



Maggie Berkley

*Diary of a*  
Vampire

*Red Rose Publishing*

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Vampire

By

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### **The Diary of A Vampire By Maggie Berkley**

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# Chapter One

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*I sit at my desk and stare at the open book before me, pen in hand. My adopted daughter Dassah convinced me to write my history, though I'm not certain how wise it is to do so. The world around us does not receive well those like me, though few souls know of our existence. That and I do not know exactly where to start.*

*At my rebirth possibly into what I am today? Or at what led up to my actual death and rebirth into my new Un-Life? Or to be more politically correct...my living impairment. This amuses me, but Dassah rolls her eyes claiming I am 'so not with it'. "Vampire," she says, sighing heavily at me as she shakes her head. "You're a vampire American." The youth of today have no sense of secrecy or humor.*

*The story I choose to write is quite long and tedious, many, many years gone by. I am not sure I remember it all. But Dassah hovers in the doorway and urges me on. I believe it is mostly due to her own curiosity about my past, for I do not speak much about my life before her.*

*Dassah, my ever-faithful child, brought me nourishment last night in hopes that I would feel refreshed and ready to begin my story. It had been*

*awhile since I fed for I do not need to partake as others of my kind, those that are much younger than I am.*

*She brought me a sweet young man, one no older than eighteen, and just past the first blush of youth. He was quite handsome in his soft, unworried way. His scent was quite pleasing, spicy, and masculine, with a hint of fear and desire. I could see from the way his dark blue eyes lit upon me, that he wanted to do more than be just my sustenance for the night.*

*As tempting as it is, I had put aside my carnal pleasures as I had locked away my heart behind a wall to keep safe my easily swayed emotions. For you see, I have a weakness for all things young and beautiful; and, I may add, I tend to fall in love quite easily.*

*I fed upon this young Adonis until I was sated, then left his body to bleed out his ruby red elixir until no life stirred within him. I had no wish for him to join my family and feeling particularly put out, decided his beauty angered me enough to let him die.*

*Now first I must explain something to you. When a vampire feeds, we do not, contrary to popular belief, drain the bodies dry of every last drop of blood. None of us have that capability; otherwise there would be many bloated and/or bulimic vampires lying around the street. Our stomachs hold no more than normal humans. We are not super vampiric vacuums capable*

*of such a suctioning force as to drain a person dry within a few moments after biting them.*

*Instead, we feed until we are no longer hungry.*

*Depending on our moods, we may heal them, erase their memories, and send them on their way, or we leave them to bleed to death.*

*Sometimes we end it quickly by breaking their necks. That is but one way to feed. There are others, but that I will not get into this moment, for it has no basis in my story at this point.*

*Now, I am older than any other vampire I have met. Only my creator was older than I. Oh, but lest I forget and never should I do that, is my beloved King and Queen. They ultimately gave us life...or shall I say, Undead Life.*

*As for me, I no longer live on blood. Although I still enjoy the taste every once in a while, it is not what I need to continue my life. What I require is the life force of a human. The very essence that lets them live, that gives them hope, love, anger, sorrow and joy.*

*I consume the human spirit.*

*Every vampire is capable of it, which is why they enjoy the taste of fear in their victim's blood.*

*I fear I get off track in my writings. I find myself doing this quite often.*

*For one of my kind, time is...not something of importance. Each second that passes, each breath expelled means nothing to us. We do not need to 'hurry up to get as much done as possible'. For humans there are never enough hours in the day to satisfy. For them, the ending is always somewhere near, always close.*

*I find I enjoy sitting back and watching those harried creatures around me, to puzzle as to why everything seems so important to be done 'at that time'. I fear I have lost too much of my humanity. No, it is not fear. I know I have lost it. I lost it thousands of years ago.*

*I sit here writing, chuckling at the word fear. It is such a strong emotion. Fear, love, hate, and lust...the strongest emotions given to mankind.*

*Very few traits I had as a living being followed me into the Un-Life I now live. But those four, they stay with you no matter what you are. Others of my kind may deny it, but they lie. If not, then why the obsession with the living? Why the fear of being found out? Why the sorrow of what we have lost and the hatred of those who still possess it? Those four basic emotions are the driving force of any entity.*

*One never realizes how precious life is until it is taken from one. The difference between most of my kind and me is that I willingly gave up my*



*life. I was not forced into what I became. I was offered the Dark Gift and I took it with eyes wide open.*

*I took what offered gift in hopes of revenge.*

*No 'oh woe is me', no 'I was cursed', or any other excuses some of my kind spew in order to be pitied. Nor am I a loathsome bloodsucker who thinks of nothing but my stomach, or where the next blood supply will come from. I am not one of the villainous creatures who do nothing but seek the destruction of the living. I am more civilized than that.*

*Do not get me wrong though, lest you forget.*

*I am evil.*

*I will take from you what I need, with neither hesitancy nor thought; and depending on my whim, whether you live or die.*

*I have no soul, and though I do care for a select few, you are not one of them.*

*But my musings wander. It is a fallacy of mine.*

## Chapter Two

### **The Past:**

I was born in the eighteenth century BC, during a time of unrest and war. The supreme ruler of the land was Hammurabi, who was the sixth king of Babylon. After achieving the conquest of Sumer and Akkad, and ending the last Sumerian dynasty of Isin, he ruled over the lands, becoming the first king of the newly formed Babylonian Empire, one of the greatest kingdoms that had ever graced the world.

I myself was born to a nomadic tribe in the lands of the Elamite, far west of what is now Iran. Captured during a raid of my people when I was but thirteen years of age, as were many of the females between the ages of eleven and twenty, we were sent to the city of Babylon itself to become slaves and concubines.

Because of my youth and great beauty, the palace mojomoro chose and sent me to, to put it plainly, the chief harem dormo. He selected me to stand before the lord of the household, who was none other than the son and heir of great Hammurabi himself, Samsu-Iluna.

At this time, Samsu was only in his early thirties and had two wives. His father still ruled the empire with an iron grip, so his son had much time

to enjoy his baser needs. After spying me, he fell in love and decided that I would become his third wife. Needless to say, at the tender age of thirteen I became the youngest wife of Prince Samsu. That is not where my story leads to, but it is a starting point.

Life was not easy as the youngest and most favored wife of the young prince. His first two wives each bore him three children, between the ages of three and fourteen. Over the years, I myself bore him two children, a son and a daughter.

It was within the year 1769 BC, when I was twenty-one, that forever altered my life. My son was five years old, my daughter but a babe of one year.

That year, during a holiday I have long forgotten, we had a visitor within our palace, a stranger from mighty Egypt. He was a great magician, one with many tricks to entertain us. I remember sitting with the other wives, with little Summa sitting in my lap, watching the Egyptian create fire from nothing and clapping in wonder at how marvelous he was. My son sat with my husband's other sons and male relatives because men and women did not mingle in public.

The Egyptian was quite handsome, with his caramel skin and tautly muscled body. He wore a black, heavily oiled wig as was the Egyptian way,

and a white pleated cloth over his lean hips.

The women murmured about him, wondering about his virility and how he would be between their thighs.

I remained quiet on the subject, ignoring the jests at my expense, and continued to watch the show with great delight.

At the end of his performance, the Egyptian turned and glanced our way. I swear he stared straight at me, though the other wives and I sat behind a heavily gilded latticed wall adorned with gold and gems. I could feel his black eyes on me. I even felt what I imagined to be a simple caress on my cheek when he turned with a flourish, leaving the chambers, at which time acrobats arrived to take his place. I flushed, swallowing hard at the improper thoughts moving through my head, pushing them out of my mind.

Later that night, tragedy struck.

\*\*\*\*\*

I am not sure what had awoken me.

Was it a noise or mother's instinct?

All I recall was the sudden urge to check on my children in their sleep. I crept quietly to my son's room first, passing through the curtain that separated him from his half siblings. I stood at the threshold, watching him,

his small form bathed in moonlight, lying peacefully in sleep. Satisfied that all was well, I turned to leave when a glint of something wet caught my attention by his bed. All in the room was of blacks and whites, since the full dark was underway with only the soft glow of the pale moon light guiding me.

I padded closer to his bed, making sure to make no sound lest I awaken him, and knelt beside his bed. A large puddle spread across the floor under where his head laid. I dipped the tip on my forefinger into it before rubbing it together against my thumb. It was sticky and slightly warm. Small chunks of something dark lay within the puddle itself. Was he sick? Had he woken and vomited during the night? If so, why did he not seek me out as was his usual routine during illness?

I frowned in confusion, and then I heard it. A very light sound spaced evenly apart.

Plop...plop...plop....

I glanced around, straining to hear where the sound was coming from, when I noticed the droplets were falling from my son's bed sheets. The bitter scent of stomach acids filled my nostrils along with something sharp and pungent. I turned my attention to my son, reaching out to shake his small shoulder.

Nothing.

I shook him harder.

"Ahmarien," I whispered harshly, my throat tightening.

He flopped over to his back like a small rag doll, his flesh already cooling beneath my touch. I scrambled up onto his bed and shook his small frame harder, growing my frantic, my voice rising.

"Ahmarien! Awake, son! Answer me!"

The light of the moon crossed his small face to reveal half-silted eyes with a blood smeared chin and neck. The silken sheets I now sat upon were stiffening, though still sticky, drenched his vomited blood. The scent of something foul, of stomach acids, bile, and the bitter tang of what I could now gather as cyanide created from a distillation from peach kernels filled the air around me.

I sat unbelieving by his side as a small tremble raced through my entire being. This could not be, my mind screamed, but as I brushed the tips of my fingers across his clammy skin, I knew the truth. The pain that seared through my body at that moment was beyond any words I could ever describe. My son, my beloved Ahmarien, poisoned, murdered.

I screamed out my pain, pulling his small limp corpse tightly against my chest to rock him back and forth. Tears ran down my cheeks, as cry

after cry ripped from my throat. I wanted so badly for this to be a dream, some horrible dream the gods sent me as warning against impure thoughts towards another.

Surely, this could not be true. Surely, my son would open his dark eyes and smile at me, teasing me for my worry before asking for a sweet date as a reward for his fine trick he pulled on me. Surely...

The sounds of running sandal-shod feet echoed down the hall. Light suddenly filled the room from a torch held aloft by a harem eunuch. The other women piled into the room, stopping suddenly to gasp in horror at the blood covered bedclothes and my young son held lifelessly within my arms.

"She killed him," my husband's eldest wife, his first, pointed a finger at me and boldly proclaimed.

The others stared at me, as a few backed out of the threshold into the hall.

"She killed him, in revenge against our husband for not claiming her son heir, for she knew how Samsu loved the boy."

I stared at her in grief and horror, speechless. Surely no one would believe such a prosperous lie.

"Yalean," a woman's voice called out. I recognized her to be Naya, a young concubine whom Yalean favored as a servant. "The daughter lies

dead in her crib too, blood everywhere."

I stared, speechless, unable to form words though I opened my mouth. My breath caught as I believed now I would surely join my children in death.

A great wail filled the hall, very quickly picked up the other women. I felt the world spin as nausea filled me. I held my son tighter, rocking back and forth.

Soon, more footsteps echoed through the hall, heavy but unhurried. The women parted like a field of wheat to reveal four tall, powerfully built men with bronze breastplates and spears. As they moved towards me, I felt fear as I had never felt before fill me. One took my son from my arms, twisting my limbs in the process as two others grabbed my wrists and roughly pulled me to my feet.

"Take the murdering bitch to the King," Yalean spit out as she looked at me with such venom that I could feel it.

With a jerk, they pulled me to the door. I tripped over the hem of my nightclothes, but did not fall because of the tight grip they had upon my person. Instead, they dragged me bodily out of the room and down the hall as the wailing concubines stood watching.

The last thing I saw before hauled from the Women's Hall was Yalean



standing in the middle of the hall, a smug look across her beautiful face.

I was dragged before my Father in Law, Hammurabi King of Babylon. My husband, Prince Samsu, stood by his side. I was stunned, too much in shock and grief to defend myself to them as the guards and Yalean revealed what they witnessed in my children's chambers.

The whole scene is mostly a blurred memory to me, too hard for me to even think upon for very long. Though I loved my children deeply, their deaths are not something I wish to dwell on.

The judgment came swiftly. I was to be taken to a cell in the dungeon and beaten; then come the dawn, taken to the courtyard, stripped naked for all to see and staked to the ground, at which the palace hunting dogs would be released to tear and feed upon my flesh.

My husband crossed his arms over his chest and turned away from me, the look on his face one of great sorrow, grief, and anger. I must have fainted for what I next remembered was the sting of a lash striking across my back. I cried out in pain as the leather tore my tender flesh from my shoulder.

Never before had I been struck. Never had I felt so much agony except for within my heart. I barely remember more, only the faint weaving in and out of consciousness as my back was ripped to shreds. Because I

was a member of the royal family, no metal touched me. Yet leather, in the right hand, can be just as devastating.

How long I lay in my cell I know not. When I was finally able to crack my eyelids open, the moon was lower in the sky.

Something woke me.

I moaned in agony and whimpered. Death was certain I knew. I cared not, for at least I would be with my beloved children.

A shadow crossed my vision.

It moved quietly to me, no sound from the straw on the floor came to my ears; a gentle touch on my forehead, a stirring of my dampened, blood sticky hair drawn from my face. As my eyes focused on what was before me, I realized it was the magi, the fire blower from earlier that night. I closed my eyes again at the memory, before drawing in a shuddering breath.

"I can help you," he whispered to me. I could feel his soft breath on my ear, teasing me. "I can give you what you most desire."

"Are you a god?" I asked my voice harsh from tears. "Could you bring my children back?"

"I am no god, but I am close." I felt his lips brush against my cheek before he continued. "And though I cannot give back your children, I can

give you revenge and life."

"I do not want to live without them," I cried softly. "I want to die."

"No you don't, Vashti. Do not let them win. Do not let them take your life without a fight." Fingers brushed my shoulder. I winced as they passed over my torn skin, breaking the scabs to let fresh crimson blood seep down my arm. I heard a sharp intake of breath from him, before he continued.

"Do not let Yalean kill you as she did your children. Do not let her win."

I opened my eyes at the mention her name. Yalean. Hate flared in my heart, hate so strong I felt the strength to turn my head to gaze upon the stranger.

He smiled at me, his beauty breathtaking, alluring. "Yalean killed your children. You know that. She killed them out of jealousy and spite. Will you allow your children's deaths to go un-avenged? Do you not hear their voices, calling to you? Will you allow her to continue breathing while your children lie lifeless?" His eyes glittered like glass in the moonlight, black as onyx.

"No," I murmured, blinking my eyes to clear my vision from the tears beginning to form once more. "No, my children need to be avenged. They will not be allowed to live in paradise with this burden on them."

He nodded and leaned toward me, until his nose was barely a breath

space away from mine. "You must release their souls; you must avenge them, set them free."

I looked deep into his eyes as he studied mine, eyes as shiny as ebon glass, hard and lifeless yet a flame burned deep inside. "I can help you do this; I can help you avenge them."

I felt helplessness fall over me again. I was but a woman, one beaten and locked in a cell. What could I do against the palace guards? How could I punish Yalean and the others? I gave voice to reality.

"I am too weak to do such things. How could I do what you suggest?"

As if it were possible, he moved even closer to me. I could feel his breath caress my cheek as he spoke. "Accept the Dark Gift I would bestow on you. Take your revenge. All I ask is you become my companion."

Confusion filled me. "Dark Gift? What is that? How can that help me? You come with no weapon or with men of your own."

A smile lit his lips. "I would make you one of my own, a NightWalker, one who is invulnerable to mankind. One who strikes fear into our enemies. One who lives forever, to never age or suffer from disease. Great speed and strength you will have, with powers beyond your imagination. You will become a god upon this world."

Thoughts of vengeance filled my mind, to destroy those who sought

to destroy me. "Yes," I breathed. "Anything. I will pay any price, just give my children vengeance."

I could feel him smile as he brushed his rough cool fingers over my shoulder, pushing aside my hair to bare my flesh to his sight. Then he struck, sharp teeth piercing my already abused flesh, rending and drinking my life's blood. I groaned, not quite in agony, not quite in pleasure. I struggled weakly in his grasp, unsure, but his mouth would not release me.

A whooshing sound filled my ears, pulsing with some strange hypnotic beat that matched the rhythm of his sucking. I could feel his lips, clamped tightly against my shoulder, his tongue stirring the wound, coaxing my blood to flow faster. The urgency of his mouth, of his drinking, lulled me even as I could feel my skin pulled between his lips. It caught my attention, drawing me down, down into a spiral of death until I felt heavy and tired, my very limbs refusing to respond to my will. When the beating of my heart slowed so that I could barely hear it, barely felt awareness, he pulled his mouth away from me and lifted my head up to his chest.

"Drink. Drink and live," he commanded as he drew a finger across his smooth chest, splitting his skin without a blade.

I stared as ruby red liquid began to flow from the wound, watching in fixated wonder, until he pushed my head to him, my mouth to the cut.

"Drink, Princess. Avenge the cries of your little ones."

I swallowed hard at the thought of drinking his blood as he did mine, my stomach turning at the concept. As my lips touched his cool flesh, curiosity at this new erotic sensation filled my mind. I had never touched a man other than my husband in any way intimate before. His skin was silky smooth beneath my touch, heat radiating off him to warm my chilled flesh. His scent, one of musk and pure masculine, filled my senses, drowning me deep into his very essence.

My tongue slipped out between my parted lips to lick at the elixir, tasting the salty metallic tang on the tip, finding it not unpleasant. Slowly, I stroked my tongue over the wound, gathering his blood then working at a quicker pace. Hunger, the need for vengeance and more, caused me to press my mouth against him, drawing in more and more of his life's blood. I turned in his hold, wrapping my arms tightly around his waist, pulling him closer to me as my fingers dug into the skin of his back.

He groaned, wrapping me in a strong embrace, throwing his head back in ecstasy. I could feel his body react to mine, his erection hard and erotic, though it went no further than letting its presence known. He overwhelmed my senses, leading me down a tunnel and along a path that was to be my destiny. I could feel his emotions, glorious in predatory

nature, as his thoughts washed over me in a tidal wave.

He wanted me, wanted me as a companion, as a daughter, as a lover. Someone to share his lonely existence with, someone to experience his baser needs with. I knew at that moment he loved me, not as a husband to wife or a father to child, but as something more, something stronger.

The hunger in me grew stronger. I wanted more. So much more than even he could provide and he knew it. Our minds touched, our thoughts merging as if we were one. I saw his creation, the terror of his death at the hands of his beloved Queen, saw the hunger and maliciousness that boldly crossed the handsome ebon face of his King, the Pharaoh, as he witnessed his wife's first creation. I heard words spoken by the Pharaoh, words I did not understand, as the magi's body dropped from his Queen's slender caramel arms.

Suddenly, I felt him pulling me off him, forcing my shoulders and body down on the straw as I struggled.

I remember the saltiness of his taste, the scent of leather, sweat, and pure manliness around him. The scent of my blood, of his blood and that of my son's upon me.

I remember strength, and weakness, of feeling stronger, then

suddenly sick.

I remember flaring pain and agony outside my whip marks.

I remember darkness and the look of glee in his dark eyes as my body struggled and died under him.

Then I remembered no more.

What is it like to die?

A sweet blessing brought on angel's wings?

A soft loss of breath?

A painless passing?

If only that were so.



## Chapter Three

I lay in the Egyptian's arms as my body shook and thrashed. My heart pounded against my rib cage, fighting for release from the agony I had never felt before. I feared what was happening to me so strongly that I screamed in panic, reaching out to him, begging with my eyes for him to end this torment and pain. Fire washed through my veins as my stomach rolled and coiled, vomiting up the crimson liquid I had but drank moments earlier.

The Egyptian held me, wiping the blood and bile from my face with a cloth as he whispered soothing words into my ear. I could feel the coolness of his lips as they pressed against my temple, hear the soft sigh he let escape as my body jerked and spasmed in his arms. He lay down next to me, outlining my body with his own hard lean one, cradling me, wiping the sweat and tears from my face.

My breathing became shallow. I struggled so hard for my next breath, gasping for air. My body wanted to live, fighting for its very preservation. Slowly my heart quit its rapid flight, becoming quieter. Soon, all that reached my ears was the gentle rise and fall of ocean waves as my blood slowly ceased pumping through my veins.

My body ended its fight, giving up its last breath.

I died, looking into the ebon eyes of my benefactor. The joy I saw in them the last thing etched into my living memory. Joy combined with a strange mixture of tenderness and triumph.

When I next opened my eyes, I remember darkness, but not the darkness that was within my cell before. No, this darkness had life to it, a presence. I sat up, my eyes open wide to stare out before me. The Egyptian was gone, the indentation from where he lay still beside me. I pressed a hand to the broken straw where he had laid then cocked my head at the sounds reaching my ears.

I could hear the crickets outside in the field, the clicking of little claws as mice scurried between the stone walls. I heard...a heartbeat, rapidly beating like a small bird confined to a wicker cage that fluttered in the back of its prison, watching as a large cat stalk ever nearer to its captured prey.

Looking around, I spied a shadow of a man huddled in the corner of my cell, trembling from fear. I could smell that fear, cold sweat, piss, and the stink of an unwashed body. I stared, fixated by the movements of the man before me, the tiny, involuntary gestures his body made from the terror he felt. Terror I knew grew within him created by me.

A movement to my right revealed the Egyptian. Sitting casually, he

leaned back against the wall with his arms behind his head, watching me with a bemused smile upon his handsome face. I sensed the movement was to catch my attention, to somehow reassure me that he was still with me. I smiled, grateful and looked away, feeling slightly embarrassed at the sudden rise in my heart at the look in his glossy onyx eyes.

"I found you a present," his voice washed over me like a fine scarf of silk, caressing my skin, leaving behind tingles that sent my pulse to rising. "Feed, my lovely companion. Feed and grow strong. Then after, we shall avenge your children's deaths."

I found myself nodding; saliva filling my mouth as I once more looked upon the man in the corner. Food he was, nothing more than cattle. So strange the thought that entered my head, not revulsion at what I was about to do, but almost instinctual. As if, inside, I knew this was right, that the cowering man's blood was the only thing that would satisfy me.

My nostrils flared as I opened my mouth, tasting his fear and sighed. I stood up, walking slowly toward him, feeling him watching me, unsure as to what I was about to do. I must have looked a sight. My body, barely clothed, a breast exposed, bloodied and bruised. Long dark hair no longer brushed to a silky glow but tangled with bits of straw throughout it, covering part of my face before cascading down over a bare shoulder to hang limply

to my waist. My feet bare, padding softly to him without sound, almost ghost-like. I'm sure I looked quite the fright that early morning.

Carefully I watched for any signs that he would try to fight or flee. What look crossed my face, I do not know, but death was in his wide eyes. The slightest twitch from him would cause me to spring. I could feel my muscles grow taunt, coiling, waiting, feeling like a predator stalking my prey.

Then it happened. His finger moved, barely perceived in the dark, but enough to set off my motions. I fell on him like a ravaging beast. My teeth had grown as if fangs within a lion's mouth; my nails that were once broken and bleeding from my imprisonment were now whole, long, and sharp as hard iron.

I tore at him, my teeth ripping the soft flesh of his neck, tearing deep into muscle and vein, cracking bone to bare him open as his blood filled my hungry mouth. My fingers curled around his shoulders, sliding down his arms to hold him in a vise grip to keep his struggling form from escaping. Rapturously I fed as waves of his wondrous ruby elixir pumped with each rapid beat of his heart, filling my mouth to overflowing with the warm saltiness.

His screams grew louder and more frantic with each bite I took,

spitting the flesh out so I could drink at the welling scarlet liquid that bubbled, spraying like a fountain. I felt his weak mortal body break under my administrations. Weaker and weaker he struggled, his body jerking, until he lay dormant, giving up life to me before fading from existence.

Strong fingers wrapped around my forearms.

"That's enough, my love."

The Egyptian reached for me, pulling me off the corpse that was now under my body. Some time during my feeding, I had straddled the man, wrapping an arm behind him to hold him close to my chest.

"Death holds nothing for you. It is now life that you must seek." The Egyptian cupped my chin in his large hand, brushing my bottom lip with his thumb as he wiped away the blood that streaked my mouth.

I looked up into his face with wide eyes, breathing heavily as my body trembled, excited from the feeding. The change I was going through coursed along my nerves, the thrill of the kill and sweet taste of death bringing my senses to full throttle.

Moving me from the corpse, he pulled me into his lap, holding me in his strong arms as I calmed, stroking my hair and cheek with a large steady hand until I came to my senses. I licked at the blood on my fingers, sucking at the clots under my ragged nails. All I felt was a great need to rend and

feed. Animal I had become.

"No, not an animal," he spoke as if he read my mind. "Newborn. You seek nourishment to live. The feeling will soon pass and your senses will return." He petted my hair, holding my head to his chest, his arms now enfolding me as a lover would, caressing my arm and back. I could feel his lips move against my hair as he spoke, whispering words of encouragement.

Pulling back slightly from me, he looked into my face and smiled, revealing even white teeth and sharp lion's fangs.

"My beauty." His fingers brushed my tangled hair from my face before tracing a line down my cheek. "Even my Queen will envy you." His eyes shone with an inner fire as he gazed over me. "But you are not for her, for you are my companion."

He lifted my chin. My eyes met his with an innocence I could no longer contain. "Are you steady? Do you feel yourself return?"

I nodded my head at him, in awe of the great beauty I saw there. His eyes were like polished stones, skin as white and as smooth as alabaster. There was such tenderness in those eyes as they looked upon me, such need and devotion. The feelings were almost so overwhelming that I had to look away.

He smiled again, leaned down to press his lips against my forehead. Incredibly soft yet cold as a statue he resembled. "Good. Now let us avenge your children and yourself."

Taking me by the hand, he guided me from the cell into my new life.

The Egyptian, whose name I later learned was Ahman Kaman, held only my elbow as we walked down the dark stone passageway.

I remember feeling the cool smoothness of the floor, hearing the soft echoing sounds as insects and mice scurrying along ahead of us. A few paused to watch as we passed then ran in the opposite direction, as if to spread news of our coming.

His hands, so firm and strong, were calloused from work. I had earlier thought him to be just a magus but obviously, he had to have been more than that. He gave me a gently squeeze, reminding me he would be with me every step of the way. I glanced up at him to catch a warm smile then looked forward as we continued along our way.

The shadows seemed to stay with us, draping us in lush velvetiness as we left the prisons. I saw no guards along the way, only smears and droplets of blood as proof of how my rescuer gained admittance to my cell. The violence he did was so minimal, so skillful, I could only wonder at his abilities, hoping he would teach me his ways rather than keep me ignorant

as most men of my time did to their women.

He led me among side passages, avoiding further guards and servants, for the revenge I would give must be done in stealth to get what I truly wished. My mind envisioned all forms of revenge. Rip Yalean limb from limb, and laugh as she screamed, bleeding to death before my eyes, begging me to end her suffering. I should curse her to never gain entrance to the Hall of Anubis, to exchange her heart with a stone so if she did gain entrance, she would be judged unworthy to enter paradise and instead would be sent to the Hell of the Jews to suffer in torment and pains for the rest of eternity.

But Ahman had better ideas.

I barely noticed as we crossed the courtyard to enter the palace. The shadowed landscape was peaceful to the peacocks that rested along the lush green yard. As quiet as a butterfly's flight, Ahman and I moved down the halls to the women's quarters, our passage as unremarkable as a whisper of wind. I smiled in glee as we neared Yalean's private chambers, feeling my lips pull back to reveal my sharp white fangs. I could already taste her blood, rich and warm on my tongue. My mouth watered at the thought as my senses sharpened.

Soft even breathing reached my ears. She slept so peacefully,



knowing my children had suffered and died. Knowing I had been tortured, thrown in a dank cell to await my death. My hunger and anger stirred, becoming a blazing inferno as I turned, lifting a hand to push open her closed filigreed door and right my vengeance.

Yet Ahman did not stop.

Instead, he continued farther down the hall, past the other wives' chambers, past the concubines, down to the end, where the children slept.

There he stopped and looked back at me, waiting patiently for me to follow. Out of curiosity, I left Yalean's door and went to him, stopping when my toes brushed against his woven sandals. Looking up into his handsome face, I questioned him with a look.

Even though we stood in darkness, I could see his smile, white, straight, and deadly.

"Take what was taken from you." His voice was thick and soft to my ears, caressing my very senses.

I turned and closed my eyes, letting my awareness expand outward, taking in all the scents and sounds that emitted behind the doors. The smells of the nursery wafted to my nose. I could breathe in the fragrance of their young, innocent flesh and it made my knees go weak. Soft sighs and the gentle rushing of blood in their veins met my ears. I closed my eyes in

the moment, savoring the sound and smells.

Yes, the perfect revenge.

None of Yalean's children will ever grow. While mine lie in dust, their tiny bodies rotting, then so will hers. I understood Ahman's offering to me, his present and I accepted it graciously.

My eyes opened, meeting the glittering black ones of the Egyptian's as a smile lifted my lips. Without seeing, I could feel him motion towards the door, feel the soft breeze from the outside wind as they opened to reveal the curtain covered entrance of the nursery. He beckoned me forward.

With a few steps, I entered.

As the gossamer curtains parted, the first thing to meet my eyes was the large black eunuch that guarded the chambers. Nabio had been part of the children's harem since I could remember. He had always seemed as large as a mountain to me, a fierce and loyal protector of Samsu's offspring. Whenever I entered the chambers, a ready smile would be present on his lips.

I removed him with a swipe from my clawed hand. The flesh of his thick neck split open beneath my nails like a ripe melon, revealing a red juicy center. Crimson liquid pumped frantically from his arteries as he

grabbed at the wound, mouth opened in a silent cry as his disbelieving gaze moved to my face before he fell to his knees. Eyes dimming, he landed face first on the beautiful woven rug that protected tender feet from the cold marble floor as a dark stain quickly spread around his head.

The moonlight from arches opened to outside, revealed to my eyes the sleeping forms of all the children born to wives and concubines. To my newly created appetite, it seemed a great feast laid out before me. My mind reeled at the intake of their many mingled young scents, warm bodies and the underlying pulsing of their blood coursing through their veins under soft, delicate, thin skin. I felt intoxicated, aroused, and hungry.

Ahman watched me languidly as he crossed the room, his steps never making a sound as he wove between the sleeping beds that dotted the chamber. With a gentle touch, his fingers breezed over small heads, only slightly stirring the downy soft hair of the sleeping children.

With care, I followed, my eyes wandering over the small sea of faces, searching for those children belonging to Yalean. I find them back toward the balcony, their rooms divided by the thinnest drapery. Each child sleeps so peacefully, unaware their deaths loom over their fragile bodies. Beautiful children, one and all, for Samsu was a handsome man and all his wives and concubines beautiful.

What maternal instinct I had possessed to nurture and never cause harm vanished without thought as I gazed down upon them, leaving only that deep sated, hunger-filled rage created earlier tonight as my children died and I punished for their deaths.

I reached the Yeleen's oldest first, a boy of the age of eight summers. Next high moon he would have graduated to the men's quarters, being of legal age to begin his training as heir to my husband, Prince Samsu. I leaned over him, a stray lock of hair tumbling forward to tickle his face, before I released a soft breath across his eyes.

He opened them, blinking as one does when roused from a deep sleep, to stare at me for some time before he opened his mouth to speak. I smiled down at him with a gentleness belying my intent, before revealing my fangs to his sight.

"Vashti?" he whispered, the pupils in his dark eyes expanding as he squinted up at me, trying to see my face in the dark.

I nodded, brushing his dark hair from his forehead, pleased he spoke my name. A low sigh sounded around us, lifted on the night breeze before carried out into the early morning.

"Grandfather condemned you to death. You should not..."

Anger at his words filled me as I felt my eyes grow hard as stone and

my jaws ached from want. Ignoring what he spoke in ignorance I entwined my fingers in his dark silky hair, held tight and pulled his head back to expose his thickening neck to my gaze. With one last breath, I closed my eyes as I plunged my sharp teeth into his throat, tasting the hot sharp blood that spilled into my eagerly awaiting mouth as his heartbeat pushed it with a faster pulse.

Clasping a hand over the young boy's mouth, I dug my fingers into the soft flesh of his face as I drank greedily, stealing his breath, his very life away. He struggled for a bit, but what could a boy of eight do against my newfound strength? When a trained harem guard could not stand against me, a child would be no problem. Whimpers rose to my ears, music to accompany my feeding as my teeth dug deeper into his throat, rending bone, muscle, and cartilage. A sharp shifting then a crack, as the boy suddenly became limp in my arms.

I ignored the noise as my hunger deepened, feeling myself drawn into the Thirst before the Egyptian roused me from it. With a sharp intake of air, I forced myself to pull away from the now vacant body of young Tasmu, blood dripping from my teeth. A bit of tissue stuck between my incisor and the tooth next to it. Wiggling it with my tongue, it loosened til I spit it out, watching as a pool of darkness quickly stained the linen and spread along

the bed to gather and drip to the floor below.

Wiping the crimson liquid dribbling from my mouth onto his silken sleeping robes, I rose and went to the next child, a daughter of seven. Little Ester was the golden apple of her father's eye. Her angelic face slept surrounded in true blue black hair that lay in ringlets. Eyes closed, delicate brows lifted in carefree dreams, a rosebud mouth slightly opened as she breathed. Even at such a tender age, her voice could bring a tear to the most hardened warrior at the sheer beauty of it.

Resisting my first impulse, I merely pressed my hand flat against her slender throat, pressing down softly with even pressure, knowing how easily it would snap as a twig under my strength.

She gasped, choking, her eyes opening to stare into my own as she gasped for breath. I could feel her life slowly ebbing out of her small frame as tiny hands reached up to grab at me, pushing and pulling as she tried to make mine release her. Her innocent eyes begged, asking why, but nothing, even the tiniest bit of remorse came to me. When her shuddering stopped, I wiped from her cheek a single tear that leaked from her eye.

I stood straight and looked toward where the third child lay.

I brushed aside the curtains that separated the baby's area, feeling nothing, no emotion touching my heart as I looked upon the form of the

sleeping infant. My daughter was not much younger than this when she was poisoned, dying her own small bed, alone and afraid. I could not be there for her but I could be here for this tiny child.

With a hollowness I did not fully understand at the time, I moved silently to the bed and gathered the sleeping baby in my arms, gazing down at her, as I thought of my daughter, wishing so badly I could hold her once more. My daughter was dead, forever out of my reach.

Closing my eyes, a lullaby I remembered my own mother used to sing to me when I was scared upon my lips, I cradled Yolean's infant, holding the back of his head in my hand and twisted it off as if he were no more than a doll. There was a slight resistance at first, and then it came off with a popping noise, spraying the ruby elixir I now thrive on over the silken drapery around where I stood.

I remained still, almost lifeless as I watched the blood pulse from the tiny form, until it did no more than become a steady trickle. I stood and listened. No sound was heard from the rest of the sleeping chamber; nothing but soft sighs and nighttime noises a child would make in their sleep. All was still at peace for the other children of the harem.

Replacing the body of the child back into his cradle, I cupped the head, gazing down at the sweetness of his face. Lifting my other hand, I

brought my fingers to my mouth, licking first one, then another of my fingers. Sweet blood he had. Sweet blood they all had.

As I left the infant's room, I looked once more at the head in my hands. Smiling, I made my way back to the first two bedchambers to retrieve the gifts I would leave for Yalean. My Egyptian followed behind me, the expression on his handsome face unreadable but the sense he gave off was most satisfied.

I was not there when Yalean woke, but I was privy to a rumor that spread through the Empire that Prince Samsu's first wife lost her sanity that morning.

I could imagine her surprise waking to find, cradled to her bare breast, the decapitated head of her infant son placed in a position of mock suckling at her nipple. Then to look up and see two pairs of small white orbs, all facing her with the black irises of her children.

I heard that the screams echoing through the palace that day were legendary. However, I had no chance to gloat, for the discovery that Prince Samsu's youngest wife missing from her prison cell and a body of a mutilated guard discovered within, hastened our departure.

We had hurried along the vast tunnels under the city itself, reaching a small hidden gate that led into the deserts themselves. I moved to step



forth into freedom when the first rays of the sun struck me, searing my delicate skin. I stumbled back, holding my arms before me, trying to protect my face and screamed in agony as my flesh boiled and darkened, splitting from the intensity of the early morning beams of light.

Ahman pulled me back into the shadowy shelter of the tunnels, holding me protectively in his strong arms and whispered soothing words into my hair as I wept and shook.

“Too much time had passed,” he mumbled, brushing his cool lips across my temple. “We need to seek refuge within the darkness of the passages.”

He led me back down the tunnel to a small alcove we had passed on our way towards the gate. Kneeling down as he sat, he settled me in his lap. My legs curled up in comfort as I leaned my shoulders back against him, feeling him press my head to the crook of his neck. I took solace in his rich scent and tried to ignore the stink of my burning flesh, but the pain was too intense. A whimper escaped from my lips.

“Drink,” he breathed, tilting his head to the side to expose his throat to me. “Drink, then sleep. I will protect you.”

I barely chanced a glance down at my hands and forearms, seeing raw seething wounds, burns from the sun's harmful touch before he turned

me toward him. I wept, crying out in pain and turned my face into his throat. He held me, whispering sweet words in a language I knew not as he brushed my hair in soft gentle strokes.

"Yes nerfer netjret (*beautiful goddess*), drink. My blood will heal you."

The vibrations of his deep voice were soothing to my ear. I turned my face to him, my mouth against his skin. My lips parted slightly, letting my tongue slip out to taste his flesh. I felt his body tremble under my touch, reacting once more to my nearness and heard a sigh escape him. Opening my mouth wider, my jaws ached with need, feeling the Hunger build within me. Dizziness swept over me as I closed my eyes, then I struck swiftly, sinking my teeth deep within the tender skin of his throat.

He let out a gasp of pleasure/pain as I bit him, arching slightly against my body. One of his hands moved to the back of my head, holding me firmly as his fingers curled in my hair. His other moved to the middle of my back, pressing my breasts hard against his broad chest. As I gulped down the first swell of liquid to enter my mouth, I could feel my bare breast brush against the skin of his chest, feeling the smoothness of his dark skin. My nipples tingled, sending slight waves of pleasure through my body to end pulsing between my legs. I shifted, moving to straddle his lap and felt his rigid erection under my body.

I sank into him, melting as smoothly as honey and gave myself fully into the sensations of his blood. The wondrous elixir he shared with me was fiery nectar, burning down my throat yet leaving a burning trail of liquid heat to rest warmly in my belly. I rocked my hips each time I sucked at the blood, feeling him tremble beneath me as I fed.

Soon, my limbs felt heavy, my movements slowed as a languid slumber over took me. I barely remember him laying me down, of him curled next to me as he stroked my soft hair from my face, running his fingers across my burned skin with the gentleness of a soft cooling spring breeze, before caressing my breast and its dark tip.

Sometime after that I awoke with a start. Sucking air deep into lungs that no longer needed it, I gasped, sitting up, holding my chest, and stared straight ahead of me. I could see the outlines of the great stones of the tunnel wall in the gloom. Calming my fears, I looked around, the darkness withdrawing, and remembered my flight with the Egyptian.

Then I realized he was not there.

Terror filled me at the thought of being alone. Where was he? Why had he left me? Questions filled my mind, a tumbling of waves as my breathing quickened. "He'll be back," I murmured to myself. He would not have saved me only to leave me to the world on my own. Taking a deep

breath, I calmed myself again and listened to the sounds around me.

I could hear the scurrying of tiny feet as rats made their way about their business. A buzzing of wings announced the passing of a night fly and a clicking sound caught my attention. I looked down near my feet to discover a red scorpion.

It clicked his pincers at me, before hurrying down the tunnel. I watched after it, listening to the night sounds before peering out of my alcove to glance in the direction of the gate.

Where was Ahman, I wondered, anxiety filling me to the very core. I knew nothing of what I was now, only the need to feed and hide from the sun. Remembering the pain of the early morning, I held up my hand to discover the burns I suffered from the searing rays were no longer there. Instead, the flesh of my hands and arms were as smooth and flawless as they were before. I stared in wonder at the miracle, relived that I was not disfigured when I sensed something that was not there before.

Instincts took over as I moved my weight to the balls of my feet, ready to spring forward and defend myself.

I could smell fresh blood, which caused my jaws to ache and my teeth to elongate. Swallowing hard, I steadied myself. The Hunger rose within me once again.

Then I saw him.

Ahman grinned at me, holding out a bundle in his arms as he moved to my side. I watched his handsome face, watched the graceful way he moved and envied him his beauty. With the fluidness of a dancer, he settled beside me.

"Sit, my dark princess."

I could see a dark smear of blood by the corner of his mouth.

He smiled again, noticing where my eyes were drawn. The tip of his tongue slid between his lips, licking the speck, and then disappeared once more. I followed the movement, wanting desperately to taste that which he had not long before. A gnawing in my stomach built as I licked my own lips, mimicking him. Ahman chuckled, the sound low and rich.

"You will feed soon enough. First, we must clothe you properly for your station. Stand for me now."

He reached out a large hand to me. I lifted one, placing it in his and I did as he asked, without hesitation. Standing, I watched as he rose before me, the bundle in his arms unfolding to reveal clothing. He held his arm wide, letting the dress drape over the length of his well-muscled arm. The fabric was a rich shimmering silk of black, woven with gold and burgundy threads. Small golden tassels hung at the base as more elaborate gold

threading decorated the low-neck line and long hanging sleeves.

Smiling, I took the gown, running a thumb over the softness of the material. I always thought silk was beautiful, but now...it shone with a light I had not known, the threads shifted and shimmering under my perusal. Like everything else around me, the dress took on new life.

Sighing, I lifted the gown to my face, rubbing a cheek against the coolness of it and sighed at the softness of the material. Ahman moved behind me, his hands sliding smoothly over my shoulders, fingers skimming my bare flesh and the tattered remains of my sleep garments. Deftly, his fingers quickly untied my blood-covered clothing, letting them fall off my arms, over my hips, landing in a pile around my feet.

I stepped out of the discarded clothing, feeling Ahman's eyes caress my naked skin as his hand moved once more to touch my hair. He stroked it slowly, letting a curl entwine around a finger then sighed.

"I need to find you a brush to remove the tangles."

With a grim look over his face, he reached over my shoulders, the hair on his arms tickling my soft skin. "Let me." Taking the dress from my hands, he held it up before me, as he placed his face beside my head, his breath stirring the hair covering my ears.

Raising my arms, he lowered it over me, sliding the fabric down along

my body as I squirmed and sighed. When it was in place, he lifted my hair, draping it over my shoulder as he began tying my new dress.

When he finished, Ahman pressed his lips to the nape of my neck, before he circled me, stopping when he faced me, and smiled.

"I wish I could drape you in jewels." His dark eyes bore into mine, leaving me to feel heated and strange. "But for now we must leave. Later I will have time to dress you properly."

Taking my hand firmly in his, he led me back down the tunnel to the gate and into the desert night.

To my freedom and new life.

Together, at least for a while.

## Chapter Four

### Modern Day

*Dassah disturbs my writing, inquiring about the punishment of one of my Children who dared to defy my word. Her pale pink mouse-like eyes glitter in anticipation to what form of justice I choose, for she is my executioner as well as my enforcer. It is a job she relishes with such glee, that it's hard at times to remember that she is more than a diabolical creature that goes about her Undead Life with no more thought than pleasing me and creating pain in others.*

*She stands behind me hovering, watching, and waiting. My daughter of my heart brings me much joy. I feel blessed to have received her into my household. Her very presence has brought me much comfort from all these years of loneliness, filling the empty void of what I had lost so long ago.*

*Dassah is an interesting child. She is older than most of my Children but her physical form is no more than a child of fourteen. The one who created her was a sadistic beast who took great pleasure in torturing my dearest Dassah. When he finally died, probably a result of his callous disregard for life, it freed the child. Little did she have in skills, much less sanity. I weep remembering the filthy, cringing creature clutching a dead*



*rodent in her grasp, staring at me with hollow demented eyes, under tangled locks of bone white hair matted to her head with the filth of living in sewers.*

*My poor Dassah, born an albino and mute, a disability in her time that caused society to cast her out among the refuse and left her discarded among the garbage of the streets. She doesn't tell much about her life before I found her, only that she adores me and, I, I adore her in return. To Dassah I give the love I had once given my children of birth.*

*At times, she can be trying, like bringing her food to our home and forgetting to remove their corpses. And animal lover that she is, she does tend to be a bit rough on her pets. We have gone through five rats this past month, their tiny bodies piling up in the corner of her room.*

*I must scold her to let her know my displeasure, but then I must quickly give her the reassurance that no matter what she does that I will always love her. She is an innocent in that manner.*

*I tell Dassah to do with Rasio whatever she wishes. I have no time to deal with him personally. She smiles brightly at me before she hurries out, leaving the door open once more behind her so that I must get up and close it.*

*Children, will they never learn?*

*What bothers me the most is these new vampires, the ones made during the twentieth century. They have no manners and no self-control. For a little money and the idea of power, they create their own clan, their own children, with no thought to the outcome.*

*To randomly create a vampire is just wrong.*

*Either the newly created are not mentally capable to become one of the Un-Living and commit suicide, or they are driven insane by the thought of becoming one of the Damned, becoming mass murderers. Or they themselves are already destructive and kill for the thrill of it, with no thought of calling attention to our kind.*

*The Council decided that a Hunt was to begin.*

*All vampires not sanctioned by the Council will be hunted down and destroyed.*

*All vampires who continue to defy Council law will be exterminated along side their progeny.*

*I myself am very strict about those I select to become one of my Clan. I tolerate no disrespect to me or to any of my peers. To step outside my laws and those of the Council brings about swift death. My beloved Daughter Dassah hunts them for me since she is still young and thrills for the hunt along with the scent of blood, and brings them back to me for*

*execution.*

*It is my blood that brings them this Life and so it is only fitting that I  
take that Life from them.*

*Some accept their punishment, others fight.*

*Their Death is neither swift nor gentle.*

The End