

# Hera Love & Revenge by Jenny Fox

## Chapter 24

/ [Hera, Love & Revenge by Jenny Fox](#)

## Chapter 24

“Hey, can you drive a bit faster mate?” Bart asks the driver. “We’re in a bit of a hurry.”

This is going to complicate everything. How the hell are we supposed to swindle Charles and investigate all his crap if Rick’s already on it? And I can’t risk exposing myself or the Heartgraves. Who knows how Rick would react to the change, too... Would he really recognize me? Minutes ago, I would have thought it was impossible, but I still can’t doubt what my ears heard. How the hell would he have recognized me...? I can’t wrap my head around it. I kept thinking about it for the whole trip. Our plan was to get to Swithin’s office ahead of him, but now we’re late, and I find myself looking around, trying to spot a bike in the midst of the cars heading to London.

Somehow, we manage not to cross paths with them, and by some miracle even arrive at Swithin’s office first. Perhaps he purposefully took a detour. Bart walks in, and guides me through Swithin’s office. There’s a little waiting salon first, with four chairs, a coffee table and some plants, and a little desk for a secretary that’s apparently starting later in the day. Then, we got to his actual office. It’s surprisingly spacious, with large windows onto the street. I just have time to glance around; I find it a bit old-fashioned with wooden floors and old stylish furniture, contrasting with the high-tech equipment and big leather desk chair, but it suits Swithin. I can’t help but notice there’s a brand new portrait of me, way too big for comfort, right in the middle of the wall on his right... It’s definitely one of the portraits I shot last night, but Cecily managed to make it look like it came from the official photoshoot of a Magazine, truly professional and all. I’m amazed by how quickly they moved to have it printed, framed and hung there overnight, but we don’t have time for questions. Bart opens a door on the side, which leads to a small room, half a resting space and half a storage room. Every wall but the one with windows is stacked with books or papers, and there’s a Chaise Lounge in the middle of it. Bart goes to lie on it right away, taking out his phone.

“We made it,” he says. “They are two minutes away.”

I nod, but the stress rises up again. Rick wouldn’t barge into Swithin’s office or something, right? I keep pacing around, grateful for the carpeted floor muffling the sounds of my heels.

Soon enough, we hear them. I hear Swithin apologizing loudly for the detour or some mistake he’s made, his way of warning us. I stop my pacing, and stand with my feet planted in front of the door instead, stressed out like crazy. I catch myself combing my hair back at least three times before I stop and force myself to cross my arms instead. They walk in, chatting casually. Charles sounds fucking

light-hearted for someone who lost his “wife” not even a week ago... I hear the girl who was with him giggle too, but while I do hear five pairs of footsteps, the other two remain quiet.

For a while, I listen to Swithin exchanging pleasantries with them, offering a coffee or tea, and inviting them to his office. I would probably be much more pissed about Charles sounding so calm and composed if I wasn't also listening for a bike's engine outside. And I do finally hear it. He parks about two or three streets away I'd guess, but once the engine's cut, that's it; I can hear an engine but not footsteps from so far... Frustrated, I have to focus on what's going on next door when I hear Swithin say my new name.

“...My niece, Hera. I really love this picture of her, I had it framed against her opinion. She's truly a talented model, as her doting uncle I can't help but be proud... Although, I wish she had made wiser decisions when it comes to her agency, her talent is wasted on them. I understand you're familiar with the Business, Mr. Williams?”

“She does look amazing, definitely some talent there, and I know the business!” Charles exclaims.

What a sucker. He only cared about the contracts, couldn't see shit about any talent... He clearly hired some of the girls based on their looks and his personal preferences, or let the managers handle it all.

“Right?” Sighs Swithin, playing his part perfectly. “Luckily, I'm busy representing her and trying to get this damn agency to let her go, they are already in quite a financial mess anyway... But I digress, my apologies. We should get to the matter of your fiancé's property, Mr. Williams. I'm truly grateful you came so fast, in fact.”

“I had to,” says Charles, suddenly sounding much less joyous. “Her family is grieving, her father Mr. Starr entrusted me to take care of matters as best as I could as he trusts me completely.”

How fucking arrogant is he to throw my father's name around... Swithin goes on to provide some legal details about the flat, and I don't understand half of that jargon. It lasts for a while, and all I can tell is that Swithin is clearly working to entice Charles with the market value of that property, while smoothly questioning him about his legal rights to my belongings. From the bit I can understand, I am quite amazed about how he's clearly setting the trap for Charles, not making him feel guilty at all for putting his hands on my inheritance. I can guess the decades of experience by how he lets him dominate their argument, carefully getting Charles to let out more about what exactly is going on with what should never have been his...

“I'm still a bit surprised,” Swithin says. “I never knew Miss Starr had been married. She hadn't gotten in touch with us in quite a while, so we figured she had been busy, regretfully so. When we heard the sad news, we genuinely expected her father, Mr. Starr would be the next-of-kin person for us to reach out to. Miss Starr had left instructions. I hope you were not upset by our mistake.”

Gosh, making him feel superior by pretending he thinks he was the one in the wrong, while acknowledging Charles' fucking lie as if it was a truth set in stone... I don't know if I should be impressed or grossed out. Swithin's spitting out lies and false truths like a venomous snake hunting a nasty rat.

"Oh, please don't," Charles sighs. "Like I explained, my fi- I mean, my wife was truly worried about the media's opinion. I tried many times to have her make our wedding public, assuring her that she had nothing to hide, but unfortunately, the pressure from the press was too much. I tried to respect her decision until the end, naturally. The lawyers back home are a bit fussy about it as well, it cannot be helped. I only want the best for what my wife left behind, though. To be honest with you, all those properties and money are really nothing to me, I just wish she was here with me. Sadly, this is my burden now, I just hope to do what's best."

"That is so incredibly brave of you."

I roll my eyes. Oh, for fuck's sake, Swithin...

"I can only imagine June wanted this apartment she purchased for her own use, I have every intention to respect that, I won't use it for myself. Do you think it would be possible to sell it? I have no plans to use it, and I am unfamiliar with the current rental conditions in London, but it might be tough for me to manage from afar..."

"I understand, naturally. To be honest, my advice would be to rent the flat for a little while, the market is set to hit a new height in just a few months. However, before we speak about that, Mr. Williams, I'm afraid we will have to sort out the succession first. Due to the important sums involved in Miss Starr's inheritance, we do have to make sure to go by the rules on everything. I hope you don't mind."

"Of course not! I am unfamiliar with legal matters in the UK, so I would be happy to trust you with it. I don't think I have ever heard of your firm before, Mr. Heartgraves, but from the bit my legal advisor found online, you're quite reputable."

"Thank you for your praise. I take all of my clients very seriously, so just like you, I will make sure Miss Starr's belongings are handed to you without a hint of issue."

I suddenly realize, Swithin's been calling me "Miss Starr" from the beginning, and Charles hasn't even tried to correct him about it. While I was never grateful for my last name, it does make me a bit happy to not be called "Madam Williams" or something. I'll take the little victories I can, I guess.

Bart steps up to me, visibly listening too. Just when I glance at him, I see him open his lips, and I get worried for a second, until a very faint whisper comes out of his mouth.

"Ask him more about the circumstances."

"I regret having to ask you this, Mr. Williams," says Swithin on the other side of the door. "But may I ask how... the tragedy occurred? The newspapers were a bit cryptic about the circumstances, and the firm would like to send something appropriate to Miss Starr's family."

I remember, our hearing is much better than humans. I've been hearing Charles and Swithin chat as if they were right in front of me, but there's a large door between us. Only Swithin possibly heard Bart's whisper, no way one of the humans caught this...

"She... June was extremely depressed. I happened to be away that night, I didn't watch her... She committed the unthinkable, I was the one that..."

My god, he couldn't act even to save his life. I can't help but roll my eyes, although I'm internally screaming at that bastard's pathetic attempt at a pitiful act.

"That's terrible," says Swithin. "Was her caretaker not around?"

"Caretaker?" Charles repeats, confused.

"She was diagnosed as heavily depressed, wasn't she? I knew she wasn't sent to any facility, but I assumed there was still some sort of trained staff to take care of Miss Starr, surely?"

Well played, Swithin. Let's push his buttons and see if that asshole makes a mistake.

"No, no," he sighs theatrically. "June was quite bent on not allowing any strangers around, and it's quite sad thinking back, but she really didn't have many friends to count on."

"It sounds like you were the only one who could have truly taken care of her and prevented this tragedy, Mr. Williams."

I smile, showing off my fangs. Yes, Swithin, corner the bastard. I want to be sure he feels some guilt for what he did.

"It's... It's still very hard for me to think about this."

I hear the woman comfort him. Seriously? Where the hell is she coming from, anyway?

Suddenly, we hear a phone ringing. For a second, I worry Bart or I committed a mistake, but no, it's coming from the other side of the room, and Swithin is the one to take it.

"Sorry Sir, I have to take this. ...Yes?" He says, loudly. "...Again? Hera, darling, I told you I would take care of it. I promise I'm on it."

Bart and I exchange a smile.

"Yes, yes I know. I'm finalizing the papers, I can drag them to court within the next month. It's not going to be a problem, darling, I know you're attached to your work but I promise we'll find a better agency, this one is going bust. ...Can I call you back, darling? Yes. Yes, see you later. Bye."

He hangs up, and I wonder if another of our siblings fake-called him for this. He clears his throat.

"My apologies, Mr. Williams. My niece has been very nervous about her whole modeling agency issue, her career is very important to her."

"Oh, I can't blame you for looking out for your family! Out of curiosity, may I ask the name of the agency?"

"London Light Entertainment. They will be off the records soon though, I can guarantee you that. With what I'm preparing against them, they will have to close down business with scraps left!"

"I see..."

Yeah, Charles is definitely hooked. I know his tone, he definitely thinks he got a piece of free information.

"How long are you planning to stay, Mr. Williams?" Asks Swithin. "I will try to get all of this in order as soon as I can, but I hope you understand it might take a while, you know how it is between the US and here..."

"I'm not sure, I've done my best to clear my schedule for the next week, and most of my work can be done remotely or delegated anyway, that's how good my team is!"

...That's how lazy you are, you bastard.

"Then, shall we proceed with a quick visit to the said flat?" Asks Swithin. "As I mentioned earlier, I have the keys with me, and it is quite close, so if you want to take a quick look before we discuss any further details. I know you want to respect Miss Star's wishes, but it is probably preferable you see the property in question..."

"Of course, of course! I do appreciate your honesty, plus you have been incredibly accommodating and driving us around, to be honest. We will take a quick look at the apartment and then go to our hotel if you don't mind, the journey has been a bit long and the jet lag is set to hit soon!"

"Of course, of course. Then, let me grab a couple of things and we shall get going..."

I do hear Swithin ruffling through his papers, but then, Charles whispers something that only a vampire hearing could catch.

"Are you not too tired? We'll get to the hotel soon."

"No, Sir..."

My God, my body wouldn't even be cold yet and this bastard is fucking flirting? That woman's almost meowing voice is so annoying, but his fake caring tone even more so. He used it on me too, and I used to believe his bullshit until he couldn't be bothered to fake it anymore. Whether we find proof he definitely killed me or not, I'm already convinced. That bastard was already faking his act poorly at my funeral, but with an ocean between him and those who cared for me, he's showing his true colors. Just you wait, you murdering bastard, I'll get to you...

"Let us get going!" Swithin announces.

We hear their footsteps quickly leaving the office, and I let out a growl, not too loud because I'm still nervous they might hear me.

"...The fucker," grunts Bart too.

Once I'm sure they have left Swithin's office, I open the doors wide and walk in, rushing to the window to watch them leave. I'm careful not to be where they could see me, but I do want to see Charles' face... unfortunately, I can't; Swithin's car is in the windows blind spot. I soon hear them start the engine and leave and I grimace.

"Don't worry, you heard him," says Bart. "He'll be around for the next week, that leaves us plenty of time to get him."

"What now?"

"Nothing," he shrugs. "Swithin's going to show them around the flat, and then probably come back to work. Lance's coming to get us, he has documents to drop here."

I'm not satisfied with that, I just want... No, I need more action than that. I'm sour that Charles is walking around with some side chick, eyeing my belongings like a vulture and thinks he got away with it.

"I need to get on his radar quickly," I groan. "I want this bastard to suffer, not for him to walk around and the worst thing happening to him being jetlag..."

"We will get to it, Baby Vamp, chill."

"Stop telling me to chill, Bart. I just can't believe he..."

I stop, looking back as someone just walked into the office, probably Lancelot. When I glance back though, Bart's gone, and now I have a bad feeling. The door opens, and my heart sinks.

...Rick just walked in.

# Hera Love & Revenge by Jenny Fox

## Chapter 25

[/ Hera, Love & Revenge by Jenny Fox](#)

## Chapter 25

Shit. Shit, shit, shit. What the fuck do I do? It's far too late to move, he saw me. We're literally standing perhaps six, seven feet away from each other, and staring at one another. My heart's doing some horrible dance in my chest and just won't fucking stop. What the heck is he doing here!

"...Can I help you?" I force myself to utter.

Posh, British accent, deep voice. I slip back into Hera's role as if I was acting for a damn Oscar. Every single limb of mine gets into its role, and I'm trying to replay Benedict's lessons at full speed. I have to act nothing like June, if there's just the slightest bit of chance he recognized me... I stand tall, checking him out from head to toe – the heels definitely help – as if I was seeing him for the very first time, and slowly cross my arms as elegantly as possible, raising my chin a bit. I show nothing of my heart going absolutely crazy, the thoughts echoing loudly in my head.

"My apologies," he says. "I was hoping to meet with Mr Heartgraves. Nobody was answering and the door was open..."

He definitely just made that up, I'm sure I heard him open that door. How did he force it in such a short time?

"Well, my uncle isn't here," I say, thankfully sounding much calmer than I am under the surface.

"Your uncle?" He frowns.

My god, the way his dark eyes are staring at me, I feel like I'm standing naked on a damn podium... A hot shiver runs down my spine, and I swallow down. I've never felt this hot in my whole human and vampire lives combined. Keep acting, don't break the character...

"My name is Hera Heartgraves. And you are...?"

"...Agent Rivera."

"Agent?" I ask, reminding myself I'm supposed to know nothing of him.

"I'm a cop."

Yeah, except that you are a New York City Cop, not a London one. But then again, Hera is not supposed to know that... Shit, how do I keep doing this? Bart, you ass! I'm sure he just ran next door to hide and is listening to all this.

"What does a cop want with my uncle?"

"I don't have to disclose that information to you, Miss Heartgraves."

"You're the one who trespassed."

He seems to hesitate a little, glance around, and then suddenly goes back to me, tilting his head a little.

"...Do I know you?"

For half a second, I flinch. He could not have recognized me, he just couldn't have. No way... In a sudden, genius split-second thinking, I point at my gigantic portrait on the wall.

"I am a model, Agent Rivera. Not that famous yet, but you might have seen me on some magazine cover."

I have to pat myself on the back for that one. The not-so-humble bragging would have never been a thing of June's... Rick glances at the portrait quickly while I try hard to decipher his expression. Yeah, he's confused. Definitely confused. Does he have doubts, then? He's scrutinizing that portrait for longer than I thought, going back and forth to the actual me. I don't look like June, right? Perhaps I really dreamt that earlier...

"...Perhaps," he mutters, not sounding convinced at all. "Are you familiar with Charles Williams? He seems to be a new client of your uncle."

"How would you know that?"

"I just saw him leave this place."

"Then you should have seen my uncle leaving with him."

"I don't know what Mr Heartgraves looks like. I assumed he was part of Mr Williams' staff."

Shit, it's actually believable... Except that he probably caught on who Swithin is, Rick is far from being some idiot. No wonder he became a cop, he's always had the intuition of a German Shepherd... And I can still tell when he's lying too. I let out a faint sigh. What now? This is embarrassing.

"What about you?" He frowns.

"...Excuse me?"

"Isn't it odd you're in your uncle's office when he's not here?"

"This is my uncle's office, and as you can see from this portrait of me, he doesn't exactly hate me either. I'm waiting for him to come back here."

"Great, then we can both wait for him here."

Oh, shit. Shouldn't have said that. The worst part is that I can hear stupid Bart giggling secretly from the other side of Swithin's resting room, the bastard. I glance around, trying to find something. Swithin's not coming back, but I can still use that time and face Rick to dissuade him from sniffing that trail or something. Not that I don't want to just keep chatting with him casually... This whole situation is unreal anyway.

"What is your relationship with Mr Williams?" I ask coldly.

"Still no obligation to tell you."

"My uncle has nothing he hides from me, so you would save us both time and some awkwardness."

He hesitates. He's trying to glance left, right, but his eyes always end up coming back to me. I can almost read the doubt in his eyes... and it's making me confused and uncertain too. I'm torn between being glad I can see him again, talk to him again as if nothing happened between us, and being horribly disappointed that things are like this. A selfish part of me wishes he knew, wishes I could tell him everything, and apologize for what I did. Of course, I'm also terrified, and probably somewhat mad.

"...Mr Williams is a suspect in an investigation I'm currently working on. I need to ask Mr Swithin if he knows about this individual."

"What kind of investigation?" I ask immediately.

"...That's confidential too."

Shit, he's really not giving anything away.

"Why not interrogate him before? It's strange you're trying to see my uncle now, when Mr Williams was here just minutes ago."

"I had bad timing."

Bad timing my butt, Rick. I glance at the window. How long until Lancelot comes in? I'm suffocating here... I try to think of something, anything that I could

distract him with. No, actually, I should probably have him leave. I turn around, and pretend to go and get my phone from behind Swithin's desk, where he can't see my hands moving; I'm thankful for my new found vampire dexterity.

"...Seems like my uncle won't be back for a while," I lie, pretending to read a text. "He's busy with a client."

"You mean with Mr Williams."

I shrug. After all, Hera supposedly doesn't give a shit about Charles Williams. What do I do now? I need him talking. Not only does Rick probably already have some suspicions, but maybe he's looking for proof Charles killed me, too. I smile, careful to keep my fangs hidden behind my lips, and move around the desk to sit on its front, showing off my long legs. Rick can't help but glance at my exposed skin, but quickly looks away.

"You have me curious now, Agent Rivera. What could Mr Williams have done that you need to interrogate his lawyer?"

Much to my disappointment, this seems to give him an idea.

"What does he need your uncle's services for?"

"How about you answer my question first?" I hiss, a tad annoyed.

"I'm the cop here."

"This is not an interrogation room, neither am I a suspect, as far as I know. So, let's make a deal. If you answer my questions, I'll happily answer yours. I heard everything Mr Williams and my uncle told each other. Aren't you interested?"

"What are you doing," whispers Bart, not happy with this.

If he wants to help, he can step out and get me out of this mess instead of hiding. I pretend I heard nothing, and neither did Rick, obviously. He's busy thinking. Damn, he's doing that thing where he rubs his stubble with his index finger when he's thinking... I can't believe he kept that habit after all these years; I always found it quite cute. I want to touch his stubble too... Hell, I want to run to him. He has changed, but for the better. The last of his scrawny teenager looks are gone, he's now a full-grown man, with a strong jawline and firm muscles, looking handsome and delicious...

Delicious? Oh, for fuck sake, Hera, don't you dare think about it! Keep your appetite in check! ...Except that it's too late. I recall Rebecca's and Cecily's words, and now the can of worms is bloody open. My stomach's reaction subtly changes, and my fangs are tingling. Oh, hell no, no, no, girl, keep the fangs in check. I push my sunglasses back up on my nose, hoping I can hide the horrible hunger that's surging. Worse, Rick's still staring at me, and I try to keep my eyes on him, but I subconsciously leave my eyes to go down on his body, guessing the new lines of his muscles, the firm flesh and warm blood underneath his clothes...

"Fine," he answers, dragging me out of my hellish thinking. "I'm investigating his ex-fiancé's death. Did they mention this at all?"

"They did, but I'm pretty sure it was a suicide. The media also said the same thing."

Come on Rick, tell me what you're really trying to do here.

"The media doesn't always report the truth," he retorts right away. "They say what they are told to. I believe there are some loopholes in his fiancé's death, that I would like to clarify."

"What loopholes then?"

He grimaces, but we both know it's my turn to ask a question.

"Some things that just don't make sense," he grimaces. "His fiancé was diagnosed with heavy depression but she was left alone for a long time. How long it took for him to find her. How he never even tried to call her for six hours."

"...He didn't try to call her?"

I had forgotten about that... But wait, I didn't even have a phone, so it doesn't count. There was the hotel's line, I guess, but...

"He left his fiancé alone for hours with no means to contact any emergency number in case something happened to her," he continues. "Aside from depression, many things could have happened, but there was no way to contact the outside world for J- his fiancé."

So Rick's got his own doubts too... What I don't get is how he got to investigate this. If he really is a New York City cop now, why the fuck did he follow Charles all the way here? Why not simply summon him for a proper interrogation? I'm already surprised there's a criminal investigation going on... Then, it hits me.

There's no investigation. That's it. Rick's investigating this on his own, not officially in any way. That's why he broke into Swithin's office, and tried to get to Charles at the airport. He's not here because of his duty as a cop, he's here because this is about... me. I gasp internally. Shit, this is all so much worse. He's here on his own then, to investigate. He's got no colleague accompanying him. No one would know if I... Shit, no, Hera, don't. Drop it. I glance at the door. Where the fuck is Lance?!

"What does Charles Williams have to do with your uncle?" He asks. "I found no trace of them knowing each other before he came to London. He has his own team of lawyers, so what brought him here?"

"Some inheritance thing," I shrug, trying to act composed and uninterested. "She had a place here or whatever that should be her husband's now."

"...Her husband?" He grimaces.

He looks absolutely disgusted, which, honestly, is pretty much the same reaction I had the first time. I'm just as grossed out, but I can't help but think it wouldn't be a bad thing for Rick to look into this too. He's already nose-deep into this... It can't be bad to let him know, right? It's still better than letting Charles get away with that made-up crap. There's got to be some corrupt official that helped him with this.

"...She wouldn't have actually..."

Hold a second, he doesn't actually believe I agreed to it? For fuck's sake, Rick! ...Shit, how do I let him know?

"Are you sure?" He asks, frowning.

"Well, it sounded like some half-official thing. I didn't really understand the details, they mentioned a proxy thing."

"Proxy?"

Yes, Rick, use that sharp brain of yours to figure it out, please... You know I wouldn't have said yes, you have to believe me! While he's lost thinking, my fangs tingle again. Shit, calm down Baby Vamp, he's your ex, not a bloody meal...

"Babe! Are we good to go yet?"

I open my eyes wide as Bart suddenly walks in nonchalantly, smiling at me, and puts an arm around my shoulders. I'm too stunned. That's when he finally decides to come back? Seriously? What the heck is he thinking! Then, he glances at Rick, as if he'd just noticed him. For a second, there's this really, really strange tension in the air, and the two of them exchange looks. They couldn't be more different... and they are staring for a bit longer than necessary too. Seriously? Why do I feel like I'm watching some male ego match...?

"Sorry, I didn't know you were busy with someone... You alright, mate? You look like you saw a ghost."

I have to give it to him, except for that low-blow joke, Bart knows how to act his part. With a hand in his pocket and his cool attitude, he looks like any young man out there... He casually combs his white hair back while Rick's still staring, his jaw clenched, looking a tad annoyed.

"...We were just talking."

"Ah, sorry about that. Baby, can we go now? I'm going to be late if we don't get going... I hope I'm not interrupting anything?"

He said that asking Rick, not me. Damn, he really has to be an ass until the end... Rick faintly shakes his head.

"My apologies, I must have held Miss Heartgraves longer than I thought."

"Yeah, she has that effect on people," Bart chuckles, planting a kiss on my cheek. "Right, Baby?"

I'm so deleting all his entries once we get home.

I smile faintly, and turn to Rick.

"I'm sorry, no more questions today, Agent Rivera. You heard the man. I'm going to have to ask you to leave first, though. I doubt my uncle would approve of you staying in his office while he's gone."

"Of course."

He suddenly walks up to me, and I can feel my heart jumping mountains in my chest. I try to remain composed, nonchalant, thankful for Bart's arm grounding me. A second later, he steps up to me. Close. Way too close, dangerously close... I have to hold my breath, and I'm sure Bart notices too. It only lasted a second, he left a business card on Swithin's desk.

"Please let your uncle know he can call me anytime," he says. "Now, if you'll excuse me."

He gives me one last glance. A long, troubled and troubling stare, that lasts the longest two seconds of my life. Then, he turns around and quickly walks out. I wait until the door is completely closed behind him before finally breathing, completely worn out.

"...Damn it," I grumble.

"You've really got the fang for that guy, uh, Baby Vamp," Bart notes.

I ignore him and grab the card Rick left. There's his full name, plus the NYPD sign, criminal investigation division... So it was real. He's a NYC cop now... What has happened to him since we split ways? I'm dying to know.

"...His name is Patrick?" Bart scoffs.

"He hates it. He always went by Rick," I sigh.

I put the card in my pocket, which doesn't elude Bart.

"Baby Vamp, you do know you should not see your ex again, right? ...That guy's sniffing way too close to us, at the moment."

"I know. I'm not happy he's investigating my death either, but for now, this is the best way we have to investigate Charles."

"I thought we were investigating," he retorts, taking his arm back to face me. "Seriously? You want your cop ex to get the job done now?"

"Bart, drop it," I groan, annoyed. "You heard all of it, Rick's already on this. If I try to stop him, he'll only get more suspicious. I'm just letting him find the truth about my death. ...I owe him that at least."

"But it's not your death that this is about, is it?"

...I can only answer him with a glare.

## Hera Love & Revenge by Jenny Fox

### Chapter 26

[/ Hera, Love & Revenge by Jenny Fox](#)

### Chapter 26

Thankfully, we don't get to argue more than this; Lancelot walks in just as we're still glaring at each other. He chuckles.

"Whatever this is about, I don't want to be asked to take sides. Come on guys, time to go home."

I ignore Bart, and walk past Lancelot to get into the car, hearing the latter scoff when Bart also just growls in response.

"...You two ungrateful brats do realize I had to wake up in the middle of the day to come and get you, right?!"Daily Latest update

It doesn't really get better in the car. Bart's sulking and avoiding looking in my direction, while I do the same, my eyes on Rick's card once again. Did I make a mistake involving him in this...? Perhaps. Perhaps I acted like an idiot with the hope that he'd stick around for a while longer, but then, what the fuck am I hoping for? This is pointless. I'm a vampire now, I'm Hera Heartgraves. June's dead. I should wish him well and let him go on with his life, not give him crumbs to hold on to...

I keep getting mad at myself as we go home. I don't even care much about Swithin getting Charles' attention anymore. I can hear about that later. I just climb to my bedroom angrily, most people will be asleep at that time anyway. To my surprise, when I reach it, it's not exactly empty; there's a black cat asleep on my bed. For some reason, the vision of the small bundle of fur on my bed immediately calms me down. I slowly close the door so as not to wake the cat, and gently climb on my bed, next to it. ...Did Beatrix leave it there? Or are the cats used to just going wherever they please? ...It's the same cat she left in my hand, isn't it? Most of them were all black, I have a hard time telling... Gently, I start petting the smooth, soft black fur. A satisfied purring soon comes from the cat. Yep, definitely used to vampires petting them. I let out a faint sigh, and try to

calm down, steering my thoughts away from Rick. I lie down on the mattress, actually a bit tired. Daily Latest update

I managed to fall asleep, which shouldn't surprise me too much I suppose... When I wake up, the cat's gone, but I hear voices downstairs. It's past night time too, so I'm guessing most of the house is already awake. I get up to take a quick shower, and change into something more comfortable. I can't believe I fell asleep still fully clothed... I need to get used to my new sleeping schedule. I slip into some straight high-waisted camel pants and a black tank top, dry my curls and add a headband before going downstairs. Because it's nighttime, and probably way past sunset, most of the family is awake. Cata is chatting cheerfully with Rebecca and Lancelot in the kitchen, and I hear at least two people typing in the living room. I wonder if the lack of more communal spaces is to force us to spend time together when we're awake. Daily Latest update

My walk into the kitchen is actually greeted by a loud burp.

"Ugh, Greyson, seriously," Lancelot grimaces. "Try and act civilized, will you?"

As he sees me, Greyson wipes the beer foam off his lips and glances at me, giving me a quick nod. I don't know if he likes me or not, but I'm pretty sure I do not want the mountain of big muscles against me. He looks like he belongs in the depths of the forest, with an axe and a wooden cabin... Or in a biker's lair. Next to him, Cecily chuckles.

"Come on, big guy, let's go hunt for some real drink. I'm starving after working for Baby Vamp all night. Hera, your pictures are ready if you want to see them, but I'm out tonight. See ya everyone."

She grabs him by the collar, pulling a guy twice her size like some dog behind her, and they both exit the room.

"Don't mind Greyson," Lancelot sighs. "We're pretty sure he's genetically linked with a bear..."

"That's cool," I shrug. "Do I dare ask what's between him and Cecily?" Daily Latest update

"Oh, they sleep together," Rebecca shrugs. "But nothing more, as far as we know. Tried more, didn't work out. The usual."

I did expect something like that... I guess we're just siblings in name only after all. I glance at Cata, who didn't say a thing, but gives me a little greeting smile.

"The pictures?" I ask Lancelot.

"Cecily and I did work hard," he smiles. "You've got two auditions and a photoshoot tomorrow."

"Tomorrow?" I gasp, shocked. "Seriously?"

"Didn't you want to work?" Rebecca tilts her head. "Time to shine, Baby Vamp."

I chuckle, and move on to the living room. As I expected, Swithin's there, sitting in the middle of the couch, while Agnes is curled up in the armchair with a new book and, to my surprise, a woman I've never seen before is seated on the floor. She is very muscular, but with a thin build, like all of us. Her hair is cut short, and she has a black tattoo on her dark skin, running from her lip down her throat. I wouldn't be able to tell where she's from, perhaps Middle East or Egypt? It looks like she just arrived, she's got a long leather coat on.

"...So you're our youngest little sister?" She smiles at me. "Nice to meet ya'. I'm Vivian!"

She's got one strong american accent for someone who looks from the other side of the world. At least, she looks very friendly.

"Nice to meet you," I nod. "West Coast?" Daily Latest update

"Chicago! I've lived in Illinois for the last century."

"Great. Then you should let Bart know that New Amsterdam's got a new name..."

She laughs loudly.

"Ha! Old Bart's still a nosey mess!"

Yep, like her already. I go to sit next to Swithin, who clearly pretends not to notice my butt moving the couch next to him, his eyes riveted on his charts. Why does he wear those red shades all the time?

"Anything?" I ask him.

"Anything what?" Daily Latest update

"You know. Charles Williams. What did I miss? You got anything new?"

"No, Hera, I don't have anything new. I showed him the flat, he liked it, then he left to go to his hotel with his staff. That was it. I'm busy catching up on my work I missed while working on your case."

"He didn't let out anything that could help me corner him?" I insist.

"You know, you're cute as a little sister, but you could learn some patience, darling. You're going to need it in the next four or five decades to come..."

I pout, not too happy with that short answer of his. This is not going how I want. I can't just be like Agnes, grab a book and calmly stay at home waiting... Daily Latest update

"...What hotel is it?"

He finally stops typing.

"No."

"What no?" I protest. "I just want to check."

"I'm not telling you," he scoffs. "I'm not getting you out of a police station again."

"You got arrested?" Vivian exclaims, amused. "Already?"

"...Charles' got a huge ego," I mutter. "And he likes luxury... He always wants what's best. ...He's got to be at the Savoy."

He flinches. It's very brief, barely a twitch in his jawline, but I see it.

"Ha! I'm right, aren't I?"

"Hera Heartgraves, I swear, if you dare to go th-"

Too late, I'm already running back to my room to grab some of my stuff, a pair of boots, a big coat and my phone. When I run back downstairs, Swithin's standing there, and I have to stop right there and then. I can't move. I can't take a single step closer to the threshold. He's using his Domination.

I gasp, and as I try to look up, I realize I can't. I can't look him in the eye. I force myself to breathe in, try to fight it. He's old, but not as old as Beatrix. I feel it's slightly easier. I manage to move. I move just a little, just a little bit, but it won't be enough. He won't let me take another step...

"You need to learn your place," he hisses.

His voice makes me scared. Really scared. I feel the weight of a man centuries older than me, and I lower my head more, forced to cower. I shiver.

"...Enough."

The pressure is released without warning, and I almost fall forward, unsteady. I glance back. Richard's standing in the hallway, Beatrix one step behind him like a shadow. The patriarch greets me with a faint smile.

"Hera," he gently calls out.

"...I just want to go and take a look," I mutter.

"I know. Be careful."

I hesitate. ...Does that mean I can actually go? How come? Richard doesn't say anything, but it really looks like I can just walk out. I cautiously step back, and as no one is holding me back, I walk past Swithin and get outside before somebody changes their mind.

Just like that, I'm out. ...That's it? I have an odd feeling, but I just keep walking, headed to the Savoy. It's quite a walk from here, if I remember the hotel's position somewhat right. Should I take a taxi? For a while, there's no chance to. I just walk along the streets, crossing paths with a few humans. For some reason, I can't help but feel nervous. Is it because I'm out alone again? It's not the common fear a female human could have walking alone at night, it's... different. Like I can feel something's off. As if... I'm not alone. I stop, and glance back, but there is literally nothing but the darkness. Did one of them follow me? They would show themselves instead of playing this game. Plus, I wouldn't have such a nerve-wracking sensation... Who the fuck is it then? Or is it me just being paranoid? I can't hear anything abnormal, and I can't see anyone hiding. What the heck is going on?

While I'm busy glancing back and watching over my shoulder, I almost miss the silhouette walking up to me, and I take a hard stop.

"Hera," he chuckles, amused. "You look like you saw a ghost. Are you alright, Darling?"

"John," I sigh, a bit relieved to see him. "Yeah sorry, I just... I felt like I was being followed until a second ago."

"Followed?" He frowns, glancing over my shoulder. "...Doesn't seem like it. Anyway, what are you doing out alone?"

"Richard let me. Just going on some... personal errand. You?"

"Oh, I went out to get some drinks for Juliet..."

He shows me the pair of bottles he was holding, and as one would suspect, it's not wine. Still, I'm a bit confused. He lets out a faint grimace before I ask the question.

"Sorry, I just don't feel too confident letting her out, with what happened to Atticus... She's pretty weak to other vampires' Domination."

She did seem more fragile than I am... Is that normal for a vampire, when she's over a hundred years old? I can't remember the specifics, but Bart did say some of us have a better sense of Domination or charming than others.

"Do you... Have an idea what happened to Atticus?" I ask, a bit curious.

He slowly shakes his head.

"I wish I did. I hadn't seen him in a while, but he was like a brother... Well, to all of us. To be honest, I have a feeling Richard isn't keeping us all here in London just for our safety."

"What do you mean?" I frown.

"...I'm not sure yet," he smiles sadly, suddenly changing his tone. "Anyway, look after yourself out there, Baby Vamp. Do you want me to come with you?"

"No, I'm good. I'm almost at the busy street anyway."

"Good to know. See you later, then."

He walks off, and I stay there, still pondering. What did he mean by that? Why else would Richard have all the Heartgraves back home in London? If it wasn't to meet me, he perhaps wouldn't have had a good reason to get them all to come back. In fact, from what I gathered, some are still not home... and their whereabouts are pretty much unknown. Quentin, Susan and Elijah, was it? Are they deliberately staying out of sight? Or did something happen to them too?

I'm grateful for my new body and sturdy legs, as I keep thinking for a while and walk for a long time without feeling tired at all. In fact, I'm feeling much more energized than I was earlier this morning, I guess the nocturnal lifestyle is getting to me. I reach busier streets, and while a few humans make my fangs tingle, I try to stay unnoticed. That feeling I had vanished after meeting John, perhaps my shadow ran away rather than facing an older vampire. Or perhaps I had really imagined that... Just when I'm finally in Soho, my phone rings. It's Bart... Do I want to answer? Swithin's probably going to tell him where I went anyway.

"Good Night," I smile.

"Get your ass back here right now," he growls.

From the sounds I hear in the background, he's already out and about. So predictable, Bart...

"Richard gave me permission."

"Yeah, and he doesn't know how reckless you are yet! Are you seriously going to confront your ex?"

"No, I just want to snoop around," I retort. "If that's all I'm hanging up."

"No way! You should seriously learn to-"

Yeah, no, I hang up. I don't have time to get scolded right now. I've arrived at the street opposite the Savoy. For some reason, I can't help but glance around. If this continues I'm going to have myself checked for paranoia, I swear... At least, I

make sure Rick's not in the neighborhood this time. I check the time. It's almost eleven.

I walk in confidently, grateful for my thick fur coat that makes me fit right into the luxurious, too polished atmosphere of the most famous Londonian Hotel. I'm used to these places. Shining marble floors, high and long corridors, oak wood frames and lots of lights, chandeliers and fairy lights everywhere. I smile and walk up to the check-in counter, the sound of my heels impossible to miss. A young man in an impeccable uniform smiles at me.

"Good Evening, Miss. How may I help you?"

I slide down my glasses a bit, making sure I get a direct eye contact to use my Charm. He's well-trained, but young, impressionable. I can tell he's going to be an easy one.

"Good Evening. I'm looking for my friend, Mr. Charles Williams. Would you be kind enough to tell me which room he's in?"

He hesitates, as if trying to fight me.

"I-I apologize, we are not supposed to... Give that information..."

"But he's my friend," I insist. "I only need to know his room number..."

"H-He booked the S-Suite..."

Of course he did, the Bastard must live like he's Croesus now that he thinks he'll get access to my money and my father's... I intensify my stare. Give me the damn number, I think. Then, I can go and check his room, search for something. Even better if he's there and sleeping. Then perhaps I can get rid of that wretched human in his sleep...

"Miss Heartgraves?"

Shit. I calmly get back into Hera's character and turn around, trying hard to repress the instinct to puke. Charles is standing at the Hotel's entrance, the brunette by his side. Visibly, they both came back from spending the evening outside... They still smell like food. She seems a bit lost, glancing at him. How freaking young is that chick? And that dress on her is a bit short too, isn't it? I pretend not to notice, and tilt my head.

"...Do I know you?" I ask, faking to be confused.

I cross my arms with a faint, mighty attitude. Hera comes from old money and has a wealthy lawyer uncle who's a London shark. She wouldn't be intimidated by anyone, and I need to match the attitude with my clothing, too. Charles doesn't lose his cool at all; he's used to that kind of character. On the contrary, he's best at handling them... He walks up to me confidently, looking amiable.

"My apologies," he said. "I just happened to see your portrait in your uncle's office today, how could I not recognize you! Your red hair is quite unique."

"Oh, thanks," I smile. "Then, to whom do I owe the pleasure?"

"Charles. Charles Williams, Miss Heartgraves. Nice to meet you."

"Likewise."

I smile, and agree to shake his hand. How I'd like to smash those teeth on the marble right now...