

It's Not Every Birthday You Get Wings and a Tail

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A semi-normal teen named Crysta Aile finds out she is not so normal after all...

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1 - A Semi-normal Girl

Chapter 1

“Ugghhh...” Crysta thought, trying to focus as the teacher scrawled across the chalkboard.

Crysta Aile was just a semi-normal fourteen year old. She wore the Scarlett High School uniform- a black dress that went to just above her knees with long sleeves and a collar with a tie, a maroon mid-length jacket with the school’s emblem on the right side of her chest, and black, knee-high socks. She also wore a pair of red and black tennis shoes, well worn, by the look of them. Her pale-skinned face was framed by her shoulder-length, dark brown hair, and the top portion of her hair was pulled back into a small pigtail. Crysta had nose-length bangs that got shorter as they came closer to the sides of her face, but she had two bunches of bangs on either side in front of her ears that were an inch or two longer than the rest of her hair.

Now we get to the semi-normal-ness. Crysta was always teased because of her ears- the tops of them ended in a slight point. This earned her nicknames such as “Elf Girl” and “Dumbo.” As if her ears weren’t trouble enough, her canine teeth were also slightly longer than the average tooth, but not all-out vampire. The names “Fang” and “Vamp” came with this “genetic malformation,” as her parents described it- they and her big sister, too, had strange ears, teeth, and, finally, eyes. Crysta’s eyes were of a stormy grey color, with slightly elongated pupils. They could grab the attention of anyone with their cold, angry gaze, or calm anyone, with a cool, clear one. There was one other strange thing about this chick... her naturally long, perfectly sharp fingernails could sometimes be mistaken for claws.

“...and so, class, this is your homework: to read pages 170-192 and write an essay on how this story can connect with your life. And don’t forget- neatness counts!” Mrs. Shaun concluded, underlining the assignment on the chalkboard, just as the bell rang.

Crysta gathered her books and notebooks and slowly stood, waiting for the usual the-bell-just-rang-and-it’s-time-to-go-home-for-the-weekend mess of students.

Crysta stood and grabbed her purse, but felt a quick jab at her shoulder. She turned to see a girl about her height of 5ft, 4in wearing the same school uniform as her, but with a slightly more disheveled appearance: her sleeves were rolled up, her tie was crooked, and her knee-length socks were covered by what could only be described as combat boots. Her tanned, grinning face was framed with chin-length... Blue hair.

“What happened to your head?!” Crysta squealed, almost dropping her books.

The girl grinned. “I know! Isn’t it awesome?!”

Crysta giggled. “Sarah, will you ever stop surprising me? I’ve known you for almost 6 years, and you’re still as unpredictable as you were when you were eight.”

“Hah! You should be used to it by now, Cryssie!” She replied with an evil grin, using her nickname for Crysta. “Now, come on, it’s your turn to carry all my books.”

This had been a longtime tradition for the two best friends; it had all started when Crysta and Sarah Celeste were both about eleven years old, in the 6th grade. Crysta had broken her arm and needed help carrying her books everywhere, and Sarah was the only one fit enough for the job. Sarah helped, but declared that eventually, Crysta would have to pay her back after 4 weeks of Sarah carrying two sets of books- hers, and Crysta’s. Ever since the day Crysta was finally declared recovered, they had switched back and forth who would carry everything every day.

“Oh, fine. Gimme-” Crysta said, grabbing the two books Sarah was holding.

The duo walked out the door after the main mass of students had left, and headed towards their lockers, which were positioned next to each other.

“What books did we need, again?” Crysta asked, opening her locker as Sarah opened hers.

“...English, Social Studies, and Math.” Sarah said, handing Crysta her own books. “Now, come on! I gotta get home before dinner, or else my mom’ll kill me!”

Crysta laughed and took the pile of books. The thick tomes created a stack that was up to Crysta’s knee. She couldn’t even see over the stack!

“Come on, Sarah! Help me with these!”

The blue-haired girl sighed with more than a little bit of exaggeration. “Oohhh, fine... I’ll guide you with my voice. ...Go left a bit.”

Crysta growled. “That’s not exactly what I meant...” She carefully stepped to the left, and gently eased over to a set of stairs- their last class was on the third floor.

“Okay, take one step down. And another... and another...” Sarah coached as Crysta carefully followed her instructions. “There,” Sarah said as Crysta’s foot landed on the bottom step. “That wasn’t too hard, was it? Now... just a little ways more... Oh!”

“What?” Crysta said, fumbling with the stack of books to try to look at her, but Sarah had disappeared.

“I should have known better than to trust that she’d help me for more than a minute... she’s probably seen some cute guy and run off after him.” Crysta thought, rolling her eyes and cautiously continuing through the halls.

She made it halfway through the route in less than five minutes, carefully checking over her shoulder every so often so she wouldn’t get lost- it was only the fourth week of school and her first year in high school, and the only places she knew how to get to were her locker, her classes, the cafeteria, and one route to the front door.

Most of the students were already gone from the hallways- either home, the library, or their classrooms.

Only a few were in the halls, most visiting their own locker or their friends'. (Not including Sarah, who, like Crysta thought, was stalking some poor boy)

Crysta sighed. "I wonder what Ma and Da are getting me for my fifteenth birthday this year...-" Crysta took a step, but her foot didn't touch floor. "Kiiyyaaaaa!!" She cried as she slipped backwards on another staircase. Suddenly, a strong, but not overly buff, pair of arms grabbed her, saving her from falling- also possibly saving her from another broken arm, leg, or neck. The books, though, were not nearly as fortunate- they went sailing out of her flailing arms, and tumbled down the stairs to land in a massive heap of bent, torn, and crumpled pages, with dozens of pages of notes raining down on top.

"Are you alright?"

Crysta turned to see the person who had possibly saved her from a broken neck, and who was still holding her shoulders gently. For a moment, her skin seemed to tingle, and she had the sudden feeling that she was surrounded by soft, white feathers. She shook her head, causing her to feel a little lightheaded.

A boy a little taller than her and about the same age stood there. He had pale, but not pallid, skin, and dark black hair, which made him look even paler. His hair was in a scruffy, short style, with dark bangs hanging over his forehead. He had a small nose, and large, blue eyes. He was wearing the guy's school uniform of Scarlett High- a maroon jacket over a black collared shirt with a tie, and black pants.

"Uhh... Yeah, I think I'm fine..." Crysta murmured as the boy released her shoulders so she could stand on her own. She laughed a little. "...I just need to get my head out of the clouds. Oh, and thanks for saving me."

The boy smiled and blushed a little. "Oh, it was no problem... Well, if you're alright, then I'd best be off..."

And with that, the boy had run off around a corner, to a section of the school Crysta didn't know how to navigate.

"Hmmm... I didn't get the chance to even ask his name..." She thought, going down the stairs to see what had become of her and Sarah's books.

2 - The Aile Family

Chapter 2

“Oh, thanks a ton for abandoning me, Sarah. Now, I have to buy a new English book. AND I can’t finish my homework, because said English book will take 3+ days to arrive!” Crysta growled into the phone.

After the book massacre, she had tried to ask a nearby teacher if she could possibly get another copy of the English book for a few days, to the annoyed response of, “No, but you can buy another.”

Crysta then went back home, only to be roared at by her parents, who chastised her for being so clumsy as to drop the books in the first place after being told only about the books being dropped and the money owed for a new one.

She was now in her room on her bed. She swung her feet back and forth while lying on her stomach. Her face was scrunched into a grimace as Sarah replied, “Eh, sorry about that, Crysta... You see, there was this really HOT guy, and, well...”

“You don’t have to finish- I get the point.” Crysta muttered, in a foul mood. She rolled her eyes.

“Awww... Cryssie... Oh, I know! How about we go out for pizza Monday night? I’ll buy...? As a sort of ‘Happy Birthday’ and ‘sorry’...?”

“I don’t know...” Crysta replied, fiddling with a strand of hair.

“Come on- I insist!” Sarah exclaimed, causing Crysta to move the phone a bit farther from her ear to keep from going deaf.

“Oh, fine... You win... Again.”

“Yeah!! Okay, I’ll fill you in with the details Monday morning. See ya later, Cryssie!”

“By, Sarah... see you then.” And they both hung the phones up.

Crysta sat up and stretched. “Ugghhhh...” She sighed, stood up, and drudged over to her desk, picking up a picture of Sarah and her from a few months ago- in this one, Sarah’s hair was shoulder length and red.

“I wonder who that boy was who saved me... It was as if there was something special about him...I felt kind of tingly and lightheaded when he appeared- was that just because I’d nearly fallen off that set of stairs, or was it something... else? And what was with the feather thing?...”

She moved the picture to the other side of her desk, tiding up out of sheer thoughtfulness.

“CRYSSSTAAAA!!! TIME FOR DINNER!!!” A voice yelled from downstairs, snapping her out of her reminiscing.

Crysta dropped the eraser she was about to reposition and ran out of her room, passing her sister’s room on the way to the stairs. Her twenty year old sister, Kayla, emerged, wearing a scarlet gown and a midnight purple bodice. Crysta’s sister was a beautiful girl, and wore those kinds of things all the time- and looked good in them.

She had raven-black hair she always wore in a large bun, but if she wore it down, it might go down almost past her waist. She had lovely, pale skin and bright, red lips, and her silvery-red eyes were able to speak for themselves.

“Hey, sis. What is that thing you are wearing? Looks like it’s about a couple hundred years too old for you!” Crysta smirked, her longer canine teeth showing.

Her sister glanced at her and walked over, grabbing Crysta’s chin.

“Your fangs are longer... it must be about time...” Kayla murmured in that mysterious way she always spoke- her words fluid and almost enchanting.

Crysta swatted away Kayla’s hand. “You’re weird.” She said, trotting downstairs to the kitchen.

“Whatever you say, my little sister...” Kayla said, and then gracefully descended the staircase.

“Hiya, Ma.” Crysta said as she slowed down a bit and grabbed a plate.

“Hello, Crystalynn. In honor of your birthday tomorrow, I fixed your favorite- vegetable soup.” Laurena Aile replied, giving Crysta a bowl.

She was an attractive woman, dressed as normal in a short black dress with a low neckline, a black choker, and with her brown hair pulled back into a long braid. Her dark bangs hung in the same style as Crysta’s, but they were almost always over her eyes. When you could see her eyes, they were a rather shocking shade of reddish-brown.

“Oooooohh!! Thanks, Ma! ...But you guys all hate veggie soup...” Crysta said, sitting down at their large dining room table.

“...I also fixed a steak for us three.” Her mother laughed, pulling one out of the oven.

“Oh, I smell meat...!” A man’s gruff voice exclaimed from outside the kitchen.

Crysta and Kayla’s father, Nathaniel Aile, entered, wearing his usual attire: black pants, no shoes (revealing slightly ‘clawed’ toes similar to Crysta’s), and a white, button-up shirt with the first button and the last two undone. He had short, black hair with jagged bangs combed to the side. His eyes were the same shade as Crysta’s.

Kayla followed, her gown swaying in the breeze from the open window next to her, and her shadow

doing the same from the light of the setting sun. Something was strange about her shadow- besides her basic body shape, there were two shadowy blobs near her back... but the light was disrupted by the thin drapes blowing in the breeze, and the blobs were easily dismissible.

As the family sat down to dinner, they all became quiet as they slowly chewed their food. Until Crysta finished her meal- when she asked to be excused from the table, her father replied, "Not so fast, Crystalynn. We have your little adventure today to speak of..."

Crysta cringed, and sat back down.

"Yes, Crystalynn- what exactly happened today after school? I'd like to hear the full story..." Crysta's mother asked, cocking an eyebrow.

"...Well... you see... I was carrying all my and Sarah's books, and... well... I kind of slipped on a staircase and dropped them all- they went tumbling down the stairs, and landed in a big pile... Most of them were okay, but... My English book was destroyed... so now, I have to buy a new one." Crysta cautiously explained. She chose to keep quiet about the part of the boy saving her, for reasons she was not able to fully understand.

"Crysta, be more careful! You could have hurt yourself! And I'm not so sure I like the idea of you carrying double the number of books you should have to..." Her father exclaimed, stabbing his steak with a knife.

"Tsk, tsk..." Her sister murmured as she shook her head.

"You will be the one to pay for that book, I hope you realize." Her mother mumbled, depositing a chunk of meat in her mouth.

"Uh-huh..." Crysta replied, hanging her head.

"Now you may be excused." Her father said, waving his hand dismissively. "Good night..."

Kayla suddenly sat up straighter, her eyes widening a bit. "Oh! I almost forgot..." She began to whisper into her father's ear, where Crysta couldn't hear her.

As she spoke, her father's eyes widened, too.

"What, what is it?" Crysta asked, her mother saying the same. Her father then furiously whispered into his wife's ear, his voice loud enough that Crysta could pick out a few words. "...fangs.....about time.....maybe.....tomorrow?"

"What?! I really wanna know..." Crysta cried, as her mother gaped at her father, her pearly teeth glittering in the moonlight.

She cleared her throat. "Well, darling, it seems that you will be getting a sort of present tomorrow, with the help of your father, Kaylannah, and me. Now, go up and get to bed now- you'll want to be up bright and early in the morning!"

“Uh.... Okay, I guess... G’night...”

Crysta then trotted up the stairs, changed into her favorite nightgown, and clambered into bed, thinking about what had happened to her that day.

“What a weird day... As if High School weren’t strange enough.”

3 - That Night...

Chapter 3

“Wha...?” Crysta murmured. She looked around her. She was in the middle of a dark, moonlit forest. The canopy of fall-colored leaves nearly blocked out the dark sky filled with grey clouds, where one small, clear gap between the clouds revealed a silver full moon.

Crysta looked down at herself. There was a thin black choker around her neck, but no other jewelry. She was wearing a dark, flowing gown, similar to the style that her sister wore, except this gown had shoulder-less sleeves billowing in the cool wind. A particularly strong gust of wind blew past her, causing her to hug her arms to her chest to ward away the cold.

“Hello...?” She whispered, suddenly sensing someone else’s presence. But no one answered.

Crysta stepped forward, dead leaves crunching beneath her bare feet. The presence of whoever-or whatever- strengthened. The hair on the back of Crysta’s neck stood on end.

“Hello?!” She repeated.

Her skin began to tingle, and the sense of being watched became almost unbearable.

Crysta jumped around. She knew that whoever was following her was behind the particularly evil-looking tree before her, with dark black bark and no leaves left. The gnarled branches were twisted and seemed to have a life of their own, bending and swaying in the icy wind.

A strange feeling overcame Crysta. She felt frozen- her eyes were stuck on that tree.

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw a figure emerge from behind it.

It was a male about her age, but about three inches taller. He was wearing a black silky-looking robe that billowed in the intensifying wind.

His pallid, sun-deprived face was the only bit of skin exposed to the cold night air. His dried blood-colored hair was shoulder-length, but two pointed ears were revealed as the wind played in it. Jagged bangs hung over his eyes, as his head cocked down with an evil grin. Crysta had no doubt that the red stripe down his chin was blood, as the coppery odor was picked up by the wind.

“...Who... are you...?” Crysta whispered. The wind moaned through the trees with a particularly strong gust. The dead leaves on the ground blew through the air, several flying into Crysta, but she didn’t notice. She was still frozen in place, but now her gaze couldn’t leave the boy’s face.

He said nothing, but slowly raised his head.

The wind caught his bangs, and blew them away from his eyes.

His eyes were glowing red.

“Wha?!” Crysta cried, trying to move backward, but still frozen.

The boy threw back his head and laughed, revealing glistening white fangs.

He then turned his attention back to Crysta, his gaze unwavering on her throat.

Finally, he spoke, but not with the words Crysta had hoped “Now, hold still, my dear.” He opened his mouth, his fangs seemingly increasing in size, and a feral hiss escaping his throat. Without giving Crysta a chance to scream or react in any way, he leapt forward, fangs bared.

“No...” was the last thing Crysta thought before vampire embraced her, his lips pressed to her neck.

“NO!!”

Crysta lurched forward, flinging her covers across the bed and clutching her throat. She looked around frantically, seeing only her room.

“Oh, thank heavens... It was just a dream...Phew!” She thought, calming down. She checked her watch- 12 O’clock AM.

“I might as well get some more sleep...” Crysta murmured, lying back down after rearranging her disheveled bed. “Uhhhhh...”

Crysta looked around, this time in a well-lit forest, the full moon gleaming in the clear night sky. A warm breeze ruffled her hair and played with the same black gown she had been wearing before. Red, orange, and brown leaves were covering the trees, and allowed streams of the moonlight to filter through.

Crysta sighed contentedly, the calmness of the warm night seeping into her.

She sat comfortably on a large rock nearby, enjoying the playful breeze and the bright starlight.

After a while, she felt a light presence begin to appear. It was not overly strong, but seemed to be more reserved, and kind. This presence didn’t scare Crysta; it merely made her curious.

“Hello?” She asked, sitting up.

A form began to materialize before her. Slowly a male appeared.

Crysta gasped. “You’re the boy who saved me from falling down the stairs at school!!”

The boy nodded.

He had the same features as the last time she'd seen him, but now he was wearing a white robe that fluttered in the breeze, and, the biggest shocker of them all, a pair of white, feathery wings!

"...An angel...?" Crysta murmured, the feathery feeling coming, similar to before. But this time, she enjoyed it- it was ever so peaceful, and calming...

Crysta was soothed to seep by that light feeling, barely hearing it when the boy spoke.

"Good luck, Crystalynn Aile..."

Crysta slept peacefully from that point until several hours before dawn, when the moonlight filtered through her lacy curtains. Crysta sighed and rolled over to get the light out of her eyes.

"Well, look who finally decided to wake up!"

"Kiyayaaa!" Crysta cried, shocked awake by her mother's voice.

Her mother was standing by the foot of her bed, hands on her hips.

"We have to get you ready! It's your 15th birthday today, is it not?" She exclaimed, cocking an eyebrow.

Crysta pulled the covers over her head. "But Mooommmm... It's only three-thirty! On a Saturday!!"

The covers were yanked off the bed again. "Yes, and we only have four hours before the sun comes up. Come ON!"

"Grrr... Fine..." Crysta grumbled, clumsily falling out of bed. She sighed, and straightened out her wrinkled nightgown. "Let's get started with whatever you want me to do."

"Finally. Now let's MOVE!" Her mother replied, grabbing her daughter's hand and dragging her to her other daughter's room.

"Hello, mother, sister." Kayla said. "I have the dress I wore back then ready. Here," she said, holding up a plain black gown with shoulder-less, flowing sleeves, similar to the one in Crysta's dreams.

As they helped Crysta into the dress, Crysta muttered, "NOW will you tell me what the heck you expect to do to me?!"

Her mother and sister looked at each other, then at Crysta.

"No," they said in unison.

4 - A Family Reunion... Sorta

Chapter 4

“Crysta, are you ready?” Her father’s voice roared from outside her sister’s door.

Crysta’s mother yelled back, “No! It’ll be probably another 10 minutes.” She then went back to what she had been doing- straightening out the oversized gown Crysta was wearing.

“Fine, but hurry up! The sun’ll be up in less than three hours!” Nathaniel replied. Crysta could hear his heavy footsteps as he left.

“Ma, why do I have to wear this thing?” She whined, tired of standing up straight and holding still.

“You’ll see.” Kayla said. She was trying to style Crysta’s hair, but her hair wasn’t too cooperative. “You can sit over here now, if you wish.”

“You’re not Ma,” Crysta growled. “Oh, I almost forgot... I think this is the first time I’ve ever been in Kayla’s room...” She realized, looking around.

Kayla had a fairly large room. Crysta was sitting at Kayla’s vanity mirror, made of dark, almost black, wood. There was a single bed in the corner opposite the door, covered in dark purple blankets. A desk was in the other corner, made of a dark, antique-looking wood. The wallpaper was a bit lighter purple, and the carpet was dark black, like in the rest of the house.

From this description so far, you might just think she had a thing for dark colors, but her room was a little stranger than that... There were portraits on the walls of things such as a vampire biting a young woman, and of strange creatures that looked human, except had claws, strangely colored cat-like eyes, medium-sized bat wings, fangs, and a thin tail with an arrowhead tip. Little figurines were positioned all over her desk, many of them frighteningly similar in appearance to some of Kayla’s past boyfriends. One of them had a string tied around its neck. Another had a needle poked through its head.

“One is currently suffering from Strep Throat, the other has occasional migraines.” Kayla said, following Crysta’s gaze.

“Oh... eheheh...” Crysta mumbled, at a loss for words. “What the heck IS my family supposed to be?!” She screamed silently, now fully aware she was in the house of a family of non-humans.

“There, that should be about it...” Crysta’s mother said suddenly, stepping back from adjusting Crysta’s hair, after Kayla had given up.

“So what do I have to do now, and will you PLEASE tell me what the heck’s going on?!” Crysta cried, putting her hands on her hips.

“We’ll tell you...” Her mother began.

“...But first, you have to meet the rest of the family. They’ve been waiting since almost 12 O’clock AM!” Kayla finished.

Crysta jumped up. “The family?! You mean Grandma and Grandpa?! I haven’t seen Grandma and Grandpa since I was almost five years old!!”

Laurena nodded. “And Aunt Allinia, Aunt Katlyn, Uncle Christopher, and some of your cousins, not to mention your father’s side of the family.”

Crysta exclaimed, “I’ve never even met them before!”

Kayla laughed in her cool, refined way. “Mother and Father had reasons for that.”

“So you’ve met them, then?” Crysta asked as she gathered her shed nightgown and socks.

“Yes, when I was a little younger than you. You were at that human’s house at a sleepover- what was her name...? Sherra...?” She replied, cocking her head to the side in thought.

“...Do you mean Sarah?” Crysta asked as her mother and sister led her into back into the hallway.

“Oh, great... now they’re referring to my best friend as ‘that human...’ Now I REALLY want to know what’s going on!” Crysta quickly ran back to her room and tossed her socks and nightgown into it, then darted back between Laurena and Kayla.

They slowly walked- for you can’t walk too quickly in floor-length gowns- to the staircase, when Crysta’s mother and sister stopped.

Below them, a whole mess of people were grouped together, all chatting among themselves as if they were waiting for something. An older woman of about 35 years old at the most glanced up at the three women at the top of the staircase, then exclaimed, “There’s my little granddaughter!!”

Crysta stared at the tawny-haired woman for a moment. *“She’s not even old enough to look like MY mother, let alone Ma’s!”*

As if reading her thoughts, Laurena murmured, “Go hug your grandmother, darling...” with a little push to Crysta’s back, causing her to lunge forward down the stairs, and into the arms of the woman.

“Awwww, my granddaughter’s gotten so much bigger since the last time I saw her!” Twilah Mahogany cried as she hugged Crysta.

“Eh heh...” Crysta laughed nervously, not exactly hugging her grandmother back.

“Now give your Grandpa a hug, too!” A gruff voice exclaimed as Crysta was embraced by a brown-haired man about as old as her own father.

After Alton Mahogany released his granddaughter, Crysta staggered back.

Just then, Crysta's father entered from the kitchen, followed by several other people.

"May I introduce our star of the day, Crystalynn Aile!?" He exclaimed, holding Crysta's shoulders. The people all cheered, clapping and laughing happily. Crysta noticed that all of them had teeth, ears, eyes, and nails similar to her own. Her eyes widened.

"Da, is this our whole family?!" She whispered nervously.

"Most of the family's here, Crysta- all except your older cousins, who are in the kitchen, and a few who couldn't come on such short notice." He turned to the medium-sized crowd. "Now that you all know her, why don't you introduce yourselves?"

A woman who looked about the same age as Crysta's mother, with the same, dark colored hair stepped forward. "I'm Katlyn Mahogany, your mom's sister- your Aunt. Nice to meetcha, Crystalynn!"

Crysta nervously replied, "Please, call me Crysta... Nice to meet you, too, Aunt Katlyn..."

Next, a man and woman who seemed a little older than Crysta's parents came forward together. The woman had black hair and light grey eyes, and was wearing a Victorian-style dress, with a collar and long, lacy sleeves. The brown-haired man had on a 14th century-styled jacket, loafers, and pants, with his long hair tied back in a ponytail with dark bangs hanging over his dark eyes.

"We're your great-grandparents on your father's side, Ellen and Nathaniel Aile. Happy birthday and awakening day, by the way, Crysta."

"Oh, thanks..." Crysta said, still as confused as ever.

When her great-grandparents stepped back, a black-haired woman about the same age came forward, along with a brown-haired man the same.

The woman spoke. "I'm Ashena Mahogany, and this is my husband, George Mahogany. We're also your great-grandparents, but on your mom's side."

The next couple to introduce themselves was Margaret and Henry Aile, Crysta's other grandparents.

Several other aunts and uncles and such introduced themselves, but by that point, Crysta's head was already spinning.

"Okay, now that everyone knows everyone, let's go outside and prepare." Crysta's father said to the crowd, who obeyed, along with Crysta's mother and sister.

Crysta began to follow the rest of them, but her Nathaniel stopped her.

"You go into the kitchen and meet your cousins. They'll explain to you what's going on. One of us'll

come and lead you guys out here when we're ready."

"Whaaa?!! Do you expect me to remember all these names?!! PLUS my cousins'?!" Crysta cried, flailing her arms.

"No, I just expect you to do what we tell you to do. Now go- or else the family'll get tired of waiting and you'll never learn what we're doing to you!" He replied impatiently.

"See you, then!" Crysta said, already halfway to the kitchen.

"Finally, I can learn what the heck's going on!!!"

5 - I'm a WHAT?!

Chapter 5

Crysta ran into the kitchen to find seven kids around her age there, gossiping amongst themselves and lounging about as if they'd rather be somewhere else.

When she walked in, several of them raised their heads.

"Uhh... Hello...?" Crysta said awkwardly, pushing a loose piece of her bangs behind her ear.

Now all of them were looking at her, and Crysta had the chance to get a good look at all of them.

There were four girls- one was a blonde who looked about the same age as Crysta, with red eyes similar to Laurena and Aunt Katlyn's, who wore her hair in a long, layered ponytail and wore a plain white dress. Another one-about eighteen years old- was dressed in a red gown in a style similar to the one Crysta wore. Her grey eyes were similar to Crysta's own, and had her wavy black hair pulled back in a style similar to Crysta's, except much longer- nearly past her waist. The next had dark reddish-grey eyes, looked a little older than Crysta- maybe sixteen- had her shoulder-length brown hair in two pigtailed, and was wearing a black mini-skirt, a maroon tank top, and black, thigh-high socks. The last was around fifteen years old, and had large, green eyes. She wore her reddish-brown, nearly knee-length hair down, parted into two sections in the back, and had it draped over her shoulders. She wore a black, backless dress that went to the floor.

Out of the three boys, one of them looked about eighteen, and had well-groomed, chin-length brown hair. He was wearing a dark blue jacket and black pants, and had dark brown eyes. Two of the guys sat next to each other and looked at Crysta impatiently, as if she'd interrupted their conversation. The first had short, messy black hair, with bangs over his eyes. He wore a white dress shirt and black pants. He looked about sixteen years old, and his twinkling, green eyes showed that he was a bit on the mischievous side.

The other fifteen-year-old was a bit different from the previous two boys- he was dressed in a black t-shirt and jeans, and his red eyes reflected the bored scowl on his face. Two fangs peeked out of his closed lips, as if they didn't fit in his mouth, they were so long. His hair was piece-ey and shoulder-length with bangs that almost covered his eyes, and his hair color was close to...

"...The color of dried blood.....That's the vampire from my dream...!" Crysta thought, the hair on the back of her neck prickling.

The girl with the wavy black hair who looked about eighteen stood and walked over to her, a slight smile on her lips.

"Hello, Crysta. I'm Cilia Aile, and that girl over there," –she pointed at the girl with the shoulder-length

brown pigtails- “is my sister, Zenia.” Cilia then pointed at the blonde girl and continued, “She’s Dawn Mahogany, and she,” –she pointed now at the girl with the knee-length hair- “is Agatha Mahogany.” Cilia then turned to the guys, and indicated the oldest one. “That’s Wyatt Aile,” -she then turned to the green-eyed one- “and he’s Davis Mahogany- Agatha’s older brother. And that’s... Um...Who are you?” Cilia asked the vampire.

“He’s not part of the family- he’s just my friend who’s staying at my house for the weekend, and just came with us.” Davis explained, as the vampire nodded.

“Yeah, I’m Terrance Thor.” He shrugged, and then looked at Cilia. “So is this ceremony thing you demons all do just a family reunion? Our vampire ceremonies at least have some sort of purpose.”

“WHAAAAT??!!! I’M A DEMON??!!!” Crysta cried, near the point of hyperventilation.

Cilia sighed. “Well, I would have explained it in different terms, but... Yes. Pretty much. You’re a demon. Congratulations.”

Half the other kids laughed, and the other half sighed.

“Well, I guess it was way faster this way then beating around the bush for too long...” Zenia stated, shrugging.

“How was I supposed to know she hadn’t learned she was a demon yet? We vampires all know what we are from the beginning.” Terrance mumbled, crossing his arms.

“This should be a happy experience, not a traumatizing one...” Agatha murmured, petting Crysta’s back as she tried to take slow, deep breaths.

“Yeah, I mean, there are some plus sides to being a demon... Like... we’re almost immortal- we can’t die of old age! And you don’t have to sleep- you can if you want, but you don’t need to!” Cilia exclaimed happily.

“Yeah- you can also use your demon powers to mess with a human’s head! Like, once, when a human was being annoying to me, later that day, I scrambled his brain and made him think he was a chicken. He went around flapping his arms and eating off the ground for hours!” Dawn laughed.

“And, after your awakening, you get wings and this really nifty tail!” Davis said.

“W-wings...? A-and a tail...? Ohhhhh...” Crysta murmured, still in shock.

Cilia came forward. “Anyhow, we were supposed to tell you the history of the demon... so, I guess we can do that now.

“The original demon was a cross between a vampire and a human, with some dark magic thrown in to replace the impure human half. Fortunately for us now-but unfortunate at the time-, the elders who preformed this dark magic were unable to completely rid us of our human-like properties, causing us to look like a human with a few vamp-like qualities- the claws, ears, eyes, and the like- and the bits that the

dark magic caused- bat wings, and an arrowhead tipped tail, to name a couple. Nowadays, we demons have learned to illusion-shapeshift from our true form- with cat-eyes, wings, and a tail- to a more... human-based one- the one we're all in right now."

Crysta had calmed down a bit, and was now curious. "*I guess there's no use in being afraid of what I've always been...*" Crysta raised her hand a little. "So what are the differences between demons and vampires- I mean, besides the whole dark magic/ part human thing?"

Cilia looked to the vampire-boy, who stood, as if taking the question upon himself.

"To understand the differences, you'll have to be taught what a vampire is in the first place. You've probably heard the twisted variations of human stories about vampires- that we can turn into bats, drink blood to turn humans into vampires themselves, can't touch sunlight, can't stomach the smell of garlic, don't have reflections in mirrors, ect... but only about half that's true.

Real vampires are not able to turn into bats, but can communicate with them, and often use them to spy for us. This caused nosey humans to believe that, since we're always seen with one around us, we could transform into one- of course, they were wrong.

Vampires also can drink the blood of any living, humanoid creature- that includes you demons, merfolk, angels, werewolves, other vampires- although we only feed off of each other whenever in dire need- and the like, although we definately prefer humans for their taste- it is bitter, yet sweet, and tangy..." Cilia cleared her throat, knocking Terrance out of his reminiscence. "...Well, anyway, we prefer humans to anything else, and only bite other immortals when we want to/have to. And we don't particularly just bite people because we want to- we have a need for blood. You see, blood to us vampires is like water to you and most other creatures- we MUST have it, lest we dry up and die. But blood isn't the only thing we can consume- we eat food, just like anyone else. But water is just... useless to us. When a mortal drinks salt water, the affect is similar to what happens when a vampire drinks any type of water, or other liquid than blood, in that case.

"But we can't go drinking blood every time we get a little thirsty, or else our cover would be blown. We have to be conservative- we only drink blood about once a week at the most, but we HAVE to drink at least once a month, or else die. But because we drink so little at a time- just enough to keep us going- nothing happens to our victims- except that they usually pass out from blood loss. Eventually they wake up, thinking, "Why did I fall asleep here?"

"Now where was I...? Oh, right. Sunlight." Terrance shuddered. "Sunlight. Now that is one mean killer. You see, sunlight can't be fooled. It sees what we truly are- undead, animated corpses. Heh, I know, flattering description, is it not?" He laughed, and most of the kids in the room did, too- except Crysta, who nervously chuckled so she'd fit in.

"The original vampires were drained of their blood somehow, so they died- but they were raised again by some witches, with the instinct- the need- to get the precious fluid. After they bred amongst each other, they created creatures that shouldn't have existed in the first place- their parents were dead. The sun knew that, so, under sunlight, the original vampires' life forces were burned away, until the original corpses were all that were left. For their offspring- and all the born-vampires today- the sun sees that they shouldn't exist, and whenever we are exposed to sunlight, we burn up to nothing.

“Now, for the garlic... garlic is, well... very smelly.” He chuckled. “The original vamps were created with a much stronger sense of hearing- for listening for humans with the blood, hence the larger, angular ears- great vision- that’s why we have cat eyes, used to seek out victims- fangs, of course, with hollow centers that we can use like a straw into our blood stream- and a very strong sense of smell- so they could sniff out blood easily. Now, that also means that not only garlic, but anything with a particularly strong scent will make our heads spin.

“And finally, reflections- like the sunlight, mirrors can’t be fooled- they reflect what is there, and nothing more, and nothing less. Since we shouldn’t exist, we have no reflections. As simple as that, no?”

Terrance cleared his throat. “Now, back to your original question- the differences between your species and mine. Well, since you all are half vampire, part human, and part pure black magic, you have many vampiristic characteristics- the strong sense of hearing, an above-human sense of smell, the claws we once used to help us bring blood to the surface, a drive to attack humans, but not exactly with the same purpose- the first demon was born with this feeling of the need to attack, but had no reason to, and it drove her BATTY. So, she decided that, since she had a need to attack, that she could just ‘tease-attack’ them- scaring them by jumping out from behind corners, giving them nightmares, ect. That’s also why you all have a particular dislike of humans- you have the need to get near them, but you can’t do anything once you’re there.

“You also have slight fangs, but they are solid, and not hollow, so are pretty much useless.

“Demons also have no ability to talk to bats or other creatures of the like such as foxes and moths, but are attracted to them- by the way, Crysta, what was your lifetime favorite animal?”

Crysta gasped. “...my favorite animal has always been a bat, then a grey fox...”

Terrance laughed. “Yep, what’d I tell you? Anyway, you all also have a bit of human in you still- the human strength and most of their vitality, unlike a vampire’s total immortality to everything except blood loss, as in you can’t die of old age, but can die of anything else- sickness, murder, drowning, fire, ect. Demons can also go into the sunlight, unlike us vamps. This is because you all are part human, and therefore, the light recognizes that you have some traceable history, and that you truly exist, in some form. But, as dark magic is directly opposite light, it is also acknowledged by the light- that’s why your normal shadow- that is, after you’ve been awakened as a demon- has wings and a tail. The same goes for mirrors- that’s why you have no full-body mirrors in your house, Crysta.

“Now, as you already have been told, you are also part dark magic. This is what your wings and tail are formed from. It also gives you the use of some of the magic- there are many skills, such as voodoo, levitation, nightmares, and many others; I won’t get into that, though.” Terrance looked at Cilia and asked, “Is that about it?” She nodded and stepped up to Crysta.

“Now, do you have any questions?” Cilia asked.

“Um, yes, why do our great-grandparents look as if they’re as young as our parents?” Crysta asked, her head spinning from all the sudden realizations, yet wanting to know more.

“Well, besides being almost immortal, we also have eternal youth- we stop growing once we reach about age thirty-five, and look pretty much the same for all of eternity. I just wish you’d of gotten to meet great, great, great, great grandma. She’s almost six-hundred- and she looks almost younger than my mom, Katlyn.” Dawn giggled.

“Any more questions?” Wyatt asked, getting up from his seat at the kitchen table and walking over.

“No, I think I’m fine now.” Crysta replied, a thousand questions bouncing around in her head. *“It’ll be dawn in an hour... Ma and Da would be angry if I stalled for too long.”* She thought, shrugging.

“Okay, then, follow us.” Wyatt said as all the other kids stood and began to walk out of the kitchen and into the backyard, where a full moon glared down at them all.

Crysta gasped at what awaited them.