

Chapter 1

BOB THE VAMPIRE

“I want you to turn me into a vampire.”
I don’t know about you, but having someone actually say that and mean it is not exactly something I had ever expected. And I definitely didn’t welcome it.
Yes, I *am* a vampire, and *no*, nobody had ever asked that of me before. I mean like seriously: *who actually does that, right?*

I was in the middle of trying very hard to get drunk and was desperately failing to do even *that*, so that didn’t put me in the best frame of mind. Cheap tequila is still expensive tequila when you’re dead broke and I wasn’t looking forward to the moment the bartender tried to run my poor dented, and highly abused debit card.

“Fuck off,” I said to the squirrelly little dude who had settled into the seat across the table and who had immediately made the insane request. The dude had almost no chin to speak of and wore a stupid fucking fedora much too big for him, and looked nothing

like a gorgeous redhead with tattoos, so he instantly had all of that going against him. He also looked as broke as I was, one badly timed pay cheque away from being in the negative on the bank balance, so I knew there would be very little chance of getting any drinks out of him.

“I know you’re a vampire,” he insisted. “I want you to turn me into one of you. Into a *vampire*.”

I took another look at the dude and realized that I had seen him sneaking curious glances at me about an hour ago, almost as if he recognized me or, at least, thought he recognized me but couldn’t quite figure out who I was. The thought had occurred to me that maybe he was gay and was just checking me out and being stupidly obvious about it, but guys with his looks tended to be a little shyer.

Thing is, I had been getting lots of unwelcome attention ever since my eyes had changed color. It’s not every day that you see a brown guy like me with the particular shade of intensely pale blue eyes that was unique among vampires. I’m mixed, half-black and half-Hispanic, so the contrast can’t be ignored. Some people assumed that I was wearing contacts and dismissed me as pretentious, but they tended to be the exception. So I had taken to wearing dark sunglasses even at night. Unfortunately this had produced the opposite effect and people had started thinking I was a rockstar or something and would usually end up shocked when I tried to get them to pay for my drinks. That usually did not go down very well. I must say that the eyes did have a remarkable effect on women and I wasn’t shy about using it to my advantage.

Squirrel Boy was definitely not someone whose pants I wanted to get into, and neither was he a friend. I didn’t know who the hell he was, so the possibility that I owed him money or that he had been sent to kill me was pretty low. That had been a relief, especially after the events of the past week, and I really didn’t feel like having yet another fight for my life. My future plans had involved me not fighting at all, but life has a way of hijacking all my plans.

I decided to try another tactic.

“That’s your opening line? *Seriously* dude?”

Squirrel Boy swallowed hard and clutched his stupid shoulder bag even tighter than he had before. I knew almost instantly that he had some type of stupid ass weapon inside, that he intended to use to protect himself or to fend me off. I also realized I scared the shit out of him. I wondered for a moment what type of movie he had playing in his head where he had decided he was the lead and where I was the scary bad vampire man.

“Do I even know you?” I asked him.

“Not exactly. I mean, I *think* I sorta *know* you. I’ve seen you down at HTDK--”

I snorted. I just couldn’t help myself. “Not likely. They like ‘em prettier than you. No offense.”

Squirrel Boy blushed. “I was waiting outside in the line...” he mumbled and I almost felt sorry for him. “I’ve seen you there lots of times. And then you started showing up here. *I know what you are,*” he whispered to me. “I could tell the whole bar, expose your secret.”

I drained the glass and looked mournfully at the bottom and then looked even more mournfully at the empty bottle on the table. I still had no idea how I had managed to convince the bartender to give me the bottle, but I wasn’t about to punch a gift horse in the eye. When life gives you tequila, you look for the lemons it gave you earlier. One of the problems with being a vampire is that it’s impossible to go on a proper bender anymore. My body metabolizes alcohol too quickly and I end up sober with a throbbing headache before I even leave the bar... if I don’t keep drinking. I miss the days of getting blackout drunk sometimes. Used to be a hell of a lot cheaper too.

That’s one thing nobody ever tells you. Being a vampire is expensive in ways you never thought of.

I sighed deeply and looked blearily at Squirrel Boy.

“Go ahead then. Out me. Like I give a fuck.”

Squirrel Boy licked his lips nervously, his bluff called. He

apparently had seen this playing out differently. For a second, I considered telling him how lucky he was it was only me he was pulling this stupid stunt with. If it had been someone like Beatrice, she would already be beating the shit out of him in one of the bathroom stalls. And she most definitely wouldn't even bother with any biting, but there's no telling with a vampire like Beatrice.

"Look, what's your name. I can't call you Squirrel Boy all night."

"*Armand?*" A look of confusion crossed his face. "You haven't called me Squirrel B--"

"That's not your real name. If you're going to be obnoxious to me, you might as well tell me your real fucking name."

Squirrel Boy slumped and mumbled something under his breath, clearly embarrassed. "It's Sidney."

"Nice to meet you Sidney. I'm Bob." I grinned wickedly. "Go get me some more drinks Sidney. Then we'll talk."

The first thing I want you to be aware of is this: being a vampire sucks.

It is definitely not like they show you in the movies or any of the books written on the subject. In the movies, the vampire is always such an intriguing figure and he always has his act together. He lives by the rules of the movie world and as rules go, they are relatively straightforward. Avoid sunlight, dress in evening clothes, drink blood from the necks of nubile and attractive young ladies, be handsome and don't ever worry about picking up the check. So on that end, it's best to have lots of money and maybe a castle in someplace exotic and cold with significant thunder and lightning and preferably on top of a mountain somewhere. Also, don't look into mirrors and most of all, avoid any overly eager young men who happen to be carrying sharp pieces of wood with them.

I've broken every single one of those rules, even the last one.

When Sidney returned, I didn't ask any questions. I opened the bottle immediately and poured a shot for myself.

Sidney looked less sure of himself as he watched me drain the first glass, and then the second glass of tequila. He seemed a little uneasy after the bartender had actually given him the forbidden bottle with no questions asked. This was only after the bartender had looked over to my table and saw that the bottle was meant for me. If you want a genuine "what-the-fuck" moment, that one was definitely high on my list. Nobody gets to take a bottle from the bar: *nobody*. It looked like my run of good luck was still on!

If I was a nicer person and more of a pushover, I would have really felt sorry for poor Sidney. He had been expecting some kind of movie-type vampire and instead he had gotten me and my desperate need to have someone else buy my drinks. If he hadn't been such an asshole to me right off the bat, things might have gone a little differently. Here's a tip for you: if you're going to demand something from a stranger, at least introduce yourself and buy them a drink first *before* being an obnoxious dipshit. Protocol must be observed.

I poured Sidney a shot of tequila and slid it over to him.

"Why do you want to be a vampire Sidney?"

"Can you at least call me Armand? That's the name I've decided should be my vampire name."

I barely held in my laughter. "Fuck that. You're Sidney, so I'm fucking calling you Sidney. Now answer my fucking question. *Please.*"

Sidney hesitated and I noticed he was only playing with his still full glass of tequila. He was purposely not drinking it, perhaps in an ill-fated attempt to get me drunk. He really should have thought harder about this plan, since as I noted earlier, I was already trying very hard to get as drunk as possible.

"I want to live forever, but I want the power and everything that goes with being a vampire. I want to be cool, just like you."

“Is this about a girl? This is about a girl, isn’t it?”

It’s always about a girl. At the root of all our problems, it’s always about wanting to impress someone.

“What’s her name?” I asked.

Sidney considered lying to me, I could see it in his face, but he was already smiling, picturing the girl in his mind. “Dorothy,” he breathed her name and I knew he wasn’t lying this time. He turned and looked across the bar and I looked with him. “She’s over there.”

The girl was gorgeous. She was slim with a nice build for her small frame, dark hair and eyes and her smile lit up her face as she joked with her friends. She looked like a nice girl, the type of girl Sidney probably was too shy to be honest with and, consequently had probably ended up in the dreaded place called the friend-zone. She looked way too nice to be my type, unless she was one of those girls who get wild in bed and kept it hidden under that wholesome exterior.

“She looks nice,” I said. “Why do you think being a vampire is going to make her like you?”

“Girls like her always go for the bad boys like you. There isn’t anyone who’s a bigger badass than a vampire.”

I have no idea how I didn’t laugh in Sidney’s face. *You gotta be fucking kidding me right?* He actually thought I was a badass! I thought of all the stories I could tell him about me definitely not being a badass, vampire or not. I wondered for a second if he maybe expected my skin to glitter or some shit, but then decided that he was probably more of a fan of the romantic kind of vampires *a la Anne Rice*.

Sidney was getting impatient.

“Look I bought you the drinks. Are you going to make me into a vampire or not?”

Well, that had escalated fast. And I thought we had just made a personal connection.

“Have we reached the part where you threaten me already?” I

asked and poured myself another drink.

Apparently we had. Sidney reached into his man-purse and pulled out one of the biggest fucking crosses I have ever seen. He held it out in front of him triumphantly, apparently playing his trump card, bringing his knowledge of vampires from movies and books into the one thing that he knew would protect him.

Goddamn movies.

I'm going to cut to the chase here: you should definitely at all costs, avoid a vampire whenever possible.

See, the problem is that maybe 100 years ago you could actually do that, but these days, taking population explosion into account, maybe one person in every 50,000 you meet just *might be* a vampire. Avoidance might be a bit of an issue if you're that eager to not run into one, so yeah... good luck with that.

Imagine it. You're an ordinary guy, around thirty, which is my age, so you've grown up on a steady diet of rock music, horror movies, too much alcohol and withered expectations. I knew exactly where Sidney was coming from since I used to be that guy who believed on some level that the movies got it right about vampires, no matter how many times they contradicted themselves.

I was that guy, and you were that guy too. Or the girl. Whatever. Stay with me on this.

I noticed a girl at the bar glance over at us and look away, then she did a double take and her eyes widened, her mouth forming the words "What the fuck?" as her brain tried to figure out just what was going on, before deciding that she wasn't drunk enough for this shit and turned back to the bar.

So much for keeping a low profile.

Sidney's other hand was back in the bag and I knew it was

clutching a wooden stake of some kind, either crudely made in Sidney's backyard or a prop purchased from the Internet. I thought about it and decided it had most likely been bought from some stupid vampire website that sold pieces of wood "*blessed by a priest and sprinkled with Holy Water*" to gullible people like Sidney. They weren't even hand-carved for a hint of authenticity, but instead were identical machine cut pieces of wood. Of course he had paid too much for it; it wouldn't be a proper scam if he didn't pay too much.

"Your negotiating tactics suck balls, I just want you to know that," I noted dryly.

"Fuck you, you fucking fuck."

Well it seemed that Sidney had a bit of a mouth on him. *Insults? So quickly? Wow man, just wow.*

I drained my glass and put it back on the table with an audible thud. I was determined to finish the bottle before I dealt with Sidney, just in case I had to leave in a hurry.

"No wonder you can't make it with Dorothy over there Sidney. You have no game and you have no idea how to relate to people."

"*Don't make me compel you!*" Sidney said and then turned whiny. "I just need you to turn me man. I need this. Just bite me and make me one of you."

"Just bite you? Are you serious?"

"I know that's how you get turned. Everybody knows it."

I fucking hate the bullshit that Hollywood and bad literature has spread about vampires. Dude was hitting every one of my pet peeves, and the cross thing was just getting annoying. There were currently two options to get out of this so I could go somewhere else and drink until the sun came up, away from idiots wanting me to turn them into vampires.

Option one involved grabbing that stupid cross from Sidney and jamming it so far up his ass that every time he went to the bathroom after that, it would be the holiest place in the city. And I definitely

wouldn't be putting my mouth anywhere near his neck or any other body part. I would however still have time to drain the bottle, you know priorities and all.

Option two was probably going to be more entertaining...

I took off my sunglasses and wiped my brow, pretending very badly and overdramactically to be affected by the cross.

"Okay, you got me, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, can you please move the cross now?"

I glanced at Sidney to see if he was buying my Razzy winning performance, but he had fully seen my freaky light blue vampire eyes and the reality of what he was doing suddenly crashed over him. Terror sweat had broken out on his upper lip and he started to shake in fear. The thought occurred to me he just wasn't prepared mentally to deal with the full reality of a real vampire. The reality that was me.

Congrats Sidney: you've just met your first real life vampire.

I looked Sidney directly in the eye and gently pushed the cross down. He weakly allowed me to do this, definitely terrified of me. Damn, my buzz was fading away, and I suddenly needed to pee very, very badly. Damn tequila.

"Crosses don't work. Neither does Holy Water, a chain of garlic, a silver bullet or whatever other stupid shit you've talked yourself into believing works. You have no protection from what I am, just because you read about it on the internet or whatever. *Think about it*, Sidney and for once in your life, get out of your head and into the real world. You are not the star of the show and for that matter, neither am I. I'm going to be a footnote to you, an interesting story you can tell your friends. Call it 'the night the vampire didn't kill me,' *because believe me, I can kill you and I'm not even the worst vampire you could meet.*' The part about me killing him was a lie, since I'd never killed anyone, but I wasn't telling Sidney that. "There are some really, *really* bad people out there, so don't you ever pull this shit again or you're going

to wind up very dead. Just not by me and not tonight. You got me?"

He nodded mutely, still staring at my eyes, and I wondered if he had heard a word I'd said. It was almost as if he was hypnotized or something. That's not quite the word, but I couldn't think of a better one, so, like, whatever man. I was over it and the urge to pee was fucking killing me.

"Gimme the cross." He handed it over and I threw it into a corner where it couldn't insult anyone else. I held out my hand to him again.

"And the stake."

There were six of them, six inches long, smooth and identical, all from the internet (www.wekillvampires.com). They still had the stickers on them.

I sighed deeply and looked Sidney in the eye again.

"Do you want to live Sidney? I mean, really live?"

He nodded and I sighed. I was done playing and I was on the verge of peeing my pants. I pointed over to Dorothy and her friends.

"*Then fucking live.* Go over there and ask her the fuck out. She's either going to say yes or she's going to say no, but at least get off your ass and get an answer and then you can move on with your life. And you'll get to ask another girl later on and maybe she'll say yes, because Dorothy there might not be the one for you and she'll probably say no, I mean *look at her*, but damn dude you gotta try, and I really gotta end this now cuz I gotta pee, so whaddaya say?"

Sidney nodded and stumbled to his feet. I got up with him, feeling the weight on my bladder of two bottles of tequila wanting to come back into the world a lot more diluted. I clapped him on the shoulder, and he turned wordlessly and walked toward Dorothy, a man on a mission of certain doom, but damn he was embracing his doom--

I never got to see how it turned out. I ran off to the bathroom and for a second I thought I wasn't going to make it to the urinal. I danced from one foot to the other, while trying to pull down a

suddenly stubborn zipper, and finally I was free to pee the pee of the damned.

That's the problem with tequila: it always shoots right through me.

What? Don't give me that look. Just because I'm a vampire doesn't mean I'm suddenly a magical creature with no natural urges or processes. You try drinking two bottles of tequila and see if you aren't hosing down the closest urinal before you even get halfway through the first bottle. My pipes work the same as everybody else's.

If Sidney had bothered to even ask me what being a vampire was like, I would probably have told him the truth, although my total lack of badassery might have been a little too much for him to take in one night. One can only destroy so many dreams at once you know.

Truth is, I'm probably the *worst* vampire I know.

