Chapter One

Jessie

“I’m sorry, can you repeat that. I don’t think I heard correctly.” I rested a cool glass of lemonade to my forehead. I was a hundred percent positive I was going into shock.

My mother frowned. “Jessie sweetie, please don’t make this hard for me.” She shut her eyes, no doubt regretting my reaction to her dirty, little secrets. “It wasn’t something that we had planned, it wasn’t easy for your father and me to conceive and­­– ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­”

“And what mother, you cheated on him. That’s a poor excuse, and you know it.” I rose from my seat, anger rushing to my head. I crossed the room and stared out the large window facing the ocean. The sun was setting, leaving behind a dusty pink, purple haze in the sky.

“Did Dad even know I wasn’t his?” I had to know, even though I wasn’t sure my mother would tell me the truth. *How many other things had she lied about?*

“Your father was the one who arranged it,” she replied softy. As if that was a justifiable reason.

I had to swallow down the bile at the back of my throat. “You mean to tell me, Dad was the master-mind behind you having a *one-night-stand* – with some stranger. And the end result was getting pregnant with me.” I slammed my fists on either side of the window frame. “I can’t believe that.” I turned to face the woman I once respected, honored, and obeyed. Now, I didn’t know what to think of her.

She turned her head away. “There’s more,” she said. “I think it’s time you know the whole truth.” She turned to face me, tears threatened to escape her eyes.

I shook my head refusing to listen. “How can you do this to me? You wait until the day we bury Dad to tell me this. Now you just expect me to sit here and listen to what you have to say. I don’t think so.” I rushed past the couch where my mother sat and dashed up the stairs towards my bedroom. She didn’t follow.

I knew she wouldn’t.

My room hadn’t changed much, even though it was only a year since I left home for college. The room stayed the same. Posters of Johnny Depp back in his pirate days covered my walls. My twin size bed still covered with teddy bears Dad gave me every birthday. The computer desk wiped clean of papers and computer. The shelves lined with old school books and the occasional paranormal romance novels.

The only thing that caught my eye was the picture frame with a family photo taken on my tenth birthday. I grabbed the frame in my hand and traced a finger along the picture.

Tears formed at the corner of my eyes.

*Why hadn’t I noticed the difference?* I looked nothing like my father. He was short and beefy with curls of golden blond hair, and green eyes. My mother was the total opposite with long wavy red hair and deep brown eyes. She was petit in height and couldn’t have been more than a hundred pounds.

I on the other hand, had long pin-straight black hair, deep blue eyes and fair skin. I was taller than most the girls in my class, and a slight bit curvier too.

The first tears streamed down my cheeks. I shoved them away as more fell.

The sudden tap at the door, made my heart skip a beat. I turned on my heels as the door opened a crack, then pushed open. My mother never really understood the meaning of wanting to be alone. I sighed when she said, “Jessie, we need to talk.” She entered the room. Dark circles formed under her eyes and the whites around her irises were bright red. I knew she’d been crying, and I should really be there for her.

But I was still mad.

They had lied to me, the two people I cared most about, had lied. *Was I just supposed to swallow that betrayal and act as if nothing had happened?*

“This is important Jessie,” she said. “And I’m sorry we didn’t tell you sooner.”

I placed the frame back where I found it. “Can’t this wait mom, I’m tired and just want to sleep.” I snapped back.

“I wish it could, but we only have a little time left together and it’s time you know the truth, before you *go*.” Her voice cracked at the last word. As if, I was leaving tomorrow or something.

I turned to look at her, tears streamed quickly down her cheeks. “Mom it’s not like I’m leaving tomorrow. No matter how mad I am right now. I won’t leave you alone.”

“No but you’re leaving tonight.”

“What, are you kicking me out?”

She crossed the room to where the bed stood and flopped down on it. “I’m not kicking you out. I could never do that to you. But you have to leave tonight. You’re no longer safe here.”

“This is my home, how can you say I’m not safe in my own house.” She wasn’t making any sense. I would have to make a note to call the doctor in the morning. Maybe she was still in shock with what happened to dad.

“Oh sweetie!” Tears fell like a waterfall down her cheeks. “I wish everything was just so simple, but it’s not.” She wiped the tears from her eyes and cleared her throat. “There’s no easy way to say this so I’ll just – you’re half vampire.”

I heard wrong, I was sure of it. Maybe I was dreaming or something, but this couldn’t be real. Had my mother just used the word vampire in a sentence? It wasn’t possible. She couldn’t stand the mention of the word. And now she’d said I was a vampire or was it half vampire.

“What!” Was all I could say.

She closed her eyes and rubbed her face with her hands. “Like I said there’s a lot to this story but I’m not sure how much of it I’ll be able to cover, before they come for you.

“Okay first off, you’re serious when you said I was a vampire?” I wasn’t sure if it was a question or if I needed to hear her say it again.

“Half vampire, a dhampir to be exact.”

*Oh God! I hadn’t heard wrong.* Was my mother going crazy? Now she believed in vampires, what next the bogyman. I couldn’t help but laugh. “You have got to be kidding me?”

The doorbell rang.

“They’re here!” she said. She quickly rose to her feet. I stopped her before she reached my bedroom door.

“Who’s here? What is going on?” I searched her eyes for some kind of answer, but they were blank, filled with sadness. “Mom, tell me what’s going on?”

She placed her hand over mine, patting it softly. “Everything is going to be okay, I promise.” She dashed down the stairs when the doorbell rang again.

I decided I wasn’t going anywhere. I stood at the top of the stairs, looking down at the front door and my mother, who was now allowing whoever it was, into our house.

A tall lean blond woman was the first to enter. She had to be in her mid-twenties. Her blond hair tightly pulled back into a ponytail. She wore black legging with combat boots, short leather jacket and a black t-shirt. Her face was pale white, her lips stained with a deep red lipstick. Her eyes caught mine the minute she stopped in the foyer. They were strange and beautiful at the same time. Three shades of blue surrounded the pupil. It was almost magical and hypnotizing.

Two more entered the foyer, a small pixie like girl with round cheeks and beautiful long thick wavy black hair. She had on the same black leggings and combat boots as the first, but instead she wore a black hoddie.

The other was a tall athletic male in his early twenties. His blond hair was a mess and fell in different directions. He wore a black button down shirt with the sleeves rolled up and a pair of black slacks. He held a cell phone to his ear and a stake in the other hand. *A stake!* He stared up at me, his eyes the same piercing blue as the blond woman. Actually all three of them shared the same eye color.

“It’s all clear.” I heard him say over the cell phone. A big smile appeared on his face, flashing a pair of very sharp fangs. I took a step back. *Fangs! Stakes! What the hell had my mother just invited into the house? She must have lost her mind.* I took another step back, ready to run for my life. A firm cool hand gripped my shoulder and kept me in place.

“Sleep,” he whispered into my ear.

Within seconds, my eyelids felt heavy and before I could fight away the drowsiness, I fell into his arms.