



VAMPIRE  
ACADEMY

THE COMPLETE  
COLLECTION

VAMPIRE ACADEMY  
FROSTBITE  
SHADOW KISS

BLOOD PROMISE  
SPIRIT BOUND  
LAST SACRIFICE

THE INTERNATIONAL #1 BESTSELLING SERIES BY

RICHELLE MEAD

# **Vampire Academy**

## **The Complete Collection**

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Last Sacrifice

**Richelle Mead**



THE STORY THAT KICKED OFF  
THE INTERNATIONAL #1 BESTSELLING SERIES



# V V V

VAMPIRE  
ACADEMY

NOW A  
MAJOR  
MOTION  
PICTURE

RICHELLE MEAD

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# VAMPIRE ACADEMY

RICHELLE MEAD



Vampire Academy

RAZORBILL

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# ONE

I FELT HER FEAR BEFORE I heard her screams.

Her nightmare pulsed into me, shaking me out of my own dream, which had had something to do with a beach and some hot guy rubbing suntan oil on me. Images—hers, not mine—tumbled through my mind: fire and blood, the smell of smoke, the twisted metal of a car. The pictures wrapped around me, suffocating me, until some rational part of my brain reminded me that this wasn't *my* dream.

I woke up, strands of long, dark hair sticking to my forehead.

Lissa lay in her bed, thrashing and screaming. I bolted out of mine, quickly crossing the few feet that separated us.

"Liss," I said, shaking her. "Liss, wake up."

Her screams dropped off, replaced by soft whimpers. "Andre," she moaned. "Oh God."

I helped her sit up. "Liss, you aren't there anymore. Wake up."

After a few moments, her eyes fluttered open, and in the dim lighting, I could see a flicker of consciousness start to take over. Her frantic breathing slowed, and she leaned into me, resting her head against my shoulder. I put an arm around her and ran a hand over her hair.

"It's okay," I told her gently. "Everything's okay."

"I had that dream."

"Yeah. I know."

We sat like that for several minutes, not saying anything else. When I felt her emotions calm down, I leaned over to the nightstand between our beds and turned on the lamp. It glowed dimly, but neither of us really needed much to see by. Attracted by the light, our housemate's cat, Oscar, leapt up onto the sill of the open window.

He gave me a wide berth—animals don't like dhampirs, for whatever reason—but jumped onto the bed and rubbed his head against Lissa,

purring softly. Animals didn't have a problem with Moroi, and they all loved Lissa in particular. Smiling, she scratched his chin, and I felt her calm further.

"When did we last do a feeding?" I asked, studying her face. Her fair skin was paler than usual. Dark circles hung under her eyes, and there was an air of frailty about her. School had been hectic this week, and I couldn't remember the last time I'd given her blood. "It's been like . . . more than two days, hasn't it? Three? Why didn't you say anything?"

She shrugged and wouldn't meet my eyes. "You were busy. I didn't want to—"

"Screw that," I said, shifting into a better position. No wonder she seemed so weak. Oscar, not wanting me any closer, leapt down and returned to the window, where he could watch at a safe distance. "Come on. Let's do this."

"Rose—"

"Come *on*. It'll make you feel better."

I tilted my head and tossed my hair back, baring my neck. I saw her hesitate, but the sight of my neck and what it offered proved too powerful. A hungry expression crossed her face, and her lips parted slightly, exposing the fangs she normally kept hidden while living among humans. Those fangs contrasted oddly with the rest of her features. With her pretty face and pale blond hair, she looked more like an angel than a vampire.

As her teeth neared my bare skin, I felt my heart race with a mix of fear and anticipation. I always hated feeling the latter, but it was nothing I could help, a weakness I couldn't shake.

Her fangs bit into me, hard, and I cried out at the brief flare of pain. Then it faded, replaced by a wonderful, golden joy that spread through my body. It was better than any of the times I'd been drunk or high. Better than sex—or so I imagined, since I'd never done it. It was a blanket of pure, refined pleasure, wrapping me up and promising everything would be right in the world. On and on it went. The chemicals in her saliva triggered an endorphin rush, and I lost track of the world, lost track of who I was.

Then, regretfully, it was over. It had taken less than a minute.

She pulled back, wiping her hand across her lips as she studied me. "You okay?"

"I . . . yeah." I lay back on the bed, dizzy from the blood loss. "I just need to sleep it off. I'm fine."

Her pale, jade-green eyes watched me with concern. She stood up. “I’m going to get you something to eat.”

My protests came awkwardly to my lips, and she left before I could get out a sentence. The buzz from her bite had lessened as soon as she broke the connection, but some of it still lingered in my veins, and I felt a goofy smile cross my lips. Turning my head, I glanced up at Oscar, still sitting in the window.

“You don’t know what you’re missing,” I told him.

His attention was on something outside. Hunkering down into a crouch, he puffed out his jet-black fur. His tail started twitching.

My smile faded, and I forced myself to sit up. The world spun, and I waited for it to right itself before trying to stand. When I managed it, the dizziness set in again and this time refused to leave. Still, I felt okay enough to stumble to the window and peer out with Oscar. He eyed me warily, scooted over a little, and then returned to whatever had held his attention.

A warm breeze—unseasonably warm for a Portland fall—played with my hair as I leaned out. The street was dark and relatively quiet. It was three in the morning, just about the only time a college campus settled down, at least somewhat. The house in which we’d rented a room for the past eight months sat on a residential street with old, mismatched houses. Across the road, a streetlight flickered, nearly ready to burn out. It still cast enough light for me to make out the shapes of cars and buildings. In our own yard, I could see the silhouettes of trees and bushes.

And a man watching me.

I jerked back in surprise. A figure stood by a tree in the yard, about thirty feet away, where he could easily see through the window. He was close enough that I probably could have thrown something and hit him. He was certainly close enough that he could have seen what Lissa and I had just done.

The shadows covered him so well that even with my heightened sight, I couldn’t make out any of his features, save for his height. He was tall. Really tall. He stood there for just a moment, barely discernible, and then stepped back, disappearing into the shadows cast by the trees on the far side of the yard. I was pretty sure I saw someone else move nearby and join him before the blackness swallowed them both.

Whoever these figures were, Oscar didn’t like them. Not counting me, he usually got along with most people, growing upset only when someone

posed an immediate danger. The guy outside hadn't done anything threatening to Oscar, but the cat had sensed something, something that put him on edge.

Something similar to what he always sensed in me.

Icy fear raced through me, almost—but not quite—eradicating the lovely bliss of Lissa's bite. Backing up from the window, I jerked on a pair of jeans that I found on the floor, nearly falling over in the process. Once they were on, I grabbed my coat and Lissa's, along with our wallets. Shoving my feet into the first shoes I saw, I headed out the door.

Downstairs, I found her in the cramped kitchen, rummaging through the refrigerator. One of our housemates, Jeremy, sat at the table, hand on his forehead as he stared sadly at a calculus book. Lissa regarded me with surprise.

"You shouldn't be up."

"We have to go. Now."

Her eyes widened, and then a moment later, understanding clicked in. "Are you . . . really? Are you sure?"

I nodded. I couldn't explain how I knew for sure. I just did.

Jeremy watched us curiously. "What's wrong?"

An idea came to mind. "Liss, get his car keys."

He looked back and forth between us. "What are you—"

Lissa unhesitatingly walked over to him. Her fear poured into me through our psychic bond, but there was something else too: her complete faith that I would take care of everything, that we would be safe. Like always, I hoped I was worthy of that kind of trust.

She smiled broadly and gazed directly into his eyes. For a moment, Jeremy just stared, still confused, and then I saw the thrall seize him. His eyes glazed over, and he regarded her adoringly.

"We need to borrow your car," she said in a gentle voice. "Where are your keys?"

He smiled, and I shivered. I had a high resistance to compulsion, but I could still feel its effects when it was directed at another person. That, and I'd been taught my entire life that using it was wrong. Reaching into his pocket, Jeremy handed over a set of keys hanging on a large red key chain.

"Thank you," said Lissa. "And where is it parked?"

"Down the street," he said dreamily. "At the corner. By Brown." Four blocks away.

"Thank you," she repeated, backing up. "As soon as we leave, I want

you to go back to studying. Forget you ever saw us tonight.”

He nodded obligingly. I got the impression he would have walked off a cliff for her right then if she'd asked. All humans were susceptible to compulsion, but Jeremy appeared weaker than most. That came in handy right now.

“Come on,” I told her. “We've got to move.”

We stepped outside, heading toward the corner he'd named. I was still dizzy from the bite and kept stumbling, unable to move as quickly as I wanted. Lissa had to catch hold of me a few times to stop me from falling. All the time, that anxiety rushed into me from her mind. I tried my best to ignore it; I had my own fears to deal with.

“Rose . . . what are we going to do if they catch us?” she whispered.

“They won't,” I said fiercely. “I won't let them.”

“But if they've found us—”

“They found us before. They didn't catch us then. We'll just drive over to the train station and go to L.A. They'll lose the trail.”

I made it sound simple. I always did, even though there was nothing simple about being on the run from the people we'd grown up with. We'd been doing it for two years, hiding wherever we could and just trying to finish high school. Our senior year had just started, and living on a college campus had seemed safe. We were so close to freedom.

She said nothing more, and I felt her faith in me surge up once more. This was the way it had always been between us. I was the one who took action, who made sure things happened—sometimes recklessly so. She was the more reasonable one, the one who thought things out and researched them extensively before acting. Both styles had their uses, but at the moment, recklessness was called for. We didn't have time to hesitate.

Lissa and I had been best friends ever since kindergarten, when our teacher had paired us together for writing lessons. Forcing five-year-olds to spell *Vasilisa Dragomir* and *Rosemarie Hathaway* was beyond cruel, and we'd—or rather, *I'd*—responded appropriately. I'd chucked my book at our teacher and called her a fascist bastard. I hadn't known what those words meant, but I'd known how to hit a moving target.

Lissa and I had been inseparable ever since.

“Do you hear that?” she asked suddenly.

It took me a few seconds to pick up what her sharper senses already had. Footsteps, moving fast. I grimaced. We had two more blocks to go.

“We’ve got to run for it,” I said, catching hold of her arm.

“But you can’t—”

“Run.”

It took every ounce of my willpower not to pass out on the sidewalk. My body didn’t want to run after losing blood or while still metabolizing the effects of her saliva. But I ordered my muscles to stop their bitching and clung to Lissa as our feet pounded against the concrete. Normally I could have outrun her without any extra effort—particularly since she was barefoot—but tonight, she was all that held me upright.

The pursuing footsteps grew louder, closer. Black stars danced before my eyes. Ahead of us, I could make out Jeremy’s green Honda. Oh God, if we could just make it—

Ten feet from the car, a man stepped directly into our path. We came to a screeching halt, and I jerked Lissa back by her arm. It was *him*, the guy I’d seen across the street watching me. He was older than us, maybe mid-twenties, and as tall as I’d figured, probably six-six or six-seven. And under different circumstances—say, when he wasn’t holding up our desperate escape—I would have thought he was hot. Shoulder-length brown hair, tied back in a short ponytail. Dark brown eyes. A long brown coat—a duster, I thought it was called.

But his hotness was irrelevant now. He was only an obstacle keeping Lissa and me away from the car and our freedom. The footsteps behind us slowed, and I knew our pursuers had caught up. Off to the sides, I detected more movement, more people closing in. God. They’d sent almost a dozen guardians to retrieve us. I couldn’t believe it. The queen herself didn’t travel with that many.

Panicked and not entirely in control of my higher reasoning, I acted out of instinct. I pressed up to Lissa, keeping her behind me and away from the man who appeared to be the leader.

“Leave her alone,” I growled. “Don’t touch her.”

His face was unreadable, but he held out his hands in what was apparently supposed to be some sort of calming gesture, like I was a rabid animal he was planning to sedate.

“I’m not going to—”

He took a step forward. Too close.

I attacked him, leaping out in an offensive maneuver I hadn’t used in two years, not since Lissa and I had run away. The move was stupid, another reaction born of instinct and fear. And it was hopeless. He was a

skilled guardian, not a novice who hadn't finished his training. He also wasn't weak and on the verge of passing out.

And man, was he fast. I'd forgotten how fast guardians could be, how they could move and strike like cobras. He knocked me off as though brushing away a fly, and his hands slammed into me and sent me backwards. I don't think he meant to strike that hard—probably just intended to keep me away—but my lack of coordination interfered with my ability to respond. Unable to catch my footing, I started to fall, heading straight toward the sidewalk at a twisted angle, hip-first. It was going to hurt. *A lot.*

Only it didn't.

Just as quickly as he'd blocked me, the man reached out and caught my arm, keeping me upright. When I'd steadied myself, I noticed he was staring at me—or, more precisely, at my neck. Still disoriented, I didn't get it right away. Then, slowly, my free hand reached up to the side of my throat and lightly touched the wound Lissa had made earlier. When I pulled my fingers back, I saw slick, dark blood on my skin. Embarrassed, I shook my hair so that it fell forward around my face. My hair was thick and long and completely covered my neck. I'd grown it out for precisely this reason.

The guy's dark eyes lingered on the now-covered bite a moment longer and then met mine. I returned his look defiantly and quickly jerked out of his hold. He let me go, though I knew he could have restrained me all night if he'd wanted. Fighting the nauseating dizziness, I backed toward Lissa again, bracing myself for another attack. Suddenly, her hand caught hold of mine. "Rose," she said quietly. "Don't."

Her words had no effect on me at first, but calming thoughts gradually began to settle in my mind, coming across through the bond. It wasn't exactly compulsion—she wouldn't use that on me—but it was effectual, as was the fact that we were hopelessly outnumbered and outclassed. Even I knew struggling would be pointless. The tension left my body, and I sagged in defeat.

Sensing my resignation, the man stepped forward, turning his attention to Lissa. His face was calm. He swept her a bow and managed to look graceful doing it, which surprised me considering his height. "My name is Dimitri Belikov," he said. I could hear a faint Russian accent. "I've come to take you back to St. Vladimir's Academy, Princess."

## TWO

MY HATRED NOTWITHSTANDING, I HAD to admit Dimitri Beliv whatever was pretty smart. After they'd carted us off to the airport to and onto the Academy's private jet, he'd taken one look at the two of us whispering and ordered us separated.

"Don't let them talk to each other," he warned the guardian who escorted me to the back of the plane. "Five minutes together, and they'll come up with an escape plan."

I shot him a haughty look and stormed off down the aisle. Never mind the fact we *had* been planning escape.

As it was, things didn't look good for our heroes—or heroines, rather. Once we were in the air, our odds of escape dropped further. Even supposing a miracle occurred and I did manage to take out all ten guardians, we'd sort of have a problem in getting off the plane. I figured they might have parachutes aboard somewhere, but in the unlikely event I'd be able to operate one, there was still that little issue of survival, seeing as we'd probably land somewhere in the Rocky Mountains.

No, we weren't getting off this plane until it landed in backwoods Montana. I'd have to think of something then, something that involved getting past the Academy's magical wards and ten times as many guardians. Yeah. No problem.

Although Lissa sat at the front with the Russian guy, her fear sang back to me, pounding inside my head like a hammer. My concern for her cut into my fury. They couldn't take her back *there*, not to that place. I wondered if Dimitri might have hesitated if he could feel what I did and if he knew what I knew. Probably not. He didn't care.

As it was, her emotions grew so strong that for a moment, I had the disorienting sensation of sitting in her seat—in her *skin* even. It happened sometimes, and without much warning, she'd pull me right into her head.



Dimitri's tall frame sat beside me, and my hand—*her* hand—gripped a bottle of water. He leaned forward to pick up something, revealing six tiny symbols tattooed on the back of his neck: *molnija* marks. They looked like two streaks of jagged lightning crossing in an *X* symbol. One for each Strigoi he'd killed. Above them was a twisting line, sort of like a snake, that marked him as a guardian. The promise mark.

Blinking, I fought against her and shifted back into my own head with a grimace. I hated when that happened. Feeling Lissa's emotions was one thing, but slipping into her was something we both despised. She saw it as an invasion of privacy, so I usually didn't tell her when it happened. Neither of us could control it. It was another effect of the bond, a bond neither of us fully understood. Legends existed about psychic links between guardians and their Moroi, but the stories had never mentioned anything like this. We fumbled through it as best we could.

Near the end of the flight, Dimitri walked back to where I sat and traded places with the guardian beside me. I pointedly turned away, staring out the window absentmindedly.

Several moments of silence passed. Finally, he said, "Were you really going to attack all of us?"

I didn't answer.

"Doing that . . . protecting her like that—it was very brave." He paused. "*Stupid*, but still brave. Why did you even try it?"

I glanced over at him, brushing my hair out of my face so I could look him levelly in the eye. "Because I'm her guardian." I turned back toward the window.

After another quiet moment, he stood up and returned to the front of the jet.

When we landed, Lissa and I had no choice but to let the commandos drive us out to the Academy. Our car stopped at the gate, and our driver spoke with guards who verified we weren't Strigoi about to go off on a killing spree. After a minute, they let us pass on through the wards and up to the Academy itself. It was around sunset—the start of the vampiric day—and the campus lay wrapped in shadows.

It probably looked the same, sprawling and gothic. The Moroi were big on tradition; nothing ever changed with them. This school wasn't as old as the ones back in Europe, but it had been built in the same style. The buildings boasted elaborate, almost churchlike architecture, with high peaks and stone carvings. Wrought iron gates enclosed small gardens and

doorways here and there. After living on a college campus, I had a new appreciation for just how much this place resembled a university more than a typical high school.

We were on the secondary campus, which was divided into lower and upper schools. Each was built around a large open quadrangle decorated with stone paths and enormous, century-old trees. We were going toward the upper school's quad, which had academic buildings on one side, while dhampir dormitories and the gym sat opposite. Moroi dorms sat on one of the other ends, and opposite them were the administrative buildings that also served the lower school. Younger students lived on the primary campus, farther to the west.

Around all the campuses was space, space, and more space. We were in Montana, after all, miles away from any real city. The air felt cool in my lungs and smelled of pine and wet, decaying leaves. Overgrown forests ringed the perimeters of the Academy, and during the day, you could see mountains rising up in the distance.

As we walked into the main part of the upper school, I broke from my guardian and ran up to Dimitri.

"Hey, Comrade."

He kept walking and wouldn't look at me. "You want to talk now?"

"Are you taking us to Kirova?"

"*Headmistress Kirova*," he corrected. On the other side of him, Lissa shot me a look that said, *Don't start something*.

"Headmistress. Whatever. She's still a self-righteous old bit—"

My words faded as the guardians led us through a set of doors—straight into the commons. I sighed. Were these people *really* so cruel? There had to be at least a dozen ways to get to Kirova's office, and they were taking us right through the center of the commons.

And it was breakfast time.

Novice guardians—dhampirs like me—and Moroi sat together, eating and socializing, faces alight with whatever current gossip held the Academy's attention. When we entered, the loud buzz of conversation stopped instantly, like someone had flipped a switch. Hundreds of sets of eyes swiveled toward us.

I returned the stares of my former classmates with a lazy grin, trying to get a sense as to whether things had changed. Nope. Didn't seem like it. Camille Conta still looked like the prim, perfectly groomed bitch I remembered, still the self-appointed leader of the Academy's royal Moroi

cliques. Off to the side, Lissa's gawky near-cousin Natalie watched with wide eyes, as innocent and naive as before.

And on the other side of the room . . . well, that was interesting. Aaron. Poor, poor Aaron, who'd no doubt had his heart broken when Lissa left. He still looked as cute as ever—maybe more so now—with those same golden looks that complemented hers so well. His eyes followed her every move. Yes. Definitely not over her. It was sad, really, because Lissa had never really been all that into him. I think she'd gone out with him simply because it seemed like the expected thing to do.

But what I found most interesting was that Aaron had apparently found a way to pass the time without her. Beside him, holding his hand, was a Moroi girl who looked about eleven but had to be older, unless he'd become a pedophile during our absence. With plump little cheeks and blond ringlets, she looked like a porcelain doll. A very pissed off and evil porcelain doll. She gripped his hand tightly and shot Lissa a look of such burning hatred that it stunned me. What the hell was that all about? She was no one I knew. Just a jealous girlfriend, I guessed. I'd be pissed too if my guy was watching someone else like that.

Our walk of shame mercifully ended, though our new setting—Headmistress Kirova's office—didn't really improve things. The old hag looked exactly like I remembered, sharp-nosed and gray-haired. She was tall and slim, like most Moroi, and had always reminded me of a vulture. I knew her well because I'd spent a lot of time in her office.

Most of our escorts left us once Lissa and I were seated, and I felt a little less like a prisoner. Only Alberta, the captain of the school's guardians, and Dimitri stayed. They took up positions along the wall, looking stoic and terrifying, just as their job description required.

Kirova fixed her angry eyes on us and opened her mouth to begin what would no doubt be a major bitch session. A deep, gentle voice stopped her.

“Vasilisa.”

Startled, I realized there was someone else in the room. I hadn't noticed. Careless for a guardian, even a novice one. With a great deal of effort, Victor Dashkov rose from a corner chair. *Prince* Victor Dashkov. Lissa sprang up and ran to him, throwing her arms around his frail body.

“Uncle,” she whispered. She sounded on the verge of tears as she tightened her grip.

With a small smile, he gently patted her back. “You have no idea how glad I am to see you safe, Vasilisa.” He looked toward me. “And you too,

Rose.”

I nodded back, trying to hide how shocked I was. He’d been sick when we left, but this—this was *horrible*. He was Natalie’s father, only about forty or so, but he looked twice that age. Pale. Withered. Hands shaking. My heart broke watching him. With all the horrible people in the world, it didn’t seem fair that this guy should get a disease that was going to kill him young and ultimately keep him from becoming king.

Although not technically her uncle—the Moroi used family terms very loosely, especially the royals—Victor was a close friend of Lissa’s family and had gone out of his way to help her after her parents had died. I liked him; he was the first person I was happy to see here.

Kirova let them have a few more moments and then stiffly drew Lissa back to her seat.

Time for the lecture.

It was a good one—one of Kirova’s best, which was saying something. She was a master at them. I swear that was the only reason she’d gone into school administration, because I had yet to see any evidence of her actually *liking* kids. The rant covered the usual topics: responsibility, reckless behavior, self-centeredness. . . . Bleh. I immediately found myself spacing out, alternatively pondering the logistics of escaping through the window in her office.

But when the tirade shifted to me—well, that was when I tuned back in.

“You, Miss Hathaway, broke the most sacred promise among our kind: the promise of a guardian to protect a Moroi. It is a great trust. A trust that you violated by selfishly taking the princess away from here. The Strigoi would love to finish off the Dragomirs; *you* nearly enabled them to do it.”

“Rose didn’t kidnap me.” Lissa spoke before I could, her voice and face calm, despite her uneasy feelings. “I wanted to go. Don’t blame her.”

Ms. Kirova *tsked* at us both and paced the office, hands folded behind her narrow back.

“Miss Dragomir, you could have been the one who orchestrated the entire plan for all I know, but it was still *her* responsibility to make sure you didn’t carry it out. If she’d done her duty, she would have notified someone. If she’d done her duty, she would have kept you safe.”

I snapped.

“I *did* do my duty!” I shouted, jumping up from my chair. Dimitri and Alberta both flinched but left me alone since I wasn’t trying to hit anyone. Yet. “I did keep her safe! I kept her safe when none of *you*”—I made a