Divine Enemy
Vampire Diaries 2
Alicia Dean

Elena opened the new diary she'd been trying to start since she'd become human. The old one was destroyed in the fire—symbolic of the past she'd poured into those pages. They were nothing now but a pile of ashes. She sighed and put the pen to paper.

Dear Diary,

Each day, it's a struggle to get out of bed. My only escape is sleep. It's the only time I can stop thinking about all the horrible things I've done—the pain I've caused and the pain I've suffered. All the losses—not only my own, but this town's. I want so desperately to turn to the one person who has been there for me, the one whose love brought me into the light four years ago. But I pushed him away. Hurt him. Is it too late for us?

She tossed the journal and pen aside and pressed her palms to her eyes. The last thing she needed to be thinking about right now was a relationship. Her heart was too damaged to give to anyone right now. She had to get stronger, had to complete the grieving process before she could think about being happy again or about making someone else happy.

She stood and wandered around the room. Caroline was in town picking up a few groceries. Since their discussion two days ago about her stalker, they'd gone over every possible option of figuring out who was behind it, but so far, nothing had occurred that was any help at all.

They'd decided to go back to Mystic Falls in a few more days. Elena wasn't sure that she'd go too, but she didn't tell Caroline that. No sense in arguing about it now. There would be plenty of time for that when Caroline was ready to leave.

The sound of a car engine brought her outside. Her breath stalled in her throat when she recognized the vehicle. Not Caroline's Fiesta, but Stefan's red Porsche.

She waited on the porch, her stomach tight with excitement, her heart pounding like a drum.

He climbed from the car. The wind ruffled his hair. He wore a snugly fitting black T-shirt and jeans. He moved toward her with that familiar, confident, sexy walk, and she was lost. Maybe she was ready to be happy again. Just looking at him lifted her spirits.

"Hey," he said as he approached.

"Hey back." She smiled, feeling a true glimmer of happiness for the first time in weeks. "What brings you out here?"

He shrugged, looked away, then back at her. "How are you doing?"

She nodded. "I'm good. Getting better. I think I'll live."

"I'm glad." He came closer, joining her on the porch. "Are you adjusting to being human?" He frowned, his mouth tightening. "With all the grief over Jeremy?"

Her pulse quickened at his nearness. The tender look he gave her was almost her undoing. But she reached deep inside and gathered the willpower to ignore it. "It's the hardest thing I've ever had to deal with." Tears rose to her throat and choked her voice. "Not only losing Jeremy, but remembering all the horrible things I did. Even before I turned off my humanity. I still hurt people. I didn't think being a vampire changed me that much. I thought I was maintaining, but I didn't think a thing about killing off Kol's whole line." A shudder ran through her. She'd helped Jeremy murder thousands of innocent people; sure they were vampires, but she had been one too.

So were Caroline, Damon, and Stefan, the people she cared about most in the world. The vampires she'd killed no doubt had people who loved them too.

She wasn't aware the tears had fallen until Stefan reached up and thumbed them from her cheeks. "Come here," he murmured.

His arms came around her, and she gladly accepted his comfort. He held her to him and rubbed a hand over her back, soothing, comforting. She closed her eyes. This was what she needed. Only Stefan could truly make her feel so safe and cherished.