is stored, Kaitlyn has a vision of Owen attacking her. She also sees a one-eyed statue and an old coin, and tries to work out the clues.

Afterwards, Joss returns out of hiding and knocks out Heim with corpse flower mist that she got off the vampire hunter from the plane, admitting that the bag never went missing; she simply put it somewhere safe, fearing she might need it at some point—and she was right. She reports that she found Dusky, who told her that Adelle had promised to turn her if she cooperated. Instead, Adelle and Dante fed from her, and Dusky died of her wounds after Joss found her.

Kaitlyn makes the decision to trust Lance and Joss, and shows Joss the sketch of Marduk. Joss tells her that the sculpture of Marduk is in the Sun Shrine. Kaitlyn formulates a plan and enlists Joss to go collect the Remortalis cure from the lab, knowing she might need it. Lance agrees to help with the rescue operation.

In the old Starved lair, Owen clings to his humanity, all the while reveling in his returned vampire strength. He is ravenous with hunger, and feels that he would kill for a taste of Kaitlyn's blood. Adelle assures him that Kaitlyn will be there soon for him to feed upon. Although Owen tries to remember that he loves Kaitlyn, bloodlust consumes him.

Meanwhile, Lance drives Kaitlyn to the Sun Shrine where they find the statue of Marduk. Inside the statue, they uncover a coin—Marduk's lost relic. But they don't know what it does or how to use it.

They regroup with Joss, who has retrieved two doses of the Remortalis cure. Joss theorizes that even just being around the scent of Kaitlyn's blood all this time has changed her, and she has begun to experience empathy. Kaitlyn points out that it might not be her blood; it might just be her treating Joss with human decency and kindness.

Kaitlyn shares her plan: use the Remortalis cure on Dante and Adelle to weaken them, then get Owen out and heal him using her own blood. But Joss objects: she was only able to get two doses, and she wants to keep one for herself, especially considering she can't return to the Synedrion now that she has been exiled. Kaitlyn decides they'll flip the coin to decide who gets the second dose. When she tosses Marduk's coin into the air, a brilliant light blasts from it. The light injures Joss beyond the point of self-healing. Kaitlyn gives Joss some of her own blood, but now Joss is blind. Lance decides to stay behind with Joss, feeling that she shouldn't be alone right now.

Armed with the coin and one Remortalis syringe, Kaitlyn sets off to find Owen—alone.

At the entrance of the Starved lair, Kaitlyn meets a thrall who leads her to Adelle and Dante. Owen, she finds, has been turned into a monster and is ravenous with bloodlust. Adelle prepares to feed Kaitlyn to Owen. Kaitlyn attempts to jab the syringe into Owen's chest, but it doesn't seem to work, and he begins to violently take her blood.

Kaitlyn knows that she must live for the sake of the baby—even if that means Owen can't. So she tosses the coin into the air, and all the vampires begin to burn. Kaitlyn passes out

Owen survives the coin toss because he has become human again after all. Adelle and Dante are now ashes on the floor, and Kaitlyn lies in a pool of her own blood, nearly dead. Owen flees with her and finds Bertha waiting for him outside with the doctor, Ewan. Ewan sets to treating Kaitlyn right away. When she comes to, Owen proposes to her, and Kaitlyn happily accepts.

Later, Kaitlyn and Owen are able to use Marduk's coin as leverage for their freedom. Kaitlyn prepares for their wedding. Bertha arrives, and shares that she has taken the cure, and now serves as a human liaison for the vampires. She tells Kaitlyn that the vampires are creating some new laws: no vampire can be given the cure against their consent. Plus, they're making new rules about treating humans better. Kaitlyn receives a letter from Joss, who seems to have joined Alam's Blades. She also learns that the Synedrion are close to creating artificial blood, which could solve their need to feed on humans.

Kaitlyn basks in the joy of her wedding, surrounded by family and friends. She and Owen are in love, happy, and healthy. The sun will come up in the morning, and they'll watch it shine its light down upon them, together—as a family.

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