

*Vampire
Dawn*

*Dead on
Arrival*

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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 Alistair and Ruby's story ...

One

‘He’s been here all night. Stone cold – no pulse,’ the paramedic said, looking at Alistair’s body slumped in the road, his head slammed against the kerb.

‘There’s not much blood,’ he said. ‘I guess the rest must have washed away in the rain.’

The woman who had called the ambulance stood on the footpath with both hands raised to

her mouth. Two paramedics loaded Alistair's body onto a stretcher and pulled the blanket over his head. A police officer took a statement from the woman, while her dog tugged at its leash and sniffed his boots.

The ambulance drove off, without sirens or lights.

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Ruby tried her brother's mobile again and again, but it went to voicemail every time. *It must be out of battery*, she thought. It was so unlike Alistair – he always kept his phone charged. He'd gone to Ben's for the night. She wished she had Ben's number.

Ruby made toast and flicked the TV on, trying to distract herself. She was alone in the house.

By eleven, she couldn't stand it any more. The rain started again, and was falling hard by the time she passed the police tape at the end of Ben's road. She hurried on, head down. Ben answered the door in his dressing gown. He was surprised to see her.

'Alistair? He didn't come. I thought he'd just changed his mind,' Ben said.

Ruby's mouth was suddenly dry.

'No. No, he really wanted to come,' she said.

'Come in a minute.' Ben held the door open for her.

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Alistair opened his eyes. He was cold. And he was on some kind of trolley. Panic rose in his throat like bile, and his head hurt. A bright light

from a tube shone in his eyes. He couldn't move his head without it hurting.

Hospital, he thought. I must be in hospital. I hurt. Hurt people go to hospital.

He tried to speak, but his mouth wouldn't work. People moved around the room, but he couldn't see them. He wanted to call to them. How many were there? Two? Three? Their voices sounded fuzzy at first, but then words started to creep out of the mumbling:

'Looks like a hit and run ... no ID ... doesn't match any missing persons ...'

His eyes closed again, and he drifted somewhere else. Somewhere he couldn't hear the voices, but somewhere his head still hurt.

When he next opened his eyes the room was silent. He hurt all over. He touched his head. His fingers felt the edges of a cut and he winced. The room was cold. The arm he had lifted to his head was bare – no wonder he was cold. He was naked. Why?

He struggled to remember where he was and what had happened. He had gone to see Ben. They were going to play on the Xbox all night. It had been dark and rainy.

... Now he remembered. Car headlights coming round the corner, just as he stepped off the kerb. Trying to step back, but twisting his ankle and the car still coming. He didn't remember it hitting him, or being hurt. But here he was, so he must have been hit.