

Vampire
Dawn

Drop Dead,
Gorgeous

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The Story So Far

Hungary, August ...

Juliette, Omar, Finn, Ruby and Alistair find a dead body in the forest ...

... Twenty-four hours later, they tie the murderer, Ava, to a tree, as one by one they fall sick ...

... When they wake, they are vampires, and that murderer looks rather appealing ...

... Mysterious nobleman Ignace, 400 years old and more sophisticated than is good for him, prevents them snacking on her ...

... But that dead body isn't as dead as it looked ...

... They go to Ignace's castle for a crash-course in being a modern vampire.

And so their adventures begin.

This is Juliette's story ...

One

Becca's knife clattered onto the table and a bead of blood glinted on her finger. Juliette froze. It was the first time she'd seen blood since becoming a vampire. She clutched the edge of the table so hard that her knuckles turned white.

'Ouch!' Becca raised her cut finger to her mouth. Juliette found herself leaning across the table towards her, longing for the blood.

‘Didn’t your mum ever tell you not to play with knives?’ Charlie asked, as she handed Becca a tissue.

‘It’s OK, it’s nothing,’ Becca said. The blood was gone, but Juliette still felt faint with need.

‘Are you all right?’ Becca asked her, putting a hand over Juliette’s white knuckles.

‘I – I don’t like the sight of blood,’ Juliette whispered. ‘It makes me feel ... faint.’

‘Since when?’ Charlie asked. ‘It never used to bother you.’

‘Since Hungary,’ Juliette said quietly. She relaxed her grip on the table as the desperate urge to snatch at Becca’s hand and drain it of blood started to fade.

‘What happened to you in Hungary?’ Charlie

asked, but Juliette just looked at the menu.

‘Well?’ Charlie persisted. ‘You’ve been – well, strange. Ever since you got back.’

‘Was it that boy – Omar? Is that his name? The cute one?’ Becca tried.

‘Are we going to eat?’ Juliette said, ignoring their questions. In the time they had spent in his castle after the incident, Ignace had banned them all from discussing what had happened.

A woman at a table by the window watched them. Juliette stared her down, but there was something about her that didn’t feel quite right. She sat with a much younger, very beautiful man. Juliette tried to hear what they were saying, but it was in a foreign language.

Becca and Charlie ordered pizza, but Juliette asked for just a glass of water and a diet cola.

‘What’s wrong with you?’ Becca asked. ‘You used to love pizza! We came here as your treat – you can’t just have water!’

‘But I’m going to Paris tomorrow,’ Juliette said. ‘I can’t eat pizza the day before a photo shoot – I’ll look bloated.’

Since Juliette’s modelling had really taken off, Becca and Charlie were the only friends who still treated her in the same way – still going out, up for a laugh, neither envious nor slimy. She loved them more than ever, but now she couldn’t share her greatest secret with them.

Becca watched as Juliette poured powder from a sachet into her glass of water and stirred it. The

mix turned to a deep red goo.

‘That stuff looks foul,’ Becca said. ‘It’s like chewy blood – how can you eat it?’

‘Meal replacement stuff,’ Juliette said. ‘It’s not bad.’

Ignace, her vampire mentor, sent her supplies of ProVamp as powder. It had all the components of human blood that she needed. ProVamp was the only way to control her urge to bite. Most vampires used it in capsule form, but for Juliette the powder was easier – so many models took meal-replacement powders that it went unnoticed.

As she sipped the thick liquid, the tension from wanting Becca’s blood slipped away.

‘So – blood goop and diet cola?’ Becca smiled,

finishing her pizza. 'And you say models are normal? Durrr.'

But Juliette wasn't listening. The woman at the corner table stared quite openly now, and didn't look away when Juliette glowered at her. Instead, she twisted her wedding ring on her finger, staring back. Was she married to this impossibly young, good-looking boy? Why should Juliette care about these two strangers? It made her uncomfortable, though. The woman seemed to ooze anger at her.

'Let's go,' Juliette said loudly.

The woman wrote in the mist on the window next to her with a finger.

'LEAVE MY HUSBAND ALONE.'

Juliette shrugged at her. She'd never seen the