

What the Heart Wants

Vampire Diaries Book 1

Alicia Dean

“Hello, love.”

Caroline gasped out a yelp and came to an abrupt stop. *Klaus*. That familiar, disturbing blend of fear and excitement zipped through her blood. She swallowed hard and glanced around the darkened streets. The *empty* streets.

She brought her gaze to his. “What do you want, Klaus?”

He gave that sexy—wait, not sexy—*irritating* smile. His gaze traveled slowly over her body. “Now that’s a loaded question, sweetheart.”

His smooth voice, that accent, cultured yet frightening, sent a shiver over her flesh. “I’m not in the mood for your games. What do you want?”

“I want many things, but even I only have certain expectations of what I can have at any given moment. My most recent wish is to find lover boy. I’ve been out of town for a few days—did you miss me?”

“I didn’t even notice.” God. He hadn’t given up on finding Tyler. Would they ever be free of Klaus’s threats?

He smiled. “Oh, you noticed, sweetheart. Of that I have no doubt. But that’s beside the point. I searched every nook and cranny, every pit, and cave, and hidey-hole where your boyfriend might be skulking. To no avail. Not a sign of him.”

Caroline smiled with relief. “And you’re kind enough to deliver the good news?” A dangerous glint flickered in Klaus’s expression. But she couldn’t resist taunting him. “I appreciate the update, Klaus. Now if you’ll excuse me.”

She made to move past him, but he shot out a hand to stop her. His grip was at once thrilling and painful. She tugged against his hold. “Let me go.”

“Never, love.” His voice lowered, and the threat sounded sensuous. She shook off the thought. The man was a monster. A sick twisted son of a bitch. He murdered Tyler’s mother. Why did she constantly have to remind herself of those things to fight back the attraction she felt? An attraction she hated to acknowledge, even to herself. She’d give up blood before she would admit it out loud. She compressed her lips and remained silent.

“What I want is for you to tell me where your boyfriend is hiding. Save us both a lot of headaches. I can stop this incessant search, and you could quit worrying about his death and start to accept it, start the grieving process. I’ll be here for a shoulder to cry on.”

She jerked again, and this time he released her. “You’re despicable. I don’t know where Tyler is, and if I did, there’s no way in hell I’d tell you.”

He crooked a grin and shook his head. “Do you really love someone who can run like that and leave you to save his own skin?”

She ignored the truth in his words. The truth that had been weighing on her mind for days. But that was ridiculous. She’d wanted him to run. Insisted he run. “What good would it do us if Tyler were dead?”

Klaus moved closer, and although she wanted to move away, she couldn't, even when she summoned all the strength, all the willpower she could. He was so . . . close. Her heart stalled in her chest. She couldn't breathe, couldn't speak.

"If I loved a woman like he loves you—*supposedly* loves you—I would risk death or eternal torment to be with you."

"He does love me." Her voice was barely a whisper.

Klaus lifted a hand and ran his knuckles over her cheek. She shivered, closed her eyes, and steeled herself against his touch. "Not like you deserve to be loved."

She opened her eyes, and wished she hadn't. His look was too intense . . . his mouth too near hers . . .

Taking a step back, she shook her head violently from side to side. "Leave me alone. Please. Would you just leave me alone?"

"Never."

He captured her gaze with his. Stared deep into her eyes. She couldn't look away. Her mind went blank and there was only him . . . only those eyes . . .

"Tell me, Caroline. Where is Tyler? Where is he hiding?"

"I don't know."

He frowned. "Come on. You must tell me. Where is Tyler?"

She shook her head, still unable to look away. "I swear. I have no idea. I've left him messages, but he hasn't called me back. I haven't spoken with him since he left."

Klaus released a heavy sigh and broke their connection. "He ditched his phone so I couldn't track him."

Caroline shook her head. She felt like a fog had been lifted from her mind. Realization struck.

Damn him.

"You compelled me," she accused, hating that there was a catch in her voice when she said it.

"You weren't lying. You really don't know where he is. My, my, he is a terrified little boy."

"I can't believe you compelled me."

"You look hurt, love. What's the matter? Did you think we were having a moment?"

Fury erased whatever hurt there had been. "I hate you."

Klaus smiled. "Perhaps, but a thin line and all that rot."

"Go to hell," she gritted, then whirled and stormed away, hating herself because, amidst her anger, he'd managed to also hurt her feelings.