



By Renath Estefan

**Jaded**

Written and published by Renath Estefan

Copyright 2012 Renath Estefan

All rights reserved including the right to reproduce this book or portion thereof, in any form.

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

## PREFACE

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

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

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

\* \* \*

## 1. Escapade

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

\* \* \*

## TWO YEARS EARLIER

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

'Viol! Listen!'

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

'Mom? What's happening?'

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

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

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

'Yes Viol.'

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

'Mom!' exhaled Eric.

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

'Why did you kill my mother?'

The monsters replicated with a question.

'Do you have any last words, kid?'

'Yes. I HOPE YOU DIE!'

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

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

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

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

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

'I promise mama.'

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

\* \* \*

## PRESENT DAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He agreed by nodding his head.

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

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

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

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

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

He curved one brow. 'Are you alright?'

'Yes, I'm perfect now.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

‘Thanks again for everything.’

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

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

‘Yes... please, if you don’t mind.’

He turned around and walked away.

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

I was puzzled.

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

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

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

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

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

‘Vie verso. How I missed it.’

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'What's wrong with your eyes?'

'Nothing is wrong, why do you ask?'

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

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

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

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

My stomach grumbled as an answer to his question.

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

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

‘Is something wrong?’

‘Are you one of them?’

He frowned once more.

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

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

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

He twitched a bit.

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

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

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

‘I’m not a freaking vampire.’

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'You must have been so hungry.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

'What do you need that for?'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He helped me down.

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

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

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



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

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

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

'Where shall we go to?'

He scratched his head.

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

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

'Where are you sleeping?' I asked worriedly.

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

'Alright, have a good night.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

