Chapter Six

The following spring, Aahmas and Cyrus returned to Egypt. She had heard rumors that the Persians were helping her people and rebuilding some of their temples.  She could finally return to her temple in Thebes and renew her old life.  Maybe Bastet would see her renewed devotion to her and forgive her, change her back into a human being and remove the curse. Perhaps if she was human again, she could die. She believed living forever was a curse just like being forced to drink blood.  She was very religious, and she believed true happiness was after death in the afterlife not living forever on Earth.  She also knew if she died, her loved ones would be waiting for her there, and she would be with them for eternity.

When she reached the ancient city of Thebes, she noticed that her temple was still in ruins, and this angered her immensely. She decided the time had come for her to put her old plans into action and punish the Persians.

Cyrus was unaware that within a week, his life as a human would be over, and like his mistress, he would never again desire food but blood. Cyrus had plans of his own when he got to Thebes. He wanted to get away from his mistress and go back to Susa. He was given a lot of freedom throughout the day to do whatever he wanted after he did his duties in the morning. He could explore the city, go to the market to shop, or run other errands for her while his mistress performed her duties in the temple. He just had to be back by evening before dark. She always told him he must be inside before night came. She did not want him out when she went for her hunt.

He knew that Egypt was part of Persia now, and he knew that Persians lived there.  He knew if he wanted to get away, he needed to find other Persians to help him.  Then, after several days, he found some Persians. They did not like the idea that he had been made a slave by an Egyptian, and they wanted to punish Aahmas, but he told them that she had helped him and that he only wanted to go home. They told him that some Persian nobles were returning home for Persia six days from today, and he would be able to go with them.

Cyrus decided that he would not return to Aahmas in the temple but stay with his new Persian friends, learning what had occurred in the empire since his capture during the Scythian campaign.

 Aahmas became very worried about him when he did not return to her the first night. She had come to love him as her own son. She went out, and she searched diligently for him. She went everywhere, hoping that he was not hurt or dead.  Several days passed before she found him, and when she did, it was not what she expected to find. Her joy turned quickly into anger and hatred. Cyrus tried to offer her money to buy his freedom, but the offer only intensified her rage. She believed in her heart that he had betrayed her. She no longer was the sweet and kind woman that he had known but a blood thirsty monster.

She became aware of her hunger, starving for blood. Cyrus saw her attack his friends with lighting speed. He was horrified with fear as she drank them dry of their blood. He had seen death, but nothing had prepared him for this.  After he regained his senses, he tried to run away from the house, trying to escape his mistress, but he was not fast enough.

Aahmas caught up with him with anger and bloodlust in her eyes. She held him fast, and she bit him over and over.  She bit his neck, his chest, and both his arms; blood flowed freely from his wounds, but the wounds were not fatal. She was still hungry, so she returned to his neck and began sucking him dry, but she stopped. Suddenly, she came to her senses and remembered that she loved him as if he was her own child. She also remembered that she wanted to seek revenge for her country and her goddess through this mortal.

 Her brain began racing with thoughts about how she could save him from death and make him a creature like herself.  She thought about what she had done before. Why had she failed time and time again? What had she done wrong? Time was running out, Cyrus was dying. She could hear his heart pumping slower and slower, and soon, she knew he would be lost to her forever.

 She came up with an idea; perhaps if she needed blood to live, blood could save him as well.  Maybe if she gave him some of her blood to drink he would live, and maybe her blood also could change him. She had to try. She bit quickly into her own wrist and blood began to pour out. She placed her bleeding wrist down to Cyrus’s mouth where she let her own blood drip into his dying mouth.

At first, she thought all was lost and he was dead, but then she noticed his left hand began to move. He was alive.  Aahmas knew that she had to get him away from there and back to her temple before he regained consciousness. She carried him outside, away from the carnage and the blood and gore.

She needed to get rid of any evidence of the crime.  If the Persians found out that she had killed any of their people, she would be in a lot of trouble.  She wanted to keep her secret from them and the world. So she decided that she had to burn the building and the bodies inside. It would look like an accident.

 In ancient times, oil lamps were used for light. Fires were often a regular occurrence, and she believed no one would be the wiser.  It would be just another fire.

She went back inside, looked quickly around the room and found all of the dead. She quickly piled them together. She lit a torch from one of the lighted lamps, and touched some of Persian’s clothing with it. Aahmas watched the fire spread quickly among the corpses. She found a bottle of oil and poured it all over the wooden furniture in the room. In a matter of minutes the building was engulfed in flames and before anyone could come to help put out the fire, all the evidence was gone. Aahmas and Cyrus were hidden by the smoke from any preying eyes or any witnesses. She picked Cyrus up in her arms and flew away. She made her way to her temple before anyone was the wiser.

 She reached the temple in a minute, and she took Cyrus into the temple. She laid him before her statute of Bastet and prayed, and as she prayed, she hoped that she had been successful. She knew that he was alive, but had she changed him from a man to a creature like herself? She did not know. She stayed day and night at the temple never leaving, not even to feed, hoping her prayers would be answered.

A week later, Cyrus woke up, and he opened his eyes. He saw her praying, and he saw that he was in a temple. He wondered how he had gotten there. She went over to him, and she looked into his eyes; they were as brown and beautiful as before, but something was different about him. She noticed it immediately. The deep long scar on his face was gone.  Aahmas remembered after she became a vampire how her heart’s rhythm had changed to a very slow pace. It beat so slow she thought for a moment that death might be eminent, but she was wrong. She did not die. Now Cyrus had the same slow- beating heart; he had become a vampire.

 She left him and she returned with a goblet of wine mixed with sage. She asked him, “Cyrus are you thirsty?” He smiled and nodded. She gave him the goblet, and he drank. The sage wine not only helped them to live in the daylight but it helped them keep their human emotions and retain a sense of humanity.

Cyrus had also changed in other ways. She noticed how his body had been transformed. His body was perfect, and his skin was soft like a child’s. Just like hers.  He was a picture of health.  She looked at him and told him that he was a handsome and a beautiful specimen of a man. Cyrus at first wondered what she meant.  He knew that he was no longer handsome.  He knew that his body and face were scared from war with the Scythians. He knew his leg was deformed. What was she talking about? Had she lost her mind?

 His mistress told him to look for himself. What did he see?  Cyrus   looked at his body and he examined it very carefully.  He was shocked at first, and then, he was surprised to see what he saw. He believed that for some reason, he had been favored by her cat goddess or Ahura Mazda and had performed a miracle.  He had been blessed. All the scars that had been on his body were gone. The scar on his chest from the arrow had disappeared.  He no longer limped. Not only that, but his leg was also healed. He was handsome again. He was a new man, a perfect man, even better than before.  He wondered what had happened to him. Then he remembered the horror.

The next moment, Cyrus became terrified of her, and he backed away from her in terror.  She saw his fear and tried to comfort him, but he remained afraid.  She moved closer and told him not to be afraid.  It would be alright. Then she began telling him her story of about what she really was and what he had become.

Aahmas told him many years ago how she had left Egypt after the Persians had come. She told him of the Persian’s invasion, the destruction of her temple, and how she was beaten and left for dead. She went on to tell him about Bastet’s punishment. Then she explained to him, that in order to save him, after biting him in anger, she had to turn him into a creature like herself. She also told him what he had to do to survive as a vampire.

Cyrus was horrified that he had to drink blood from others to live, but what choice did he have? He was a survivor and by living, he knew one day he would return home to Persia.

After Aahmas shared her story with him, she took him out to find nourishment. She knew that she had to teach him to hunt, but first, she only wanted him to feed. She took him to the market in Thebes where she bought a couple of donkeys. They left the market and traveled outside the city limits of Thebes and went into the desert with the donkeys. She told him that he had to be careful not to be seen by anyone when hunting for food. They had to be careful not to be seen; their lives depended on it.  She also told him that they could feed on the blood of any animal except for the common house cat which would be deadly.

Aahmas took the first animal and showed him how to bite the neck and drink its blood.  Since she had not fed since the attack, she was very hungry and emptied the donkey of its blood very quickly. Cyrus watched her carefully. He was also very hungry, and he was surprised how quickly he had his hands around the scared little donkey, biting it in the neck and drinking its blood.

  Like his creator and mentor, he preferred animals, but killing people came easier and easier as time went on.  He believed at first if he only killed animals, he might be able to keep some of his humanity, feel somewhat human, and less like a monster. As time went on, he discovered that this would be impossible. His thirst often became so unbearable, and it did not make any difference if the blood came from an animal or a human being, just as long as it had blood.