



By Renath Estefan

Jaded

Written and published by Renath Estefan

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AUTHOR'S NOTE: The following is a work of fiction. All people, places, and events are purely products of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to actual people, places and events is purely coincidental.

PREFACE

Here I was, settled alongside my children. Both sat down, each of them by my side, Darren on my left and Chloe on my right. I caressed both their heads gently. These were the twins I had always dreamt of having, now grown.

Their eyes glimmered. I got a sudden memory lapse. It took me way back into time, the moment when humans were almost exterminated. The thought of them living up to this day was a wish coming true. I was once a normal girl who had normal needs, until the day it all changed. As time went on I changed, as well as everything around me. The world was already a place dented with violence, death, war and injustice but no one could ever think that it could be worse than this. Things changed when everything became even more frightening and the person I had loved the most changed too.

Vampires had always been mythological creatures, but an eye-opening occurrence change our perspective on these creatures when all of a sudden, they invaded our world.

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1. Escapade

'Run', I kept on telling myself. I knew I was going to die. There was no chance for me to escape something like this. I was ruined, and my life would be over in just a few minutes. I leaped out of my unhopeful thoughts and ran as fast as was possible on the rocky ground. The dark forest that I had always feared was now my shelter. I sighed heavily.

'There she is! Get her!' I heard from behind.

I started shaking again, the moment I realized I didn't know where I was heading. The forest was dense and the pathway was rough. I tripped, fell and bruised myself but the bruises were nothing compared to what they would do to me. My steps were slower as I fought through the twigs that were whipping me. They had caught up with me.

In a sudden memory lapse, I remembered how I never used to be the best sprinter in high school. And my speed was nothing compared to the speed of the inhuman creatures. But I kept on running for my dear life, using every bit of strength left in me. I kept on running without even looking back, and then came the time when I knew it was the end. I couldn't give up easily, I wouldn't. Finding myself in front of a cliff with nowhere to run, I looked back and noticed them just a few meters away. I couldn't see a thing in this nocturnal mist but their bright eyes, almost like animal eyes, gave their position away. What was I going to do? I couldn't run back and I couldn't jump off the cliff. I was in deep trouble.

They kept on shouting. 'Yes! We've got her.'

This time was definitely the end. No one could save me now. I looked back. Before I could think of something else, the rocky path underneath my slippery Converse shoes crumbled and I tripped and fell into the dark mist.

At such an unforeseen moment, I wished I had a remote control to turn back the hands of time and undo all that had happened to me but such things only happened in movies or books. The strong wind blew past me and my fall was eminent, seeming endless. I stared past the trees. There was light, the bright moonlight. This light that gave me hope seemed to wane and finally vanish. It has always been said that when your final minutes have arrived, every moment of your insignificant life will pass by your eyes. Well this didn't happen to me. All that was on my mind now was emptiness. Nothing else mattered.

My back hit a very cold surface, the lake which seemed very much like an asphalt board. The water was very deep so I didn't knock my head onto a rock. I started to sink deeper into the water and I couldn't emerge, even with every effort I gave. The fish swam away as soon as they sensed my presence in the waters.

No one would remember me and no one would weep. I was happy for once, even though I was about to have my last breath in this watery grave. I closed my eyes and sank into the unknown. It was at this irrelevant moment that my entire life flashed through my eyes. The parties, the times I tried to escape from home... all the irrelevant memories. But the memories faded and soon I felt a hand pulling me but my eyes were still closed. It was very hard to tell how long I was in the water but after several moments I was brought back to the surface, by a shadow-like shape. At this very moment I thought I was being pulled by an angel.

Maybe I was dead. The thought had indeed crossed my mind. Maybe I was going through an opening into heaven. The wetness that was around me slowly faded. The hand touched my neck and chest again and again. Then I felt something soft and cold on my lips. Air was being forced through my stiff lips. After several minutes of the same unfruitful trials to revive me, the person finally gave up. I gave up on myself too.

* * *

TWO YEARS EARLIER

We were helping mom at the farm one late afternoon. Eric was rounding up the hay with the tractor. I hated chores, and so did he but mother wasn't as young as she used to be so we helped as much as we could.

'Viol! Listen!'

She was about to give me a slap. Mama, she was my best friend, my life. I had never seen her like this before. She pressed her hand on my mouth so that I would stop talking. All I could distinguish was the sound of shivering leaves and loud and rapid foot stomps that cracked twigs on the forest mat. We had no idea what was coming. Mama kissed us both on our foreheads and told us to hide at once.

'Mom? What's happening?'

'Shush. Stay there and take care of your brother.'

I hid myself inside the hay while my brother hid behind the gatherer truck. Mom left us and closed the entrance of the stockroom.

'Eric, please stay quiet no matter what. Don't make any abrupt actions.'

'Yes Viol.'

After a few minutes of silence, a loud shriek was heard. My mom, bleeding intensely, was being pulled by her hair, and she fought back the monsters, punching in the air. My only thought was to run towards her and defend her. But she had given us an order to stay hidden no matter what happened.

'Mom!' exhaled Eric.

My eyes flew open and I almost released a loud gasp. What had he done? Why did he have to shout and run after her? The monsters immediately came after him. My mother rested on the floor, gasping for her last breath. She pointed out that I shouldn't move with facial expressions, and soon after collapsed.

'Why did you kill my mother?'

The monsters replicated with a question.

'Do you have any last words, kid?'

'Yes. I HOPE YOU DIE!'

With a quick bite, they cut out his throat. I saw my brother die right in front of me and I did nothing to save him. They dumped his body onto the ground and left. I rushed to the murder site as soon as they were out of the picture. His face, damp with blood, was still as delicate as it had always been. His blood made a dark stain on my maroon shirt. I dropped his lifeless body back onto the ground while I rushed to my mom. She was barely keeping her eyes open.

'Viol... they killed him. They killed my only son.'

'Mom! Please don't push yourself too hard. I'll get some help.'

Her white dress was stained all over with red. She had been stabbed in the chest.

'No... I'm dying Viol. You don't need to do that. Promise me one thing before I leave this world. Promise me that you will find your brother's killers and make sure they pay for what they did. Promise me, Violet.'

'I promise mama.'

She caressed my face one last time and died soon after. I would avenge my family if it was the last thing I had to do. The next day, I myself buried them, and after weeks of mourning I began with my plan to find the killers. They were inhuman creatures, without a doubt. After two years of intense research, I was able to identify them. The creatures with gleaming eyes, like animal eyes in the dark. It seemed the assassins had no idea where I was until now. But I couldn't hide forever. And that's how the chase began. They had discovered my hideout and they were coming for me. They had been sent to finish the job.

* * *

PRESENT DAY

I could perceive sound and vibrations as I strived to consider where I was. Was I dead? Was I alive? No matter where I was now, it would be a better place... a sharp pain in my neck, was all I could feel. My arms and legs were now just inactive puppets that waited for the strings to be pulled. I heard footsteps coming closer to me.

Where was I? Why couldn't I move a muscle? So many questions were troubling my confused mind. The pain was unbearable. I tried screaming but all that came out was a series of moans. Footsteps coming closer were all my ears could adjust to. I felt a finger open my eye and a gentle hand caress my forehead but I couldn't see a thing. It was entirely black.

Who was this person? His voice was soft and kind. I tried to speak to him but no sound came out of my throat. I tried stretching my arms in any direction but my whole body felt numb. Something thin pierced through my skin and shortly I felt anesthetized. I found my way into sleep right afterwards.

It was easier for me to wake up now. I muscled through my tensed eyelids and finally opened my eyes. The ceiling was dark brown and the atmosphere looked warm and cozy. On my right was a dark figure sitting on a rocking chair. As soon as the character spoke I managed to recognize the warm voice when he started talking.

'Morning... you finally opened those pretty eyes.'

'Where... am I?' I managed to whisper.

'It doesn't matter. Just know that you're safe and alive.'

I couldn't quite distinguish his face as my eyes weren't used to light yet. 'Please... come closer. I want to see the man who saved my life.' I pleaded.

He stood up and moved towards my direction. 'Your eyes aren't used to the light yet. Don't worry, you'll be able to see and talk properly in two days.'

I hadn't realized that my voice was reticent and croaky. I managed to make out some parts of his appearance. His face looked as pale as a corpse's face. His hair was utterly black. He wore what seemed to be an auburn coat. He smiled. It was the sweetest smile I had ever seen. His lips, the lips that had pressed softly against mine, were narrow and appealing. I brushed my fingers across my lips, as the sensation re-occurred in my head. He pulled off the black sunglasses from his face. I had never laid eyes on such a beautiful man, with such radiant black hair and blue eyes.

I tried moving out of the bed but a sharp pain hit me when I tried to.

He immediately rushed to me and pressed my chest down. 'Don't... force yourself. You're too weak to even stand up.'

I rebuked. 'But I'm sick of lying down.'

'You can't walk. You hit your leg when you fell.'

I eventually relaxed my tensed muscles. 'How did I survive?' I pointed out.

He paused for a moment. 'I saved you. You can call it a miracle.'

I thought for a moment. 'How did you save me if I fell into the lake? With the strong current it would have been impossible to save me. It was so deep I thought I was going to drown.'

He agreed by nodding his head.

'I was on a boat... fishing... and I heard a splash. I roamed the boat to where the sound was coming from and I saw you sinking in. You were unconscious.'

Who goes fishing on a lake at night? His excuse wasn't quite in place but I didn't have a choice but to believe.

'I understand.' There was a moment of silence. 'Could you please carry me to that couch? I'm tired lying down.' I muttered.

Hesitating for a few seconds, he carefully placed one arm under my legs and another behind my back. He easily pulled me up as if I was a bag of feathers.

Once in his arms, I felt his hard chest. He had been blessed with the looks and strength. He was really strong, though he was only fairly muscular. He dropped me carefully on the huge couch, making sure I was comfortable. We stared at each other for a short moment.

He curved one brow. 'Are you alright?'

'Yes, I'm perfect now.'

He sat down next to me once he made sure I was comfortable. 'If you need me, I'll be outside. I almost forgot... my name's Alucard.'

'My name's Violet. Thanks Alucard. That's a very unusual name, but I like it.'

He smiled and left the room. My eyes followed him until he closed the door behind him. I tried to get my eyes used to the dim light by opening the curtains behind me. The room was very small but nice. It was a wooden cottage with plenty of wooden furniture. It had a few decorations here and there and the air that surrounded it was fresh and pure. When I looked outside I noticed that we were in a forest and just a few feet from the cottage was a lake.

When I analyzed myself carefully, I noticed how messy I looked. My hair was slightly muddy and my face was sweaty. My clothes were torn and my undergarments were still wet.

'Alucard, please come. I may need your help with something.'

He immediately came in and sat next to me. 'Are you o.k.? Do you want something to eat?'

I hesitated. 'I feel dirty and my clothes are damp and torn.'

'I wanted to clean you up before but I preferred waiting until you were awake.'

Did he just say clean you up? Was he planning to undress me without my consent? I immediately blushed. He helped me up and put my arm on his shoulder. He walked me slowly to the bathroom. I leaned on the wall while he brought a towel and clutches.

'I'll be back when you're done.'

I undressed when he was gone. A bathtub would have been easier right now but the only cleaning department available was the shower and sink. Even though the water was almost freezing, each droplet made me feel so much

better. I wrapped my towel around in difficulty but I finally managed. When I was done, I then left the shower. He was taking a seat in the small room, waiting for me. He turned around when he noticed me. He had left a bunch of clothes, letting me choose from the collection.

‘Thanks again for everything.’

I felt weird undressing in the presence of a man. He didn’t stare at all but I still felt irritated. I waited for him to see my unease.

‘Do you want me to leave? I just thought you wouldn’t manage to dress up by yourself but I can see you’re doing fine.’

‘Yes... please, if you don’t mind.’

He turned around and walked away.

The options he had given me were pathetic and they were all men’s clothing. I picked up one white vest and what seemed to be beach shorts since there was nothing else that I could wear. I threw the rest of the clothes in a basket. I slowly walked out of his room towards the living room where he was supposed to be. As I was walking towards the couch, one clutch got stuck and I immediately lost my balance. Before I even realized what had happened, I found myself in his arms.

I was puzzled.

His face was serious. ‘You should be more careful with the clutches.’

He walked me to the rocking chair and immediately returned to the couch. There was a minute of silence. He suddenly went rigid in his seat.

‘It’s dangerous out there. What is a girl like you doing out there? They might catch you.’

‘I have been hiding in the woods for almost two years now, frantically doing research on vampires. Then they finally started searching the forests and I had to escape.’

He stood and went to the kitchen. I heard him open up the fridge and take something. He brought me back a small bottle with a red liquid in it. I drank vigorously.

‘Vie verso. How I missed it.’

He smiled. ‘Yes. The sweet taste never ends.’

He sat beside me. I found myself revived. A drink that had lived longer than my great grandfathers always refreshed one's soul. It was a delicacy and yet I was surprised that he had offered it to me for I was underage. I didn't want to stop drinking it. I finished the entire bottle in three gulps.

He seemed concerned about something else but he just kept quiet. He never stared at me twice and he tried to avoid my eyes.

Though I had the incredibly urge to go out, my foot was hurting just a bit but I knew I couldn't strain too much. He eventually stood up and went out, without warning me. I stared around. I noticed there was nothing that indicated that he had family. It was a simple cottage with few decorations. After a short while outside, he brought back some fish with him.

I watched him place the fish on the kitchen counter. 'You're good at it.'

He didn't seem to understand what I was talking about. 'What do you mean?'

'Fishing... you must be an expert. It hasn't even been thirty minutes since you were outside and you caught all those fish.'

He stared at me from the side. 'I guess today's just a... lucky day I must say.'

Throughout all this conversation, my eyes flickered again and again to him. There was something about him that was different. As I watched him closer, I noticed that his eyes changed color.

'What's wrong with your eyes?'

'Nothing is wrong, why do you ask?'

I examined his eyes carefully, to make sure that I wasn't mistaken. 'Your eye color changes so often.'

I continued to stare into his eyes, feeling that I'd gotten no answer to my question. They changed again, from emerald green to startled silver eyes. He turned away when he noticed how much I was gazing at his eyes.

He immediately changed the subject, as if hiding something from me.

'Are you in for some salmon with Italian pasta?' he shouted from the small kitchen.

My stomach grumbled as an answer to his question.

He seemed startled by the grumbling. 'I'll take that as a yes.'

I smiled in embarrassment as I carefully studied his actions in admiration. He was so neat and precise in his work. He held his knife at a perfect angle and his fingers were in perfect place on top of the knife. He stared back at me, seeming confused again. His eyes wavered away into the pan and then came back to mine again. I will never forget the faces of the monsters that killed my family and one of the characteristics was the change of color.

‘Is something wrong?’

‘Are you one of them?’

He frowned once more.

‘I was asking myself, if I could trust you, if you weren’t one of them. I want to know if you’re a Vampire.’

He dropped his knife. ‘You know you can trust me... I saved you.’

I was onto him. ‘Prove it then. I only spotted a few of them from afar two years ago so I couldn’t distinguish their traits. But I heard their eye color changes as often as yours do. And they have unbelievable speed and strength.’

He twitched a bit.

‘If you are one, you’ll immediately kill me and if I try running away, you’ll catch me.’

He stood still, almost sculptured to the ground. His face became unbelievably pale and his eyes opened up wider than usual. He didn’t relax a bit. Poking my finger with the tip of the knife, I let myself bleed to prove a point.

He then broke out of his trance and came closer. For a moment I feared and moved a few inches with the knife in hand but then when he was close enough, he just slowly took the knife out of my hands and wrapped his arms around me and laughed. He then handed me a napkin to clean up the blood.

‘I’m not a freaking vampire.’

He looked down at me with his and I noticed the change in color once more. They were now pale brown, almost red.

I relied on my intuitions too much. Other than the fact that his eyes were odd, he seemed normal like any other human. And so were the vampires. You wouldn’t distinguish them from us. It wasn’t like the old tales. They didn’t have sharp teeth all the time. One could only see their teeth when they were feeding.

And these days, they could tan themselves so their pale skin wasn't going to give them away.

But he was too nice to be a vampire. And he didn't suck my blood. He probably had a sight problem. Hard to say what caught my attention but I knew he was different. It was a crazy and unbelievable attraction.

'Am I irritating you? I know how you might think that I'm ungrateful but I... I lived in a small and remote part of the city. Everyone in our neighborhood... was killed, including my family. I was the only one that survived. My father abandoned us and since then I haven't seen him once. I'm alone.'

He frowned and then glanced at me. 'Of course you're not irritating me. I'm really sorry. I didn't know what you went through.'

I was desperate to get some help. I was alone. I smiled hiding the grief and fear I had experienced. He came closer and sat next to me. I could smell his strong perfume penetrate my nostrils.

I looked down at my thighs, trying to avoid his gaze. 'It's alright. They never actually cared that much about me so I can bear the grief. My father was a drunk and a crook. He left when I was still young. He stole money from several people in town and so they hated us for his actions.'

His body was closer to mine, having budged unconsciously in the course of the discussion. I felt anxiety take over my body. An intense wave of his aroma hit the surface of my throat. I leaned away from him, hitting the edge of the couch with my ribs.

He noticed how uncomfortable I was. 'I'm sorry. I didn't think I'd make you so uncomfortable. Let me just sit on the rocking chair.'

He turned without another word and quickly walked away. I watched as he sat down and glared back at me from a distance. He seemed so interested in analyzing me.

I felt really awkward. 'What? Why are you gazing at me?'

He gave me half a smile. 'You're quite... interesting. First of all, after everything you went through you're still strong. And second, any other girl would blush away when I look at her. How old are you?'

I thought of lying about my age but I just couldn't. 'I'm seventeen. Um, am I still going to stay here with you once I'm healed?'

'You're free to leave whenever you want but I must admit... I like your company.'

His words were quite sincere. And I didn't want to leave. Something was keeping me here and I knew it was something about him. He was adventurous and really nice. And the fact that he was good looking was a bonus too.

I blushed. 'I don't mind yours either.'

I folded my arms across my chest and breathed very heavily as I watched him walk towards me.

He walked passed me and went to the kitchen. I could smell the spices smear up all over the house. After a few minutes, he came back with the smoked salmon and pasta, serving it with another *Vie verso*.

I started eating immediately. I hadn't noticed how hungry I was.

'You must have been so hungry.'

I nodded and immediately resumed on eating the tasty food he had prepared for me. The meal was delicious. 'This is really good. Other than being a professional in fishing, you're also a great cook.'

He shied off. 'Don't mention it. I'm sure my food isn't as tasty as yours.'

'To be honest I've never quite cooked a great meal. People ended up getting food poisoning when they ate my food.'

I was amazed at how handsome he was when he laughed. But what interested me the most about his smile was his set of perfect white teeth. I kept on gazing at him in admiration.

'Want to watch me cut wood? I'm sure you're as bored as I am.'

I really had nothing better to do. 'Sure... do you have a piece of paper and a pencil?'

'What do you need that for?'

'I used to do art in high school until war between the vampires and human broke out and the school was closed for security reasons.'

He smiled. 'You're going to draw me?'

I couldn't admit. 'Not you... but the trees and the lake.'

He pouted. 'That's a shame! I've never had a portrait of myself.'

He helped me up while I grabbed hold of the clutches. Once outside, I realized how beautiful the forest was. The air was filtered and the trees were

silent. I turned around and caught him staring at me. He evaded my glare when he saw me looking. I watched him unzip his coat and drop it on a rocking chair next to me. His skin looked so soft. I was tempted to touch. He picked up the heavy looking axe and he started launching it at the pieces of wood, breaking them by the middle. I took the initiative to begin drawing his flawless face.

His eyes narrowed as he looked at me from the side, suspicious of what I was drawing. I realized at that moment that I was attracted to him in a very unreal way. I wasn't a believer of love at first sight but now I could prove myself wrong. It really did exist. I never stopped staring at him. His oddly pale skin looked like a marble-like sculpture. He was naturally calm even when doing a really difficult task. He looked at me and smiled as if he knew what I was feeling now. As my drawing reached completion, he had finished up with his work. He surprised me and snatched the piece of paper and laughed at me as I screamed at him, too embarrassed to even look at him.

He approached me, his body slightly bent over. When he was close enough that I could smell his breath, I looked up at him, knowing he would look back too. How could I fall for someone so mysterious and yet so charming?

'You're really good. But I thought you said you were just drawing the lake and trees? What happened? Did I charm you?'

'I wanted to draw you because your body blends in with the environment... it was part of the picture. Nature is very fiddly and yet so... beautiful. And your muscles were too damn good to ignore.'

He half-smiled and picked up his coat. Why did I just say that? I asked myself. How could I have been so blunt?

The sky had turned dark now. He helped me walk back in and put on the fire. A drop of sweat travelled on his clear forehead and all I wanted was to wipe it off so that I would touch him.

He helped me down.

'Do you have any family?' I blurted out.

'Not really. They all died in a fire. The only one alive is my aunt.'

I knew how he felt. I had lost my family too. 'I'm terribly sorry.'

'It's alright... I've managed to live with it.'

He seemed emotionless, like he had nothing to live for.

'When you'll be healed, we'll leave this place. It's too dangerous to live out here. I only came here for a few days to spend my holidays.'

'Where shall we go to?'

He scratched his head.

'I planned on passing through my home in Vancouver but the monsters have attacked there too. We shall just head off to London immediately. It's the only place that hasn't been affected by them. By that time you'll have recovered fully.'

I yawned as fatigue and sleep took over me. I stood up with the help of my clutches and I headed for the bed he had provided me with.

'Where are you sleeping?' I asked worriedly.

'On the couch... I don't mind, I'm used to it.'

'Alright, have a good night.'

I felt awful for letting him sleep on the couch. His body was way too large to fit comfortably on the tiny couch. Even under the uncomfortable position, he looked so innocent. No one could be this perfect. Something about him wasn't to be trusted.

To be quite honest, I didn't close one eye at night. I always felt this presence in the room but when I switched on the bed lights, there was no one in sight. I decided it would be better if I went for a walk down the lake to clear my mind. I slowly tip-toed across the living room where Alucard was deep asleep... he was so still.

Once I reached the door, I noticed the key was missing. This was a great inconvenience. I noticed the key was in Alucard's hand. I silently walked towards him and when I was about to get the key, he opened his eyes. They were dark red. I launched myself back in fright. What was he?

'I... I was just going for a walk down the lake.'

'Hmm... were you? A fragile girl like you shouldn't be out there at this time of the night you know.'

I was shaking in terror as he came closer. He stared at me directly, not even blinking.

He whispered something in my ears. 'Please go back and sleep.'

'Why are your eyes so red?'

'Go to bed and forget whatever happened here.'

I couldn't believe it. He was lying to me with no remorse whatsoever.

Though I knew he was lying, I felt like I was in a trance.

Although I didn't want to move, my feet started moving. He had hypnotized me with his eyes. I headed for the bed and fell asleep immediately, forgetting everything.

The warm rays of the sun caressed my face, waking me leisurely. When I opened my eyes, I found him sitting next to me in a rocking chair.

He hesitated. 'Good morning, how are you feeling?'

'Better... my head feels so heavy.'

'You've slept for long, almost half a day.'

'That's unusual. I've never slept for that long before.'

He sat down, watching me closely for a moment.

'What? Why are you looking at me like that? Did I do something?'

He didn't answer. He walked away in silence, pulling out his smart phone from his pocket and making a call. I couldn't understand him. One minute he was kind and gentle, the other he was silent and rude. I stood up with my bruised leg that felt much better now and I headed for the shower. I didn't even need the clutches anymore. I walked steadily to the bathroom. Turning the knob, I let the water drip down my arm.

The water was very cold, as usual. He told me the heater had broken down.

I bet the water from the lake was even warmer than this one. I decided to postpone the shower and instead take a swim. I was getting too used to him and I was overstaying my welcome. I thought of leaving this place at once but where would I go? Who would I go to? I was pretty much stuck with him. And to be honest, I liked him.

Inside the cabin, aromatic spices smeared the air and made me feel hungry instantly. I found some clean clothes on the bed, they were even worse than the ones before. I didn't have a choice so I wore them. I looked like a lesbian who just

didn't have a sense of style. I stared into his eyes, about to ask, when his smile widened then he suddenly burst out laughing.

'I knew it! You just gave them to me so that you could have a laugh.'

'You didn't have extra clothes on you when you fell down. You should be happy I offered.'

I couldn't just look manly and not do anything. I made myself more feminine, by unbraiding my hair and wearing the silver hoops I was wearing that day. He kept quiet and grinned.

'Can I remove the plaster? I feel better already.'

He scowled. 'Yes, I guess you'll be fine now.'

I jumped up on my feet with my arms stretched. 'Yes! I'm finally free!'

'Now that you're o.k., I'm taking you to London. I did promise you, didn't I?'

Excitement could be seen on my face. 'Great... I can't wait.'

I guess it was too late for second thoughts now. I had embarked on a journey with this man, the man who had saved my life.

2. London

Getting to London wasn't an easy task. Roads and airports were guarded, from the vampires. In the last two years, vampires had become manifest, suddenly appearing out of the shadows and they decided to overthrow humans. The human governments hadn't been able to counter-attack these creatures since most of them had superhuman powers. Their numbers had raised in the last year from two thousand to ten thousand all around the globe. Seventy percent of the alarming number of vampires had been created by a mad scientist who had injected mind-controlling substances that gave these test subjects of the human army powers beyond belief.

We disembarked in London at eight in the morning. The city was sprawling with people. I had never seen so many people in my life. The airport hallways were barely able to contain all of us.

'Why are they so many people?'

'This is the only safe place. It seems the rebellious vampires haven't been able to invade the United Kingdom yet. Every person here must have left their country for safety reasons. It's chaotic.'

I now exiled myself in this city, with the other millions of refugees, getting away from my past problems. The building we stopped by before heading for his aunt's place was gloomy from the outside. The sky wasn't perfect or cloudless blue. It was snowing and the wind was heavy. The trees even made things worse, bringing a macabre vision to the neighborhood.

'Two rooms please.'

'Sorry but we only have one room available. Due to the increased amount of people looking for shelter, we have fewer rooms and the prices have increased.'

We both stared at each other blankly. I hoped I wouldn't have to share a bed with him, it would be too awkward. Hopefully we might have a couch on which one of us would sleep.

'Okay, we'll take it. We don't have much of choice, do we? How much will it cost?'

'That will be a hundred per night. How long are you staying?'

'Five nights.'

'That will be five hundred pounds.'

He handed her his credit card and obtained the electronic key from the red haired woman at the counter.

'Thank you for choosing Brick Lane Inn.'

I stared in amazement, waiting for him to open the door to the big room, my eyes wavered.

'Are you coming in or not?' he asked.

I glanced inside the room. It was amazingly beautiful. This room was out of place, since the bright colors on the walls and furniture were a contrast to the nocturnes of the trees outside. The curtains were as clean as the bleached white sheets. The artifacts seemed to have been collected from the eighteen hundreds. This room was completely neat.

He spoke with pride. 'This is our room.'

'Wow... I'm speechless.'

He seemed proud of it too. I glowered at the whole place with my rather curious eyes. I could store up in some part of my brain some of the features I had seen in this room for my future dream house. I followed him to the other side of the big room

'And it also has its own kitchen.' He pointed out. 'This will be our room.'

It took me ten minutes to get used to this prestigious environment. From outside, one would never know that this building had rooms of such caliber. Frightened I was, to sit down or even touch anything. Braced together, I courageously took the time to unpack my luggage.

When I was done unpacking, I rushed to the living room. He was lighting the artificial fire place. I wanted to help but I was scared to touch or break something. I just sat down and waited for him to say something.

Resting on one of the sofas, he ogled me. I stared back without breathing, across the long room, into the blue eyes of my savior, and he looked pleasantly back at me.

‘I’m going out for a while... would you mind not having my company for a bit.’

I pouted. Was he serious? Was he going to abandon me in this spectacular room, by myself, expecting me not to break anything? I couldn’t stay here, no; I wouldn’t stay all by myself while he went exploring the beauty of London.

‘I want to come with you,’ I begged.

‘I’m not taking long.’

I always got what I wanted with my puppy doll face. ‘Please...’

He finally gave up. ‘Alright, you can come. But don’t get lost on the streets. They are too many people and I wouldn’t be able to keep my focus on you all the time.’

‘Ok I promise I’ll stay by your side at all times.’

I couldn't stay in such an astonishing place by myself. I rushed to the door and jumped inside the cab that he had stopped. I soon found out he was planning on buying me new clothes. I wanted to go shopping and touring.

I stared out the window in silence. It was beautiful. I couldn't rebuff the fact. Everything, other than the empty streets, was perfect. People feared that the vampires would eventually attack London so they avoided going outside their safe homes. The streets were practically empty. I could smell his perfume complement the odor from the flowering Irises. To my intense surprise, I loved it. I shivered again. It smelled amazing. I inhaled deeply.

'What perfume are you wearing? It's so nice.'

He paused. 'Are you trying to flirt?'

I hadn't realized that the words had popped out. My deeper thoughts had been able to force out of my mouth. I blushed and looked away.

'It's alright... I know you're fond of me. I'd say if you were older, I wouldn't mind taking you out.'

He made me blush even more. Was he trying to make me melt? I thought so. But what he mean by older? I didn't have time to ask. We came to a halt on a narrow street. We stopped at a random clothing shop on the narrow street. It seemed to be a well know shop since there was surprisingly a lot of clientele. The shelves were full of ranges of clothing. I was surprised by the amount of things I got and most of the choices were made by him. They were all beautiful and unique.

One thing I liked about shopping was, shopping with a hot guy by my side. I had always been slender and I never feared not fitting in. Girls these days even took ridiculous diets to lose weight, so it was a blessing for me to be slender. I looked at my face in the mirror as I brushed through my tangled hair with my fingers.

He watched me closely, taking note of every particular detail of what I was doing.

My skin could be attractive, almost lucid. But in this place with the ever gloomy weather, I looked dead, almost zombie-like. I tried on more than a dozen outfits and he was my stylist. He judged every facet that didn't fit into place. I ended up buying only seven outfits from the large bunch he had chosen for me.

As soon as we were done, we headed back to the hotel. On the way back, the sky had cleared up.

'Thank you Alucard.'

He nodded. Sometimes it seemed like he wanted to say something but he just kept quiet and nodded.

When I finished my shower, it was already nine p.m. I wore one of the outfits he had bought me, some khaki high waist shorts with a white tank top.

'Wow, you look... stunning.'

'Thank you.'

In school I had never been the pretty girl that every boy wanted and I had always hated it. People hated me because of my father. I was the daughter of the crazy scientist who had defrauded almost half of the town. And now, I was receiving kindness and gifts from someone I didn't even know that well. No boy had ever been this kind to me. It almost felt like a dream.

'I was hoping we wouldn't have to be in an awkward situation with the room arrangement. So I ordered a couch which I'll be sleeping on of course. It will be delivered tomorrow. I didn't want to make you uncomfortable. But unfortunately we will have to sleep in the same bed tonight.'

'That's very kind. Well one night won't kill me.'

'Good. I promise to stay on the far end of the bed.'

'Good.'

'Can I cook for you anything? You must be starving.' I muttered, trying to evade the awkward moment.

'I'm not really hungry.'

'But you haven't eaten since yesterday morning. Surely you must be starving! I know I am.'

'I ate a sandwich. I'm heading to bed now.'

I froze into place when he suddenly approached me. He held my face into his palm and gave me a goodnight kiss on the cheek.

'Good night beautiful.'

He smiled and walked towards the bedroom. My heart almost jumped out of my chest. How could something as mere as a kiss on the cheek, bring such an eruption of sensations? My palms were trembling. I managed to steady myself on one chair, releasing a heavy sigh. It took me about ten minutes to compose myself. I watched a bit of television, avoiding the news. I wasn't going to let the news ruin my evening. By eleven o'clock, I was sure that he was fast asleep. I was tired too after such a long day.

I turned off the monitor and headed to the bedroom. I could definitely feel the awkwardness when I got in. His body was so cold, it was very disturbing actually. As I had guessed he was fast asleep. He was motionless. To my surprise, he had kept his promise. He stayed on the far end of the bed, away from me. I did the same, keeping my distance, and soon after fell deep into sleep.

* * *

Alucard was out of bed when I woke up.

'You're finally awake. I made you breakfast.'

'That's so nice of you, thank you.'

He picked up a bottle of vie verso from the table and began drinking.

'Why are you drinking so early in the morning? You're just as underage as I am. You shouldn't be drinking.'

He lowered one eyebrow. 'Did you just call me underage? Well how old do you think I am?'

'Nineteen or maybe twenty.'

He burst out laughing. 'I'm twenty-two.'

I couldn't believe it. I thought I would relate well with someone my own age but he was so much older than I was.

He put on his serious face. 'We'll leave this place today.' He uttered.

'Why's that?'

'I received a call from my aunt. And she wants me to visit as soon as possible. It's a family emergency.'

'Oh... alright, I don't have any problem with that.'

I kind of wanted to meet his aunt. I'm sure she was as good looking as her nephew. I hurried, packing my new clothes into my tiny suitcase. I wasn't going to miss this place at all since I didn't get overly attached to it. I found him outside in a cab. I hadn't noticed how few his things were.

I couldn't understand why he had such few paraphernalia. 'Is that all you have?'

'My aunt has most of my stuff at her place.'

I guess that's why he didn't pack anything, I thought to myself. I sat in the back seat so that I would be next to him. I fell asleep during the whole drive. When we reached, there was no life in view. Slowly dragging my suitcase, I followed his steps. He walked so fast but yet so gracefully. His black cloak wavered in the wind like a feather. It felt like I was following a superhero.

He helped me with my luggage, a gentleman indeed. He just kept on staring right back at me with his sky blue eyes. This was the true color of his eyes it seemed, the color of his eyes without any emotions. He didn't stop staring at me for one moment. There was an instant where he was about to place his hand into mine to make sure I was alright but he hesitated.

The memory of his kind and gentle kiss sent chills through my entire body. He immediately noticed me shaking and pulled off his coat. When we were just inches apart, he dropped it off on my shoulders. My eyes wavered until they reached his chest. My eyes were fighting to reach his but my brain was conflicting.

He broke off the silence. 'You seem... anxious about something... is something wrong?'

'What makes you say that?'

'You're biting your lower lip really hard and your hair is getting soaked with sweat.'

I ran my fingers through my hair. He was right; I was sweating like a pig. It was something that happened only when I was nervous.

I mumbled. 'It's nothing.'

I knew he was onto me but I ignored him until we reached a huge gate that was about three meters high. It was followed by other gates that were even thicker and that had electrical fences around them. Who lived here, the Queen? This place was entirely secure. They inquired for our passports and all our electrical devices. We continued driving until we were able to see a mansion. It was even bigger than the mansions I had seen on TV. I couldn't even imagine someone living here. There was a servant waiting for us.

‘Welcome back Sir.’

‘Thank you Denzel.’ He muttered.

My luggage was carried by the butler. We followed him to the library, where Alucard’s aunt was waiting for us. The entrance to the mansion was a huge hallway with twin stairs and a large chandelier dangling right in the middle. The stairs seemed to be leading to bedrooms I guessed. We went straight on until we reached a large decked door. He opened it up for us and inside sat a womanly figure, her back facing us. She turned around, smirking.

‘That took long! But you’re finally back.’

‘Yes Sir Severna. I brought the girl with me.’

‘So you’re Violet.’

She was pretty like I had expected. She somehow had the same traits as me. She looked like she was in her thirties and she had blond hair. What made her look more mature were the glasses that covered her small grey eyes. She looked like someone who just came out of a vintage fashion magazine. Her blazer was fitting and her skirt was short, revealing her slender legs. Her hair was chopped short in a bob, with a fringe covering her forehead. But what did Alucard mean when he said *‘I brought the girl with me?’*

She came closer to me and caressed my crimson dyed hair.

‘I have been waiting for you. I’m your aunt from your father’s side.’

After hearing the shocking news, I just stood motionless, confused. ‘He never told me that I had an aunt.’

‘That’s because he didn’t want you to meet me. He always was... unpleasant.’

‘I’m sorry to contradict you but my father was nice.’

‘Poor girl, there’s much you need to know about your dad. Alucard, would you mind telling her everything?’

‘Yes master.’

‘Alright then, I won’t keep you waiting in this boring library. You can go around for a walk or something. Look around if you want.’

Alucard escorted me outside and took me for a walk in the forest.

‘What is she talking about? And why did you call her master?’

‘She is my master.’

I was still baffled. There was a minute of silence. Alucard strolled to a nearby oak tree, leaning against its huge trunk. He stared down at the ground, a smile hovering around the edges of his fine lips. I could see he was going to try to make this interesting. His voice dropped a little lower than a whisper.

‘Well, listen to this story. Your father created the artificial vampires. He was an exceptional scientist, with the most amazing research on earth and when the government found out, he was taken into their custody. His research was for a good cause at first, initially meant to be used in future medical research but then it was altered to create human weapons. They tried to kill him when they drained him of his knowledge but he escaped with his first research. He partly lost his sanity after all the mental torture he went through. He began drinking and swindling people to get enough money to open his own research laboratory to perfect his experiments. Until today, he is nowhere to be found. We still don’t know if it was a true story but people say that he has transformed himself into one of them and he’s planning to take revenge on the regime.’

I trembled as the cold breeze passed. I steadied myself on a large rock. This was all too much for me.

'You came across the vampires in the past and they ruined your life and killed your family. They had been sent by the people who backstabbed your dad. They knew your mother knew the truth, so they ordered her execution. There are certain organizations, secret organizations, which round up the remaining humans and defend them against the monsters.'

'How do you know all this?'

'I'm not done yet. As I was saying, I work for one of those organizations. Sir Severna is the head of the organization called Vendetta. Her father was the one who created it but he died when she was just twelve. She was the only legal heir. The main objective of the organization is to prevent the extinction of humans.'

The organization had my surname.

'Why do you work for such a dangerous organization if all that you're telling me is true?'

'You'll soon find out for yourself.'

We continued our hike until the trees ended. Once out of the forest, a ruckus of metallic friction announced the arrival of several military tanks.

'Those are our best defense tools.'

As we continued, I saw a large building about forty meters high. I followed him in. I felt the eyes of the guards on me. The lobby was very simple but it still looked quite good. There was no receptionist but I could see a few servants here and there walking around with food on platters and some with clean towels. The amount of security in this place was unbelievable. We climbed into the elevator up to the last floor.

'We've provided you with a secure room and it would be difficult for anyone or anything to break in. This door will only open after your order. I'd like you to speak into this speaker so that it recognizes and records your voice.'

I ordered it to open and the red light turned immediately green. The door opened up slowly. It was incredible. My room was an apartment that was perfectly decorated and I had everything I needed here. It had a kitchen, a living room and a bedroom.

‘This will be your home from now on.’

‘You mean I’ll be working here?’

‘Not really. You’ll be kept here for security measures... There’s something I haven’t told you. Your father was Sir Severna’s half-brother. Soon after he abandoned you, he sent his minions here and tried to take this organization for himself. He needs all the power he can get to take down the men who betrayed him. He tried to kill his half-sister but he had no success in doing so. It turns out that you’re the only one who can prevent this apocalypse.’

‘Why is that?’ I questioned.

‘Your aunt isn’t healthy anymore and she fears she will pass away soon. We were lucky to find you in time. I was sent to get you.’

‘You knew about this and you didn’t tell me?’

He paused for a moment. ‘Yes I knew. Your aunt had always wanted a child for herself but she’s barren. And when she heard that her brother had two children that he’d abandoned, she sent me there to get you both.’

I had a frown on my face. ‘Why did you lie to me all this time?’

‘You would never have followed me if I told you the whole story by that time. I had to make you gain my trust. And there’s something else you need to know. You’ll be the next Head of the organization since Sir Severna has a short time to live. Her heart is very weak because of smoking.’

‘This is all too much for me.’

‘I understand how you feel. We brought you here to train you because you’ll have to become strong if you want to be the next leader.’

‘Why is that?’

He paused for a moment.

‘You’re the only rightful heiress. Your father wants a vampire world where he will be the emperor. He will try to annihilate you. I’ll leave you to absorb everything I’ve mentioned up to now.’

He took my hand into his, a physical touch that seemed to reach beyond the light summer clothing I wore, making me wish I could be his right this minute. Without further warning, he left. I hadn’t realized that it was already dusk. The room was too appealing to belong anywhere but in a hotel. The bedside lamps, bolted to the tables, were made up of conch shells, as for the long curtains, they were made from a silky fabric, the same fabric as the bedspread. The walls were colored with circular designs of different colors such as the pillows. I changed into my nightgown after a long bath in the big bathtub that was already prepared for me.

I couldn’t sleep that night. I had a dream... I was surrounded by vampires. I shot them but they wouldn’t die. The same grief that I felt then when my family was killed returned and it started crushing me. They encircled me, coming closer and closer... I opened my eyes in trepidation.

* * *

When I woke up I was confused. My thoughts were muddled up and I couldn’t distinguish anything I was seeing. I tried to remember how I got here, but nothing came at first. Things seemed to clear up after five minutes. I had no memory of this room.

I looked at the digital clock on the nightstand. It was twelve o’clock. The doorbell rang immediately after I stood up from the bed. I walked slowly towards the door, still sleepy I guess. I ordered it to open and Alucard was standing the other side with a huge grin on his face. As usual he had his dark aviator shades.

‘How are you doing today?’

He had brought me flowers, Lilies as a matter of fact. He waited for me to say something.

‘They are beautiful, thanks.’ I sighed.

I walked right back in and sat on the couch. To my surprise, he was still in front of the door.

He seemed serious. ‘Aren’t you going to invite me in?’

‘I woke up on the wrong side of the bed today. Please come in.’

He hesitated then stepped a foot in. He opened up the long and wide curtains, revealing the huge field where the soldiers were training. There were some with guns and some training with their bare hands. A dozen were crawling through the muddy ground under some challenging training fences. It felt like I was watching an action movie. They were so good at what they were doing that I felt so naïve. I could never imagine myself doing such kind of activities. He handed me a gun, interrupting my ogling.

‘Today, you’ll train in the shooting rank with me. You’ll have to beat me at it to prove yourself worthy enough. I’m a professional shooter.’

‘We’ll see how good you really are.’

I have never even touched a gun in my entire life and he expects me to be perfect in just a day? I followed him into a small vehicle when we got off the elevator and out of the building. This place was even bigger than I had imagined. Apart from the immense field and the camps, there was a huge shooting rank, a gymnasium, a swimming area, a tennis court, and an airdrome. I was amazed by all of this. The shooting rank was the last building on the east side of the mansion. When we approached the entrance, we could already hear gunshots from everywhere. We stopped in front of the shooting rank. There was a man standing in front of the large bolted gate.

‘This is Violet Vendetta, niece of Sir Severna.’

When he smiled at me, a few wrinkles became visible. 'It's a pleasure to meet you Miss.'

The man was in his fifties but he was really built. When I shook his hand, I could feel the coarseness weights had left on it. He shook his head, frowning.

'How can a young girl like you take such rough training... you're too fragile.'

'Thanks. I guess I don't have a choice but to train. I'm going to have to defend myself sooner or later.'

'Well, let me not keep you waiting. You'll just go to shooting rank 122. You're in the best hands so you won't need a trainer.'

I followed the numbers, glancing for two seconds at each of the shooters as I passed them. They were all so good at it. I felt that I would be the worst shooter in the history of shooting. Once there, I tried to hide my anxiety by looking sprouted up.

'What's with the sudden enthusiasm?'

'I've never done this before and I'm kind of psyched.'

'Alright then, let's hope you don't kill someone.' He joked.

I put on the security goggles that were suspended on two hooks. Once I was ready, he showed me how I should stand and how to position the gun before I could aim and fire. He held me tightly, close to his chest. Suddenly, I felt shy. Outwardly, I seemed much more composed, as though I had done this several times before. Wrapping myself in his soothing hold, a surge of unease took over me. Alucard could sense my pulse rising since he drew me even closer, his narrow eyes focused on me. He stretched his hand out onto mine and held it softly. Once I had perfectly aimed, I pulled the trigger. A droplet of perspiration slid down my neck. The shot went directly into the dummy's head.

He smirked. 'Good... now try it by yourself.'

I followed his instructions, carefully making sure I didn't pull the trigger too early. Once I was ready, I took a deep breath and shot the dummy. The bullet went through its eye although I was aiming for its forehead.

'Not bad. Not bad at all. That was so great for a first time. But try to focus more on where you're aiming.'

He helped me again. My hands were trembling and sweating from his touch. He later placed his head closer to mine and whispered softly in my ears. 'Relax.'

My blood stopped boiling as much as before. When he let go, I took another deep breath before aiming. In a short instant I finally pulled the trigger. The bullet went right through the dummy's forehead. I leaped in joy. We both smiled and hugged each other. I hadn't anticipated that I would enjoy shooting this much. After a dozen of shots, I became really good. I managed to shoot thrice in the dummy's forehead. It wasn't that hard but one would really need to focus while doing it.

'Do you want to continue? If you're exhausted, you can just sit here. I'll show you how I do it.'

He was right. I was indeed sweating heavily. I nodded and sat down. He didn't put on the protective goggles. He stood there and pulled out an incredible revolver with Latin writings on them. One feature that caught my attention was the word Vendetta, which was my name. It was thirty centimeters long with a fifteen centimeter handle. The outer core was golden and the writings were molded into the revolver. He didn't even show any sign of weariness while holding the heavy revolver. Once he pointed it straight out to the dummy, he pulled the trigger in a flash. Within five seconds, I heard ten gunshots. After those shots, the dummy was already decapitated. It seemed he enjoyed this activity much more than any normal person.

He uttered in pride. 'And that's how I do it.'

'Wow... you're... unbelievably great! And that revolver! Where did you get it?'

'I... accustomed myself with it some years back... it's quite a long story. Well, I think that's enough for today. You should head back to your place.'

'Yes, I'm quite exhausted. Would you mind accompanying me back?'

'I wouldn't want you to get lost, would I?'

He escorted me back to the apartment when we were done. We used one of the golf carts until the field outside the apartment. I engulfed a large amount of this filtered air as I combed through my sweaty and dangled hair with my fingers. The sun was setting and the clouds had become pale orange, almost red.

'I enjoy sunsets... they indicate the end of boring days of my tedious life.'

I had no response to that. What could I have said? He seemed to be talking to himself in a loud monologue. He was lost in his own thoughts. The silence remained the entire stairway until we finally reached my apartment. He stood at the door.

'Please come in.'

'I'm better off here.'

Was it a formality for him to remain at the door whenever he visited someone?

'Thanks for everything Alucard. I really appreciate it. By now I'd be dead if you hadn't saved me.'

He smiled and nodded. There was a short minute of silence.

'Thank you.' My tone sounded ardent with appreciation.

'That's the second time you've told me thanks.' he shrugged.

He stared, perhaps questioning why my lips were twisting into an unintentional grin. He pressed his lips together, staring at me through his narrow blue eyes. He looked at me bluntly, and I apprehended that I had frozen. He abruptly inclined his head forward. The movement was so swift it startled me. Was he going in for a kiss? Oh no. I hadn't even had a mint to freshen my breath.

'You have something in your hair.'

He removed a leaf from my tangled hair. His phone vibrated and after several minutes talking to the other person on the other end of the line, he rushed down the staircase.

'I have to go.'

He walked away, slowly and swiftly, a serious look painted on his face. There was something he was keeping from me. I trusted him to tell me everything but I knew he was still keeping something from me.

3. Disorder

I hadn't slept well that night. I woke up with a headache and muscle pains in the morning. The morning passed slowly as I waited for him to come. TEN, ELEVEN, TWELVE, I watched as the clock ran. I waited for him the whole morning and he hadn't showed up. I was impatient to see him. I decided to go looking for him myself. As I directed myself to the main building with the golf cart, it had started raining. What more could ruin my day?

Aunt Savvy, the nickname I had given her, sat in the dining room, having lunch with Denzel. As usual, she was on her iPad.

'Darling, you joined us for lunch?'

'No, but I would like to enquire something.'

'Anything you want.'

'Would you know where Alucard is?'

They both looked at each other when I mentioned his name. She paused for a moment before articulating something.

'He's gone for a mission. I can't tell you when he'll be back because I have no idea. Nevertheless, please join us.'

My manners wouldn't allow me excuse myself when I had just been invited to have lunch. I wasn't hungry but I would have to please her. With my head staring at the tiles, I sat opposite her. The table was silent for about two minutes then she finally spoke.

'You haven't touched your food yet.'

'I know... I'm sorry but I'm not that hungry.'

The silence returned once more and this time it stayed until I decided to leave the table.

'Please inform me if he comes back.'

I walked away as slowly as it could get. By the end of the day, the boredom was becoming ridiculous. Why hadn't he informed me of his sudden departure? Maybe he had, but in an indirect way. He had mentioned something like '*I have to go*' yesterday night, the night he left. He had not even taken the slight second to explain why.

I tried getting my mind off of things by watching the TV. There was nothing at all that caught my attention. The same old TV shows were shown at this time and the only thing that always had something new was the Local News. I searched through the various channels and found something that caught my attention.

'If we do not receive what we want, we shall destroy all of you. Our Master desires a girl named Violet Vendetta. A great reward will be awarded to the vampire that finds and brings this girl to us ALIVE.'

This news bothered me deeply. It was a live broadcast of my wanted capture. I was wanted. I changed the channel for further information.

'A vampire hunter has risen out of nowhere for the past two months, killing several vampires who's numbers amount to a hundred. These numbers of vampires, all found dead yesterday all over the city, were massacred at the scenes. We believe the suspect is in his early twenties, tall and slightly muscular, his hair utterly black with a red coat and an undeniably unique revolver described by witnesses...'

The signal got degraded at that point. I went through all the channels but it seemed like they were all toyed with. That's when it caught my attention. This description that the police mentioned earlier fit in with Alucard's. He was indeed the vampire assassin. Aunt Savvy didn't want me to know where Alucard was, that's why she told me half of the truth. Alucard was a vamp killer.

I couldn't think straight for about ten minutes. All that went through my head was the word 'KILLER'. I didn't think he would work as a professional

assassin for this organization. I didn't have enough evidence to throw at him but I still had to clear things up with him as soon as he came back.

I observed how the headlights twisted with the curves of the road. They moved too quickly; it didn't look real. It seemed like a videogame. I was dreadfully afraid that I would never have another opportunity to be with him like this again. He was teaching me how to drive. It had already been two months since we came here. He had been away for almost two and a half months now and he just came back today. I couldn't waste one minute that I had with him since he could once again leave at any moment.

'I was distracted since then, worrying about you.'

His voice was harsh. 'You shouldn't have been.'

I realized the wetness on my cheeks were tears. He didn't know how I felt. I was lonely. He had thrown all this news on me all at once and expected me to go through all the changes alone? I wiped off the tears and heavily sighed, grabbing the wheel hardly. I slowed down, getting into the precincts, still driving through the acres of trees that surrounded my Aunt's mansion.

His voice was nearly inaudible. 'I'm... sorry.' He gesticulated. 'I abandoned you when you needed me the most.'

He did care about me. The blue eyes held onto mine, and I lost my train of thought.

'Careful! Watch the road! Or do you want to die?'

'Sorry... my mind was off.'

I pulled the car to a halt on the side of the road. We were alone, surrounded by trees. He could tell me any secret here. No one would know he had told me anything.

He paused for a second. His voice was honest. 'I just can't explain some things to you.'

‘What are you hiding from me?’

He frowned, and his eyes were tight as he stared past me out the window. His eyes fixed on mine; he seemed to be making the decision on whether to tell me the truth or not.

‘I know your true identity.’ I mumbled under my sobs.

He paused and looked at me.

‘I know that you’re an assassin... a trained killer.’

I had difficulties pronouncing the word. He sighed softly.

‘Why didn’t you tell me? I wouldn’t hate you because of that.’

‘It was obvious... I thought you already knew. We’re in a place full of soldiers... a place full of trained killers. Wouldn’t you have expected me to be a soldier too? And the way I wielded my gun at the shooting arena, wasn’t that obvious enough? But I only kill the bad guys.’

He was right, it was obvious. I could have nailed it but I was trying not to accept the facts. Once I parked the car, he closed his eyes and walked out of it.

‘You kill vampires, for that I love you.’

He grinned and hugged me before he took off.

‘Where are you going?’

‘I can’t stay for now... I have to go.’

He ran off into the forest and left me standing there like a statuette. I was unable to move until my brain had decoded itself. I drove the car clumsily. He didn’t even say bye. I thought his apology was sincere but once more he just left me. I pulled myself together and drove, reaching the building’s bolted gates. I parked my new car in front of the building I lived in.

I strolled out of the elevator and reached the door, unlocked it, and stepped inside. The house was cooler today, like the other days when he was gone.

I didn't pay any attention to what I was doing until I realized that I was in bed. I shuddered violently for several minutes before turning on the heater. I was absolutely and irretrievably in love with him. I always thought that the girls in my previous school were weak for falling in love so fast, but now I realized I was the pathetic one.

I didn't know what I was thinking. How could I fall for someone I had just met? Even after several months together, I still knew nothing about his secretive life. And he was my aunt's employee, one of her agents. Other than that he was a trained killer that I knew nothing about. He had killed a hundred vampires since we had gotten here.

I tried to pull myself together in the morning. It was foggy and dark outside my window. I took a quick shower. I swallowed a portion of sweet flakes. I looked up from my cereal bowl, which I was pondering on rather than eating, before heading for training. The fog was ice cold where it clung to the exposed skin on my face and neck. I hesitated on my way out the building's entry, trying to figure out why he had just gone off like that. I sat down on one of the benches in the field, staring at the hardworking soldiers. They all looked so engrossed in their work. I was suddenly interrupted by a voice. A tall figure stood, blocking the few rays of sunlight I was enjoying.

'Violet, aren't you?'

'Yes.'

When I pulled my head up I noticed a handsome man. He was young, also in his twenties and his hair was dark brown. Green eyes that just glimmered in the sun ogled me with empathy. I noticed he was bare-chested, his strong muscles expanding as he took in deep breaths.

'I heard you're going to be the new Sir.'

'Yes, and I'm looking forward to it, although I don't want my aunt to die.'

'Don't worry... she won't, not any time soon. She's such a nice and strong person. And she's the strongest woman I've known as a matter of fact. She's done so many things for me.'

I tried to smile. 'Tell me more about it. I want to know.'

'You better ask her yourself.'

I followed his eyes and noticed Sir Severna coming by.

He stood straight, his hand right above his ear, in a respectful salutation.

'Good morning Sir.'

'Good morning soldier. Hope my niece likes it here. Thanks for keeping her company.'

'No problem Sir, it's no bother. Please excuse me.'

He walked away and joined the others who were completing a morning jog. It would have been nice to have some girl friends around here but there was no sign of other girls.

'Hello aunt Savvy. Thank you so much. You've been so nice to me.'

'I would have made you a spoilt kid if only my brother allowed you to visit. Now I'm compensating for all that you had missed. You can have anything you want my darling.'

'Thanks. I don't know where I would be right now without you. I had a question to ask though.'

'And what would that be?'

'Would you know where Alucard is?'

‘He’s...out of town. He left for a very serious mission. He had to go immediately and I’m afraid he won’t be back for a whole month. Viol, please don’t get too involved with him. It’s for your own sake. It will hurt you more if you get too close to him.’

I frowned angrily. She didn’t know what she was saying. She didn’t know how I felt! A shudder of trepidation went through my tummy as I realized he wasn’t coming back for another month. What would I do in such a new place without any friend? Agony ripped through me with the reminiscence of his face. I shook my head, frantic to escape the pain.

As time went on, slower than I imagined, I forgot him just a bit. Ten seconds seemed to be more like a century. I didn’t feel like going for training today. Each day, I locked myself in my room, staring at the roof for an hour and sometimes reading novels or listening to my favorite bands. My Aunt was very worried and she kept on promising me that he would be back, always trying to cheer me up.

I leaned my cheek against my knee, grieving in anguish. When I managed to stand up halfway, I heard the door bell ring. I felt a slight bit of relief, eager to see if he had come back for me. It had already been more than a month and Aunt Savvy just came up with more lame excuses. I ran to the door and to my disappointment, it was just Ted, the new friend I had made. He had been really nice to me all this while and I appreciated it. And we had become really good friends which had made me feel so much better.

He had a large smile on his face. ‘Can I come in?’

‘Of course Ted.’

‘I was just wondering why you didn’t show up for training today. Are you alright?’

‘Yes, I’m fine.’

‘Your eyes are red. Have you been crying?’

I couldn't lie to him; it was obvious I had been crying. I cried even more when I remembered that Alucard didn't care about me. I was alone in the world with no family or friends and now I was soon to be heiress of a secret organization I knew nothing of. He pulled me into his arms, cuddling me like a little child.

'Are you still crying because of that good for nothing moron?'

I nodded with my head. 'Why did he do this to me? I never even got the time to tell him how I felt.'

'I never really liked that guy, always so full of ego. Forget about him. That's the best you can do for now. I know this is the wrong time but I was thinking... how about... you... and me?'

'What do you mean?'

He moved away for a second. 'I mean... could we be more than friends?'

'You know how I feel about him...'

'Yes, and I don't care. You'll learn to love me in time even if it takes you a lifetime.'

'But...'

'Don't say anything else but yes.'

I did like him, but as a friend.

'I'm sorry Ted, but... I can't.'

'I guess I'll just have to leave now but please think about it.'

I was only human. I would forget about Alucard in time. He was no good. Being with me was just a mission forced on him and now that he had delivered me safely to my aunt, we had nothing more to talk about. Ted was right. I wouldn't allow myself to think of him.

I went back to my room, locking myself and standing in front of the mirror. I had become thinner and paler. What had happened to me? I was a strong and intrepid girl before this. I would never let myself look like this. I had stopped feeding myself properly since he left and what I was looking at now was horrid. I could even see my ribs popping out. I never thought I would be anorexic one day and here I was.

My hair wasn't even combed and it seemed like I hadn't taken a shower since yesterday. I wondered how Ted could still like me with my degrading appearance.

I rushed to the bathtub, burying myself in the soaped water. The water was soothing, healing my emotional scars. As much as I fought back any thoughts of Alucard, I did not struggle to forget about him. I had to know that he was still alive. I hurried in the clothes that were available to me. When done, I rushed to the elevator, heading for my aunt's mansion. She was going to tell me what all this was about, even if I had to force it out of her. Why hadn't he showed up? Where was he? I almost tripped on the snowy field as I rushed. I felt like a puny emotional teenager, which I had become as a matter of fact.

On my way out, I hadn't even realized that the snow had melted. That's how much I had lost touch of the outside world. I met Ted on the way.

'What an improvement! You look irresistible.'

'Thanks Ted... I'm sorry but I have to go. I'll be back in five.'

'Where are you going?'

'To the main building, I have to visit my aunt.'

The sky started hammering and I felt a cold breeze flow in the air. It was about to rain. I hurried and drove out with my black Range Rover Sports. I was still learning how to drive and the rain was making it much harder. After parking my car, I ran under the rain into the mansion where I met one of the servants.

'Good morning Miss. What may I do for you?'

'I must see my aunt immediately.'

'I'm afraid she can't see you now... she's in a meeting.'

'It's urgent! I need to see her!'

'Alright... I'll take you there.'

I followed him across the large corridor into another passage then we finally reached the door of the conference room. When I opened it, I was solidified for about thirty seconds. The person sitting at the back of the room sent a pounding pulse throughout my entire body.

4. Misfortunes

I managed to whisper his name. 'Alucard...'

'Violet, what are you doing here?' my aunt replied.

I whimpered with tears on my cheeks. 'Why did you lie to me? All this time you were here and you had my aunt lie to me.'

He was a man of few words and fewer wasted movements. He didn't budge. I knew he could see that I was hurt. And that made me vulnerable. I wrapped my arms around my middle, a useless self protective gesture.

'Violet Vendetta, please leave now!' my aunt screamed angrily.

'No, Sir let her stay. She is indeed the next Sir.'

The man who spoke was one of the five men seating at the table. He was an old man who looked very wealthy and fastidious. My aunt let me stay against her will. She gave me displeased looks. I didn't even pay attention to any of them since I was focused only on one person, Alucard.

'So where were we before we were rudely interrupted?' she continued.

'Mr. Coleman was informing us on the activities carried out by the vampires. They have outnumbered us and turned most of our soldiers into vampires. We need your help Severna.'

She relaxed a bit. 'Well, how many soldiers do you want?'

‘A thousand would be enough.’

She bent slightly over the table, pushing a document towards one of the men. ‘Alright then, just sign this document.’

Alucard pretended as if I wasn’t there and it made me even more furious. Something kindled in his eyes, a flare or a spark of something. I controlled my temper until the meeting finally ended.

The old man came up to me. ‘It’s a pleasure meeting you Violet. You are one sturdy girl it seems.’

‘And you are?’

‘I’ll tell you when the time is appropriate.’

They all departed and Alucard and I were both left alone in the room.

I stared past the large table where my interlocutor. ‘Why did you pretend that you had left?’

‘I don’t have to answer your questions. I don’t have time for this.’

He stood up and walked slowly away from me but before he was able to reach the door I stopped him. I grabbed hold of his arm, blocking his way. He frowned angrily.

I scolded him. ‘Do you know how I felt when you left? Can’t you notice how much weight I’ve lost? I starved unconsciously because of you. I had sleepless nights because of you. I couldn’t think straight because I was always thinking about you.’

‘I never told you to worry about me. Can you let go of me? I have some work to do right now.’

He pushed me aside but I didn’t let go. I thumped on his chest furiously but he just stood there without moving as if he didn’t feel any pain. He grabbed hold of my arms violently when I was exhausted.

'Stop being a child! You shouldn't worry about a monster like me! I don't deserve someone like you! I don't like you; I was just doing my job. Get that through your stubborn head! Stay away from me; please it's for your own sake.'

His words hurt me much more than I expected. It was obvious he didn't like me but I didn't want him to remind me of it. Why was I forcing myself on someone who never even felt anything for me? He was right. I was just being a stubborn child. I realized that there was nothing to search for, and nothing to find.

That there never had been anything more than just this acted friendship. He had his job. But as for me, I had nothing, just nothing. I wondered how long this could last. How long I would keep denying myself the truth. I held myself together and faced him.

'Thanks again Alucard. It was nice meeting you. I'll never bother you again.'

* * *

I left running, and pain took hold of my heart. It was unbearable. I knew the damage was permanent. I tried holding myself together. I met Ted on the way back home and I couldn't keep from breaking down in his arms. He was the only one I could run to now and he was always there for me. He hugged me tightly, telling me it was going to be fine.

I was so broken that I couldn't stand up right. He dropped me off at my apartment, making sure I had stopped crying before he left. My eyes were dark and gloomy when I was done crying and my skin frail and pale. I might have passed off for a vampire if someone from the outside saw me. Soon, my breath came easier and I was able to compose myself. I concentrated on trying to sleep. The words repeatedly ran through my mind. "I don't like you." I immediately stood up and closed the window, so as not to catch a cold. Tomorrow would be another day, I reminded myself. I hoped it would be a better day. I vowed to never let myself cry again for any man.

I woke up rapidly, after taking a thirty minute nap, realizing that I still had the unbearable pain in my head, anguish. This time I was mistaken, because the pain came from the unbearable noise that vibrated throughout the room and in head. It was a siren. I rushed down the elevator, alarmed by the fact that this might be something serious. The sun had already set and it was becoming dark.

When I got down, I soon found out what was happening. All the soldiers were running up and down, rushing to get their weaponry.

My senses had awakened. 'What's happening here?'

'It's the defense alarm. We're being attacked by vampires. Get back to your room.'

I couldn't believe this. Unable to heed his order, I remained there motionless. Everything was now in slow motion. From the soldiers rushing to their guns and preparing for defense, to the landmines being placed, the helicopters and jets circling in the air. It all seemed like a movie but it was all real.

'What are you waiting for? Get ready. Go to your apartment and lock yourself. You're the one they want.'

It was me they wanted? All this was my fault? I didn't even have time to blame myself since Ted carried me back to my apartment.

'Your room will protect you from any intruders.'

He handed me a gun and walked away.

I was stagnant. 'Wait, Ted!'

He turned around, glancing at me hesitantly.

I held his arm. 'Please stay... I have a bad feeling about this.'

'Nothing will happen to me.'

I felt panic, as if it would be the last time I would see him. I hugged him then he rushed off, leaving me by myself in the living room. I felt numb when he

left. I stared past the large window, noticing him running to help other soldiers who were creating a land mine barrier across the field. When they were done, all the soldiers gathered behind the hill, crouching, and waiting. Everything was so dark and seeing anything was almost impossible.

It took about ten minutes before the first vampire appeared. As soon as he stepped on the grass, he was blown to shreds. I was frightened by the site of this. Until now, no one from our side was injured. I didn't trust this to last. Maybe we wouldn't last for long.

We were on the short side here, with the nocturnal mist as a disadvantage. Vampires could see fairly well at night. Outside, the rain came down like water slopped from a bucket, to make matters worse. The phone startled me when it rang.

It was my aunt. 'Viol, I'll need you to get down to the main building if things get out of hand over there. Whatever you do, don't act brave and do something stupid.'

She sounded so relaxed it made me fear. It was like nothing was happening. When I looked back, I lost track of Ted. I searched for him but I couldn't see him. I noticed four soldiers being devoured vampires. It was inhuman. Why did they have to die like this? What had happened to the world? The vampires did this. They were the cause of all this misfortune. Blood, so much blood, I couldn't handle it. Even in the darkness, I could see the blood.

A barricade of tanks and vehicles surrounded by soldiers marched out for urban warfare. When I watched carefully, I noticed Ted coming out of the barracks, heading for the front line. What was he doing? Was he trying to kill himself? This was suicide. He attacked the vampires vigorously. He fought like a fully trained assassin, slaughtering them one by one. He blew their heads without any regrets and he went on with his massacre.

Within five minutes he had already killed about ten vampires. I followed his swift movements with my eyes, but soon I realized something was wrong. He was being surrounded. Without a conscious command to the muscles around my lips, I

screamed out his name. I knew he couldn't hear me through the thick glass of my apartment window but I couldn't bear the thought of not doing anything.

He was immediately attacked by a vampire from behind and it started ripping his throat apart. I had to do something. He had promised me that nothing would happen to him but if he died now...

In the distance I heard a thunder-like noise. Something might have exploded. I ran into the elevator, clicking the buttons nervously as it went down. When I reached the ground floor, I rushed to him, shooting the vampire right in the head. I ignored the fire, the ash that drifted down like snow, blanketing the grass. I braced myself, trying to memorize through my panic the little self-defense I knew. I shot most of the vampires that were around him and other soldiers helped me out. When they were all dead, I rushed to the still body on the floor. Ted was bleeding enormously and I could see his arteries popping out of his neck.

'Ted! You'll be alright... let me take you back to my room.'

'No... I'm going to die here, in honor. Why did you put your life in danger by coming out? If I could move, I would knock you senseless...'

Even half dead, he still kept his humor.

'You can't die here Ted. You're too strong and too young. Don't give up this easily.'

The blood kept gushing out and I immediately knew it was too late for help.

'I can feel it Viol. I'm dying. And before I die, I want you to know that I love you. Please... promise me... that you won't die here too.'

'I promise...'

When I said those words, he smiled at me, and then died in my arms. For a moment I remained without emotion. I didn't know what I was feeling right now. Was it grief? Or was it just culpability? I couldn't tell. Maybe it was both. Tears started dripping from my eyes. No one came to help. They were too busy running to fight the vampires.

I caressed his soft skin that seemed so lively although he was dead. He was a good friend indeed and he died in my honor. Despite of all the things he had done for me, I never even paid any attention to him. The vampires were coming closer now but I didn't want to leave him here. I couldn't. He had died because of me. He was trying to protect me.

Most of our soldiers had died and I could only see a dozen now. When I was about to leave, some of the bodies started shaking and waking up. I soon came to understand that the soldiers that had been killed were coming back to life as vampires.

If they were bitten by vampires, and then turned, that meant that Ted would also turn into one of them. When I came to the conclusion, it was too late. I tried to get away from him but he grabbed hold of my hand.

'Ted, don't! It's me, Viol!'

'I must kill you. I can't fight it off.'

'Stay away from me. I don't want to hurt you.'

'You think you can hurt me? I think the contrary.'

I walked a few feet back but I was surrounded. I composed myself, feet apart and fists ready, trying to remember through the fright the few fighting skills I knew.

When he was about to attack, I heard a gunshot. Ted's head blew off instantly. His body fell to the floor and turned into ash like the other vampires that were killed by the bullets. When I turned around, I watched a familiar face walk towards me. It was Alucard. He grabbed me by the arm furiously.

'What do you think you are doing? Are you trying to commit suicide? We told you to stay inside.'

It was incredible how the choking fear vanished straight away as soon as I heard his voice.

‘Let go of me! You’re not my parent so you have no right to hold me like that. My friend was in danger...’

‘Your friend is dead. And he would have killed you if I had appeared just one second late.’

‘You don’t have to remind me...’

The vampires walked back a few steps when he turned towards them, hissing and hesitating to attack.

‘Why are they so scared of you?’

He just frowned and turned his back on me. He took a deep breath before walking towards the monsters. He pulled the trigger. I only heard three gunshots but when I watched carefully, I noted that all the vampires were falling to the ground. He stood there motionless, looking at the ash. I walked towards him, wondering what was happening.

‘Are you okay?’

‘Yes I’m fine, it’s nothing.’

We strolled together and I couldn’t help but stare at him. I looked up to see him with a crooked smile so beautiful that I could only stare at him like an idiot. I didn’t know why he was smiling but I was glad he could still smile. Today, he wore sunglasses. Why would he wear sunglasses at night, I wondered? I tried looking up at him when he realized that I was staring at him. I almost tripped but he caught me in time.

‘Try not to get hurt. You’re supposed to be in perfect condition until you become Sir.’

His face was such a distraction that I tried not to look at it any more. We never said a word to each other on the way. It was amazing how the fear vanished

immediately. It was amazing how sudden the feeling of safety swabbed over me. I glanced into his direction yet again without thinking and I met his gaze.

I mumbled under my teeth. 'I'm sorry... I was stupid to have put myself in danger.'

He nodded his head, not wanting to talk. I wondered if he was agreeing that I was stupid or that I had put myself in danger. He didn't seem to be concentrating on me but on something else that I couldn't see. He just stared blankly at the sky.

'It's a beautiful night isn't it?'

I was shocked. I couldn't see the beauty in this at all. About three hundred soldiers had died tonight on that field, all that blood and the stench of burnt flesh. What could be great about this night? I kept quiet, trying not to say the wrong thing. I looked around me to make sure I wasn't missing anything but all I could see was bodies and blood.

'Your father sent the vampires to capture you.'

'My father?'

'Yes. We found out immediately. He had sent a message through one of his minions. He wants you dead. He knows you'll be the next heir of the Vendetta organization so he wants to capture you and kill you.'

'My own father wants to kill me?'

'Violet, he's not the same father you had. He's changed. He's a vampire now. He couldn't care less if you died.'

The trees were shaking like specters and the wind sounded like millions of locusts that were approaching. I swiftly looked away from the bodies, trying not to throw up. I was really shaken but I tried hiding my tears under my open hair.

'Why... are you crying?'

How did he see my tears in this darkness and through the thick barrier of hair that covered my face? And he wasn't even looking at me. Did I give myself out by whimpering? Maybe I did. I didn't want to talk.

I didn't even know why I was crying. Was it because of Ted's death or because my own father was trying to kill me? Or maybe it was because I was finally with him again? Maybe they were tears of joy at a very inopportune time.

'I won't leave you again.'

That surprised me. It was the least I expected him to say. When I turned at an angle where I could meet his unblemished eyes, he looked serious. He stared right back at me immediately through his dark glasses.

'I will never leave you again.' He repeated.

A small curve drew on his lips which made me smile back. I couldn't believe he was saying this. It was like he could read my thoughts. I was just thinking of how he was going to leave me again once I reached the main building. And now he was telling me that he wouldn't leave.

He accompanied me until my aunt's office, where she was usually working on her laptop and smoking. She instantly rushed to me, hugging me tightly. 'Darling, I'm so glad you're alright.'

I grimaced when he left us alone. I wanted him to stay but that was selfish of me. He had just battled several vampires, he needed to rest. I too, needed some time to sit, compose myself and talk to my aunt.

'Come... sit here with me. I've wanted to give you something ever since you came.'

She handed me a golden pendant with my name on it. When I opened the small convex locket, I found a small picture of a woman. She was beautiful and elegant. What was really striking about the picture was her smile. It was one of the warmest and kindest smiles I had ever seen.

'She was your grandmother.'

'I wish I could have met her... My dad had always told me that she was the kindest woman he had ever met.'

'He was telling no lies. She was a good woman, caring and authentic, the founder of Vendetta. She was my role model. I'll let you stay here so that you compose yourself.'

I hadn't noticed the tears piling up in my eyes. I couldn't hold them off. I held her picture in my right hand, placing my head on the table. I sobbed within those minutes. I had seen so many bodies in one day. This attack was just a warning from my father, and it had already brought chaos into the mansion. Luckily Alucard had been here and he was able to put a stop to the assault.

* * *

I had fallen asleep in the office. When I opened my eyes, something seemed different. It was the light. This room seemed to be darker and it looked less furnished. And someone was sitting behind a table, drinking whiskey.

'Did you sleep well?'

'Yes. How did I end up here?'

'I brought you.'

I remember walking with him, I recall seeing the bodies, the blood and my aunt. But I couldn't remember getting here. I searched for the pendant in the dimness. It was on my neck, pending in between my breasts.

'Where are we? What time is it?'

'We're in the attic. This is my room. It's eleven a.m.'

It was odd. 'Why do you stay in the attic if I may ask?'

'It's perfect for me. I really don't like the sun because it affects my eyes. There's only one window here, so there's less sunlight.'

I still couldn't understand why anyone would live in such a room. I couldn't see his face because it was too dark. I stood up troubled, trying to get used to the dim light. He turned his head towards me, not meeting my gaze.

I still didn't understand what was happening. He didn't seem concerned by me. Alucard stood up and switched on the lights, which didn't help much. He came and sat next to me without hesitation. I tried very hard not to be aware of him but within a few minutes, I turned slowly, unwillingly. His expression was incomprehensible. He was neither smiling nor angry.

'You're incredible. After all the emotional pain I put you through, you still have faith in me.'

'Why shouldn't I? You're my knight in shining armor. You saved me twice.' I joked.

He laughed softly, looking away.

'You don't even know me.'

'I don't need to, you're a good person. And that's why I like you.'

'I dazzle you? Please, don't get dazzled by me. I'm not any good.'

'You always say that. What do you mean?'

His eyes narrowed a bit before he stood up and left. When he came back, he had a ring in his hands. He placed it on my finger slowly.

'What's this?'

'It's for your safety. You'll need it.'

How could a ring protect me? His face was very serious. His eyes flickered down at me from under his eyelids. I straightened up to admire the ring. It was a large silver ring with a crimson stone on it.

'It's very precious to me.'

He slouched off, back into his seat. He smiled for a split second, and then his face became serious.

‘Never remove it.’

I still couldn’t understand why he had given it to me but I just listened to him. Once he caught my eye, he raised one hand to the hair covering my face, pushing it away from my face. I knew I was trembling inside. I couldn’t breathe or move. My heart started pounding fast and I could do nothing else but blush. I could feel him staring at me. For the very first time, he had touched me willingly. His slouched smile reappeared.

‘Don’t hide your pretty eyes.’

Almost like a statue, I was unable to say a word. The slight sight of him made my heart pound.

‘I’ll get you some breakfast.’

He stood up and left the room.

A servant came back with a platter of food and juice. I was hungry but I hadn’t realized it because I was still wobbly inside. I slid out of the bed, directing myself to the table. He had brought my favorite breakfast, scrambled eggs with toast, bacon and a glass of pineapple juice.

‘Your aunt wants to see you.’

I followed the butler to the chamber where my aunt was. I stared at the clock that was in the hallway. What could she be doing in her room at this time? It was already twelve o’clock. She always seemed to be up and early, always waking up at seven. The butler opened the door and shock instantly hit me.

When I saw her, I was taken with awe. She looked like a corpse. Her skin was as pale as Alucard’s and her previously enthusiastic face looked jaded. It came as a shock to me since the night before I had seen her and she was perfectly fine.

‘Violet, come closer.’ She murmured.

Once at her side, she smiled at me in pain.

‘It’s time Violet. I’m going to die soon. The doctor says the attack yesterday made my blood pressure rise and that it would be a miracle if I recovered from this. My health is degrading every minute.’

‘What are you saying? Stop saying that. You won’t die.’

She couldn’t die now. We didn’t even spend enough time together. She coughed in pain.

‘I just wanted to tell you that I have always loved you as my own child and that you must take care of the organization as if it depended on your life.’

‘You can’t die now. I’m not ready.’

‘Yes you are.’

I couldn’t hold the tears back. She couldn’t die. I wanted her to live so badly. Stretching out my arms, I hugged her firmly before leaving the room.

Once out of the room, I felt a small knot in my heart. Alucard had been standing at the door the whole time so he had probably heard the news. ‘Alucard, will she be fine?’

‘I hope so. She’s almost like family to me. She mustn’t die now.’

I tried to keep my voice calm.

‘She’ll be fine.’ I assured myself although I knew she wouldn’t.

I decided to get her flowers, her favorite ones. Tulips were all over the garden outside the main building and I knew smelling them would make her feel better. I strolled back to her room with Alucard.

‘Aunt, I brought you flowers.’ I exclaimed merrily.

She was lying motionlessly on her bed and I feared the time had come.

'Aunt Savvy?'

'Yes Viol.'

I sighed in relief as I approached her.

'Here are your favorite flowers. I thought they would make you feel better.'

'Thanks so much. They smell really great.' She whispered.

While I was placing the flowers into the pot, aunt savvy managed to pick up a cigarette from the side table.

'No you shouldn't have that.'

'I need to smoke one last time before I die.'

'No aunt, it's not good for you.'

'This is my last wish. Please grant it.'

I watched her inhale the cigarette in pain. She started coughing blood as soon as she inhaled. Alucard dashed into the room towards her. 'Viol, please call the doctor immediately.'

She kept on coughing blood and her face became paler. I rushed out to call the doctor but when I got back, it was already too late. He examined her and clarified her death. She died exactly at two p.m. I couldn't hold the tears. She seemed peaceful on her deathbed. She was gone and I couldn't do anything to bring her back.

* * *

5. Alteration

I was beginning to think that all this was just a dream that I would never wake up from. She had left me a whole organization plus all the mansions that had belonged to her. My mind couldn't move past the confusion and fear. I didn't understand what I'd just witnessed. She had been perfectly fine a day before her death and now she was gone. All the people I cherished were now dead. A funereal in honor of all the dead soldiers and my aunt was held three days later.

Her funeral was long and unbearable because I tried to keep myself firm and strong but the tears just couldn't hold back. A few people attended it and the thought of my father being right a few meters away from me made me sick. Turning into a vampire hadn't changed him much though he was much more handsome than what I remember. His auburn eyes pierced through one's soul, almost like a hypnotizer.

How could he even show his face? Stupid traitor, the day he had abandoned us was the day I had stopped being his daughter. He tried giving me a grin but I scowled.

My 'father' was indeed Sir Severna's half brother therefore he had every right to take part at the funeral but knowing that he was the reason that my best friend and my aunt were dead didn't alleviate the anger. But now that he had become a vampire too, I was totally revolted. Alucard gave me a worried look, as if he had sensed my anger building up. I felt hatred deep inside. It was his turn to talk and seeing him move to the stand gave me a feeling of disgust.

'Severna was indeed a great sister and it's a pity because we couldn't settle our disputes before... well before her death. I will let myself be sincere, I wouldn't have changed a thing about it but although I have no human feelings anymore... I still feel something burning deep inside... I miss my sister.'

I wanted to shout HYPOCRITE but diplomacy was a quality I had to keep during such a crucial time. I gawked at him when he left the stand. People began whispering to themselves and I could hear how his words had brought concern and commotion within the little audience that had attended.

‘How could they invite a vampire here?’ One in the audience whispered.

It was my turn to give a speech that I hadn’t even prepared. I walked onto the platform and watched every face before I could open my mouth. It took me about five minutes to put into words my emotions.

‘Although we didn’t spend much time together because of the disputes that my father previously mentioned, I would say that my aunt was everything to me. She took care of me when one of the closest people to me tried to capture me and kill me. She was my source of life, of joy and of protection. She didn’t deserve to die. And I swear, over my life, that I will protect her achievements. Yes, I will protect Vendetta if it’s the last thing I must do!’

I left the podium with tears in my eyes. Everyone that attended the ceremony applauded, including my father. The speech was obviously addressed to him but he still clapped. He had nerves, showing up here and mocking me.

‘Goodbye Aunt Severna...’ I whispered.

I watched painfully as they lowered her coffin into the ground. I hadn’t realized that my father had been next to me the whole time. I had completely forgotten how stealthy and fast vampires were. He was about to open up his filthy mouth when I stopped him.

‘You don’t have to stay... the funeral is over now.’

He closed his mouth then opened it again.

‘I’m sorry Viol... I never meant to hurt anyone. You know they made me what I am today.’

‘It’s not about that. I can’t believe you killed your own parents, dad! I never even got to see my grandparents! You’re a monster!’

'Is that what they told you? You don't believe them, do you?'

'As a matter of fact yes, they did tell me and yes I do believe them. How could you create more vampires? Now the world is in chaos because of your stupid experiments.'

'You don't understand. There are many things I can't explain...'

He stopped since he didn't have a good answer.

'I'm not a hypocrite Viol. I meant what I said... I loved my step-sister.'

'You loved her enough to keep her away from me for so long.'

He kept quiet. I walked away to show him that this conversation had just ended. I couldn't understand why he didn't try to kill the humans here. I thought newly born vampires had an incredible and uncontrollable thirst. He seemed to be scared of something... or someone.

A few days had passed and life seemed to go on, even without my aunt here. A cold breeze whisked through the meadow, swaying the grass like something was moving through it. The grass had been cleaned and the air didn't smell like death anymore. Yet I couldn't keep myself from remembering all those dead bodies lying on the grass. So many deaths in just one place, we had lost so many soldiers during the attack. The only person I could trust now was Alucard and all the organization decisions were in my hands.

Vacillating and confused, I needed some time alone. I would usually take long walks around the compound to waste time. I turned around and ran headlong into the trees to clear off my mind. I wanted to get away from this place that was just a reminder of what had happened. I wanted to get away from all the responsibilities. I wanted to get away from everything. The next few hours seemed too long and I walked in these unknown woods like I was mad. I couldn't

control my steps anymore and my head felt so empty. By the time I composed myself enough to realize that I was lost, I was deep into the fear-inspiring forest.

The sky had become darker and the air humid. I tried following my tracks back but they had already been swept away by the strong wind. Just my luck! I kept on walking and I came across a never-ending electric fence that covered the entire area.

I inspected it and found a way on to the other side, but I didn't know where I was heading. It was a fence that would either lead me to my safe haven or into my trouble if I crossed it. I continued without stopping.

I finally reached a water pond where I decided to rest. Just after a few refreshing minutes, I heard someone scream out for help. It was coming from behind me. I ran towards the voice and I could feel twigs whip me but I ignored them. Once I reached, I found a man laying on the ground his back to a trunk of a tree, with one of his legs torn and his neck shredded.

I tried calming him down. 'Don't worry, you'll be alright. I'll call an ambulance.'

I had learnt so few things in first aid that could help this man. I tore my shirt's sleeves to use them as bandages.

'What happened?'

'Some kind of monsters attacked me... they looked like normal people but...'

I understood immediately what was happening. He had been attacked by vampires. I didn't know whether I should have come here and helped him. He was bleeding heavily and he was going to die sooner or later if he didn't get proper medical care. He was already losing consciousness, a sign that his heart wasn't working at its full potential. His heart was weak and he was going to die.

'Please don't die.'

'I can't... it's too painful. Please, take this.'

He handed me a locket that had the picture of a small girl on it. She looked much like him.

‘Please if you ever find my daughter, give this to her. Her mother died long time ago and now I’m joining her. She’ll be an orphan at the age of five... oh my dear child. She and her brother will be orphans.’

I knew it wouldn’t be too long until he died, so I started running away. I couldn’t bear seeing someone die again. I ran as fast as I could, trying to save my own life. The vampires that attacked him would sniff out my scent. Vampires were incredibly fast and it wouldn’t take long for them to catch up with me. I didn’t know where I was running to but I kept on running.

All of a sudden, there was a strange growling coming from where the man died. I knew this wasn’t good. They had located me. I stood there and pulled out the gun given to me by Alucard as the growling came closer. They seemed to be coming really fast. When I spotted them, I ran as fast as I could, heading west. There were about three vampires and I was alone. Three devils were after me. I only had one bullet in my gun and trying to confront them would be suicide. I ran as fast as I could, without even feeling the cuts made by the twigs on my skin.

I came across a clearing and a church was right in the middle. That would be the best hiding place for me right now and I knew they would never enter such a godly place. When I got in, it seemed like someone had been present but I couldn’t see anyone. The candles had been lit.

‘Hello? Is anyone here?’

Nothing, there was no response, just static. Just silence. I sat down and started praying. Mama had always taught me to be religious. We were from a small religious town so going to church every Sunday was a routine. After several minutes of intense prayer, a voice interrupted my murmurs.

‘Dear child, what might you be doing here all by yourself?’

‘I’m lost and I can’t find my way back.’

‘Oh... it’s pretty rare for young people like you to visit.

He came closer to me. ‘Well, you do have a peculiar aroma...’

‘What do you mean? Are you a molester? Leave me alone you freak.’

‘I’m far more worse than that I must say. You smell great, you must taste better too. You must taste fresh because you’re so young.’

I hadn’t noticed how odd this priest looked. His eyes were oddly darker than any normal human and he was unbelievably pale. He walked towards me and caught me by the neck. His eyes glowed under the candle light, just like the vampires who had chased me a few months ago. Their eyes had glowed under the moonlight.

I choked on my voice. ‘Who are you?’

‘It doesn’t matter... all you need to know is that you will die right here.’

He grabbed hold of me and pulled me up by my neck. I was obviously suffocating but that was what he wanted. I tried fighting back but he was as hard as steel and I couldn’t reach for my gun.

‘What do you want from me?’

He laughed. ‘Honey, you’re worth a million bucks. All I need to do is to deliver you to the Major and I’ll be a millionaire.’

I couldn’t believe my ears. I was on the vampire trade list now that I had become the head of Vendetta. His face was dreary and uninviting.

‘I’ll pay you double if you let me go.’

‘Now why would I do that? Now that I’ve seen you in person, I think I’ll just savor you instead. Your blood smells unbelievably great. I can’t resist. But first, I want to see you beg me.’

Heaving me up in the air, he threw me across the room onto the colored glass wall. I broke the glass when I thumped against it. The broken glass

penetrated my skin and the impact must have broken my ribs because I couldn't move.

'Please don't kill me.' I managed to whimper.

'Well it's too late for pleading but don't worry, it won't hurt a bit.'

Picking me up by my hair, he tossed me some more until I was half dead and I couldn't even move a finger.

'Come on... you've already given up? Let me have some fun.'

I ignored him, crawling toward the door on my arm. He was by my side in a second, kicking me with his foot. I curled up into a ball, letting him hit the less vital parts of my body. I could feel the blood soak my clothes and hair. He picked me up by the shirt now. My face in despair, I just wanted him to end it right away. His lips curved up at the corners and just when he was about to finish me off, someone appeared from behind him. I couldn't distinguish the person since my eyes were soaked in blood and my eyelids were swollen.

'Don't you set a finger on her, unless you are ready to die?'

'Who the hell are you?'

'Cockroaches like you aren't even meant to be killed by my hand.'

'What did you say?'

'You're a filthy little pest. Go back to where you came from. Look at you, you're a disgrace, a vampire with no purpose.'

'How dare you! Greta, Ian, Yakub, finish off this moron! It seems like he wants to join our feast.'

I recognized his voice, yes, it was Alucard. He just stood there, his eyes hidden behind sunglasses, as three other vampires appeared from behind and approached him. They immediately attacked him all at once and ripped him apart. His head rolled towards me like a football. I tried screaming but all that came out

was a moan. Every part of his body was decapitated. I still couldn't believe he had let himself be killed so easily. He was a professional vampire slayer. I stared right into his beautiful eyes, which were almost glowing. The man I had fallen in love with, dead.

I had never seen his eyes in the dark since he always seemed to be wearing sunglasses at night. Now I knew the reason why. He had their eyes, he had vampire eyes. He had been a vampire all along. It seemed I had always known it but it was easier for me to think that he wasn't. But now that his head was just lying there with gleaming eyes, it was so real to me.

'Now that I took care of the moron, let me finish up with my dinner. Would you care to join me or are you already filled?'

The three other vampires, the ones that had killed the man in the forest, were now giggling and celebrating, preparing to suck my blood. They all looked like siblings, all red haired with glowing eyes. One of them, the female, was much more aggressive.

'Let's suck the bitch dry.'

One of my tears slid down the side of my eye and when it touched the ground, something happened. Alucard's eyes twitched and an evil chuckle was heard. I thought I was hallucinating but then it happened again. Then his lips moved upwards from the sides, forming a huge grin.

Suddenly, his blood glided on the floor into the center of the room where his heart was and all his body parts happened to reconstruct. It was unbelievable. The vampire tried shooting at him but the restoration was too fast. When he was fully reincarnated, he just smiled at me.

'You shouldn't have done that, microbes. Now I'm really mad.'

Without taking his eyes off me, he ripped their hearts out one by one and crushed them with his own hands. The three vampires that had previously attacked him turned to ash, like every other vampire that dies.

With a dash of fright on his face, the priest managed to whisper. 'It's impossible... it can't be! You're immortal! The only true immortal is...'

'Don't mention that name in front of her. I'm not HIM anymore. And you filthy monsters are all going to perish under my hands.'

The vampire moved back until he reached the wall then he pulled me up and used me as a shield.

'We're both vampires, you shouldn't kill me. Sorry master but if you kill me, she'll die too.'

'Well then, I'll make that sacrifice.'

He paused before pointing the gun into my direction. Was he seriously going to kill me? He couldn't be so cruel. Before I realized what had happened, a bullet went through me and I instantly fell to the ground. The vampire priest screamed in pain and disintegrated into ash. Alucard immediately rushed to me.

'You were going to die either way, Violet. I had to shoot him before he could kill you. But I can help you. Do you still want to live?' Alucard whispered.

I would have run away from him if only my feet could move.

'Do you want to live Violet?'

'Yes...'

The last memory I had was that of his eyes turning crimson as his mouth approached my throat and soon after I fainted into his arms as soon as he pulled me up from the ground and carried me away like a baby.

6. The truth

I could see aunt Savvy and my mother calling me and running towards me with their hair flipping in the wind. The room was really bright and they were the only people there. They were wearing all white and their faces looked gracious. I tried reaching out for my mother's hand but my vision became even narrower. I screamed, calling them, begging them to come back but they slowly faded away. Both of them disappeared out of the picture and all that was left was a blank space.

It seemed so real that I couldn't believe I was in a dream. When I woke up, I found myself in my aunt's room. Her bedroom seemed brighter than before although the curtains were completely closed. When I tried focusing on only one thing, I could see many other things at the same time. I could hear all the voices in the mansion and it was unbearable. What was happening to me?

'You're one of us now.'

When I turned around I saw Alucard sitting next to me. He wasn't wearing any sunglasses this time I could see his eyes even more clearly now.

'What happened?'

'I bit you.'

'Are you a...'

'Am I a vampire? Yes I am.'

'That's not true... I tested you and you didn't fall for it. You came out clean.'

'Can't you remember how fast I reached you when you tripped while using your clutches? And how quick I killed those vampires? No human can shoot that fast. And how my body reattached itself?'

'But why didn't you kill me when you had the chance?'

'Because... I'm Dracula. I can control my thirst.'

It all made perfect sense. Those vampires feared him because he was the master of their masters. He was their king and they feared for their lives. That's why the vampire priest was telling him: '*You're immortal! The only true immortal is...*' When I filled up the space it all made sense. '*The only true immortal is Dracula*'.

'You turned me?'

'Yes... and I'm sorry.'

'Don't be. You asked me if I wanted to live and I said yes. I didn't think you meant this but becoming a vampire was the only option I had if I wanted to live.'

'It's a curse that I've poured upon you.'

There was a moment of silence. He whispered something, sighed and turned my head around to face the mirror. What I saw was horrible. I saw a ferocious monster with long ears, fangs, red eyes and wings. It didn't look anything like a human.

'What is that?' I choked out in disgust.

'That's your true form.'

He then whispered something else and the image in the mirror morphed. I went back to being a human but the face in the mirror was practically a stranger. I looked partially different from how I was before. I was as pale as a corpse. My hair had become longer and fully red with one streak of black, and my eyes were red.

My nose had emaciated and I now had fangs that felt kind of irritating against my lips. I was beautiful, like an angel. My white hair, almost reaching my thighs, glowed, like in one of those hair product adverts. I had lean legs and a fuller chest.

'Is this what I look like?'

'Yes. You're the prettiest girl I've ever seen and that's why I couldn't let you die. It would have been a waste.'

That was the second time he had complemented me. He didn't hide the fact that he had feelings for me too.

'You're the only human I was really fond of and I didn't want to hurt you. That's why I hid myself from you.'

I was now a newborn vampire. The dryness in my throat was proof of it and I knew what being a newborn required, blood, lots of blood. Each new feeling weighed down on me. I didn't know why I had said yes. I should have died there and then. I wasn't ready for this at all, the blood, the thirst. The thought was sickening.

'Are you alright?'

'I can't do this! It's impossible! I can't even see clearly.'

'You'll get used to it.'

'I can't!'

'But you will. You don't have a choice now, do you?'

No matter how I didn't want to admit it, he was right, I would give in. I stared into his eyes and his retorting smile dazzled me more than it ever had when I was human. It was clearer now that we were both vampires. I was even more attracted to him now than ever before. I noticed that I wasn't breathing at all and at first I thought it was only because I was nervous. After a few minutes, I knew I couldn't breathe at all. I was indeed a vampire. He stared at me momentarily.

'You look very pale. You have to feed.'

'I won't. I will never become a monster.'

‘Well then, you’ll *die*.’

He disappeared into thin air after the word *die*. The word ‘Die’ seemed harsher than it had ever been. His vanishing would have shocked me if I were still human and I probably would have fainted but I was a vampire now. Nothing could frighten me. When I tried walking, one human step was like ten vampire steps. I reached the door unwillingly when I just took one step. This was very hard for me. I couldn’t concentrate on one thing. I tried focusing on the wardrobe and then I took a deep breath and moved one foot. I immediately reached the wardrobe. It was amazing. When I opened it, I saw varieties of dresses that didn’t seem to conform to my style. I locked the wardrobe, deciding to go for a walk. The thirst wasn’t actually unmanageable. I descended the staircase and right when I was about to open the door, someone stopped me.

‘Sorry Sir but you can’t go out now. You’ll burn in the sun if you do.’

I had completely forgotten about that important aspect of being a vampire. We can’t walk in the sunlight without some kind of protection. But why could Alucard and my dad do it?

‘I’m Denzel, eternal servant of the Vendetta family. I’m neither a vampire nor a human. I’m a Quincy, the last of our kind. I destroy monsters like vampires and other monsters that are a threat to humans. But I promise not to kill you as I promised my eternal servitude to the Vendetta family and its household.’

I remember seeing him the first day I got here. But he hadn’t shown his face again. I thought my aunt had fired him but apparently she had not. By looking at him, one would think that he was human, but his eyes were different. One eye was dark brown, almost black and the other, blue. Suddenly, the dryness was all I could think about. I tried rebuking the thoughts from my brain but they were stuck. I needed to drink, fast. Grabbing my throat, I squeezed it tightly and hoped for the best.

‘You shouldn’t keep yourself from it Sir. You have to feed.’

'I won't! It's controllable. I can manage it. Where is Alucard?' I viciously rebuked.

'He's in his underground room.'

'Please take me there if you don't mind.'

'Your wish is my command Sir.'

I followed him, trying not to think of the thirst. My hand held up to choke my throat. I had to withstand the thirst. The narrow staircase leading to his room was dim and all I could see was the white collar of Denzel's shirt. When I remembered my aunt, I could see how much she cared about me. I would have to ensure my human memoirs were tiled into my fail-safe vampire mind. I couldn't shut out my humanity like my father had. The narrow door was already open, as if he knew I was coming.

'Come in Viol.' He murmured.

'Please excuse me Sir. I must go back and take care of your schedule.'

Denzel closed the door behind me and went back upstairs.

'I already know why you came.'

'Well, how do I get rid of the coarseness in my throat?'

'Drink.'

'No.'

'Drink or Die, it's quite simple. Well now that I've given you your answer, do you want to know if you have the same abilities as I do? The answer is yes and no. You have some of them. I mixed my blood with yours before biting you. But you're not immortal.'

He stood up and came closer to me until I could smell his minty fragrance. His fingers glided down the column of my throat.

'I don't want you to be hurt. You want to control your thirst? I can't help you. You must drink.' He added in a low hum.

Once again I felt oddly off balance, waiting for reactions my body wasn't capable of anymore. My cheeks would have been awfully red by now but I couldn't feel myself blushing. He circled around me without taking his eyes away from me. I didn't know what to do so I just stood there trying to seem composed.

'What are we going to do from now on? Most of our soldiers died during the battle and only a small number remains, some who can't even fight suitably.' I broke off.

'You have enough protection with me here. I'm even stronger than any human army.'

What was he talking about? One person couldn't kill a whole army of vampire soldiers. Even if he was Dracula, he still had some weakness.

'Just help me out here and tell me how Aunt Savvy used to take care of this place! I need to fortify this place now more than ever.'

'Alright then, we'll have to call upon a meeting with our allies. We'll introduce you to them and explain what we need. And they can't know that you're a vampire, or else they'll take away the organization from us. The Rule is that only a human descendant of the Vendetta family can become the leader of the organization. No one outside the mansion knows your secret for now but I'll need you to act as human as possible. I'll arrange your tan and a visit to the dentist to level your teeth. You'll have to wear these contact lenses for now.'

He stopped circling and put his finger under my chin slowly bringing my lips to his. I immediately stepped back, not wanting to fall for his dreamy tricks.

'I'll see you tomorrow, Alucard.'

How could I be so stupid? I had been waiting for that moment for a long time and I just blew it. Stupid, stupid, stupid girl. I fell asleep and dreamed of Alucard.

7. Adrenaline rush

I woke up confused... I always thought that vampires couldn't sleep but I was wrong. I did fall asleep yesterday. So many questions ran through my head. I wasn't used to this kind of life. I dressed in a rush, leveling my collar against my neck and wearing one of the unbelievably heavy costumes that my aunt would wear. I decided to go with a short vintage skirt, trying to look more feminine. My aunt wasn't much of the girly type. She wore men's suits. I would have to go shopping on my own and find clothes that were formal but that could also satisfy my fashion style.

I noticed how much I looked like her, except for the hair. One would say that we were sisters. I still felt inside me humanity and although I was now a vampire, I didn't want any previous emotions to depart from me. The board of allies from the other organizations had already arrived and they were all waiting for me.

'Sir, you are awaited downstairs.'

'Thank you Denzel. I think I'm ready. Please accompany me if you don't mind.'

I couldn't imagine what would go on behind those doors and I didn't want to. Once the door was opened, I looked at the surprised faces that were making up the room.

'But, she's so young!'

I was too embarrassed to even say a word but I had to be strong.

'I might be young but I have the will of a fighter.'

I sat down at the chair that was supposed to be mine, the main chair. I noticed Alucard at the back of the room, leaning on his chair and hiding his face under the sunglasses and a black cloak with a pulled up collar.

‘Well it seems like your aunt has done a pretty good job educating you. Now that we’re acquainted with each other, we can start with the meeting if you don’t mind Sir.’

Everything went well and I got along with most of the associates.

‘I would like to solicit the main issue on hand. We need soldiers and fast. We don’t have time to be latent while the monsters are on the move, spreading fast like cockroaches. We must take serious actions now and I call upon you for help.’

‘You’re a great leader and we all agree that with proper training, you’d be better than your aunt.’

‘Thank you for your commendations and I must admit that all of you are good allies too. You accepted me here even though I’m not as experienced as you’d prefer me to be. It would be a pleasure for me to work with you.’

‘Well we have another mission in Paris at hand and we would have preferred if Alucard could handle it, but I see you’re shorthanded at the moment?’

‘Yes, our lack of soldiers at the moment cannot allow me to dispatch one of our best.’

We had agreed that they would send in a seven hundred soldiers and I was content that Alucard wouldn’t be dispatched to Paris. My eyes caught a very handsome man in the group and he was the only one who seemed to be younger than Alucard. He had been staring at me the whole time and I couldn’t keep my eyes off of him, if I were to admit. At the end of the meeting, during the small banquet I had prepared for them, he approached me personally.

'You seem really interesting. I'd like to know you better. May I request for your name Sir?'

'You can call me Violet.'

'What a charming name you have there.'

'Thank you. And what might be yours?'

'Jeremy McCue.'

'You seemed really quiet during the meeting. I thought you would be more loquacious like the other men.'

It wasn't as hard as I had feared. Having a conversation with a human, being a vampire that is, was actually easy as long as you avoided close contact that might enhance your thirst. We went down for a simple stroll, Jeremy and I, and Denzel escorting me with a black umbrella, around the premises. I noticed how much Alucard was surveying us.

'What are you doing?'

Was it me or was I hearing voices? I tried responding to the voice and it answered back.

'Who are you?'

'It's me of course, Alucard. What are you doing with the human?'

'How is it possible?'

'I told you. You have some of my abilities as me and this is one of them.'

'This is incredible! So can you hear my thoughts?'

'I can do anything Viol.'

'Would you please tell me more about this later when the guests are gone? I can't concentrate.'

'You prefer being with that human?'

'Yes. I feel more human around other humans.'

'You're not human anymore! Why can't you get that through your head?'

'Please get out of my head! Get out!'

I couldn't hear any other disturbing thoughts after that and I was relieved he wasn't stubborn. Was he being jealous? I smiled at the thought. I tried ignoring him for the rest of the day. I strolled, only walking in the shadows underneath trees, trying to avoid any ray of sun on my skin. I could partially walk in the sun now because I hadn't completed my transition but the sun still affected me.

My throat was quite dry and it was now getting unbearable. I would have liked to lie back on the grass, as Jeremy did, and let the sun warm up my cold skin but the sun was similar to acid now that I was a vampire. I stayed under the shade the whole time, hiding my face from his gaze.

'So how old are you?' he asked.

'I'm eighteen. Please don't mock me.'

'Why should I? I'm only two years older.'

He placed his hand on mine. The warmth of his touch ran through my whole body and ignited my thirst. I could see every artery in his body, transporting the blood to his tender heart. I could count every heartbeat slowly rising as he pulled his face closer to mine. One false move and it would be the end of his precious life. We were interrupted by someone when I was just about to prey on him.

'I'm sorry but you'll have to leave immediately. Sir hasn't been feeling well and it's important that she rests.'

'Sure. I hope we meet again Violet.'

I waved back in a hurry and grabbed Alucard's hand, quickly dodging the unbearably delicious scent. I was so relieved nothing really bad had happened and if he hadn't showed up, something terrible would have happened. I followed him back to the mansion. I wanted to thank him but I couldn't pronounce a word.

'You owe me a big one Viol.'

'Thank you master.'

'I didn't do it for the worthless human. I did it for the organization and to save your life. If you even drank one drop of his blood, the other men would have captured you and killed you. Now I have a reason to force you to drink even if I have to torture you.'

'I won't!'

'I gave you two choices and you chose torture. Alright then... get ready to be tortured.'

He grabbed my arms tightly then he looked into my eyes, hypnotizing me. What he showed me was horrible. He showed me how he killed innocent humans, tearing them into pieces and drinking their blood without mercy. It was disgusting and unbearable. He even killed small boys and girls, ripping their throats off with his teeth and pulling their hearts out with his long fingers. What kind of monster was he? How could he be so merciless? I couldn't help but break into tears. There were so many of them that had perished under his hands and they kept on adding up in my head. I couldn't stand the screams and cries in my head.

'PLEASE STOP!'

I fell to the ground crying. The man I loved had killed so many people. A knot of guilt built up in my chest when I knew that I was one of those filthy monsters now.

'How could you? What are you?'

'I know what I did was an atrocity and I wanted you to see what you would become if you kept yourself from drinking. All the thirst you're building up right now will have to be compensated for and that means you'll do anything to have blood in your mouth. You can hate me all you want but it won't change the fact that you're my servant. I want the best for you and you have to drink if you don't want to become weak and die.'

I just stayed there holding myself and sobbing. He was right. I feared everything would crush around me if I killed a helpless human the way he did. The guilt would haunt me for the rest of my eternal life.

'Alright, I'll drink, but only from a blood bank.'

Those words gave me the chills and I wanted to take them back but it was too late. When we reached his my room, he pulled out a blood pack from his cloak and he placed a wine glass next to it. Once he was done, he left the room without a word. I gazed at the blood pack without touching it. It was exerting a pull on me like a magnet and I couldn't help myself but take it. I picked it up and pierced my incisors into the pack although I could have easily used the glass. It was like I hadn't eaten in years and the thought of pouring it in the glass was just a waste of time.

It was so good I wanted more of it. I opened up the drawer, finding other packs that he had left behind and I fed on them in a short time. After three packs, I still wasn't filled. When I looked at myself in the mirror, I was soaked in blood and my whole face had changed. I had looked pale and sick before drinking. Now I was revived and my skin wasn't as pale. The dryness in my throat slowly faded away. I was beautiful and my hair was glowing. My eyes took back their normal, human color.

I ran to the balcony, and when I reached it, a stream of wind blew in my fresh face. I had never felt any better. I didn't know what came over me but I just dived off the balcony and when I hit the ground, I landed perfectly. I was amazed. I ran across the whole estate in just five seconds, coming back to my original position.

'You feel great don't you?'

'Wow... it's incredible!'

'I know. I saw you.'

'From where exactly did you see me?'

'Look behind you.'

When I turned around I found him standing right behind me smiling.

'Did you think I wouldn't know what you were going to do? I'm part of you now and whatever you do, I'll always know.'

'Why isn't the sun burning me?'

'The ring I gave you when you were still human. It's a sunlight ring. I gave it to you before because I would be able to track you with it. But it also serves as a sunlight ring to vampires.'

'I love this. It's fun! Teach me more master.' I screamed.

The last word sounded like a chanting.

'I will...but not now. Did I tell you how seductive you look?'

'Not that I remember but thanks. Well it's all because of the blood, isn't it? And how can you like me when my clothes are soaked in blood. It's repugnant.'

'You'll always look nice to me, even if you're wearing rags.'

'You're such a flirt, do you know that?'

'I do and it's also one of my qualities, the art of seducing.'

I smirked and I left him and raced back to my room. When I got there, I went to look at myself in the mirror first thing; it was pretty ghastly. Blood was drying on my cheeks, neck, and in my hair. I cleaned myself up swiftly.

I hated the idea of losing even brief seconds of closeness with the memories that didn't hurt. I couldn't stand the idea that I was a total bloodsucker now.

I cleaned myself up and changed my clothing. I didn't feel tired but I just jumped into bed and covered myself under the warm sheets that soon became cold because of my skin. My skin was as cold as the inside of a refrigerator and no matter how much I covered myself, I still remained cold. I spent the rest of the night on the bathroom floor, under the burning water from the shower. I stayed there for a whole hour until I realized my skin was getting soggy and nasty. I looked like a boiled fish in the mirror. But my skin went back to normal within seconds. It always did, even after getting a cut. I shut off the water, stood up and wrapped a large towel under my armpits. I jumped into the warmest clothes I could find, covering myself in the warm sheets of my bed. Staring at the ceiling, I slowly fell asleep, exhausted from the long day.

8. The beginning

It's complicated, it always is. All these things I couldn't see when I was human were now unveiled to my vampire eyes. All the animals I had dreamed of seeing as a human were now at arm's reach. I looked up to him to hold my hand and when he did, a rush of happiness ran over me. I could see his perfect smile under the crystal clear water. Within minutes, we had raced up to the lake and it wouldn't take us too much time to get back.

'What can I do to make you feel more... human?' I teased.

'Kiss me...'

When I looked at his face he seemed so serious. He finally broke the silence out by smiling.

'Well you should practice more on sarcasm.' I laughed.

'Who said I was joking? I'm serious.'

'Why should I?'

'I've never kissed you before and I'd like to know what it feels like. I always feared killing you if I did but you're a vampire now.'

I wanted to, I wanted to so badly. But I couldn't... I wouldn't. Not until he accepted me the way I was. He hated the fact that I still acted human, even after the five years since I had turned.

'You once told me if I was older, you'd be interested. But I can't grow old.'

'That's true. You'll remain eighteen forever. But right now you would be twenty three if we counted your human age.'

His deeply lined face was unreadable. Five years had passed and I had now gotten used to my new life. Without a doubt, I wanted to live a normal life. But I loved being a vampire. I loved the speed, I loved the way I could go anywhere I wanted, and mostly I loved being with him. Now that he wasn't fearful that he would be a danger to me, we could spend all the time we had together.

Since the day he had turned me, I had learned so many things and I could now defend myself perfectly. All I needed now was a cool revolver like Alucard's. I tried not looking at his beautiful eyes but my eyes moved on their own. He caught grip of my hands.

'I know this isn't the good time but we have to head back.'

'What's going on?'

'Listen...'

I shut off every other sense I had, leaving the rest up to my ears. I tried focusing on what he was warning me about but there were so many vibrations and different sounds.

'I can't figure it out.'

'Just pay attention.'

I tried again and this time I heard something unusual. A girl was screaming for help. I used my sixth sense, my new sense, to figure out what was happening. The girl was a teenager and she was being attacked by a vampire since the other person in the picture didn't send me throbbing with thirst. I would normally figure humans from afar because they sent me twitching with thirst. I could hear her heart beats and what they were thinking or saying from afar.

'We need to go now before we're too late.' He exclaimed.

My eyes flitted across the edge of a distant cliff. I realized if we reached even a second late, the girl would be dead.

'Leave that girl alone, you filthy scam bag.'

'Who are you to tell me what to do? You're just another vampire like me! Go hunt elsewhere.'

'I'm warning you!'

'Shut the hell up bitch!'

That word lit the flames of anger inside of me. I didn't know whether to engage into this fight or whether I should leave it to Alucard. I had never fought a vampire before and I was afraid I wasn't ready for this. This was the very first time in five years that I had confronted another vamp. But my temper overpowered me.

'What did you call me?'

'You heard me. I said B.I.T.C.H!

'Why you...'

Before I could even slaughter the moron, my master appeared.

'Don't. A pest like him doesn't even deserve to be killed by you. But let's just get rid of the small ones like him first.'

Alucard shot the vampire in the head in a fraction of a second. The vampire screamed as he turned to ash.

'Nice shot master...'

The girl that had been attacked just stood there frozen, watching us with attentive eyes. She began walking backwards, scared and delicate.

'Don't be afraid. We're here to help.'

'Where did you get that?'

She pointed out to one of the pendants lying in between my cleavage. I remember the day I had gotten it. It was from the man who had been attacked. I pulled it off of my neck and held it in my right hand.

'Have you seen it before?'

'It was my mother's. My father kept it when she passed away.'

'You're the little girl he told me about?'

'You knew my father?'

'I met him before he... passed away. I'm very sorry for your loss. He also said you have a brother. Where is he?'

'My brother, he disappeared two years ago. I'm alone now.'

I placed the pendant in her hand. She smiled when she opened it and saw the picture in it.

'This is the very last memory of them that I have.'

I paused before asking her. 'How did you survive for all these years?'

'I was taken in by an old couple in my town. They were very nice to me and they treated me like their own child. But they recently passed away so I had to find another place to live.'

'I'm terribly sorry. And how old are you?'

'I'm fourteen... turning fifteen in the next two months.'

'And what's your name?'

'Chloe.'

'Well Chloe, how would you like to move in with us?'

'I don't know... can I really trust you? You're vampires.'

Alucard immediately joined the conversation. 'We just saved your life. Would you rather stay in this dangerous place and die or would you rather live in a safe place where you can stay for as long as you want? Aren't you tired of foster homes?'

Sometimes Alucard could be the rudest man on earth. His voice was low and cold.

‘Well, I don’t want to die... okay yes, I’ll follow you.’

I kindly managed to convince her. ‘Please hold onto me... it will be easier for us to travel.’

She wasn’t at all afraid of us. She approached me easily. As soon as she came closer, I caught her delicious scent. Her blood had this peculiar aroma, like vanilla and raspberries mixed together. I carried her by the legs as she grabbed hold of my neck. We started our journey back to the mansion. I watched her blonde hair blow with the wind as I ran through the woods. She closed her eyes, enjoying the ride. She seemed so fragile. I was scared of touching her, frightened that I would break her fragile bones inadvertently.

‘Why do you kill your own kind?’

She startled me for a second. I had never thought of those monsters as my kind. They were very different from me. I still had humanity in me.

‘Well, that’s because they are pests. They are monsters that blemish our name.’ he replied.

She didn’t ask any other questions after that. We reached the mansion just a few minutes later. Mesmerized, she began exploring the mansion.

‘Wow! You live in a mansion? I was right to come with you!’

‘I knew you would love it. This will be your new home from now on, Chloe.’

As soon as we got in, she started investigating the entire place. She seemed to be as astonished as I was when I first came here. I was happy that she was enjoying this.

‘Denzel, please accompany Chloe to one of the guest rooms.’

‘Yes, Sir... Please follow me Miss.’

Alucard and I were both silent for a moment until they left, and then his cool finger was under my chin, lifting my face up.

‘What were you thinking of Viol?’

‘What do you mean?’

‘How could you bring in a human? Do you know how dangerous it is?’

‘I know, but we just couldn’t leave her in the woods.’

‘That’s very human of you... a normal vampire wouldn’t even care.’

‘I’m Violet Vendetta. I live to fulfill my Aunt’s unfinished work. I’m not just any normal vampire.’

His tawny eyes seemed to get a little bit darker whenever I said something like that. He hated the fact that I would never accept the fact that I was a vampire. My throat felt parched. I needed to feed. We both needed to feed. His eyes were only tawny when he was thirsty.

I took a deep breath. ‘Please excuse me, I need to... feed.’

My voice weakened at the end because I realized as I was saying the word I swore never to say. He seemed glad when I mentioned the word ‘*feed*’. A small grin appeared on his face. He just disappeared into thin air after that.

I walked slowly back to my room, knowing I couldn’t escape this overpowering thirst. I marched to my room and after Denzel dropped off two fresh packs on my table. I pulled up one of them and poured out the contents in a large glass. I drank the whole of it in a sip. It felt reviving when I gulped it down.

My attention drifted. I heard someone approaching. It was her, Chloe. I quickly hid the blood pack and the glass. When she opened the door, she found me sitting on the table.

‘Sorry for coming in unsolicited.’

She looked better than last time I had seen her. She had been provided with clean clothes and her blonde hair had been curled.

'You look beautiful.'

'Thank you.'

We both paused for a second since we had nothing to say to each other.

'How old are you?' she inquired.

'I'm twenty three.'

'You look like you're in your teens. But how long have you been a... vampire?'

'Oh... that... it's been five years now.'

'So you're actually eighteen.'

'Yes.'

'Was it by choice?'

'Yes.'

'Can you turn me too?'

That came as a shock to me. How could she want this? Did she even know what it involved? I could never do that.

'Never... I will not.'

She couldn't understand why I refused.

'Why do you even want this?'

She responded with firmness. 'I want to avenge my dad's death.'

That was the very reason I wanted to be Sir. I wanted to make them pay for what they did to my family. Those filthy vampires destroyed our whole town.

And being one of them was the easiest way to know their weaknesses to defeat them. But I could not promote such a destructive facet.

'I know how you feel but I can't make that happen.'

She seemed so disappointed.

I managed to change the subject. 'Are you hungry?'

She nodded her head. She followed me downstairs to the dining room.

'Why do you have humans as servants?'

'My Aunt was the owner of this place. She was human. She died five years ago. Our family owns a secret organization that eradicates vampires. When she died, I was the only legal heir.'

'Wow... so you own all this?'

'Yeah... it's cool, right?'

'Totally cool...'

'And who's the other guy you were with?'

'That's Alucard... he's my master. He's the vampire who turned me.'

Her eye-balls popped out a bit, but then she regained her emotionless face.

'You shouldn't have told her that.'

'She would eventually find out. She still doesn't know that you're Dracula.'

'Open the door.'

I walked over to the door and opened it. He was standing there as usual. His jaw flexed. I stared at him, speculating. He didn't seem to notice since he was staring past me.

He whispered to my ear. 'I don't trust her.'

'We'll talk about this later.'

Both of them gave each other hostile glares as we went to the dinner table. They'd sat there nearly motionless, staring at each other.

'Look, there's something I need to say.' He frowned, looking very uncomfortable.

'Can't it wait for dinner?'

'No, I have to say it now.'

He met my gaze for a second before shifting his eyes to the girl.

'You're welcome to the Vendetta house Miss Chloe.'

I exhaled a huge sigh, relieved that he didn't say something pessimistic.

'Thank you Mr. Alucard.'

'Call me Alucard, just Alucard. We should all be comfortable with each other in this mansion.'

'Please call me Chloe too, just Chloe, if you want us to be comfy with each other as you say.'

He raised one eyebrow at me. I knew what he meant was 'you're unwelcome here Chloe.'

'Alright, can we have Dinner now? I'm starving.' She exhaled.

'Yeah...'

After we all went downstairs and sat at the table, I noticed an unusual silence that seemed awkwardly scary. I stared at both of them surprisingly.

'I hate her.'

'You just met her.'

'Well, when I met you, I knew I would get along with you. Her... I don't know there's just something odd.'

'Can you at least try? I mean you're almost thousand years old and she's fourteen. There's a pretty large age difference.'

'She hates us.'

'I know. That's why I want to change her attitude towards us by bringing her here. She needs to know that she can trust someone in this world.'

He flickered unwillingly to her. I needed to know both sides of the table so I tried to read her thoughts.

'These vampires freak me out especially when they don't talk. Why is he staring at me like that? Does he want to eat me or something? But I love this place so much. I can actually call it home. And Violet is really nice.'

The phone rang then, shrill and demanding. Denzel brought it to me and said it was Jeremy. I got a sudden pulse of excitement in me.

'Hello?'

'With all my due respect, I must say your voice sounds even better on the phone, Violet. It's quite pleasant to hear from you Sir after such a long time.'

'Thank you Jeremy. I must also say that I am really surprised that you called. Is there something I must know? Any new vampire attacks?'

'I didn't call you for that Violet. I recently came back to London and I would like to come in for a visit if you don't mind.'

'I would be delighted. When shall you visit?'

'Tomorrow, I know I didn't tell you early enough.'

'It's all right.'

'Have a good night Violet.'

'Thank you Jeremy, same to you.'

After I cut the call, I noticed both of them were staring at me.

'Was that your boyfriend, Sir Violet?'

'No... he's one of my business partners.'

Alucard chuckled. I didn't even need to stare at him to know that he was tensed and angry. He hated the fact that I was too close to Jeremy.

'Do you like him?'

The question was sudden and unexpected. I did feel something for Jeremy but it wasn't like the attraction between Alucard and I.

'I don't know.'

'Well, it seems like you do. I mean you don't change your voice like that when you're talking to me on the phone.'

'That's because you never even call! Why do you even care?'

It was complicated for me before to figure out his moods and feelings because I was human. But now that I was a vampire I could sense things since we were somehow connected. He was my master, I could tell when he was angry, or sad, or happy. What could have changed in the past five years that could have brought us to this point? Did his immense attraction to me begin when I turned?

I ate dinner agonizingly, pretending that I enjoyed it. Alucard preferred not to touch the food. Chloe stared at me and she seemed to be enjoying this, watching me suffer. When the agonizing stench of the meal was completely buried inside of me, I stood up from the table. The stench remained until I threw up every single gram of food in my body. When I was done, I relaxed on my bed until I finally slept.

9. New beginnings

The cold rain dripped through my damp hair and then dripped across my white cheeks like tears. The droplets helped to wash away the mud stains. I blinked the water away, staring blankly at my emotionless teacher. We had gone hunting together, as I was growing restless of drinking from blood banks. I needed some action. Alucard taught me how to hunt animals instead of humans.

'Your mind is somewhere else it seems.'

'What makes you say that?'

'You are part of me as I told you before. I can feel all your emotions... including love.'

Had he discovered that I was madly in love with him? I felt embarrassed.

'I know that you love that human.'

I felt like laughing at him but he looked quite serious.

'If you really had an idea, you would know that I don't love him... I love you.'

That was the first time that I had actually told him how I felt.

'That's great... because I feel the same too.'

He walked closer and closer to me. I knew what he was going to do. I stiffened.

'I wasn't going to kiss you.'

'Then what were you trying to do?'

'I was trying to do this...'

He pulled me up by my knees, with my legs wrapped around his waist and carried me to a trunk. He then pushed my hair off my shoulders and twisted my head to the side so that my neck showed. He bit my neck slowly and ecstatically, placing one hand in my hair and the other on my buttock. It felt really good. He stopped when he noticed how still I was.

'Is something wrong?'

'What are you doing to me? Is this how vampires make out?'

He stopped and licked away the blood from his lips.

'By biting you a second time, I've chosen you as my eternal mate. If you die, I die. But for the bond to be complete, you need to bite me back. It's similar to a human wedding. The words until death do us apart are very much literal to us.'

He twisted his neck to one side so that it would be easier for me. I placed one hand on his neck and the other on his shoulder. I didn't think I was ready for this but I immediately bit him. He moaned in ecstasy, his groin arching against me. His blood tasted better than any other blood I had taken before. It was like a bottle of wine that had been kept for centuries. As it matured, the better it tasted. I couldn't stop myself from drinking.

'Enough Violet, you can stop now.'

'Just some more master.'

'No.'

'Why not... You won't die anyway.'

'Look at yourself first.'

When I stared at my hands, I moaned in horror. It was like the blood in my system had been drained out. I looked drained and dry.

'What's happening to me?'

'You drank too much. My blood is linked to the blood of all vampires in this world. If any vampire tries to drain my blood, or kill me, they are actually killing themselves and every other vampire. I'm like a tree and you're my roots. If you try to cut a tree, the roots will die, and if you cut all the roots, the tree will eventually die.'

'So you mean, when we kill other vampires, it has an effect on you?'

'Yes, it drains my powers slowly. But I'm not willing to kill all of them. I'm saving one special root, you.' He smirked and pinched the tip of my nose.

'But that's insane. You'll lose all your strength! I can't let you do that. We must immediately stop the work that we're doing. I can't let you die!'

'All I need in this world is you. I can survive with only you by my side. I'll be weak but it'll be worth it.'

'I don't care... I won't risk it. Can we head back now?'

He pulled me to him then, pulling me tightly to his marble chest. He seemed warmer now that we were both vampires. I rested my head on his chest while he toyed with my hair and kissed me fervently.

We both snuck past the main entrance, walked through the walls of the mansion. I headed back to my room, showered and changed. My skin was still drained, so I had to drink lots of blood. In one night I drank twenty packs until I returned to my perfect self.

The irritating sunlight woke me up. I found Alucard standing next to my bed.

'What are you doing here?'

'I was about to wake you up and tell you that the human is here.'

'Who?'

When I saw the grimace on his face I knew exactly who he was talking about.

‘Jeremy is here? Fetch my clothes.’ I joked.

He frowned. ‘Fetch? I’m your master, you due me respect.’

‘Alright, I’ll get them myself... master.’

I ran through the best clothes I had in my closet and pulled out a short black sleeveless dress that tightened around my waist and opened up at the knees.

‘Would you please help me close the zip?’

He didn’t respond but moved closer and pulled the zip up violently.

‘Ouch... I would have felt that if I were human.’

‘You might have realized that it was intentional.’

He placed his head onto my shoulder and whispered something to my ears.

‘I won’t save the human twice Sir...’

‘You won’t need to, master.’

He disappeared into thin air like he always did. When I headed downstairs, I found Chloe and Jeremy playing Checkers.

‘Ha! I beat you twice!’

‘Don’t be so sure young lady. Checkmate...’

‘Damn it...That’s the sixth time I’ve lost! I quit.’

They both noticed my presence when I approached the table. When he saw how beautiful I looked, he immediately smiled at me wistfully. In a place like this, where I was the leader of Vendetta, diplomacy was essential. I placed my hand for him to hold and kiss.

'I'm honored that you accepted my request Sir.'

'I wouldn't reject such a... pleasurable appeal. Please take a seat Jeremy.'

I called out to Denzel for his services.

'Would you have the goodness to bring us some green tea Denzel?'

'As you wish Sir...'

'Thank you Denzel.'

Though it was cold today, Jeremy managed to make everything feel so warm. He was very easy to talk to unlike Alucard. He sparked a dazzling smile, looking at me admiringly in a way that made my pale face light up. I wasn't the only one who noticed.

'You seemed to have relaxed a bit Sir.' Jeremy said.

'I can see you've the new addition to the family, Chloe. She's an orphan so I decided to adopt her. She is quite pleasing, isn't she?'

'Wouldn't it be a threat to her that this mansion is inhabited by two vampires?'

My eyes popped open. Had he known all this time?

'What do you mean?'

'I know that you're a vampire. And so is that pet of yours, Alucard right?'

'Chloe, please excuse us and go to your room.'

She hesitated but then left. Her heartbeat started racing and I figured out that word had brought back bad memories. When she was gone, I turned my angered eyes towards him.

'What do you know?'

'You think I wouldn't figure out that after so long?'

'What are you talking about?'

'The original... the so called Alucard you have as a servant. I know that he's Dracula.'

'I don't know what you're talking about.'

'Quit fooling around and spill it.'

Suddenly, Alucard appeared out of nowhere and caught Jeremy by the neck and pushed him up in mid-air.

'Who do you think you are to come into the Vendetta mansion and start talking rubbish?'

'I'm not talking rubbish since its true. LET ME DOWN.'

'As you say...'

Alucard hauled him to the other side of the room and a big crack was heard. One of his ribs must have broken.

'Master, don't kill him, please.'

I reached for Jeremy at once, standing above him with furious eyes.

'What do you want from us?'

'I want his head. Once we get rid of him, all pests will be exterminated.'

'That's our job. We're the ones that kill the pests.'

'You do realize that you're one of them. Will you kill yourself or will you let us kill you instead?'

He was right. I wasn't going to kill myself. And I wasn't going to let them kill me either. And neither was I going to let them kill Alucard.

'Why do you hate us so much? We're on your side.'

'Your grandfather created this organization to keep the humans safe and kill ALL the vampires. He didn't write any exception in his will.'

'Why do you even care?'

'Because... I'm your cousin.'

'What are you saying? I don't have a cousin!'

I turned around and looked at Alucard in disbelief.

'How is it possible?'

'I'm Severna's son.'

'Severna could not bear any children.'

'There's so much you don't know about our family. They are so many secrets you do not know. Poor, clueless girl, that's what she must have told you. But in reality she couldn't bear any children after me. She just didn't want to tell you that she gave me away when I was born. She didn't want you to hate her because she already felt guilty about giving me away and your comments would make matters worse. She didn't want a child at the time so she just gave me up at birth. She asked your father to leave me somewhere safe, but he '

'This means that you're her successor.'

'Yes. And since you're a vampire now, I have the legal right to take over the organization. I'm her son.'

'What? I won't let you do that! Aunt Savvy handed it to me personally. I won't let you go against her will. She didn't write your name in her will.'

'Give it to me. I don't want to hurt you.'

'Over my dead body...'

'You're already dead. In any case, you've chosen the hard way. You've just declared war.'

'I forbid you to come back here.'

'I'll be back. And when I do, you won't live to see another day in this mansion.'

I watched him walk away slowly in pain and felt like going after him and beating him up some more.

'Calm down. Don't do anything rush.'

Alucard was the only person I could confide into right now. I stayed up extra late after that since I couldn't close one eye. I turned around and found Alucard lying on the bed, motionless and worried. When had he gotten into the room? I wondered.

'Do you want me to do something about him?'

'No Alucard. Leave him alone. If it's a fight he wants, it's a fight he'll get. I know he'll attack soon, so we need to get ready. We already have a thousand trained soldiers and Denzel. I've never seen him work but I trust that he's good.'

'I've seen him work and he might be as strong as me. Quincy are not weak creatures.'

'Two vampires, a Quincy, and more than eight hundred humans, that seems to be good enough.'

'Yes Sir.'

I kept silent for a few seconds, gazing into those mesmerizing eyes of his. Just one look at him would take all my troubles away. His hand brought my chin up to his face, and his cold lips locked onto mine. This kiss that I wasn't prepared for brought forth a surge of sensations and for a moment I felt dazzled. My breaths came faster at the feel of his hand slowly moving on its own firmly across my back.

'You are now mine and you will be mine for the rest of eternity.'

The thought had just crossed my mind and I just realized now what we had done in the forest.

'You mean to tell me that you're my husband now?'

The amused grin he was trying to suppress was so charming. He was damnably handsome.

'Yes...'

'And I'm your wife?'

'Yes...'

I hadn't given a thought to what it would be like to have a mate. I had always imagined myself as a housewife but being a vampire was so different. I wouldn't be able to procreate... I wouldn't be able to cook for my husband since he couldn't eat human food. All the fun things that were common to humans were just a mere reverie.

'What are you thinking about?'

'What do I have to do to make you happy?'

'You don't need to do anything, because you already make me happy. Seeing you every day, is what keeps me going.'

That was the sweetest thing he had ever told me. I crawled over to him and hauled my arms around his neck. In turn he circled his arms around my waist. He just smiled at me and held me tighter.

10. Nuptials

This is my life now. It's not what it was before, but I don't regret anything. All these feelings I share now with Alucard, they are irreplaceable. I waited so long for this. Chloe smiled after hearing the news a week later.

'Well, that's your choice if you don't want a normal wedding, though I would have wanted you to have a honeymoon like every other couple.'

She was only fourteen and she sounded so mature. When I was her age, honeymoons just sounded like fairy tales to me. When she was gone, Alucard guided me into the trees where it seemed he had prepared a surprise. The blindfold he had closed my eyes with was unhelpful since I could use my sixth sense to discover what he was hiding. But I had promised not to use it to my advantage. He guided me by the shoulders and then did away with it when we reached. It was the pond, covered with rose petals and the trees decorated with lights.

'Did you do this?'

'Yeah... I know it's not much.'

'Not much? You just placed millions of rose petals all over a pond! That's too much to ask for.'

'For a vampire, it isn't.'

He helped me undress, ready for a swim. I realized how beautiful this night was. I clutched my arms around his neck and glued my mouth to his enthusiastically. On the other side of the pond was an open aired bungalow. We swam across and dried ourselves when we reached the bungalow. There was a small jukebox playing my favorite song. This was our song, the song we would always listen to and think back on to this day.

He pulled me into his arms for our first dance. There was no one to watch us so I went willingly. I wasn't the best dancer.

'I'm not much of a dancer Alucard.'

'You don't have to be one, just followed my lead.'

Resting my head on his chest and one hand on his shoulder, we circled several times until the song ended.

'Did you enjoy the dance Mrs. Violet Dracula?'

'It sounds amazing, say it again.'

He slowly whispered in my ear. 'Mrs. Dracula.'

I loved this feeling, being in love.

'Do you know how utterly enticing you look? How perfect you feel in my arms?' his raspy voice was nearly seductive, the intoxicating seduction of his words threatening to snare me.

We disappeared into the forest as he carried me in his arms and ran.

He had rented a small cabin, not too far from the mansion, in the woods, just for this occasion. It seemed we were the only ones here. The cabin had been lit with several scented candles and a lively fire place. The view of the moonlight from the cabin was breath taking. He carried me to the bed at the end of the cabin. The sheets were warm. Although my heart couldn't beat, and my breath couldn't get stuck in my throat, I felt a sudden anxiety.

This room was warm, in contrast to our cold skin. We both stared at each other in nervousness. Neither having experienced human nor vampire sex, I was anxious. Had there ever been a honeymoon like this before? Being the first to take the initiative, he caressed my neck.

'I've never done this before...' I uttered.

'Don't be afraid, I won't bite... hard.' He teased.

His eyes had never been this color before, crystal grey.

'I'm not going to hurt you I promise.'

With those words said, he instantly assaulted my mouth. Pinning me to the bed, he kissed and bit me fervently, arousing me in a surprising way. He got the still wet clothing off of me with just one slash. His lips brushed against my throat slowly, just below my ear to the tip of my shoulder and lower until I shuddered. He was torturing my nipple.

'Oh! Oh!' I moaned.

I managed to free him of his silk clothing, his body muscular and smooth. His kisses were dizzying and mind reeling. His sweet odor swarmed over me and his now long and silky smooth hair swept my abdomen as he drew his head lower into my moist. The arousal was eminent. Unable to wait any longer, I arched against him. He brought my knees up, to the sides of his waist and his groin slightly rubbed against my thighs. My eyes were locked onto his, as if he'd put a spell upon me. He was poised over me, savoring me with his eyes.

My timid smile seemed to entice him. I rested my fingers on his lower back, violently bringing him closer into my haven. I thought I would suffocate from his unexpected onslaught. His lips brushed my nipple again and again and I felt a small bite into the flesh of my areola. My moans grew louder, synchronized with his repeated action.

'Uh...Uh!' he groaned.

This moment was so perfect, so right and there was no doubt about it. My claws sank deep into his skin when I reached my peak. We both growled in synchronized climax. He rolled to the side of the bed, maintaining me in his arms. I instantly fell asleep, remembering only his kiss on my forehead before I sank into unconsciousness.

When I opened my eyes in the morning, I felt a presence next to me. I recognized the familiar easy and cold arm around my waist. He sighed briefly then pulled his arm away. I didn't want him to leave, the sun, hot on the bare skin of

my back. Luckily I was wearing my sunlight ring, I never took it off. I kept my eyes closed.

Lying across his chest, his arm twirled around me, felt very nice. I wondered why I'd been so shaky about last night. He was as awake as I was. I suddenly realized I hadn't fed. I opened my eyes and searched for his.

'Good morning.'

'Hey', I answered.

I took a deep breath and leaned my head against his chest.

'I love you Alucard.'

His face was soft and compassionate very unlike of him. He was usually very serious and hard to approach. A large line formed when he looked at me.

'I love you too, Violet Vendetta.'

'Hey! I liked Violet Dracula.'

That smile and the same eyes that had made me fall for him. They were the same eyes that had looked at me lustfully the night before. Every sensation had been multiplied.

His eyes tightened suddenly and he sighed. There was something buried in his eyes that I couldn't be sure of and it scared me.

'What's wrong?' I gasped.

'We need to get back now. Your cousin...'

'What? What has he done?'

'He's heading right for the mansion. He's not alone. He has vampires with him.'

'But I thought he hated our kind.'

'He will do anything to get the organization for himself, including recruiting our kind. He may be working for your father.'

This was bad news. Chloe was at the mansion while vampires were heading there. We would reach in time to fight but we wouldn't have the time to get her out of there. We weren't the only beings that had super speed. The attackers would reach there even before us.

My sixth sense was telling me that something was terribly wrong. My next shudder wasn't due to cold. My mind was alert and it was working very fast. I could sense the vampires from miles away. I could hear two heart beats. I couldn't distinguish whose heartbeats but I got the answer as soon as I noticed Chloe missing. I cringed away from the idea of even trying to imagine that I wasn't fast enough.

Somehow, she'd become a part of me, like a daughter. I could place a stake in my heart right now, for not protecting her. Why her? What did they want from her? Today was her birthday, I had completely forgotten.

'Violet, please control yourself. Getting mad won't make things better.'

I hadn't noticed him behind me. My husband had some tricks that even I had never seen. He had told me before that his true form was something even I wouldn't bear to see.

'I'll go get her back.' He whispered.

'No, this is my fight Alucard. He wants me to give him what he wants.'

'You're not ready to go by yourself.'

'I'm not? Well, watch me.'

Children, in the abstract, had never appealed to me. They seemed to be loud creatures, often dripping some form of goo. I'd never imagined myself a mother, never wanted it. This child, Chloe, was a complete different story. To me, it felt odd. Not being able to save her father gave me a weight in my heart, and it was my obligation to make sure she grew up to be a beautiful young human girl.

A sudden surge of guilt hit me. That day in the woods, I had made a silent promise to the dying man, that I would find his orphaned daughter and protect her. I was still human at the time and now that I was a vampire I felt the obligation heightened ten times. And the guilt too, everything was heightened, every emotion. My eyes pricked in the strangest way, like they wanted to tear. She was in danger because of me. Sometimes I could be persistent, and that's what made me a Vendetta. I would not give up until I found Chloe, if it was the last thing I would do.

ALUCARD

11. The search

No one had ever wanted to be near me. Who would have thought that this frail and lost girl that I had rescued three years ago would have turned my ice cold heart soft? I was new to this whole relationship thing and I was trying very hard not to screw things up. She gives me a peck on the lips, her eyes glowing with happiness.

‘I love you Alucard.’

I look down at her, dropping my head onto the center of her chest, my hands caressing her soft skin. Trailing kisses over the sensitive length of her throat, I whisper the significant words too. ‘I love you too, Violet Vendetta.’

She can’t help but smile, that beautiful smile that had made me fall for her instantly, back at the cottage where we had first met. She was so full, overflowing with life even though dead, radiating perfection with her sweet smile.

Suddenly I distinguish something odd. It was one of my abilities, kicking in at the moment. I was able to know when something wrong was happening to the people I cared for. Well I didn’t care much for Chloe but my wife did. She was my wife. The word seemed so foreign yet so damn perfect. She cared for the human like her own child. That was one reason I had to protect the girl, because it would crush Violet if anything happened to her. The girl made her feel more human, a thing I wouldn’t understand. There seemed to be commotion back at the mansion. I knew things weren’t going well and we had to hurry back.

‘We need to get back now. Your stepbrother is on the move and this isn’t good. I can feel him.’

Her eyes widened in fear, shock and anger at the same time. I had never seen the girl so angry. I had no time to explain, we needed to head back now. Her

hands were shaking as we ran back and she was suddenly very frightening. She breaks into a run and she doesn't stop, ignoring the bodies of the security guards lying on the ground, until she slides around the corner into the familiar hallway of the guest quarters, Chloe's room.

'Chloe!' she gasped.

We both stare at the empty space, disappointed. Chloe was long gone and Denzel was nowhere to be found. I stare at her, all the muscles in my jaw tightly clenching. She needed to calm down. I feared she would do something she would regret. I reach for his arms but she flinches away from my touch, leaving my hands suspended in the air.

'Violet, please control yourself. Getting mad won't make things better. I'll go get her back.' I muttered.

She swallows before giving me any chance to convince her.

'No, this is my fight Alucard. He wants me to give him what he wants.' She barks.

'You're not ready to go by yourself.'

There is too much intensity in her eyes.

'I'm not? Well, watch me.'

With that she turns on her heels, stomps back and slams the door behind me. I had to find Denzel. He was the only one who could explain what had happened here. I found him, lying on the floor in one of the rooms, battered and unconscious.

'Wake up Denzel, you old fool.'

He quickly woke up, unhinged.

'The girl, I had her. Where is she?'

'They took her. And now Violet has gone berserk. She's gone after them. I need to go after her. I just needed to make sure my old friend was fine.'

‘As you can see I’m fine. You should be careful. They have a secret weapon they used against me, a boy. I didn’t have enough time to identify him clearly but be careful.’

Without further warning, I quickly made myself scarce and followed her trail. It didn’t take me much time to catch up with her. I just gazed in amazement at her confidence, following her prudently. I was one of the strongest creatures in the world and I could easily get rid of the strongest threats yet I couldn’t tame an enraged woman. I followed her silently as we ran full speed into the woods.

‘Violet, do you even know where you’re heading?’

She suddenly stopped. Of course she had no clue, because they were long gone. The sun was awfully low. Something twisted in her face, a painful mix of hope and disbelief. Her throat had twisted shut on a knot of tears.

‘Help me. Please help me find her Alucard.’ She broke down in my arms.

She crushed her face against me in a bruising embrace. I had never seen her cry. Vampires did not cry. I hated seeing her this way. She needed to shut off her emotions. She hadn’t shut them off yet. Heightened emotions were no good in a vampire world. I pulled her closer to me, hugging her even tighter.

‘We’ll find her. I promise you love.’

I had never felt this way about a woman, protective of her. I leaned and kissed her, pulling her against me in a tender embrace.

‘Let’s get her back.’

Violet frowned at me, eyes tight, like she was just as panicky as I was. She could feel my emotions, just as I could feel hers.

‘My love, I will find her, if she means that much to you.’

I owed her this much for changing my life, for coming into my life. I was a monster. How could she see me as anything else, even when she was human? I always thought if she knew the truth about me, I would frighten and repulse her. That she would shriek away in fear at the mere sight of me. But she didn’t. She loved me. Could a dead, frozen heart melt? I felt like mine would.

Neither of us had considered how difficult the human might prove to find once we went on a search for her. We had no clue where Jeremy resided, and even if we did, we would have to defeat all his minions to get to her. We needed a strategy. We needed help.

All these centuries of moping around didn’t prove worthless after all. I knew the perfect guy that would help us with our dilemma, Ian Rousseau. Flying seemed like a good option at this point, it would take us longer to run all the way to Paris, the French city of culture where I once lived, some centuries back. We drove to the airport. We would surely be there in less than a day.

‘My love, how do you plan on finding Chloe?’

“My love”, the sweet words rang in my ears over and over again. My phone vibrated in my pocket. Only rarely would I use this gadget created by the humans to communicate. Who could it be?

‘Help me Alucard. They’re scaring me.’

I recognized the voice. That usually loud-mouthed voice was now just a whimper. Violet’s eyes opened wide as she snatched the phone from my ear.

‘Chloe! Chloe! Where are you? Please tell me, we’re coming for you.’

‘I stole one of the guard’s phones. They have me locked in a room...’

She was shortly interrupted and the phone call was immediately put to an end. I quickly tracked the phone’s latitude GPS and found out they were holding her somewhere in Paris. I was already on the right path to finding her.

‘I know her location.’

‘Then what are we waiting for? Let’s go.’

We took a flight straight to Paris and reached in no time. We stopped at one of the cafés on the way. The city had always had a fresh tang to it and that’s why I had loved it so much in the past.

Two angry vampires against all the vampires Lord Frederick Vendetta, Violet’s dad, had hired we still were no match and I was not willing to use my powers on them.

I only used my powers when it was critical. No one had ever seen my true form and my true powers and lived to tell the experience.

‘Violet we may need help.’

‘Why would we need any help? Weren’t you the one that alleged that a thousand vampires were no match for you? Why would Dracula need any help?’

‘Yes I could take down any multitude of vampires but with grave consequences. I have dangerous powers that make me lose control. All those things I showed you before in that vision happened because I had used my powers. The thirst becomes unbearable. I can’t risk using them in your presence. I may lose control when I use them and you may never have me back. I’ve come so far with my self control and I can’t throw away half a millennium of training just for a futile human.’

‘How can you talk of Chloe in such a way? Don’t you see how much she means to me? I would have thought you would be more understanding but I guessed wrong. I don’t need you here if you don’t want to be here. I’m going to find her, with or without your help!’

I shot a panicked glance back to her. The way she just took off without any warning hurt me much more than I expected. Rather it was the disappointment in her eyes that was just killing me inside. Raising a hand to stop her, it was too late, she was already gone. I could have very well stopped her, but I didn’t. I wouldn’t. She was angry and she had the right to be. Some things seemed too complex to understand and her humanity was one of them. She was the only vampire I knew who still remained human emotionally. She was a vampire but she hadn’t changed much from when she was human. I loved her but she was acting too childishly.

I hung my head in my arms. What had I done? What kind of relationship could I offer her, when I had never loved anyone in all my years on earth, not even when I was human? I knew nothing of love and partnership.

When I had been human, my mentality had been washed with military teachings.

I had spent my teenage years in the military, unable to have any close relationship. I was an orphan, abandoned as a child, just like Jeremy. I had no one to love. This was entirely new to me. Although in the past I had been attracted to a few females, this one was much more different. I had just vague memories of those human years, murky memories that faded with each passing centuries. The love I felt for Violet was something I had never experienced before.

I stared at my white, cold and dead hands, hating their inhuman touch. My thoughts were abruptly interrupted by a loud thump in my back.

'Aha Alucard, I've finally been able to sneak behind you by surprise. You always seem attentive to your surroundings but what could be bothering the master of all masters?'

I instantly recognized the voice in my head. My old friend, Ian, had always been a joker. Ian had been almost like a brother to me since he was almost as old as I was. He had been reborn as a vampire only two centuries after I had been. He too had been turned by me, but it seemed her had never grown up, always the mischievous one.

'Ian, you never change.'

We embraced in a brotherly hug, his fists hitting my solid bicep in one hard punch. I would have strongly felt it if I was still human.

'What brings you here Alucard? You have changed.'

'My wife brings me here.'

'Ha-ha! A wife, the great Alucard has a wife? It seems you're bringing me more surprises every minute!'

'Do not mock me Ian. I believe I've fallen in love for the very first time.'

'I would never have thought that you would ever fall in love. Who's the lucky girl?'

'Violet Vendetta, you might have heard the name.'

'You mean Vendetta, as in the Vendetta family?'

'Yes, she's the niece of Severna Vendetta.'

'You do realize that their family has been hunting down our kind for centuries?'

'Yes, I do. I turned the girl. She was about to die and I couldn't let her die because I fancied her.'

'The sentimental one you've become Alucard. I thought you had vowed to yourself that you would never turn any other human? We already have five lineages at war, why would you add a sixth?'

'I couldn't let her die. I have only turned six people, and one of them is you Ian. You're one of the originals of the six clans. But she's the only one whose blood is completely linked to mine.'

'Master, may I meet her?'

'She ran away from me. She's angry.'

'What angered her?'

'It's a long story that I don't wish to tell. I have no time for stories. I need your help Ian. We must find her and stop her before she does anything stupid. We're bonded, if she dies, I die and you all die. But her father and half-brother are not aware of our bond. So we must stop them before they try killing her.'

He inhaled deeply. 'You mean to tell me that our fate lies in the hand of this girl... I'm so confused Alucard. You need to explain to me what's happening in details. I can't help you if you don't give me details.'

I grimaced.

'I'll explain on the way there. Right now we need to leave. This isn't going to be a walk in the park. I advise you to buy a gun and learn how to use it. Get silver bullets too.'

'No need for guns. We have you on our side.' He winked.

The snow was getting deeper by now and the drive was accomplished with much care. When we arrived, the house was pleasantly warm as they had left the central heating on. Certainly vampires didn't need heat therefore it must have been a cover-up, in case the cops would pay them a visit. We checked through the house but nothing appeared to have been tampered with. There were no signs of a struggle. Surprisingly, there was total silence, no movement at all. They must have left in a hurry because there were several clues, like the two tea cups that were still warm in the basement. Something was terribly wrong.

'They're not here. They must have moved Chloe to another location.'

'Can't you use your powers to track her?'

'Yes, I could track Violet. She must have been captured too. I'm pretty sure she must have reached here before us.'

Not long after, ten city blocks to the east, there was activity in the immense building, a moonlit balcony of one of the rooms of the palace of Versailles, where I had tracked Violet and sensed her presence. I cloaked my way up to the roof of the building, peeking through one of the windows. I caught sight of Violet, held into place by several silver chains attached around her ankles and wrists. There were several vampires in the large room and at each corner of the palace.

Standing before her was a man, elegantly dressed in an Armani three piece suit complete with gold fob watch and chain. I soon recognized him, Jeremy, the good for nothing human. Jeremy gazed around the room, stirring his coffee. And then abruptly he threw the hot liquid on Violet's face and laughed as it turned red, partially burnt. She screamed in pain and fought the chains, trying to break loose.

'Ha-ha, I could do this all day. You vamps heal instantly so stop fretting.'

If Ian hadn't been there to hold me back, I would have lost it and wasted all the years of self control I had learned. He was torturing my beautiful wife and yet I could not rip off his head.

'Go to hell Jeremy. Once I get rid of these stupid chains, I'll skin you alive.'

'Well, you're not getting out of those chains anytime soon my dear cousin.'

The door sprung open with a loud thump to the wall. Violet's father arrived furiously, holding Chloe violently by her arm.

'Well, well, well, look what we've got here. Violet Vendetta, captured just like a wild animal. My dear daughter, did you really think you'd hide from me forever?'

'Dad, why are you doing this?'

'Revenge, I'm doing this for revenge.'

'I haven't done anything to you. I should be the one revenging against you, for abandoning us. You won't succeed. Alucard will kill all of you without any hesitation.'

They both laughed in unison and Jeremy moved towards her with his silver knife, then he pinned it to her chest.

'We are not afraid. We will enjoy killing whoever or whatever gets in our way. Once dad gets Vendetta, he'll have all the power to bring ruin to all the people who betrayed him. The organization will be handed over to me since I'm human and rightful heir now that you're a vampire. But I'll be doing everything dad wishes with it.'

'And to do that, we need you out of our way Violet, you and your pet. So tell us, where is Alucard? We have a secret weapon too you know. You have Alucard and we have Darren, Chloe's twin brother. There's so much you don't know Violet.' her father continued.

They looked at each other for a moment. Violet began laughing. How could she possibly be laughing at such an improper time?

'Do you find what I said funny?'

'Yes, because you've underestimated us. WE cannot be defeated! We are Vendetta. You think I'd let myself be captured so easily? It was all part of my plan. Now Alucard knows your hideout and he's probably already here. He will vaporize you dad. And Jeremy, I'm saving you for myself because you tricked me and tortured me. These chains can't hold me, nothing can.'

Instantly Violet used one of the tricks I had taught her, disappearing into thin air.

The face Jeremy made was priceless. 'How did she do that? Where is she? Find her! Find them! Release Darren. Uncle Fred, I'm taking the little girl somewhere she won't be found.'

Jeremy snatched Chloe from his uncle's hand and ran off with her. Ian and I instantly realized that that was our cue. We broke through the glass and infiltrated the room. Jeremy and his father managed to sneak away with all the tumult but finding them was not my priority at the moment.

'Ian, can I leave this to you? I need to follow my wife and make sure she doesn't get killed.'

'No worries Alucard, I will kill them without wasting a sweat.'

I knew Violet couldn't have gone far. I sensed her close by, still in the castle.

She hesitated before looking at me and when she did her expression was distrustful. She had every right to be. I had abandoned her when she needed me the most.

'I'm sorry.'

She waited for me to continue but I just stared at her, reading her face. There was an edge of resentment to her tone that made me want to smile surprisingly.

'Don't touch me Alucard.'

No one had ever talked to me in such a way, the way she stood up to me. I loved it when she was angry. The sound of my name on her lips did strange things to my body.

Without further warning, I approached her carefully, unsure of her reaction. My lips found hers and soon our embrace turned aggressive. She kissed me back fervently and then pushed me back.

'I'm still mad at you.'

'I know.'

'This is not the right time to be kissing.'

'I know, but I want to.'

And then I pulled her back into my arms. The tension in our bodies was finally relinquished when I carried her into my arms by her knees, strapped to me like an infant. I kissed her lips, neck, her breast, and her lips again. Her response was not what I had expected. Instead of gasping in pleasure, she screamed from the top of her lungs, suddenly so frightened that her eyes were almost popping out.

'Alucard!'

What could possibly scare her this much? I immediately dropped her and turned around and saw what she was pointing at.

I winced when I saw a werewolf growling and roaring right in front of me. The last encounter I had with one of these creatures had been quite unpleasant since I had almost died. Was this the boy Denzel had warned me about? Was this the secret weapon Frederick had mentioned earlier, Chloe's brother?

I hesitated to attack him, since he might have been brainwashed by Frederick and also because it was Chloe's brother but I soon regretted it. He attacked me without further warning, biting down on my shoulder and then hauling me through the large glass window. Landing, my back onto the grass, I growled fearlessly and launched my sharp claws into his hairy skin and jabbed out a piece of his flesh. Even though he was just a boy, he would kill me if I didn't fight back. Werewolves were strikingly more powerful than vampires and in the past, they were our downfall because if attacked by a werewolf, a vampire's wounds wouldn't heal instantly.

'Violet, Run!'

'No, I can't leave you here to fight off this monster by yourself!'

But she changed her mind as soon as she saw me transform too. The elegant figure she had seen of me so many times before morphed into a horrendous creature which roared at the werewolf fervently. She ran, not looking behind even once. No one had seen my true form without running, out of fear. But her reaction had frankly hurt me because I expected her, of all people to at least look back once. Now I was alone, to fight off my natural enemy.

I would peel him slowly apart, and shred his flesh, for he had made me reach out for the side of me I had never wished to. He had made me turn in front of the woman I loved. And now she would probably never look at me the same way again. When I change, I become something else, a monster with no remorse whatsoever, and no self control. It had been I while since I'd met a challenger worthy enough to fight me off and I wouldn't let the opportunity pass by. Once I turned, I became Dracula, the ruthless King of vampires.

TO BE CONTINUED...

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

This book is the first of the JADED series and hopefully the reader has enjoyed it as I wished he/she would.

I believe I will soon publish the other continued JADED series books very soon. Feel free to leave comments and suggestions.

Inspired by the Japanese “Hellsing” Animated Series.