

Terror

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IDK what to say so...BLAH BLAHBLAHBLAH BLAH!

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1 - Invitation To Leave

Chapter One Invitation To Leave

As I slowly opened my eyes, I noticed gray, dim light streaming through my curtains. I could tell it was going to be a nice, cloudy day today. I got out of bed and got dressed. I walked downstairs to find Aunt Mollie sitting at the kitchen table.

"Good morning," I said casually.

"Good mornin', hon," she cheerfully said back to me. "Looks pretty cloudy today, huh? Gonna be nice for you and your brother."

"Yeah, it is. I just might go on a walk with Aeryk after school." Daren came down then, stomping on every step. He landed on the ground and said, "Hey."

"How come even though you were two years older than me when we transformed and yet, I'm more mature than you?"

"What are you talkin' 'bout, little sis'?"

"I'm talking about your grand entrance stomping down the stairs just now," I said, taking a mouthful of blood. He simply gave me a small smirk then drank some breakfast himself.

I realised the time then and ran to the living room and grabbed my backpack. Daren did the same.

"See ya, Aunt Mollie," we both said and we were on our way to school.

* * *

"Rayne!" I heard a voice call my name. I turned to see Nat rushing towards me.

"Hey," I said in the same tone I'd used with Aunt Mollie earlier. "What's up?"

"I aced the biology test. First 'A' of the semester."

"Great." Just then, someone from behind wrapped their arms around me and murmured in my ear, "Hey, you." I turned my head to see that it was Aeryk, just as I had expected. "Hey," I said and he gave me a small kiss. He unwrapped his arms from around me and put his left arm around my shoulders. I started turning the dial on my locker.

"Rayne, did you get my text last night?" Nat asked.

"No, went to bed early."

"As soon as you have a chance, read it. Okay?"

"Yeah, sure." She started walking down the hall and Aeryk's arm fell from my shoulders and he leaned casually against the locker next to mine while I got some books. "Hey, here comes your bro," Aeryk said, pointing down the hall. I looked and there he was, as cocky as ever, with his arm on Kayla's shoulders and a huge smile on his face. Just then, the bell screeched so I slammed my locker closed and walked with Aeryk to first period biology, totally ignoring Daren. When we got into class, we sat down next to each other in the back right corner of the room, Nat was already in the seat in front of me. Mrs. Colton

walked in.

"Good mornig, class. Today, we will be dissecting flounder. And these are fresh this time so the classroom won't stink of fish again." Everybody gave a small laugh, everybody except for me. At the word "fresh," my muscles had tensed. The flounder being fresh means that they still had blood. Mrs. Colton started passing out scalpels and latex gloves. Then went to a cooler at the front of the room and opened it. The second she did, my head was filled with the scent of blood. My K-9s wanted to grow but I wouldn't let them, I had to get out, fast. I practically jogged out the door. I could hear Mrs. Colton yelling at me to come back, then a chair scooting out and loud footsteps. The footsteps got louder and someone grabbed my arm. Aeryk. Of course.

"Hey, what's up?" he asked, sounding worried.

"The flounder are fresh, they still have blood," I replied shortly. I was still high off of the scent of blood and could barely concentrate on what I was saying so I wasn't going to talk much.

"Are you in control?" I nodded. "Okay, you clearly can't go back in there so I'll wait out here with you this period."

"Thanks," I said. Then, Nat walked up to us and said harshly, "Rayne, what're you doing?!"

"The fish still have blood," Aeryk explained simply. She just gave me an annoyed look and went back to class.

"C'mon, we have about an hour-and-a-half, let's go somewhere."

"Kay," I said and he put his arm around my shoulders again and we walked down the hallway and out the double-doors. When we were in the middle of the school campus, Aeryk stopped, faced me, and put his hands on my arms.

"Rayne, I need to talk to you for a second," he said.

"Okay, what's up?"

"My dad's company wants him to move to New York for a year. And I don't wanna leave you here alone that long. I just can't be away from you. So, do you want to go with us? Please, it would mean so much to me."

"Oh, Aeryk, I don't know, I would have to talk to Aunt Mollie and Daren and Nat and all that junk. Daren really needs a mature person around to keep him from trouble, you know."

"Yeah, but, I love you, and I don't want to leave without you."

"Did you just say you love me?" I asked, astonished.

"Yes."

"Oh, Aeryk!" I leaned forward and kissed him. I pulled away and whispered, "How could I say no?" He smiled his amazing smile, thanked me, and kissed me again. He pulled away, put his arm around my shoulders and we walked around the campus for the rest of first period.

2 - We're Not Alone

Chapter Two We're Not Alone

I got home to find a note from Aunt Mollie saying that she was at the grocery store and would be back in a couple of hours. Daren was out with Kayla and their friends. I was in the house alone. I remembered I had to read that text Nat was talking about earlier. I opened my phone and looked at my messages. I started reading Nat's.

"Rayne, new people moved into neighbor's house. Their son is AMAZING HAWT! I need your opinion. His name's Alexander. He and his parents are totally pale...they actually look a lot like you and Daren if you know what I mean."

New vamp family? Really? I thought to myself. Daren and I aren't the only ones in the U.S.? Gotta go see for myself.

I ran over to Nat's neighborhood to see the family moving in their things, the boy on the front porch must be Alexander. I hid behind a car. I looked at his face, Nat was right, he was handsome. And he did seem a lot like Daren and me. Pale skin, full lips, perfect complexion, thick hair. If I could get a good look at his eyes, it would be for sure. I looked carefully, I couldn't believe it. He had the brightest red eyes I'd ever seen. That was not good in the vampire world. It meant that that vampire had great power and they wouldn't use it for good. Evil, basically. Then, it seemed as if he looked straight at me. It frightened me. I backed away, still crouched down, and ran back to the house. I went in through the back door. I looked into the kitchen and he was there. I gasped out of fright. He gave a smirk and walked towards me.

"I saw you," he said in a beautiful voice.

"Apparently," my voice sounded weak and shakey.

"Why were you watching me?"

"A friend told me that you just moved in."

"And this is how you greet newcomers? By stalking them?"

"I wasn't stalking you."

"Don't lie." His voice was frightening yet still beautiful. He fixed his wicked red eyes on mine.

"Ah, you're a vampire. Now it makes perfect sense that you would want to know more about me."

"So you are a vampire?"

"It would seem so. And I must say, you are devine, even for a vampire." He leaned closer to me and kissed my cheek. His freezing lips were colder than my skin. I tried to move away but he gripped my arm.

"Don't run away, after all, you were the one watching me. I know you want me." He leaned even closer and tried to kiss my lips but I pulled away from him. It wasn't any good. He grabbed my arm again but this time so hard that it actually hurt me.

"Stop fooling around!" I turned my face away from him but he gripped it in one hand and forced me to look at him. "One little kiss is all I ask."

"HEY!" It was Aeryk at the open back door. "Get your hands of my girl." Alexander simply laughed.

"You're going to stop me? HA! No whimpy dog can keep me from what I want." Aeryk had a completey

confused look on his face. Then I got why, how did Alexander know he was a werewolf? Aeryk's expression turned serious again.

"I'm not whimpy...." Aeryk said and transformed right there, then lunged at Alexander. He had him pinned to the ground and I ran to the livingroom and called Daren on my cell phone. I could hear that Alexander had been able to get back up.

"Yello?" Daren answered.

"Daren! You need to get over here now!"

"And why, exactly?" I heard a striking shout from Alexander and then a loud yelp from Aeryk.

"A family of vamps just moved in. Their son just tried to rape me! Aeryk's fighting him right now. Come over here and help him!"

"Okay, okay, I'm on my way." He hung up and Alexander flew in the doorway, Aeryk walked in, growling.

Alexander got up and posed as if he was ready to take a lot of force. Aeryk threw himself at him but Alexander easily lifted him up off the ground and then slammed him down again. Aeryk let out what sounded too much like someone screaming in pain and didn't look like he was going to get up.

Alexander was about to hit him again but before he could I yelled, "Alexander! Stop right now!" He sat there for a moment with his fist in the air then he looked at me with his terrifying eyes and chuckled.

"Okay, I'll let your dog live." He got up brushed himself off and walked to the back door. "And call me Alex, love." Then he was gone so quickly, I wasn't sure if he had actually left. I ran over to Aeryk who was still lying on the living room floor. I knealed down next to him and stroked his face. He was out cold. Just then, Daren showed up.

"Whoa, what happened?" he asked when he saw me knealing next to Aeryk. I just started sobbing into Aeryk's fur.

"Hey, hey, hey. Don't cry, Rayne. I'm sure Aeryk's gonna be fine. He's a pretty tough guy, believe it or not," he said, trying to add humor to the situation. But it wasn't working. I just cried harder. Aeryk started waking up. He transformed back into human form.

"What happened?" he moaned. I realized he was awake and hugged him, still sobbing. "Hey, I'm okay. A little beat up, but I'll live." I didn't stop crying and he hugged me tightly.

"I was so scared," I whispered into his ear.

"By that dude?"

"No, I was afraid that I was gonna lose you." He didn't have anything to say to that so he just kept hugging me and he started to cry, too.

"I've already told you, I just can't leave you."

"Promise you never will."

"I promise."

"He's gonna come back sometime, you know. And he'll probably go to the same school as us. He's going to keep an eye on me. Oh, God, I'm so scared."

"It's okay, I won't let him hurt you," Daren said. "You're my little sis and I gotta protect you, it's a big bro thing."

"I won't let him hurt you, either," Aeryk said softly.

"What about you? I don't want you to get hurt."

"I'll be fine. Don't worry about me. I'm gonna keep you safe."

"Thank you," I said and looked into his balck eyes. He kissed me as if to reassure me that he wasn't going to let anything get to me.

"I think you should stay here tonight, Aeryk," Daren said. Aeryk pulled away from me and just nodded his head and held me in his arms. Aunt Mollie walked in the front door then.

3 - A Night To Remember

Chapter Three A Night To Remember

"What's going on here?" she asked, seeing Aeryk and me on the floor, crying.

"I'll explain," Daren said and walked Aunt Mollie into the kitchen to leave Aeryk and me be together. I heard Daren start talking.

"Are you going to stay tonight?" I asked Aeryk.

"Would it make you feel better if I did?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll stay." We both stopped crying but we didn't dare let go of each other. We sat there in each other's arms for a couple of minutes, listening to the muffled voices of Daren and Aunt Mollie in the kitchen.

"Aeryk?"

"Yeah?"

"I love you." He smiled and said, "I love you, too."

"I've waited almost 300 years to say that to someone."

"Yeah, me too."

"I'm just glad that I got to say it to you." I looked up at him when I said this and he was looking down at me, smiling.

"What?"

"You're just so... amazing." I smiled and kissed him. He kissed me back passionately for a long time. When he finally pulled away, he kissed my cheek and then back to my lips. We lied down on the ground together and he pulled away from the kiss and tilted his head down so that I could feel his warm breath on my shoulder. Aunt Mollie and Daren walked back in then and we sat back up.

"Aeryk, you are to stay here with Rayne tonight, you understand?"

"Yes, Aunt Mollie."

"And Daren, you camp out in the hallway in front of Rayne's room. I'll stay down here tonight."

"All right, Aunt Mollie," Daren replied.

"Okay, it's getting late, we should all get ready for bed." At these words Aeryk and I went up to my room and Daren to his and Aunt Mollie to hers. I took a shower and got in pajamas while Aeryk went to his house to get some of his things. When I had finished my shower, Aeryk hadn't come back yet. I went downstairs and found Aunt Mollie and Daren sitting on the couch, watching TV. I sat down next to Daren and he said, "You okay?"

"Yeah," I replied weakly. "How long has Aeryk been gone?"

"Bout two hours now. He probably needs to explain this to his dad."

"He needs to get back, soon." I felt very uncomfortable without him around to keep me from harm. I watched half of a Jeff Dunham special with Daren and Aunt Mollie before Aeryk came back. We went up to my room to put his stuff down. When the door was closed, I hugged him tightly.

"Was I gone too long?" he asked, sounding a little worried.

"No, I just felt strange without you here."

"Oh, okay then." He hugged me back then I left so he could change into his pajamas. I was waiting outside the door, looking around the hall. Suddenly, the door opened some and Aeryk pulled me into my pitch black room. He held me in his arms and said, "You scared?" playfully.

"Not with you here to protect me."

"Good." He kissed me passionately and I kissed him back. He started stroking my hair with his left hand and kept his right arm around me. I had my arms thrown around his neck. He pulled away and picked me up so that I was cradled in his arms. He carried me over to the bed and sat down with me in his lap. He started kissing me again. He pulled away and said, "I used to be afraid of the dark. But now I'm thinking that the dark isn't so bad after all." I giggled and kissed him again. Then Daren walked in and turned on the light. I quickly pulled away from Aeryk and yelled, "Daren! Get out of here!"

"Oh, sorry!" he said sheepishly, turned the light off again and left.

"Ugh, that kid," I said.

"Ha ha, yeah, sometimes he can be pretty annoying. We should get to bed."

"Yeah." We lied down on the bed and got under the blankets. Aeryk hugged me and pulled me closer to him.

"I feel like I'm in the future," he said, kind of shyly.

"How so?"

"I'm hoping that in the future, we'll be...um, we'll be..."

"We'll be what?"

"Married."

"Oh! Well, maybe, hopefully, we are getting a glimpse of the future."

"I sure hope so." I gave him a small kiss and whispered, "Good night." He whispered "good night" to me and then I thought that I was glad that he was nervous about telling me that. I don't know why, it just made me feel happy. We fell asleep in each other's arms.

* * *

I woke up unexpectedly around 2:30 AM. The room was dimly lit by the moonlight streaming through the open window. A breeze passed and I shuddered and goosebumps formed on my arms. I unwrapped Aeryk's arms from around me and got up to close the window. When I got there, I could have sworn I saw someone standing in the yard, then vanish. I looked around for the shape of a person but I didn't see anything. I figured it was just my imagination and closed the window. I got back into bed and closed my eyes, ready to go back to sleep.

"Hello, love," I heard a voice say quietly from a dark corner of the room. My eyes shot open to see Alexander leaning against the wall.

"Aeryk!" I whispered sharply.

"He wakes up, I kill him," Alexander said harshly. He slowly and gracefully walked to the window, the moonlight making his skin glow.

"You quite possibly have figured this out for yourself already but our little meeting earlier, well, let's just say that it aggravated me...greatly," he said softly. He turned to look at me and Aeryk, in his sleep, put his arm around me again. Alexander chuckled and walked over to the bed.

"He really does love you, doesn't he?"

"Yes," I managed to croak in all my fear.

"Hm, it always seems that way. But in the end, they leave you. It happens all the time. You're young and foolish. You think that you'll be together forever, but they will eventually rip your heart out and they don't

care one bit about you." He looked at me then. "I don't want that to happen to you, Rayne. If you go away with me, we could live where ever we want, we could do what ever we want, we could be anything, and I would never leave you. We could live for eternity with eachother."

"I'm not going anywhere with you," I said sternly.

"No? You don't trust me? Well, you haven't had time to think, you're probably tired. I'll give you time to think for a while." Then he practically vanished, the window was open again. I shuddered violently in relief and Aeryk finally woke up.

"Anything wrong?" he asked kindly. I looked at his sweet face, I couldn't tell him about Alexander wanting me to leave. I couldn't scare him like that. I just nodded my head yes.

"Okay, go back to sleep." He pulled me closer to him and he kissed my shoulder.

"Good night," he whispered.

"Good night, Aeryk," I said and closed my eyes. I gradually fell asleep.

4 - Fear

Chapter Four Fear

I woke up to blinding sunlight coming in through the window that was still wide open. It was Saturday. Aeryk, with his arm still around me, was sleeping still. I stared at the ceiling for a few moments, thinking about what had happened during the night. Finally, I lifted Aeryk's arm and got dressed. I walked down the stairs to see Daren, who usually slept until 11:00, was already awake and watching TV. He looked up at me and a huge grin appeared on his face.

"Hope you kids didn't have too much fun last night after what I saw," he said tauntingly.

"Shut up, I already have a lot on my mind," I said sharply.

"Why? Anything happen that I should know about?" I took a deep breath, remembering how close and frightening Alexander had been.

"Alexander was here last night," I said quietly.

"What?" he sounded like he couldn't believe what I was telling him.

"He was in my room and he said that he knew that in the end, Aeryk would leave me and not care about how hurt I was. He told me that he didn't want that to happen to me, then he asked me to leave with him."

"Don't listen to him. Aeryk's crazy for you, you should hear the kind of stuff he says about you when you're not around. Does Aeryk know?"

"No and I want it to stay that way, okay?"

"Why shouldn't he know? I don't think he would like it very much if you suddenly left with some other guy. And I wouldn't like having to be the one to tell him about last night very much either."

"I just don't want him to be scared. I want him to be as happy as possible. So I'm not going to tell him and neither are you. Don't tell anyone. Not even Aunt Mollie, you got that?" He seemed too shocked at my decision that he was at a loss for words. He simply nodded his head. Aeryk came down then, still half asleep and in his pajamas. He put his arm on my shoulders and said, "Hey, good morning you two."

"Good morning," I said softly. I couldn't even look him in the eyes.

"Morning, Aeryk," Daren said as if there was nothing wrong.

"You guys got any meat?"

"Oh yeah, we usually don't eat it, though, we just suck the blood out of it," Daren said, walking towards the kitchen.

"Cool," Aeryk said and followed him. I was left alone in the living room. I started visualizing the night before. The way I had ignored thinking I had seen someone in the yard. Then being stupid enough not to wake Aeryk and tell him. I also remembered Alexander sounding so frightening and serious when he said that he was going to kill Aeryk if he woke up. Alexander's angry face stuck in my head.

"RAYNE!" It was Aeryk and Daren trying to get my attention. I looked up at Aeryk who had been shaking my arm to break my thoughts.

"Yes?" I said in a voice that still seemed lost.

"Are you okay?" Aeryk asked with clear worry in his voice.

"Yeah," I said and looked at Daren. He was staring at me with concern written all over his face. I looked

away and walked up the stairs to my room. I heard Aeryk start to question Daren and stopped in the doorway. I turned my head a little to look at Daren through the corner of my eye. I could see Aeryk off to the side still staring at me. He looked so confused and...scared. I hated it.

"You tell him," I said softly and walked into the room, closed the door, and locked it. I started to hear the muffled voice of Daren explain what I had told him. He finished. There was a silence from Aeryk that seemed to last forever. Then I heard him scream in anger.

"WHY DOES HE WANT TO HURT HER?! SHE'S DONE NOTHING WRONG!" His voice started to get growly. "I'M GONNA KILL HIM!"

"Aeryk!" I heard Daren yell. Then I heard a loud howl and a crash. I looked out the window to see Aeryk transformed and running at full speed towards Alexander's house. I saw Daren run out to the yard and scream at the top of his lungs, "AERYK!" I walked to the window and opened it.

"Daren," I almost whispered. He heard me with his inhuman hearing. He looked up at me, his expression was fear. Pure fear.

"I'm sorry," I whispered and could no longer look at him. I heard him grunt in confusion of what to do. He finally said something.

"I'll be back." Then I heard his footsteps running and him yelling after Aeryk. I sunk down below the window and started crying. I couldn't believe I'd wanted to keep that from Aeryk. I also couldn't believe that I couldn't tell him myself. I felt ashamed and weak. Then, with my enhanced hearing, I heard the most heartbreaking sound I've ever heard.

"YOU WILL DIE, DOG!" Alexander was screaming. I heard a series of barks from Aeryk and then Daren yelling, "Aeryk, don't do it! Rayne wouldn't want you to." I heard a long and loud growl from Aeryk then a yelp.

"I told you you would die." I heard a loud whimper from Aeryk then a scream from Daren saying, "How many people do you have to hurt before you're satisfied?!" I heard him lunge at Alexander, supposedly about to hit him. I heard Alexander simply say, "Are you sure you want to do that after what I just did to your friend?" I felt the sadness flow out of me and it was replaced with rage. I stood up and jumped out the window. I landed softly, barely with any noise, and ran as fast as I could to where I could still hear Alexander talking. I arrived to see Alexander holding Daren up by the neck, choking him.

"ALEXANDER!" I yelled.

"Ah, you've come to join us, love. What a great surprise." He was still holding Daren by the neck.

"Let him go."

He looked at Daren desperately trying to break free and let him go. Daren fell to the ground and stayed crouched there, gasping for air. Then I looked to the side and saw Aeryk. Some of the sadness from before was coming back. He was laying on the ground, still in wolf form. He was barely breathing and I knew he would need medical attention. Then I realized that Alexander had done this, Alexander had put the love of my life in pain. My eyes darted to Alexander, they were filled with anger and hatred. He laughed and walked up to me.

"Do you really think that he can protect you? Look what I did in less than a second." My eyes were unmoving from him.

"You. Almost. Killed. Aeryk," was all that I could say in my anger. I threw a strong punch into his stomach and he bent over surprisingly. He chuckled and said, "Now, that was unexpected. You're strong. You're not even a newborn vampire. I like that." I growled and lunged another fist at him. He moved quickly and grabbed my wrist. I tried to hit him with the other but he caught that one, too.

"You may be strong, but I'm still stronger." I was putting as much force as I could in attempt to knock him down, but he stood his ground. He raised his arms, still holding my wrists, and threw me down. "I'm going to let you three live out of pity. I truly do feel sorry at how pathetic excuses you and your brother are for vampires. You won't even use your powers unless it is necessary." He walked towards his

house which was out of my sight. I heard the front door open then close. I didn't feel that I was strong enough to walk upright so I crawled over to Daren who was still laying on the ground but he was no longer gasping for air. I put my hand on his shoulder and he looked up quickly.

"You okay?" I asked. He nodded and looked back down. I started to crawl over to Aeryk, frightened of what I was going to see up close. I put my hand on his shoulder just as I had with Daren, but I felt warm liquid. I stared at my hand for a moment then slowly lifted it up. I saw it was covered in Aeryk's blood. The scent of it reached my nostrils and my fangs started to grow. I resisted and got up even in my weakness to run to Daren. I grabbed his wrist and pulled him up off the ground and started running with him to the house.

"What's going on? What about Aeryk?" he asked, clearly confused.

"He's bleeding badly. We had to get away so we wouldn't hurt him." I began to cry. I hated that I had to leave him when he was injured. We reached the house and Daren ran to get a phone to call 911. I heard him say the address, thank them, then hang up. He ran into the living room where I was sitting on the couch and said, "They're going to get him. He'll be fine." I just looked at him with tears running down my cheeks and simply nodded. He sat down on the couch with me, hugged me and whispered, "Everything's gonna be okay." I could tell he didn't believe that himself.

5 - Two Days

Chapter Five Two Days

Since Daren and I couldn't see Aeryk without getting hungry, only Aunt Mollie could go see him. The night he was sent to the hospital, she came back saying that they would have to keep him there for two more days due to excessive bleeding in his shoulder. Those two days had been depressing and terrifying. It was a long weekend. We didn't have school on Monday. All day Sunday Nat was over to talk about Aeryk. I didn't tell her that it had been Alexander who had hurt him. I just told her that we had been on a walk and he had tripped, hit his head, and got a concussion. Her family had ran out to see what was going on when they heard the sirens is what she mostly told me. The rest of the time I wasn't really paying attention to what she was saying because I was so worried about Aeryk. I was mad, too. I was mad that I couldn't even see him because I would most likely hurt him. I was mad at Alexander for doing this. I was even mad at myself for not being able to help. I was also thinking of tomorrow night when Aeryk came back. Would Alexander still try to hurt him? That's basically what we did all day. she didn't even seem to notice, or care if she had, that I wasn't really paying attention. Every once in a while Daren came in and asked if I wanted any lunch. I mostly ignored him, too.

Then, around 8:00, Aunt Mollie returned home and Nat left. We ate dinner in silence then Daren went to the living room to watch TV, Aunt Mollie went to work on the garden in the back, and I went up to my room. I only got to relax for about fifteen minutes before I heard Daren yelling up to me to come down and see something. I walked out and said, "What's the problem?"

"Go look at the news!" he said and ran to the back door to get Mollie. I walked into the living room and looked at the TV which was showing a news broadcast. I looked at the headline.

"Five teens have mysteriously disappeared." It read. I looked down to the live interview they were having with a police officer. Daren and Aunt Mollie ran in then.

"Well, the mother of one of the kids said that they were all going out to a movie around two this afternoon. She had specifically told them to be back around 5:30. It was around 8:00 that she finally called the police. The teens' names are Trent Branston, Tina Summers, Logan Cox, Brandon Willards, and Lisa Stratsford."

"They're all from our school," I said softly, "They all are in my Trig class. What could've happened to them?"

"I don't know but the Cox family lives right around this area. Which means that's also Alexander's," Daren said, apparently feeling like the smartest person on the planet at the moment. I couldn't say anything. Was Alexander the one behind the disappearances? That night we all went to bed pondering that question. Is Alexander really that crazy? Would he really go on a rampage of death?

I woke up early the next morning since my mind was used to getting up that early on Mondays. I walked down to get some breakfast and was surprised to see Daren already at the kitchen table with a cup full of blood.

"What are you doing up this early?" I asked lazily.

"I've been up all night. I'm worried, too. Kayla lives three houses down from the Cox family. I was watching the news to see if they found those kids yet. They haven't." I had never seen Daren so serious

before. It was comforting that I knew he could take things seriously but it also frightened me. He looked so...sad. I noticed that the TV was on in the living room. I walked in to watch. When I saw what was on the screen, I shouted Daren's name. He walked in and looked at the TV.

"Teens found dead near stream." Is what the headline was. I looked down at the camera's view. It showed the grey, dead faces of Trent and Lisa. Then it went to another camera and showed the reporter. She said, "These teens went missing last night and just a couple of minutes ago, police found them all dead near this stream. Lets ask a couple of questions." The camera turned to the same officer from last night.

"Um, we don't know what could've happened to these kids. It's really very strange. When we found them, we saw that each of them, on different parts of their body, had two holes. They also seem to have lost large amounts of blood. Heh, it kinda makes you think a vampire attacked them, huh? But that's impossible. So, we're still trying to figure out how these kids died and we'll inform you when we know something."

"Thank you, officer," the reporter said and the camera went back to her. I looked at Daren in disbelief. He looked at me with the same expression on his face. We had unfortunately been right about Alexander. Daren slowly reached for the remote and turned off the TV. He sat down on the couch and put his face in his hands.

"Oh my gosh," he whipered and he started crying. "Kayla." I sat down next to him and hugged him.

"She's gonna be okay," I said to him even though I didn't completely know that myself. Now I was glad that Aeryk was safe in a hospital. Then I remembered, he was coming back tonight. I started sobbing with Daren at this thought. I heard the front door open and close. I decided it was Aunt Mollie and called, "We have bad news, Aunt Mollie."

"Sorry, love, but I'm not your Auntie." I heard a devilishly beautiful voice say softly. I looked up and saw Alexander standing in front of Daren and me. He smiled when our eyes met. "So, how's the dog?" he said teasingly. All the anger rose up in me again, but I didn't try to fight this time.

"I hope I didn't cause you two too much trouble the other night. That dog simply aggravated me and I got violent. But you're still, my favorite," he said mockingly.

"Don't call Aeryk a dog," I whispered. He ignored me and kept talking.

"And let me tell you I had a devine feast last night. Sorry if they were friends of yours. But I was by the stream and hungry when they passed by. They smelled so...delicious. I couldn't resist." Daren hadn't looked up but he knew that Alexader was ther and he was listening.

"Well, I just stopped by to remind you to watch your actions. And don't let that emotionally unstable dog near me again. Right, love?" I just stared at him evily. He gave me a smirk and left. Daren, still looking down said, "I'm gonna have to kill him later."

Hours passed by and in that time Aunt Mollie had come home. We hadn't told about Alexander. It was around 7:00 now and she had just left to go pick up Aeryk from the hospital. I had to admit that I was extremely excited. I had been so worried for what seemed like forever. Daren and I sat at the kitchen table anxiously awaiting the arrival of Aunt Mollie and Aeryk.

"So, you excited?" Daren asked to break the silence. I nodded and he said, "Yeah, me too." We waited for a couple more minutes then we heard a car engine in the front yard. I looked up at the front door impatiently. It finally opened and Aeryk stepped in. I got up out of my chair and ran to him to give him a hug. He hugged me back and said, "Miss me?"

"Of course I did," I said and let go of him. Daren walked over and gave Aeryk a brotherly hug.

"Hey, we missed you, man," he said and they separated.

"Yeah, sorta guessed that already." I was so happy to see him happy. He had been scared and depressed the one day I had spent with him. But when I looked into his eyes, I could tell he was still afraid.

"Hey, Aeryk, we have to talk to you about something," Daren said.

"Yeah, what is it?"

"Alexander."

"Tell me everything." We all sat down in the living room and Daren and I told Aeryk and Aunt Mollie the whole story.

6 - Betrayal

Chapter Six Betrayal

The next day at school, Aeryk stayed with me where ever I went. We were in almost every class together so that worked out pretty well. And when we didn't have a class together, he would walk me to the room and wait at the door until I was in my seat. It was ninth period, the 1st one of the day. Aeryk and I didn't have this class together but Nat was in the same class. Aeryk gave me a hug goodbye then waited until I took my seat next to Nat. We still had a minute or two left of the passing period so we talked.

"Rayne, I have to tell you something important," Nat said quite seriously.

"Okay, what is it?"

"You know Alexander?"

"Yeah," I said getting cautious.

"I-I think I'm in love with him." I merely stared at her in disbelief.

"And why exactly?" I blurted out.

"Because he's gorgeous. And he was over at my house yesterday and he was so sweet and funny. I've fallen in love."

"He was inside your house?"

"Yeah, is that a problem?"

"Um, no, no. It's just...surprising," I said keeping my memories and thoughts to myself. The bell rang and Mr. Olson, our history teacher, walked in.

"Good afternoon, class," he said in his usual drawl.

"Good afternoon," only a few kids replied.

"Today we will be starting the unit on the 1600's through the 1800's. Yes, a very exciting time. For example, the 1600's were the starting point of vampires." At the word "vampires" I perked up to listen. He went on, "Yes, vampires were a big deal back then. Now we know not to be afraid because they, of course, do not exist. But still, they are a very interesting subject and I thought that we would do a little project on them." Nat looked at me then and raised her hand.

"Yes, Miss Draton?" Mr. Olson said when he saw her hand stuck up in the air. "What's your question?"

"Are we allowed to work in partners?"

"Uh, yes, yes you are." Every head in the class was turning to look at someone they wanted to be partners with. Nat tapped my shoulder and said, "hey, we're gonna ace this thing. Haha!"

"Yeah," I said unenthusiastically. The rest of the class included Mr. Olson's boring voice explaining what we could and could not do for this project. At the sound of the bell, Nat stopped me before I could leave.

"I need to talk to you."

"Okay...."

"You know how I told you that Alexander was at my house yesterday?"

"Yes," I said, getting cautious again.

"He asked me something while he was there, too."

"What did he ask you?"

"He asked me out on a date!"

"What?"

"I'm going on a date with a gorgeous guy!"

"Don't go."

"Wait, what?"

"Don't go on a date with him."

"Why not?"

"I don't like him." In my head I was replaying everything that he's done to hurt Daren, Aeryk, and me.

"Well, why don't you like him?" She asked with confusion in her voice.

"There's just something about him that throws me off."

"Well, I really want to go on a date with him. Like I said before, I'm in love with him."

"No, you're not, you just think you are." I saw Aeryk standing in the doorway waiting for me.

"I thought you would be happy for me. But I guess you're just going to be a jealous jerk about it."

"HA! Jealous?! Why would I be jealous if I have Aeryk?!"

"Sorry to break this to you but Aeryk isn't that great." This made my anger almost get out of control.

"Aeryk is one thousand times a man Alexander will ever be!" I screamed.

"No, he's not!"

"SHUT UP!" Aeryk heard my shout and ran up to me before I could do anything to hurt Nat. He held me tight and said to Nat, "I think you should go. I don't want her to lose control."

"Fine," she said stubbornly and left.

"What was that?!" Aeryk said, surprised.

"She's going on a date with Alexander."

7 - Not Anymore

Chapter Seven Not Anymore

"What do you mean 'she's going on a date with Alexander'?! She can't! She'll most likely get hurt or...abused," Aeryk was saying as I put in the number for my locker.

"I know," I grunted. "I tried to tell her but then she got all 'you're being a jealous jerk' and all that crap." I opened my locker and put all of my stuff in my bag and slammed the door closed. Some people turned away from their senseless conversations at the loud noise. I started walking and Aeryk followed. It only reminded me of how Alexander calls him "dog."

"So, what are we gonna do?" I stopped walking and turned to look at him.

"I don't know. All I know is that Nat needs to be watched. Even though she was being a jerk, she's still my friend. Keep an eye on her, especially when you see her with Alexander."

"Okay," he said, put his arm on my shoulders, and started walking with me.

* * *

We were sitting on the couch together, watching TV. I had the laptop, researching the "history of vampires" for Olson's project. Aeryk had his arm around me on my right side and Daren was sitting left of me. Aunt Mollie was in the rocking chair next to the couch, reading today's paper. I typed in the word "vampires" in the search engine.

"Why are you looking up yourself, Rayne?" Daren asked, looking at what I had typed in.

"It's for Olson's class. We're doing a project on the history of vampires from the 1600's through the 1800's."

"But we've been vampires for way longer than that. I'm over 1,000 years old. We lived through the sixteenth and eighteenth centruies."

"Hey, it's been a long time since then. I'm just making sure I remember everything correctly." I looked at the page that had popped up. It had a dark background and the home page went to different links. I clicked on the history tab and it went to a similar page. I scrolled down, skimming everything as I did. Then I stopped at a painting they had posted. I recognized the man in the painting. I read the description.

"This is Alexander Cordilini. He was an evil vampire that lived in the early years of Italy. He was an enemy to both humans and vampires. He would take human women with his beauty and kill them. And with vampire women, he would find one that was pretty enough for him, rape them, then chase after them in blind love until he got bored with them and eventually killed them. It is believed that he is still out there but no one knows where." I stared at it with my mouth hanging open. I had been so happy just a second ago, Daren and I had talked like we used to. It had felt so...normal.

"Aeryk," I said softly.

"Yeah?" He looked at the painting and recognized who it was right away.

"I've got to go find Nat." I got up and ran out the door to Nat's house. When I got there, I saw Nat holding the door open for Alexander to come in.

"NAT!" I yelled. She looked at me, clearly still annoyed. She said something to Alexander and walked towards me.

"What is it? And could you please make it fast?"

"I found out something about Alexander."

"And what might that be?"

"He's going to kill you, Nat, he's going to kill you."

"Wow, Rayne, I can't believe that you would make up something like that just because you're jealous.

You're so stupid!" I was completely confused and knew it showed. "If you're going to act like this, then I guess we can't be friends anymore. The project's off. Find another partner." She left then, with me standing there, still confused. How could someone not take that seriously? Aeryk ran up from behind me then.

"What are you doing?"

"It's over."

"What?"

"Nat and I aren't friends anymore. No, not anymore."

"Oh, I'm sorry, Rayne," he said and hugged me. I hugged him back, still looking at the green front doors of Nat's house.

"Bye, Nat," I whispered softly to myself. Aeryk and I started to walk back to the house.

8 - Explanations

Chapter Eight Explanations

That night, I lied awake in bed with Aeryk's arms around me for hours. I was worrying about Nat. Suddenly, my window flew open and a huge gust of wind blew in. I got up to go close it. I turned away from the window and Alexander was standing right behind me. It startled me and I jumped. He smiled when I did.

"Did I scare you, love?" he asked without a hint of worry in his voice.

"No," I said but I knew he could hear the lie in my voice.

"I just wanted to ask you how you knew Natalie."

"We're best friends. Well...we were."

"Oh, what happened?" he said, the concern clearly mocking.

"You happened," I stated.

"Oh, I'm sorry that I ruined your friendship." He wasn't sorry at all.

"I also wanted to explain some things to you. You know, why I did this, why I did that type of thing. Lets see, ah, we'll start with Natalie. I'm sure you're wondering why I wanted to go on a date with her. Well, the reason is because of my...reputation. I'll give you a short history lesson right here. You see, I've been around for a very long time. And when I was merely a newborn vampire, I still had a girl to love. But one night, when I was out with her, I was hungry, I killed her. This, I will admit, caused me to go insane. I sought out human girls that reminded me of her, charmed them, and eventually killed them. Then I started with vampire girls. I don't really know why I still do it. It's just fun, I guess. That is why I'm chasing you, Rayne. You remind me so much of Margaret. You look like her, sound like her, you even smell like her. And that is the same reason I am chasing Natalie. She reminds me of her."

"How is killing people fun?" I said more to myself than him.

"I don't know, it just is. Now, I guess I'll also explain those teens. This is a simple explanation. I was hungry. I know you're usually only supposed to kill one human at a time but I'll tell you why I kill more than one. People, in their last moments, tend to show who they really are. I know which ones are cowards, which ones are courageous, which ones care, and which ones really couldn't care less about anything. When I was about to kill him," he nodded his head towards Aeryk, "he showed who he really is, too." An evil smile appeared on his face. "Would you like to know what kind of person he is?"

"Shut up," I said very softly.

"You don't?" he asked tauntingly.

"Shut up," I said a little louder.

"After all, he is the 'love of your life.'"

"Shut up, shut up, shut up!" I almost yelled. He chuckled.

"I think you already know. That's why you're getting so angry. You know how weak, ignorant, and unstable he is. Face it, he's a coward." I looked into his glowing red eyes. I saw amusement, joy, glee. He was laughing at my pain. He chuckled again.

"You do know. You know that's another reason why I love you. You're so easy to read. And you should be happy that I'm in love with you, otherwise, he would be dead by now." I took in a deep breath. He

turned his head to look out the window.

"I have to leave," he said and walked over to the window and opened it. He was up on the windowsill and turned his head towards me.

"Until we meet again, love," he said then he vanished. The curtains flying in the wind. I shuddered out of fear, anger, and the wind was freezing. I closed the window and quickly got back into bed. I looked at Aeryk's sleeping face. He looked so calm and peaceful. He always looked worried during the day. I stroked his cheek and he woke up. He looked at my face and smiled.

"You look even more beautiful in this dim light than usual," he said, still smiling. I smiled back at him then kissed him. He wrapped his arms around me and kissed me back. I pulled away and buried my face into his chest.

"Aeryk's not a coward," I thought to myself. He hugged me and whispered, "I love you." I smiled and said, "I love you, too." He kept holding me in his arms and he fell asleep. I was still awake. I was trying to erase all thoughts of Nat and Alexander and concentrate on being here with Aeryk. Nat didn't know how amazing he is. She had never hugged him, she had never kissed him, she hadn't even had a real conversation with him after I thought about it. Oh well, her loss. I erased everything in my mind except for Aeryk again. I fell asleep with his arms around me and my face in his chest.

* * *

The next morning, I was getting ready to go to school again. Daren walked up to me and gave me something.

"Here," he said.

"What's this?"

"I know Alexander was in your room again last night." I looked at the thing he had given me. It was an audio recorder. "We need to know how he thinks. Keep this with you at all times, okay?"

"Wow, Daren, this is actually a really smart idea." I was really surprised.

"Hey, I can be smart when I need to be." He showed me where to hide it so it didn't get taken away from teachers.

"Thanks," I said.

"Aeryk knows about it, too," he said and after everybody had gotten some breakfast, we were off to school.

9 - Powers

Chapter Nine Powers

I was sitting in Biology again. I was in my usual back corner with Aeryk sitting next to me but Nat was on the other side of the room. It felt different without her in front of me. Mrs. Colton was sitting at her desk grading papers. I was supposed to be working on an essay about the inner workings of fish. But I couldn't keep my concentration. I was looking around the room, occasionally looking over at Nat. Then my vampire ears picked up something. Footsteps. They grew louder and louder. I stared hard at the door to see if anybody walked in. Then, someone horrible walked in. Alexander. He saw me and stared back for a second then walked over to the teacher's desk. I heard him tell Mrs. Colton that he was new and that he was sorry that he was late. She replied kindly that it was fine and that she just needed to find a seat for him. She looked towards me and I looked straight down at my blank paper. Then I heard footsteps approaching me. The chair in front of me was pulled back and Alexander sat down. He turned around to me.

"Hello, love," he said devilishly. I looked up at him and he was staring down at me, smiling. I didn't say anything. I looked over to Aeryk and he was staring at Alexander as if he was trying to send him a mental message.

"Rayne, Aeryk, get back to work," Mrs. Colton called. I looked back down at my paper and so did Aeryk. I heard Alexander turn back in his seat and start to get things out on his desk. I started writing slowly. A half hour passed and I had barely written anything. I was trying hard to concentrate but I was scared at the fact that Alexander sat right in front of me. A neatly folded note slipped onto my desk. I looked up at Alexander who was looking at me again. I looked back down at the note, picked it up, and started to open it carefully.

I'm sure you remember Monday night. I remember mentioning powers. What is your power? Have you even ever used it? Mine, as you've probably already guessed, is teleportation. If you knew your power and used it as frequently as I did, you would be almost invincible. Try. Tonight. I will meet you in the park at 7th Avenue and 2nd Street around midnight. If you choose not to come, there will be heart breaking consequences.

*Yours Truly,
Alex*

I looked back up at Alexander with my brow furrowed. I had never used my power before. Nor had Daren. We had never thought it was necessary to use them. I folded the note back up and put it in my pocket. I noticed that Aeryk was looking at me. I just shook my head and tried to get back to work. The rest of the day, I didn't have any more classes with Alexander and I was grateful for that. Aeryk didn't question me about the note. He really didn't talk to me at all after first period. I didn't talk to anyone either. I was too busy thinking about what I should do. "Heart breaking consequences" is what Alexander

had written. I didn't know what that meant exactly, but I knew that it would be bad. By the end of the day, I had made the decision to go meet Alexander but have Daren with me and Aeryk hiding nearby to keep watch.

* * *

We were all at home again. Daren, Aeryk, and I. I had to explain to them what Alexander's note had said. I would have to eventually. Aeryk would tell Daren and they would ask. Aeryk and I were sitting on the couch together and Daren was sitting in Aunt Mollie's rocking chair. Daren and Aeryk had only one short conversation. I hadn't spoken at all. I had just stared at nothing for a long time, thinking. I finally said something.

"Daren, how do vampires use their powers?" He looked up, surprised that I said something. Aeryk had looked up to listen, too.

"I don't know. You and I have never used them before. Why?" he replied. I took in a deep breath and exhaled.

"Read this." I pulled out the note Alexander had given me and handed it to him. He took it and read it. When he was finished, he looked at me with concern and worry written all over his face.

"Are you gonna go?"

"Yes."

"You can't! I won't let you get hurt."

"I'm not going alone. You and Aeryk are going to come with me."

"Wait, what?"

"I figured that you should find out what your power is, too. But Aeryk will have to hide somewhere nearby just in case we need some help."

"What's going on?" Aeryk asked and Daren shoved the note at him. He read it and looked at me with the same expression Daren had.

"Why are you going?!"

"Read the last sentence again." He looked at the note again and his expression turned serious.

"Do you really feel that you have to?"

"Yes."

"Okay, I'll go. And so will Daren. Right?"

"What? Oh yeah, sure." I looked up at Aeryk and he looked down at me.

"You don't have to go through this alone."

"Thank you," I whispered and Aeryk hugged me tightly.

* * *

It was 11:30 and we had told Aunt Mollie what we were planning to do. She had argued a bit but in the end she agreed with our decision. Aeryk and I were waiting by the front door, Daren was getting some last minute blood in his system before we left.

"You nervous?" Aeryk asked to break the silence.

"A little. You?"

"Yeah, a little." Daren walked in and we all walked out the door and started to walk to the park that

Alexander had said. We were walking down the middle of the street. This was a small town. There were almost never cars out at midnight. When we got to 7th Avenue and 1st Street, Aeryk gave me a hug goodbye and went a different way that headed to the back of the park. Daren and I kept walking straight. When we arrived at 2nd Street, we could see a man and a girl kissing in the middle of the park. As we got closer, Daren started to slow down, then stop completely.

"Wait," he said, "Isn't that Nat?" I looked closer at the girl. It was Nat. The man was Alexander. We didn't move a muscle. I just stood there breathing heavily. Then I saw Alexander's red eyes look straight at me. His lips left Nat's lips and they went down to her neck. I started to subconsciously walk towards them. Then Nat screamed. Alexander's eyes were open wide and I could see his fangs stuck in Nat's neck.

"NO!" I shouted. I started to run but Daren caught my arm.

"That's not a good idea," he said. Alexander pulled away from Nat and she fell to the ground. She was still alive. She was screaming and writhing in pain. She was dying. Alexander was standing above her, his chin covered in her blood. He just stared at her. Nat gave one last scream then she was still for a moment. Then her eyes shot open, they were white like all newborn vampire's were. She got up, looked at Alexander, took in a deep breath through her nose. Her head darted towards us. She smiled just like Alexander did. Then she turned back to Alexander.

"I'm hungry, dearest," she said.

"We will hunt soon enough," he replied. He looked at us and said, "Come." I looked at Daren and he nodded. We started walking towards them.

"Welcome, friends," Alexander said.

"We just came because we want to know more about our powers, not because we're your friends," Daren said.

"Now, let's not be rude. I guess since you're so eager to, we will get started on your powers. And your dog doesn't have to hide. I won't hurt him if he behaves." I was taken aback by this. Then I called for Aeryk. When he got to me I told him that Alexander had known he was hiding.

"We'll start with you, Rayne," Alexander said, "The way you use your power is basically you have to concentrate. If you do not know what your power is, then just concentrate on the moon. No one knows why but it sort of unlocks it."

"I'll try," I said and looked up to the moon. I concentrated hard until all I could see was the moon. Every crater and every mountain was burned into my memory. I thought it wasn't working so I looked away. But when I looked where Alexander had been standing, he was gone. Everyone was gone. There was nothing but blackness and the sky.

"Hello?" I called. No one answered. "Hello?!"

"Hello." I turned quickly and there was a small girl in a night gown standing behind me. Her skin was as white and smooth as her clothing.

"Oh, hello, what are you doing out here so late?" I asked.

"I can't find my mommy."

"Well, I could help you look for her."

"Really?"

"Mhm."

"You can ask those men that took everything from our house and took mommy away with them? She left me. I don't know why. I always thought I was a good girl." I bent down so that I could look her in the eye. But when I got closer, I realized huge cuts on her arms. There was even a huge chunk of flesh missing from her left arm.

"What happened to your arms, sweetie?" I asked, a little shocked.

"It happened when that bear attacked me." I looked up into her eyes. They were dead. They were black and sunken in.

"Are you-dead?"

"I think so." I started to hyperventilate. I walked backwards away from her. I was about ten feet away from her when she turned into a ghost type creature and flew at me. I screamed and fell backwards. I returned into reality. I was curled up on the ground, shaking violently. Aeryk and Daren were leaning over me, screaming my name and asking what was wrong. I gulped and stopped shaking. I sat up and Aeryk's and Daren's screams stopped. I looked to Alexander. He was looking at me curiously.

"Interesting," he said, this time, he was serious.

10 - Pain

Chapter Ten Pain

"What's interesting?" Aeryk asked defensively.

"I've only seen this once before," Alexander said.

"What is it?!"

"She can communicate with the dead." Aeryk didn't have anything to say. He just stared angrily at Alexander.

"Is that what you were doing?" Daren asked me. I nodded. Aeryk looked at me with the same angry expression. It scared me. His eyes darted around. He was trying to comprehend this.

"Ha! I always knew you were a freak, Rayne," Nat interrupted. Aeryk looked at her like he was going to murder her if she said another word. She grabbed Alexander's arm and moved back so that she was partially behind him. I put my hand on Aeryk's shoulder and he looked back at me. This time, his expression was worry mixed with confusion. He sat down on the ground next to me and held me.

"Rayne, don't ever do that in front of me again," Aeryk said. He sounded like he was about to cry.

"Why not?"

"You looked like you were being tortured or-dying." I almost cried at the word "dieing." I remembered Monday night when Alexander had almost killed Aeryk. I had been so angry and sad. But I was mostly scared. I hugged Aeryk back to reassure him that I wouldn't. I really didn't want to again. It had been so dark and creepy. It made me feel as if I had died a little myself while I was there.

"Tell me what you saw," Alexander said and kneeled down to my level. "Please."

"Do I have to?" I asked. I didn't want to remember.

"It would help me get a better understanding of how powerful you really are." I looked down at the ground then started explaining what I had seen.

"It was very dark. There wasn't anything except for the moon and the stars. I called for you but there was no answer the first time. The second time, a little girl in a white night gown said hello back. She asked me if I could help her find her mommy. If I could talk to those men that took all their stuff and her mother away. I looked closer at her and she had huge cuts all over her arms. And part of her left arm was missing. I asked her what happened. She said that it happened when the bear attacked her. Then I asked her if she was dead. She said-she said-I think so. I got scared and tried to get away from her. Then she turned into a ghost-like creature and flew at me. That's when I screamed and fell. Then I came back to reality." I looked up at everyone's faces. Alexander's was fascinated and intrigued. Nat's was bored. Daren was looking at the ground with his brow furrowed. Aeryk's was...scared, angry, sad, confused, upset. I hated seeing him like this.

"Aeryk," I whispered.

"I remember the scream. I remember it too well," was all he said.

"I'm sorry." He looked down at me and his expression changed. He looked like he understood, like he wasn't so scared anymore. I could see that the sadness was still there but he looked happy at the same time. I didn't know why but I was sure happy for him. He was still holding me. I kissed him and he seemed surprised. But after a second he kissed me back fiercely. I hugged him again. For a second I

didn't care that Daren was watching. I pulled away and noticed Alexander staring at us. His eyes looked like he was about to explode in rage but he contained himself.

"I think I should leave now," he sort of grunted out. He stood back up and started walking. Nat followed him. Daren, Aeryk, and I were left alone in the middle of the park.

"C'mon, we should get home. It's almost 2:30," Daren said and stood up. Aeryk got up and then helped me up. Daren had already started walking. Aeryk put his arm around my waist and we followed behind Daren towards home.

* * *

We walked in the front doors and found Aunt Mollie on the couch, sleeping. We were quiet going up the stairs and got into bed. We were all tired and we had to get up relatively early the next morning for school. When I was just about asleep, Aeryk started talking.

"Rayne?" he said softly.

"Hmmm?" I was half asleep.

"Tonight was...was...interesting." I smiled and said. "How so?"

"It seems like I went through almost every emotion there is. Anger, sadness, confusion, love, happiness, gratitude, fear. I guess it's true what they say about werewolves, we're emotionally unstable."

"I don't care if you're emotionally unstable. I still love you."

"Thank you," he said and kissed me passionately again. He put his hands on my neck so that my head was tilted upwards. He put his left arm around me to pull me closer to him. I put my arms around him, we still hadn't broken the kiss. He pulled away for a second so I could take a breath then he kissed me again. His hand became tangled in my hair and mine in his. I finally pulled away from the kiss but he just kissed me again. He had his arms around me and he wouldn't let go.

"Aeryk," I mumbled through his lips. He still didn't stop. "Aeryk, stop." He gave no response. "Stop." He just held me tighter. I finally pushed him away with my inhuman strength. We stared at each other for a moment. Then he said, "I'm sorry." He sounded like he was about to cry again. He got up and ran out the door.

"Aeryk, wait!" I called after him. He ran out the front door and through the window I saw him running and crying. I couldn't believe it. I hurt him. Even when he had just told me he was emotionally unstable. I'm such an idiot! Daren walked into my room then.

"Hey, what's up with Aeryk?" he asked. I just started crying. "Hey, what's wrong? What happened?"

"Go find Aeryk," I said between sobs.

"Okay, I'll be right back." He left and I was alone in the dark, crying.

11 - The Chase Begins

Chapter Eleven The Chase Begins

I was on my bed, crying still. I could hear Daren shouting Aeryk's name over and over. After a couple of minutes of Daren running and shouting, I heard a howl in the distance that sounded too much like a cry. I stopped crying and got up to look out the window. Daren was running back towards the house. I looked over towards Alexander's house. I began to get angry. I was thinking.

"Where could Aeryk have gone? Could anyone help? Why did I do that?!" I closed my eyes and smelled the air. Then I heard laughing. It was a girl's laugh. I opened my eyes and looked as far as I could. In a street about a mile away, I saw Nat dancing around Alexander and laughing. Then I heard the lonely howl again.

"Lets go kill him," Nat said to Alexander. He stopped walking and just stood there for a moment. Then he said, "Fine." Nat let out a screeching laugh and ran in the direction of the howl.

All I felt now was rage. I jumped out the window, ran past Daren, and kept running in the direction of Nat's insane laughter. Daren started running after me.

"Rayne!" he called. I kept racing towards Alexander and Nat. Every corner I turned, I knew I was closer to my target. I kept running for what seemed like forever, the adrenaline making me feel high and content at the same time. Then, down the road, I saw them. Nat still dancing crazily and Alexander walking slowly. Alexander spotted me and yelled, "Nat, Rayne!" Nat stopped dancing and faced me. I kept running at her. She screamed and ran to Alexander. She held onto his arm and they vanished. I stopped in my tracks and looked around. Then I heard the maniacal laughing again. I turned and saw Nat and Alexander up the street.

"We're going to kill Aeryk! Ahahaha!" Nat yelled to me and then they vanished again. I stood there for a few moments, the rage building up. Then my fangs grew out and I screamed into the air, "I'M GONNA KILL THEM!" I ran faster than I've ever ran before. Every house and car was just a colorful blur, I was running so fast. I ran for just minutes before I came to a stop in the woods that had the stream where those kids had been murdered. I stood with my glowing blue eyes and my fangs out. Every sense on my body was on alert. I heard Nat's echoing laughter all around me. I looked frantically around, trying to spot her pale skin. In the same echoey voice, she said, "We're going to kill him." I screamed at the voice.

"Rayne!" I heard Daren call in the distance.

"He's gong to die and there's nothing you can do about it," she said.

"Come out, you cowards!" I shouted. I heard Alexander's chuckle echo in the same way Nat's voice did. Then there was complete and utter silence. I listened for another sound. There was nothing.

"Rayne!" Daren was getting closer. Then I heard Aeryk bark and growl. Then Nat's laughter again. They were close. I ran in that direction. I heard a loud, defensive howl from Aeryk. I ran faster. Up ahead, I started to see a clearing brightly lit by the almost full moon. Aeryk, Nat, and Alexander were in the center of it. Right before I entered the clearing, I stopped. I saw Aeryk, looking fierce and ready to attack. Then, Alexander and Nat had their fangs out, ready to fight, also. I remembered what Alexander had done to Aeryk alone Monday night. Now he had a newborn vampire with him. Aeryk would most definately die and so would anyone who attempted to help.

"Rayne!" Daren called my name again and everyone in the clearing below looked up at me. Aeryk immediately became depressed when he saw me. Nat simply smiled.

"Come to watch the show?" she yelled up at me. I stared at her. How could we have been friends so long? I didn't even know how crazy she actually was.

"Rayne!" Daren was about ten yards behind me now. I heard every footstep crash to the ground and crush twigs and dead leaves. He ran up behind me, then stopped. "What's going on?"

"They want to kill Aeryk."

"Let me tell you, Rayne, really don't want to harm your dog," Alexander said, "I wouldn't want to hurt you that way. I know you love him. You would die for him."

"Alex!" Nat whined. He shushed her quiet.

"I don't believe you," I said.

"You probably don't after everything I've done these past couple of days. But I am serious. You have great power and I admire that." I just stared at him so he went on. "I'm going to let him live...for now." He grabbed hold of Nat's arm and they vanished. Once I was sure they were actually gone, I ran down to Aeryk. Daren followed.

"Aeryk, are you okay?" I was about ready to cry. He went back into human form and said, "Not really." He couldn't even look me in the eye.

"Oh, Aeryk, I'm so sorry."

"It's ok...really."

"No, it's not." My fangs had already gone down. I began to cry. Aeryk took in a deep breath then let it out. Daren spoke up then.

"Rayne, I think I know what we need to do." I looked at him as if to ask him what it was. "We need to go to London and meet with the Council. You too, Aeryk."

"What's that?" he asked.

"They're sort of the vampire government. Most other vampires live in London so they'll all be there, too." I thought this over for a moment, then nodded.

"Okay, we leave by the time the sun rises." I nodded again then hugged Aeryk. He was reluctant at first, but he hugged me back.

"Please forgive me," I whispered to him.

"I already have," he said and pulled away from me but kept his right arm on my shoulders.

"Right, then," Daren said and we started to walk back to the house to pack for the long trip we had ahead of us.

12 - Arrival

Chapter Twelve Arrival

We had decided to take a cab to the airport. Daren was sitting in the passenger's seat in the front and Aeryk and I were in the back. It was around 6:00 in the morning. I was leaning against Aeryk, half asleep. Aeryk was leaning against the car door and Daren had his head back and his eyes were closed. "You kids look like you had a crazy night last night," the driver said.

"Sort of," Daren said, still in the same position.

"Haha, you two back there look kinda cute," the driver said, looking at Aeryk and me through the rear view mirror. I smiled and I saw his eyes crinkle in a smile in the mirror. Aeryk started snoring softly and no one talked the rest of the drive.

* * *

I had fallen asleep somewhere along the way. I awoke to Aeryk shaking me gently and saying, "Rayne, it's time to get up." I sat up and stretched. Aeryk opened the door, got out, and I followed. Daren and the driver had been getting the luggage. The driver slammed the trunk closed and picked up two bags. Daren and Aeryk did the same which left only a backpack for me to carry. We all walked into the airport and to the front desk which surprisingly had no line. Daren had bought the tickets online last night so the lady at the desk only had to direct us to where we dropped our bags and then to Gate B. We dropped our bags off, paid the driver who's name turned out to be Phil, and headed to Gate B to board the plane. When we were in, each side had three seats. We found ours and I took the window seat, Aeryk was in the middle, and Daren sat in the outer seat. It was a ten hour flight from Wyoming to London. I settled in and got comfortable for the long trip.

* * *

We had taken off around 7:00 that morning so, if we were still in America, it was about 5:00. Daren had called some of our vampire friends and told them that we were coming for a visit. We got off the plane, got all of our bags, and walked out of the airport to see the Blakes waiting for us. When they saw us, they embraced us with hello's and hugs. Daren and I gave all of them hugs while Aeryk just stood off to the side awkwardly. I saw him and said, "Oh, yeah, this is my boyfriend, Aeryk everybody."

"Aeryk!" almost all of them said in unison. They bombarded him with hugs and hello's just like Daren and me. I started to introduce everybody.

"Aeryk, this is the Blake family. We've known them for about 700 years. This here," I pointed to the oldest woman, "is Evaline."

"Hello, Aeryk, and let me tell you it is so nice to meet you," Evaline said.

"Thanks, nice to meet you, too," Aeryk replied.

"And these two," I pointed to the twins, "are Derek and Evan. They're twins as you can see," I said.

"Hi, Aeryk!" they said together.

"I have a good feeling we're gonna be good friends," Evan said.

"No, I'm gonna be his friend!" Derek protested.

"No."

"Yes."

"No!"

"Yes!" They started slapping each other and Evaline had to break them up.

"Hi to you, too," was all that Aeryk said. I shook my head and continued.

"This is Patrick," I said, pointing to the oldest looking man.

"Hello, Aeryk, it's nice to see that Rayne found such a nice boy," Patrick said with a smile.

"Thank you," Aeryk said. I went on.

"This here is Mary," I said, pointing to the girl that looked maybe eighteen years old.

"Hi," she said, sounding a little bored.

"Um, hi," Aeryk said, a little taken aback by her tone. I rolled my eyes at her and then pointed to the boy that looked like he was twenty and said, "This is Joshua."

He uncrossed his arms and gave Aeryk a brotherly hug while saying, "Hey, welcome to London, man."

Joshua had always been the nice one.

"Thanks," Aeryk said, I could tell that he felt a little more comfortable with Joshua than any of the others. I understood why. I liked Joshua the best, too.

"And this is the newest addition to the Blake family," I said, putting my hands on a girl's shoulders who was sadly bitten when she was about thirteen or fourteen, "Riley."

"Hi," she said quietly.

"Hey," Aeryk said kindly and smiled down at her. She looked away from him and went by Evaline.

"Oh, she's so shy," Evaline said. "It's okay, sweetie," she said, stroking Riley's hair.

"So, I think we should all go to the house and get caught up on things. Sound like a good idea?" Patrick asked.

"I call shotgun!" Derek and Evan yelled and ran into the parking lot.

Evaline laughed and said, "Even though they're 800 year old vampires, they act like fifteen year old humans." We all started walking and Daren and Patrick started talking to each other, Aeryk sat next to me and never left my side. It was pretty clear that he was still a little nervous about things.

13 - Bad News

Chapter Thirteen Bad News

We were at the Blakes' mansion, sitting at their huge dining table. Aeryk was surrounded by the twins, I was next to Derek and on my left side was Evaline. And next to her was Patrick who was talking to Daren on the other side of him. Mary sat in the middle of Daren and Joshua and, finally, Riley was next to Joshua and Evan. No one was talking to me so I listened in on Patrick's and Daren's conversation.

"So, Patrick, you're still a member of the Council, right?" Daren asked.

"Yes, yes, I am," Patrick replied.

"How are things going on there?"

"Well...some things have been happening."

"Like what?"

"Um," his voice got a little quieter, "some of the members went Red."

"Really?" Anybody Rayne and I know? How many?"

"Seven have gone Red so far."

"Seven? "

"Mhm, and some of the members still here are starting. One of the members that have gone already was MacGuire." I stopped listening then. I remembered MacGuire. He had been the one who found Daren and me after we were bitten. If he hadn't, Daren and I would've killed each other. MacGuire was our oldest friend. How could he have gone Red? He had always seemed like the nicest guy anyone could know. I listened to Daren and Patrick again.

"Yes, they all just started using their powers whenever they wanted. One at a time," Patrick was saying.

"Do you know why they did?" Daren asked.

"No. No one knows where they went either."

"You don't have any idea?"

"Well, some of the members, including me, think that they all headed to America."

"Hmm."

"Don't worry about it, Daren. So, how's it going in Wyoming? How's Mollie been doing?" At the change in subject I stopped listening. I didn't want to think about it right now. I looked over at Derek and noticed he had blood capsules, probably filled with sugar. Sugar had the same effect on vampires as cocaine does on humans.

"Hey, Aeryk, try these, they're good," Derek whispered. I slapped him upside the head.

"Ow! What was that for?"

"Aeryk's not a vampire, stop trying to give him blood."

"Wait, Aeryk's not one of us? Then what is he?" Evan asked.

"Werewolf," Aeryk said.

"What?" the twins said in unison.

"I'm a werewolf." They cracked up when he said this.

"Nice pick, Rayne! A werewolf!" Derek said and they kept laughing. Aeryk was blushing and I grabbed both of them by their shirts and dragged them into the next room, slapped them, and gave them a short lecture on manners. I walked back into the dining room alone and noticed that everybody had stopped

talking.

"What?" I said innocently. Aeryk was trying hard to hide his laughter.

14 - Meeting

Chapter Fourteen Meeting

We barely slept that night. Everyone was too busy taling and catching up to sleep. But we did eventually go to bed to have at least some rest for the meeting with the Council today. After getting dressed, I went down the stairs and found Aeryk standing alone in the living room.

"Hey," I said. He looked up at me and smiled. "What?" I asked.

"British vampires are...weird. Not to be racist or anything," he said, the smile still on his face. I smiled back at him and walked over to him.

"Yeah, Derek and Evan are pretty strange. But you should be prepared for the meeting with the Council today. The higher members are very strict. Maybe it would be best if you just didn't talk while we're there."

"I am completely okay with that."

"I bet you are."

"I hope you're okay with this," he said and kissed me before I could say anything. He put his hands on the small of my back. I kissed him back and put my arms around his neck. I was definately okay with this. Then, I heard stifled laughs from behind me. I reluctantly pulled away form Aeryk and turned to see the twins sitting on the stairs, watching us.

"Evan! Derek!" I picked up a wax apple from the bowl on the coffee table and chucked it at them. They had already begun to run up the stairs so the apple missed them and just bounced off the wall. Joshua came down the stairs then and picked up the apple. He brushed it off and tossed it back to me. I caught it and put it back in the bowl.

"You know, you really shouldn't do that when they're within a ten-mile radius," he said.

"Yeah, we've kinda figured that out," I said. Daren, Patrick, Evaline, Mary, and Riley came down then.

"Okay, everybody get in the limo," Patrick said.

"Whoa, a limo?" Aeryk said.

"Yeah, a limo, Patrick? We're just going to meet the Council," Daren said.

"Oh, we're seeing the highest members. I told them about your situation and they really started paying attention when I mentioned the name 'Alexander.'"

"Yeah, turns out he's an over 10,000 year old Red vampire. No one has even come close to catching him," Daren said.

"Oh, really? That sounds like an interesting subject to study." Patrick and Daren went out to the driveway and Aeryk just looked at me and said, "Cool, I get to ride in a limo." I laughed and hugged him. We walked out of the house to see this huge stretch limo in the front. We got a ride, which Aeryk enjoyed greatly, and walked into the Buckingham Palace. The Council HQ was right underneath the palace and you needed an authorization card to access the "special floor" that the elevator had a button for. We stepped into the elevator and went down. All the way down. When the doors opened, we saw a fancy conference room. It had a huge table in the center that looked like it would sit at least twenty people. Some of the seats were already taken by Council members and around them were more members talking to eachother. We walked in and a vampire that looked like he was African looked up and said, "Ah, Patrick, you're here."

"Yes, sorry but we kind of have a big group with us," Patrick said, pointing back at the rest of us.

"Oh, that's ok. My my, is that you, Rayne?"

"Um, yes," I said, I had no idea who he was.

"Why, you look like you've turned into an excellent vampire. Your eyes tell it all. They're ice blue. Practically glowing."

"Thank you," I said, still feeling a bit awkward.

"Well, don't you remember me, Rayne? Ah, surely you do, Daren."

"Um, sorry but we don't," Daren said just as awkwardly as me.

"Oh, well I guess it has been 1,000 years. Let me introduce myself once again. I am Benjamin Trason. You may call me Ben, of course. I found you when you were bitten, along with MacGuire." Now I remembered. Good old Ben. We hadn't spent as much time with him as MacGuire. Ben had been the newborn hunting trainer. He taught newborn vampires how to hunt and not to overhunt.

"Oh, now I remember you!" Daren exclaimed.

"Haha, see? You just needed a name." I smiled and gave him a hug while saying, "Oh, it's Ben. I had forgotten about you since we don't really hunt."

"Oh, that's okay. Come on, I'll introduce you to the rest of the members. If that's okay with you, Patrick."

"Yeah, sure, it's fine," Patrick said and then went over to another member and started chatting with him.

"Follow me," Ben said and started walking into the crowd of members. He stopped at the closest vampire, a woman, and said, "Rayne, Daren, this is Denise Wilson. She joined the Council some hundred years ago. She is the best power trainer we have."

"Oh, thanks, Ben. You're the best hunting trainer we have," Denise said.

"Thank you, Denise," Ben said and introduced us to most of the rest of the Council. After about a dozen members, Ben introduced us to the head of the Council, Jaque DuFraunt.

"Jaque, I'd like you to meet some old friends of mine," Ben said.

"All right, who are they?" Jaque asked.

"These two are Rayne and Daren Jackson."

"How nice to meet you," Jaque said, shaking Daren's hand then mine. He looked as if he were about twenty-nine years old but I knew that he was much, much older. He had sky blue eyes that were comforting yet strong. His voice was smooth and ageless. He seemed like the type of person that wouldn't hurt a fly. But I knew this wasn't true, he was a vampire.

"Mr. DuFraunt here founded the Council almost 20,000 years ago," Ben said to us.

"Oh, please, you two can call me Jaque," he said and smiled. He looked at the clock then and said,

"Well, it has been excellent meeting you but I believe it's time for the meeting to start. Would you two mind sitting next to me? After all, this is about you."

"Sure," Daren said and then Jaque started speaking.

"Everyone, it is time for the meeting to begin," Jaque announced. Everybody in the room ended their conversations and sat down. We took our seats next to Jaque, Ben sat next to Daren and the vampire from before, Denise, sat next to me. Everyone else was a member. The Blake family and Aeryk were standing in the back corner of the room. Jaque started speaking again.

"Now, I'm sure you are all familiar with the matter at hand. We quite possibly know the whereabouts of the immortal criminal, Alexander Manden." There was some murmurs from the members then Jaque continued. "This girl, Rayne Jackson, was a victim to him. He will not leave her be. He haunts her, tortures her and the people that are close to her and love her." I saw Aeryk tense. "She and her brother have come to us for help. I think that we should. I know that some of you think that the members that have gone, have gone to America. Now that we know that Alexander is in America, this may be true. If they meet Alexander, all Hell will break loose. So many Red vampires should not be in the same place at once. I have decided to do whatever I can to help this girl, even if it may mean war. I urge you to do

the same. I am not forcing you to. Many will be hurt. Some may die, so to speak. Just, please, ponder this. I hope you choose to help."

"Sir, why should we risk ourselves for this girl? She has not done anything to benefit the Council," a member near the center of the table stated.

"How do you know this, Smith? She could have done something. And like I said, I am not forcing you to help her."

"I am sorry, sir, but I choose not to," Smith said.

"I respect your decision," Jaque said. I saw Aeryk tense again and a frown appeared on his face. Jaque spoke again.

"If you choose to help, please see me in my office." He stood up and everyone else stayed in their seats, silent. Jaque left the room and it was filled with the same question from everyone: What are you going to do?

"I'm going to help them of course," I heard Ben say. He got up and left. Denise stood up and said, "Me too," then left just as Jaque and Ben had.

"As am I," Patrick said then left with Evaline and Joshua. The rest of the Council was still trying to make a decision. Aeryk walked over to Daren and me and said, "I'm gonna help you, you know that."

"Yes, I do, but I don't want you to," I replied.

"Why not?"

"I don't want you to get hurt again."

"I'll be fine. I'll try to convince my dad and the other werewolves to help if there is a war." I concentrated on his face. He looked serious.

"Okay," I said, but didn't really mean it.

15 - Reminder

Chapter Fifteen Reminder

We were all at the Blakes' mansion again. Everyone else was upstairs. It was just Aeryk and me in the kitchen. We weren't talking, just sitting. It wasn't an awkward silence. It was very comfortable. I was sitting up on the counter and Aeryk was leaning against it right beside me. I looking around at the kitchen. The walls painted light blue, there was a wood clock on my right side. That was the only thing making noise. Ticking that could eventually drive someone mad. Aeryk broke the silence surprisingly.

"Rayne?" he asked.

"Hmm?"

"I was wondering, how do you kill a vampire, if you don't mind me asking." I looked at him with a confused glare.

"Um, well, you have to..." I looked at him again, his eyes were curious and pleading, "you have to inject enough vampire venom. It reverses the living dead thing going on with vampires. They're mortal again and much easier to kill."

"How much is enough?"

"However much is in the vampire you're trying to kill. So it varies with each vampire."

"How do you know how much is in the vampire you're trying to kill?" He was sure asking a lot of questions.

"You don't. You could end up killing two vampires. A vampire needs venom to survive. If it runs out, they turn mortal again, but they're very weak and won't be able to live for long." I didn't like this conversation. Aeryk was making me feel uncomfortable.

"Would that happen to you if you tried to kill Alexander?" I stared hard at him. He couldn't seem to look me in the eye.

"It's a possibility." He looked at me then with extreme worry in his eyes.

"November 23rd," he said.

"What?"

"That's when we're leaving for New York. I promise this will all be over by that time." I realized what he was talking about. I was going with him and his dad to live in New York for a year. I remembered that day very clearly. He had told me he loved me for the first time.

"What if it's not?"

"Then we'll go to New York anyways. And if Alexander comes after us, I'll protect you with my life." He looked serious. Very serious. I wasn't going to argue with him. Not today.

"Okay," I said and he took my hand and started to walk out the kitchen with me. As we passed through the doorway, I saw Daren leaning against the wall right next to it. I looked at his face and saw that he was glaring at me with pure anger in his eyes. I let go of Aeryk's hand and stood in front of Daren.

"You're leaving," he stated. It was so quiet that I could barely hear it.

"I'm sorry," I whispered back.

"Rayne?" Aeryk asked from across the room.

"One second, Aeryk, I need to talk with Daren," I said back to him. He nodded and turned. I looked back

to Daren.

"How could you?"

"Aeryk wants-" He cut me off.

"Aeryk doesn't get a say in this. You know that related vampires need to stay with each other for eternity, you're leaving for a year. The bond between us would break. The bond between two vampires that are related is like no other bond in the world. Do you know how rare it is for vampires to be related like we are? Very. Out of all the vampires in the world, it's just you, Derek, Evan, Tanya, Ben, and me. Just three pairs. Do you really want to ruin one of them?"

"No, but-" He cut me off again.

"But what, Rayne? What could possibly make you want to leave?"

"I need to make Aeryk happy."

"Forget about Aeryk! You just can't walk out on me like this. This is a very rash, ignorant, and stupid decision you're making. You know, I'm starting to think you care about yourself than me." He stormed of up the stairs. I heard his pounding footsteps then a door slam. Aeryk walked over to me.

"What was that?" he asked. The twins and Joshua came down.

"Yeah, what was that?" Evan asked.

"Daren's having...reminders."

"Of what?" Derek asked.

"Of what life did to him before immortality."

"What happened to him?" Aeryk said.

"Do you really want to know?" He paused for a second.

"Yes." I inhaled and said, "Okay."

16 - Daren's Story

Chapter Sixteen Daren's Story

We had all sat down in the living room. Aeryk, Evan, Derek, Joshua, and me. I was trying to recall Daren's life before the attack. Trying to remember our friendship, adventures, and laughs we had shared together. I began reciting Daren's story.

"Daren and I had been friends since I was eight and he was ten. We did everything together. We were always at this little creek in the woods next to the small town we had lived in. We spent hours on end playing there. We were practically inseparable. When we were together, we were happy. But when Daren went home at the end of the day, he was always the exact opposite from happy."

"Why?" Derek asked.

"Let her go on," Joshua said and nodded to me to keep going.

"Daren's parents were...not the best parents. His father was an alcoholic. His mother was always angry and violent because of her husband. Daren was tortured by the yelling and screaming and fighting from his parents each night. He would always watch them fight with each other. He would cry but they didn't seem to notice."

"That's horrible," Aeryk said. I gave him a look that said I agreed and continued.

"I was sort of Daren's comforter. He would tell me about the night before if it had really bothered him and I would do whatever I could to make him feel better. This went on for years. By the time that I was thirteen and he was fifteen, Daren started getting very protective of me. This group of boys would sometimes tease me because my family was not the richest in the town. Their families were. Daren was strong for a fifteen-year-old. If someone bothered me, he would beat them up. Or at least try to. I must admit that Daren got a little bruised up back then." I smiled, remembering how beat up Daren used to get.

"We were always there for each other. But when Daren was sixteen, his parents broke up. They didn't do anything with him, they just...left him. Without a second thought. Daren was traumatized by this. My parents let him stay with us for a while. He would always walk around the house with his head down. Sometimes, when I went up to the second floor of the house, I could hear him crying in his room. It broke my heart. I tried to help him as much as I could. After a couple of months, he was pretty much back to himself. Our birthdays had both passed and I was now fifteen, Daren was seventeen. On the night of December 17, 1710, we were attacked by the well-known vampire, Jon Adams. I was out alone, walking, when I heard sort of, whimpering, from an alley way. I stopped and called out at the sound. The whimpering turned to growling. I asked hello and I saw a pair of red eyes suddenly appear from the dark." I saw all of the vampires in the room shift uncomfortably. Every vampire knew of Jon Adams. He was the most blood-thirsty vampire in history.

"He leaped at me. I let out a scream for help. But before I could do anything more, Jon had his fangs in my neck. It was all kind of blurry. I had heard Daren scream my name, then see him leap onto Jon. I remember the pain of the venom flowing through me. All of our screaming had gotten some people's attention. Men were yelling to their wives to get their guns and get the children. Daren was still fighting Jon when a man had shot Jon. Jon didn't die though, he just fled. After they were sure he was gone,

some men looked over Daren and me. We both had been bitten. We had both lost a lot of blood. They thought that we had died. I don't remember anything after that. Just waking up in a building to find Daren killing a woman."

"So, what was he reminded of?" Derek asked.

"His parents abandoned him. Like I said, he was pretty traumatized by it. Apparently, he still is. He's still afraid of being left behind," I answered. I looked at Aeryk. He had his hands together and he looked like he was thinking.

"He heard, didn't he?" he asked. I nodded and tears started forming in the pit of my eye. Aeryk sighed and said, "We're still going."

"Going where?" Evan asked.

"We're going to New York for a year. Rayne and I." Joshua, Evan, and Derek gave me a horrified look.

"Rayne! You know the bond you and Daren share. You can't leave him here alone," Joshua said to me.

"I know," I said, trying to hold back the tears.

"Gosh, Rayne, do you have any idea how much this is hurting Daren?" Evan asked.

"Yeah, Evan and I are related, too. We literally can't live without each other. Don't go, Rayne, or your'e going to kill Daren," Derek said. I felt a tear escape from my eye.

"But, Aeryk," was all that blurted out from my mouth.

"Aeryk doesn't get a part in this. You and Daren are too close to each other," Joshua said sternly and left.

"Yeah, Rayne," Evan said. Derek walked up to me and said, "Don't kill Daren, Rayne, you'll kill yourself, too. Trust me." He left with Evan. I put my hands over my face and began sobbing. Aeryk took the seat next to me and hugged me.

"Hey, don't cry, we'll figure this out," he said comfortingly.

"I'm such a bad person," I said, more to myself than to Aeryk.

"No, your'e not. I'll talk to Daren, okay?" I didn't say anything. I didn't want to. Though I knew that Daren would probably get even angrier if Aeryk tried to convince him to let me go. As a response to my silence, Aeryk gave me a kiss on the cheek and said, "I'll go find Daren," then left. I sat there. Still crying. Patrick and Evaline came down then.

17 - Even Worse

Chapter Seventeen Even Worse

"What happened?" Evaline asked when she saw me crying.

"Ask Joshua," I said.

"Joshua!" Patrick called. Joshua came down the stairs and said, "Yeah?"

"What happened to Rayne?" Joshua looked down at me and then said, "I'll explain. Come into the kitchen." Patrick followed Joshua and Evaline continued to try and stop my tears. I tried to block out Patrick's and Joshua's conversation but couldn't. I heard the worst bits of it. "She's leaving." "Hurting Daren." "Aeryk wants her to." They both stopped talking for a moment. Then I heard Patrick say, "Okay." They both walked out and towards me.

"Rayne?" I looked up to see Patrick kneeling down to my level. "Why are you leaving?" I looked up at Joshua.

"Because Aeryk wants me to," I replied weakly. Patrick sighed and said, "Sweetie, Aeryk doesn't get a say in vampire rules. You can't stay away from a relative for that long. Ben and Tanya tried. They got in a huge fight and Tanya tried to leave. I unfortunately the one who took care of Ben. He had starved himself. He would barely talk. He was so...weak. Do you want that to happen to Daren? Especially with his past?" I shook my head no.

"So you're not going?"

"What about Aeryk?"

"He has to understand vampire law. We'll try to explain to him. He might be angry at first but-" He was cut off by a booming bark from upstairs.

"Oh my, what was that?" Evaline asked.

"Aeryk," I whispered to myself. I got up and ran to the stairs. Aeryk and Daren flew out of the hallway and landed with a loud thud. Aeryk was on the ground and Daren was on top of him trying to strangle him.

"YOU STUPID DOG! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?! WE CAN'T LEAVE EACH OTHER!" Daren screamed. Aeryk pushed himself up but Daren held on so they just tumbled down the stairs. I tried to get out of the way but my hand ended up being crushed by Aeryk. I shouted in pain and cradled my hand. Aeryk tried to get Daren off of him again and they came towards me. They were about to trample my whole body but Joshua lifted me out of the way. He set me down on the couch and turned back to Aeryk and Daren fighting. I looked at Patrick and Evaline. Evaline had a horrified look in her eyes. Patrick's face was serious and a little scared.

"Daren! Stop it!" Joshua yelled. They just ignored him. Joshua growled and jumped into the fight himself. The twins, Mary, and Riley rushed down then. The twins started chanting, "Fight! Fight! Fight!"

"What's goin on?!" Mary yelled over the boys' shouts.

"We'll explain later!" Patrick yelled back. He got up then and went into the fight. For a moment, it was all a blur of color. The next thing I saw was Patrick holding back Daren and Joshua trying to calm down

Aeryk.

"I NEED TO TEACH HIM A LESSON!" Daren screamed. He looked absolutely terrifying.

"Daren! Daren!" Patrick yelled. He was having trouble holding him back. "Daren, we'll settle this later!" Daren stopped trying to break free from him. He still looked murderous. He was breathing heavily. He swallowed. He blinked a couple of times and looked around. Joshua had been able to calm Aeryk down and he was in human form again. He was sitting on the floor looking at Daren with shock. Daren looked down at him and stared for a few moments. Patrick let go of him and said cautiously, "Daren, are you in control?" Daren's expression turned to horrified. He couldn't believe what he had just done. He stepped back a step.

"Daren?" Riley pouted. He looked at me and whispered, "I'm sorry." Then he sprinted out the door and into the street. We heard tires screech and people shouting at him to get out of the road.

"What's wrong with Daren?" Riley said, she was scared out of reality.

"I'll explain later. C'mon, sweetie," Mary said and took Riley's hand. They went back up the stairs. Riley gave me one last sympathetic look then disappeared upstairs.

"That was intense!" Evan said.

"Oh yeah!" Derek agreed and gave him a high five.

"Boys, this isn't funny," Evaline said.

"That's right. We need to find Daren. Joshua, you, Evan, and Derek go look for him."

"Right. Come on, you two," Joshua said and they left in the direction Daren had gone.

"Rayne, we should get your hand fixed up. Evaline?" Patrick said.

"Yes, come, sweetie. We need to get you to the hospital," Evaline said and started to take me to where they kept the cars.

"I'm coming with you," Aeryk said.

"No, you're staying here, young man. You've done enough for one day," Patrick stated. Aeryk looked at me with a pleading look and I said to him, "I'll be fine. Don't worry." He looked down for a second then looked back up and nodded. Evaline and I got in the Blakes' new Camaro and left for the hospital.

* * *

We returned home, I had a cast on my hand. I had broken my wrist. It didn't hurt at all now. We walked in the front door and saw that the house had been cleaned up.

"We're back!" Evaline called. Patrick, Mary, Riley, and Aeryk rushed out of the kitchen.

"Oh, good," Patrick said and gave Evaline a kiss on the cheek.

"Have the boys found Daren yet?"

"No, they just called though."

"Are you okay, Rayne?" Mary asked. Her white blond hair was wet.

"Yeah, I'm fine," I replied. Aeryk stepped forward and Mary got Riley well out of the way when he did. He walked so that he was right in front of me.

"Did I hurt you?" he asked. I could tell he was still a little shaken.

"Not really," I said, "See? Just this, nothing big." He looked at my cast and then closed his eyes shut.

"Why was Daren so mad?" I sighed and said, "Beacu-" I was interrupted by a loud knock on the door. Patrick shoved his way over to it and answered it. Ben was standing on the front porch.

"Hey, Ben," Patrick said.

"Patrick, I have horrible news," Ben said. Patrick's face turned serious. "What is it?" Ben looked past Patrick to Aeryk and me. Patrick looked back at us and said, "Come in and tell us." Ben walked in and

we all sat down in the living room.

"What's going on?" Patrick asked.

"There has been reports from members visiting America. They've spotted Alexander and..."

"And who?" Evaline asked.

"And Jon Adams." Evaline gasped. "It gets worse. All of the members that have gone Red are with them, too. They're joining together to try and be able to get Rayne is what we have assumed."

"When was this reported?" Patrick asked.

"Just an hour ago," Ben replied, "Tanya's over there trying to get more information right now." Joshua and the twins walked in the door then.

"Hey, Ben," Derek said.

"No sign of Daren," Joshua said and went into the kitchen.

"What's going on?" Evan asked.

"Someone has spotted Alexander, Jon Adams, and a lot of Reds together," Patrick answered.

"Oh, well, that doesn't sound good," Evan said. Joshua rushed in.

"Did I just hear you say what I think you just said?" he asked. Patrick nodded. We heard a car pull into the driveway then. After a moment or two, Tanya walked in and said, "Ben, you and Patrick need to get to Head Quarters now."

"Just a minute, Tanya," Ben said. She looked at me and smiled.

"Rayne, it's been such a long time." She walked over and gave me a hug. "Your eyes have gotten so blue." I smiled up at her. Over everything that was going on, I was happy to see her again. She was tall, pale for an African woman, long dark hair pulled back in a ponytail, indigo eyes. Still the same. She looked over at Aeryk who was sitting next to me with a strange look in her eye. She looked back at me and said, "I'm sorry about Daren." Aeryk put his arm around me. He was offended by the comment. I was, too. She gave Aeryk another look and spoke to Ben.

"Ben, we need to get going," she said.

"Okay, fine. Lets go, Patrick," Ben said and they both got up. They all left and it was Aeryk, Evaline, and me in the living room still.

18 - Back Home

Chapter Eighteen Back Home

It was the next morning. Patrick hadn't come back until 5:30 in the morning. We had all had some breakfast. We acted like it was a normal morning. But we knew it wasn't. Daren wasn't here. Pretty much everyone was angry with Aeryk, or scared of him. The twins weren't even being as loud and obnoxious as they usually were. Patrick was working in his office with Evaline. Mary, Joshua, and Riley were all in the living room watching a movie. Aeryk was moping around, trying to think about things. I was in the kitchen, alone. The house was quiet. The only noise that I was aware of was the voices from the movie in the living room. It was actually quite peaceful. That peacefulness didn't last long. Ben threw the front door open and practically ran to Patrick's office.

"Patrick!" he yelled.

"Yes?"

"We need to get to the airport now."

"Why? What's going on?"

"Daren was spotted being taken by a group of Reds onto a plane to America. We need to leave as soon as possible." I walked to stand in the doorway of Patrick's office, Aeryk showed up behind me. The three on the couch were staring at us.

"Daren?" I asked hopefully. Patrick looked from Ben to me, then back to Ben. "You've found Daren?" I asked in the same voice.

"Maybe, sweetheart, maybe," Patrick said. I looked at Patrick.

"Patrick, we're going to America," I demanded.

"All right," he said, "We should get packing." He got up out of his seat, went to the living room and said, "C'mon, get going! We've got a plane to catch." He walked over to the stairs and yelled up, "Evan! Derek! Get your things packed!" Both their heads popped over the top railing.

"Why? Where are we going?" Derek asked.

"Wyoming," Patrick answered him.

"And why are we going to America?" Evan asked.

"They may have found Daren."

"Daren!" they said in unison. Their heads disappeared and they rushed to get their things packed. I looked at Aeryk and said, "C'mon, we gotta hurry." I ran up the stairs, Aeryk following. Everybody got finished packing after about 45 minutes. We were all in the truck, Patrick driving, Evaline in the center seat next to him, Joshua in the passenger's seat, Mary was in the back, on the left side, sitting in between her and me was Riley and on my right side was Aeryk, and following us in his own car was Ben. When we got to the airport, we were just in time for the next flight to America. We boarded the plane and just a couple minutes later, it took off. Another ten hours.

* * *

I had fallen asleep somewhere along the way. I awoke to Joshua shaking my shoulder and saying, "Rayne, we're about to land, wake up." I had been leaning my head on Aeryk's shoulder, he was sleeping, too.

"Aeryk," I said, shaking his shoulder a little bit. He woke up almost instantly. His eyes opened and he stared at me. I smiled. "Home," I said. He smiled back at me.

The plane landed, we got our stuff, and got taxis to head to Aunt Mollie's. Once we arrived, Aunt Mollie came rushing out to meet us. She had always favored the Blake family. She gave us all a hug and kisses on our cheeks. She looked at all of us with a smile.

"Oh, Rayne, I missed you two!" she said. She looked at me with sparkling eyes then she looked around a little more. "Where's Daren?"

"Mollie, we have some bad news," Patrick said.

"What? What happened?"

"Daren has been taken hostage by Alexander." Aunt Mollie covered her mouth with her hands and gasped. Her eyes teared up and she looked like she wanted to say something more but she started sobbing and couldn't speak. I hugged her and almost started crying myself.

"We've come here to find him," Patrick continued to speak. "Don't worry, we're going to start our search first thing tomorrow morning."

"We're gonna find him," I whispered to myself. Aunt Mollie pulled away from me and wiped her tears away. She took a breath and said, "Oh, I've been rude to you. Come in and get relaxed. You had a long trip and I'm sure you're tired and hungry." She walked into the house and we all followed.

19 - Searching...Then Finding

Chapter Nineteen Searching...Then Finding

I awoke. I stared at the ceiling for what seemed like hours. Then I took my eyes away from the ceiling and looked around the rest of the room. It looked exactly as it had just a couple of days ago. Grey sunlight peeking in through the curtains. I looked to my left side. Aeryk wasn't there. I stared at the empty spot for a few minutes. I hated it. It made me feel as if Aeryk was gone along with Daren. I looked away and stretched out my arms. I got dressed and walked down into the kitchen. When I got there, I found Joshua sitting at the kitchen table, just thinking.

"Hey," I said. He looked up from whatever he was staring at to me.

"Hey," he said with a small smile.

"It's quiet. Where're the twins?"

"Out looking for Daren."

"Oh, right. And Patrick, Eval-"

"They're all out, too."

"Oh. Okay. So, why'd you stay here?"

"We thought someone should stay incase you finally woke up." At these words I looked up at the clock. It was already 2:00 in the afternoon.

"I've been sleeping all day?"

"Yeah." I looked around the kitchen, for some reason I was utterly confused. I locked my sight on Joshua. He looked back at me. "What?" he asked.

"Lets go help look for Daren." I walked straight out of the kitchen and out the front door. Joshua followed.

* * *

After about a half an hour, we had caught up with the Blakes. They hadn't found anything that could lead to Daren's whereabouts. We were at the park now, resting and trying to think of other places to look.

"I miss Daren," Riley said.

"Oh, we all do, honey," Evaline said and started stroking her hair.

"I'm beat," Evan said.

"Yeah, me, too," Derek replied, "We've been searching for like forever!"

"Well, most of us have," Evan said, giving Joshua and me a dirty look. Joshua's brow furrowed then.

"Hey, where's Aeryk?" he asked.

"Yeah, where is that fluffball?" Derek said. Just as if he had been quued, Aeryk came rushing at us at full speed. When he got to us and stopped, he tried to say something but was panting to hard.

"You-guys-" he said between pants.

"Hey, hey, calm down, big boy," Evan said.

"What is it, Aeryk?" Patrick said. He had caught his breath a little and could speak a little more clearly

now.

"I think-I found-Daren," Aeryk said.

"Where?"

"Over-by-Nat's house."

"Okay, Joshua, Evaline, Mary, Rayne, and Aeryk, you all come with me."

"What about us?" Derek and Evan said together.

"You stay with Riley and take care of her."

"Where are you guys going?" Riley asked.

"We're going to get Daren." After these words were spoken, there was a moment of complete and pure silence. Patrick glanced at everyone, and finally, his eyes rested on me. "C'mon, lets go," he said and ran towards Nat's house. We all followed him.

When we got to Nat's house, we stopped about 100 feet away. There was a strange feeling about it. I could tell that we all could feel the uncomfortableness of this house. I looked over at Aeryk, he looked at me. We stood like that for maybe three seconds, then looked forward.

"They're all inside," Patrick said and started slowly walking to the open front door. We slowly followed.

As I stepped into the house, I saw that it was clearly being torn apart by someone. All of the furniture was thrown about. The wallpaper hung down in strips. There was broken glass everywhere.

"Hello?" Patrick called out. There was a loud bang from the door that led to the basement. "Hello?" he called again. Another bang. He walked up to it cautiously and opened it. "Is anybody here?" We walked down the narrow stairwell, each of us very close to each other. It was pitch black and all of the vampires' eyes were glowing. "He-" Patrick was cut off and disappeared from the front of the line. Evaline had been right behind him and squealed.

"Who's there?" Joshua yelled. There was a low, frightening chuckle emitting from the end of the black staircase.

"It's just us," a growly woman's voice said.

"Who are you?"

"We're your friends, of course."

"Who are you!" Joshua screamed. "What have you done with our family!"

"Oh, there's no need to get angry, now. Lets all just calm down and you can come down and we'll all get more acquainted." I heard a man's snicker from the darkness. The woman hushed him. I heard a name: MacGuire. They were all here, waiting to rip us limb from limb, to torture us. I started walking past everyone down towards the darkness.

"What are you doing?!" Aeryk said, grabbing my arm.

"I've got to find Daren," I replied.

"No, I'm not letting you go by yourself."

"Then by all means go with me." He stared at me for a second, not letting go of my arm. He looked away from me and into the dark. He took in a long, shuddering breath. He was thinking. He looked back down at me.

"Okay, I'm going with you." His hand slid down from my forearm to my hand. I tightened my grip on it and whispered to him, "Thank you." He nodded his head. We edged forward. When I had almost reached the bottom, Joshua spoke out to us.

"Rayne, what if he's not down there?" he said.

"Then...I don't know what will happen. But be ready for the worst," I replied. We took another step down. We were on the ground step now. The Blakes were up on the stairs, keeping their eyes on us. I looked straight into the blind darkness, then stepped into it. Aeryk and I were both completely enveloped in black. I didn't dare let go of his hand. From every direction I heard soft whispers and quiet laughs.

"Daren?" I said as quietly as possible. Almost as a reflex, a light turned on at my small noise. I saw the

most terrifying thing I had ever seen in my 300 years as a vampire. We were completely surrounded by Reds. Each of them staring up at us, evil smiles plastered on their faces, their red eyes penetrating me. Their laughing and talking grew louder. Then, "Hello again, love." My head darted to the back left corner of the room and the noise quieted. Alexander was sitting in a moth-eaten chair, Nat holding Daren back on his left side and another male Red holding Patrick on his right. "It's been a while, I must say."

"Daren-" I blurted out. He looked at me with eyes that were flooded with fear and outrage. But Nat had a rag in his mouth and he was unable to say anything.

"Yes, I do believe you have come here for that." He looked over at Nat and Daren. "Let him go." Nat reluctantly cut his hands free. He fell to the ground and pulled the rag from his mouth. He quickly got up and ran over to the stairs.

"Now him," I said, pointing to Patrick.

"Oh, I don't think he will be that easy."

"What do I have to do?"

"I will exchange him for..."

"For what?"

"For you." At this, Aeryk got close to me and got very protective.

"She's not going anywhere," he practically growled at Alexander.

"Fine, then he'll die," Alexander said, turning to Patrick. Evaline let out a whimper then. I realized that she was crying. I almost started myself.

"No, I-I'll go," I said, holding back the tears.

"What?! Are you crazy? Who knows what they'll do to you and besides, I don't want to loose you that way, I don't wanna loose you at all," Aeryk said, tears coming to his eyes.

"Aeryk, I-I have to."

"No. You don't. There has to be another way. There has to." He was starting to get a little frantic. He looked to Evaline and Joshua for help. They could only look away. I started to walk in Alexander's direction. A smile came to his face. But Aeryk pulled me to him again and that smile faded quickly.

"Rayne-" he said, beginning to protest but sobs overcame his words. That's when I started.

"Aeryk, I'm sorry," I said, letting go of his hand and walking to Alexander again.

"No!" Aeryk yelled and grabbed my hand again. He fell to his knees, begging me to stay between sobs.

"Ugh, this is getting annoying. Get him out of here," Alexander ordered two of the Reds. They went to Aeryk, picked him up off the ground, and tried to drag him away. Buy he wouldn't go. Not yet. He freed himself from their grips and he latched onto me. As soon as his arms were around me, mine were around him. Our tears kept flowing.

"Don't go. I love you," Aeryk whispered into my ear. This only made the tears come down even harder. I took in a deep breath.

"I love you, too, but I have to go," I said.

"No, you don't."

"Will this soap opera ever end?" Alexander said. "Get him and their friends out of here!" The same two Reds grabbed Aeryk again and this time managed to drag him despite his fighting. As they got to the stairwell, the Red behind me released Patrick and Aeryk started screaming my name. Patrick and Evaline embraced eachother and held onto each other for a moment.

"Take this," one of the Reds dragging Aeryk said to Joshua and handed him Aeryk's left arm. The other Red handed Mary his right arm. They left. The Blakes were speechless for a moment. Then Joshua said, "Rayne, are you sure about this?"

"Yes," I said, nodding my head eventhough I was the exact opposite of sure. Aeryk was still screaming out my name. I could hear his sobs. The Blakes left and I couldn't take it any longer. I dropped to my knees and put my hands over my face.

"Oh, there, there, darling," Alexander said, he laid his cold hand onto my back, "It's okay. We're together now."

20 - Afterwards

Chapter Twenty Afterwards

A couple of hours had passed. It was dark out now. I was sitting in the moth-eaten chair that Alexander had been sitting in. He was talking to a group of Reds I didn't know on the other side of the room. Nat was sitting on the ground beside me, keeping an eye on me. She was staring at the ground as if she were thinking hard about something. I stared at her, tried to get her vampire image in my head. It was all I could do at the moment. I noticed her light brown hair was thicker, her eyebrows thinner, her body was thinner, too. She was beautiful. Her red eyes were bright as if they still had some life in them. I looked away from her and at my hands in my lap. I put them together and thought of Aeryk for only the millionth time this evening. My heart felt as if something was pulling at it. I had to hold back more tears.

"Nat?" I asked softly. She turned her head quickly up to me. "Are you still in love?"

Daren

It was dark now. It had seemed like hours and hours had passed. We were at Aunt Mollie's again. Aeryk was still in break down with his head down, and silent tears dripping down his cheeks. He hadn't spoken since we had gotten here. Evaline was on his left side, holding Patrick to her. She had been scared. Scared when the Reds had taken him, that he would immediately die. Joshua was to Aeryk's right. He hadn't spoken, either. He had just been staring at the ground, not moving. Those four took up the couch. Mary was sitting on the floor with Riley. She was whispering comforting words into Riley's ear. She was crying softly. We had told Aunt Mollie everything by now. She was sitting in her rocking chair, thinking, not speaking like most of us. Evan and Derek were sitting at her feet, actually being quiet for once. I was leaning against the wall. I hadn't said anything yet, either. I was too busy concentrating on Rayne. Joshua broke the silence first.

"So, what are we gonna do?" he said with a monotone.

"I don't know, Joshua, I really don't," Patrick replied.

"Aren't we at least going to try to get Rayne back?"

"We can't right now, we have to wait for the Council."

"Why?"

"Because there are too many of them and not enough of us. We would lose a fight if we started one right now."

"But what about Rayne?"

"She's going to have to wait."

"But-"

"Joshua, that's the end of this conversation." Joshua looked back down at the ground and Patrick leaned back into the couch.

"What could they be doing to her?" It was Aeryk who spoke up. I must admit that it even surprised me.

"I don't know, but I'm sure she's fine, Aeryk," Patrick said.

"No, she's not."

"How do you know?"

"Because I'm not. We love each other. We can't stand to be away from each other. It's ripping me up inside, just thinking about what could be of her by now. She could be injured, raped, dead. I can't live without her." He broke into sobs again.

"Now you know how it feels," I said. I was still pretty angry with him. I still hated him for taking Rayne from me.

"Daren, do not speak to anyone like that when they are in so much pain," Aunt Mollie said.

"You should've seen me in London."

"Well, you're not in London now. Aeryk's heart is breaking-"

"Who cares? He will never know or experience the pain I went through just thinking about Rayne leaving."

"Daren, I think that's enough," Patrick said.

"No, it's not. You have to understand that he can't have the same bond with Rayne as I do. Evan, Derek, Ben, Tanya, and I all know this for ourselves."

"Hey, dude, don't get us involved," Evan said.

"I can and will do whatever I want," I said to him.

"Daren, stop it," Patrick said again.

Rayne

Nat looked at me with complete confusion for a second. Then she answered, "I don't know." I looked into her eyes.

"Hm, no one ever knows anything anymore," I said and laid my head against the back of the chair.

"Are you?" Nat asked innocently. I looked back down at her. I smiled and said, "Yes. Yes, I am."

"I thought I was with Alexander. It was great at first. I didn't have a care in the world. But then, he made me kill my parents..."

"What?"

"I killed my parents. You haven't noticed them around, have you?" I shook my head no and she continued. "After that, it all just...went downhill. Nothing's fun anymore. I just kinda wanna quit this."

"Hmm."

"So, how are you and Aeryk doing?" When she said Aeryk's name, I had to let a tear fall.

"Um, we're doing great."

"Then why are you crying?"

"Because he's the man I love and I can't be with him now. I'm trapped in this Hellhole. He wouldn't come for me, he would die."

"Oh. You two really love each other that much?"

"Yeah, we do. We've even been discussing moving to New York with each other for a year."

"You're going away? For a year?"

"No, we can't now. Looks like I'm going to spend the rest of my eternal life with Alexander and his gang."

"Rayne, I'm sorry about this. Sorry about betraying you for Alex, for wanting to kill you, for everything."

"You don't have to be-"

"Yes, I do. I want to leave Alex. He's been a real jerk lately and I don't love him anymore. Heh, some relationship that was. I want to go Blue. Be a normal vampire like you and Daren." Just then, Alexander

called Nat and I from across the room. We got up from where we were sitting and walked over to him. "Yes?" Nat asked politely.

Daren

"No! I am not letting him get away with this!"

"Daren!"

"Shut up!"

"Daren?" Riley asked from where she and Mary sat. "Why are you getting so mad?" I looked at her with my eyes that were being filled with rage. She looked so innocent and harmless from there. She had always been my favorite of the Blakes. How could I lose control like this in front of her? I could barely handle myself. I put my face in my hands and screamed into them then ran out the front door. I ran up the street and could hear them calling my name and running footsteps. They were gaining on me. I ran faster, so did they. I was running as fast as I could. But they caught up with me, grabbed a hold of my arms and threw me down on the ground. It had been Patrick and Joshua. Patrick pinned me down and yelled, "Daren! You have to stop doing this! You can't lose control like that!"

"I know, I'm sorry," I said.

"Daren, I know you're hurt but try to keep control," Joshua said, kneeling down to talk to me.

"I'm sorry," I said, tears coming to my eyes. Patrick let me go. I sat up. I looked over to the house and saw that Aunt Mollie and the rest of the Blakes were staring, disbelief written all over their faces.

Rayne

"Rayne, Natalie, you two have been awfully quiet over there. I was just wondering what you were doing," Alexander said.

"Oh, we were just talking," Nat replied to him.

"About what?"

"Just...stuff."

"Tell me."

"We were talking about Aeryk."

"Oh, that flea-bitten dog." My muscles tensed in anger.

"Don't call him that," I said. He looked to me with a smile.

"Rayne, how are you, darling? I hope all is well, of course. Come here." He motioned his hand for me to go over to him. I hesitated but slowly walked to him. When I reached him he held onto my hands. "Are you happy here? And tell me the truth."

I sucked in a breath and in a monotone said, "No, actually, I'm very upset here."

"Oh, I'm sorry. Is there anything we can do for you to make you happy?"

"Let me be with Aeryk and Daren again. I miss them."

He rolled his eyes when I mentioned Aeryk and Daren. "You don't need them, love. You have me here to protect you." As he said these words, he got up from where he had been seated on the floor and so quickly that I hadn't even seen him, came around behind me and laid his hands on my shoulders.

"I don't need them for protection. I need them for happiness, love, security. Everything that you can't give me."

"Darling, do you honestly think that I can't give you those things? I can give you that and more."

"I doubt it."

"Oh, don't be so pessimistic." He started to slowly wrap his hands around my waist.

"Get off me!" I yelled and threw him away from me. But as quickly as I had gotten him away, he came back. With one hand he held my hands together behind my back and with the other he held my neck tightly so that I could barely breathe.

"Alex!" Nat said in surprise and shock. He ignored her.

"I wouldn't have such an attitude if I were you," he whispered into my ear. "It could have...consequences." I tried to get away from his gripping hands but was unable.

"Alex, stop it," Nat said sternly. He held onto me for another moment then finally let go. As soon as he did, I backed away towards Nat. He stared at me with anger and desire flooding his eyes.

"Be careful what you do, love, I get angry very easily," he said and went back to sitting on the floor. The Reds grouped around him again and one by one began to murmur nonsense.

Daren

We had all returned to the house. I was shocked at myself for letting myself lose control for the second time. Having Rayne away really was getting to me. I sat in the kitchen alone, staring hard at the table, trying to think of what could possibly happen at this point. Patrick, Evaline, Joshua, Mary, and Aunt Mollie were in the living room discussing what to do next. Derek, Evan, and Riley were in the guest bedroom watching TV. Aeryk was in Rayne's room, most likely crying. I was half listening to what they were saying in the living room. They were trying to decide on whether or not to call on the Council. Patrick had tried to call Ben earlier but he hadn't answered. I kept zoning in and out of reality, trying not to think of what was happening to Rayne. I was calm. Breathing in and out. In. Out. In. Out. I was in a sort of meditating state. I was completely numb, I couldn't feel any emotion. Then there was a sudden rapping on the back door. I jerked my head to see Kayla standing there, trying to get my attention. When I looked at her, she waved frantically as a signal to open the door. I got up and did so.

"Hey, where have you been the last couple of days?" she asked and gave me a kiss before I could answer. She sat down at the table and started talking again. "You have missed so much at school. The teachers are starting to wonder where you've been. Rayne, too. And Nat's been gone, too. Where have you guys been?"

"Kayla, um, I have some bad news," I said, kneeling down and putting my hand on her knee as if it would comfort her, but I was more getting ready for my reaction than hers.

"What? What's wrong?"

"Um, Rayne's missing." She stared at me with shock. She didn't speak. I went on. "You know that we're vampires. One of the very few humans that do. You don't know the details, though. You see, like you have a government with Democrats and Republicans, we have a Council with Reds and Blues. Blues are vampires like Rayne and me. We're normal. But Reds, well, they're a little on the crazy side. They over-hunt, kill for no reason, go on rampages regularly. And Rayne has been taken by one of the craziest of the Reds. His name is Alexander Cordilini. He's kidnapped Rayne and we've been talking with the Council to try and get her back." She was speechless. She was trying to think of something to say. She had a puzzled look on her face.

"What's gonna happen to her?" she asked innocently.

"I don't know, but we're gonna find her," I answered.

"Oh, Daren, I'm so sorry. I hadn't realized it was this serious." She hugged me and held me there for a

minute. We pulled away from each other.

"C'mon, I want you to meet some good friends on mine." I led her into the living room. She followed cautiously. When we entered, no one was speaking, they all looked like they were thinking hard. I cleared my throat loudly and everyone looked up.

"Everyone, I want you to meet someone." They all looked past me and straight at Kayla.

"Who's this?" Patrick asked.

"I'm Kayla. I'm Daren's girlfriend," she said.

"Oh, well, nice to meet you, Kayla. My name is Patrick."

"Nice to meet you, Patrick." Evaline stood up and took Kayla's hand in hers.

"It's so nice to meet you. I'm Evaline," she said cheerfully. She had always liked meeting new people. Kayla gave her a smile and Evaline sat back down. Joshua got up and stuck his hand out for Kayla to shake it.

"Hi, I'm Joshua," he said shortly and she shook his hand with a smile. Mary just looked at her and said, "I'm Mary." She had never liked meeting new people. Kayla gave her a shy smile then looked down at the ground. Aeryk came down then. He was a horrifying sight. His cheeks were tear-stained, his hair was wet from all the crying, his eyes were blood-shot, and he had bags under his eyes. He gulped and weakly said, "Hey."