

# Masquerading Mask

By : MissAmmyT

Serenity Chandler now known as Tessa Rossi witnessed a murder that changed her life emotionally and physically. After witnessing the death of Sara White, Tessa has to pick up and move across the country just to make sure she's safe from the mysterious killer known as the Vampire because his victims lack blood in their systems. To unsure her safety she is equipped with a new identity, new parents, new home and school. But soon she realizes that pretending to be someone else is harder than she thinks especially when she makes great friends and even a possible boyfriend. The danger still follows and is closer than she thinks. THIS IS NOT A VAMPIRE BOOK



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## Masquerading Mask : Chapter 1

I woke up to my head hitting the car window after running over a few small bumps. Looking up I find the scenery bright and unexpected. My eyes squint as the bright blue beaches shimmer under the fluorescent yellow sun. This is completely different from my usual scenery back home. The sky is always gray, either raining or fogging up. It's never sunny or blue, but when it is it's a miracle. Everybody plans for picnics, games, and events. Looking at the people living life here it must be an everyday thing. That must be nice, although I don't really care. I'm not an outdoorsy person. I'm more of a stay inside person where there's air conditioning, heaters when needed and no bugs flying in my face. All that shouldn't matter now. What should matter is the fact that I have to change my life completely after one simple mistake I made that night.

Storming off isn't the mature way of ending arguments, but it was in the moment and I wanted to get out of that house as fast as possible. I didn't want to stick around and hear about how my boyfriend of a year started falling for the girl he cheated on me with during the summer vacation. I was furious. All I could think about while walking home was what did I do wrong in the relationship. What could I have done to prevent him from cheating? Suddenly I heard trash cans being knocked over in an alleyway next to me. Looking in that direction all I see are shadows moving back and forth. It seemed like they were fighting. To me that wasn't surprising. There's always fights going on around here, but what was different about this one was the fact that I heard a girl yelping. The headlights of a car flashed in that direction and I saw everything and he saw me. I saw his cold blue eyes stare at me as he held the girl's head in his hands and snapped it in a second. She dropped to the ground lifeless. When he took a step forward, my instinct was to run as fast as I could and that's what I did. I ran as fast I could. I felt the adrenaline pumping through my body. I wanted to look back to see how close he was, but I knew I shouldn't. I knew that that is what'll slow me down. Up ahead I see a police officer getting into his cruiser, after coming out of a 24 hour diner. That was my target. I forced my body to run even faster. He closes his driver side door and I begin to panic thinking I won't make it in time, but luckily I did. I ran to the passenger side of the door just before he was about to drive off. I pressed my cold, sweaty hands on the door and I screamed for help. He quickly took notice and stopped the car from driving off. From then on they found the body of Sara White, 15, and she lived in Kentucky. She has been missing for 4 months and she was found dead in an alleyway. Her cause of death was the broken neck, but she was definitely tortured before that. Before I saw her get killed.

Now under witness protection, I have to change my life completely. My name isn't Serenity Chandler anymore. It's Tessa Rossi. My parents, instead of Lenny and Jake Chandler, it's Jill Bateman and Max Hart. They also double as my body guards. I have no siblings and instead of being a brunette, I am officially a blonde which actually makes me look tan rather than how I use to look, pale. I begged them not to cut my hair because I've been trying to grow it out since I was 12. It might seem shallow considering the fact that I am now a target and in danger of getting killed, but if the length of my hair is the only thing I can keep from my past life. I'm keeping it.

"And we are here." Max said parking beside the house that be my new home.

It's not modern at all. The house looks almost victorian. Old vines are sprawled over the dark blue walls, dead plants cover the sides of the building. It actually looks creepy.

"I will have to do a lot of cleaning and gardening." Jill said sharing my distaste for the house.

"We aren't here to decorate or clean or plant." Max said pointing it out.

"Max, we have to make living here as comfortable as possible for Serena. She's not here as a prisoner. She's here for protection." Jill argued.

"It's Tessa now remember that Jill." Max said.

"When she steps out of this car she will be Tessa. Max lighten up. You're going to make this difficult for her." Jill turns to look at me, "Okay, I am your new mom and Max, unfortunately, is your new dad. You are Tessa

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Rossi a new sophomore at Kole High. You will forget about everything and everyone in your old life for the time being. Remember you can not, absolutely not contact anyone from your past life. No family, friends or boyfriend. Ok?" she said in a soft motherly like voice.

"Ex- boyfriend, and yes ma' am. I am Tessa Rossi." I said my voice nearly cracking.

"Call me Mom." She smiles.

They both step out of the car and are waiting for me to do the same. When I step out of this car I am no longer Serenity. Jill's words keeps replaying in my head. I finally open the door and step out of the car. That's when it really hit me. I'm not at home anymore. I won't have the same friends. I won't have the same loud and obnoxious family to go home to. I won't have to die in the cold weathers and I won't hear the name Serena anymore.

"Lets go inside and get settle in. The furniture and your clothes should be in the house." Max said sternly. I just nod and follow him inside. As soon as Max opens the door the overwhelming smell of pine cone hits my face. Outside didn't look modern or clean but inside was different. The floors looks to have been replaced with dark wood. The walls repainted a soft beige and the furniture golden tan and silver.

"Wow." I said taking in the house.

"Beautiful." Jill said admiring the high ceiling and chandeliers.

Max motions for me to follow him.

"Here's the rules. You wake up, go to school and come straight back home. For safety take the buses. On most days Jill will be home, but I won't because I'll have to do some papers down at the station. There's cameras in the front, back and garage door, so don't even think about sneaking out. Here's a cellphone. My number, Jill, and the local station's phone numbers are set on speed dial. Don't make me remind you that we are here on business. It's not a vacation. Got it?" Max said staring at me straight in the eyes. His black eyes turned cold and stiff.

"Yes sir." Was all I had the courage to say. He hands me the phone and leads me upstairs to my bedroom. He then leaves me there to unpack and get settled.

I wait until he makes it down the stairs before I can actually breathe again. I didn't notice I am sweating until I touch my forehead to brush the long bangs away from my face. I wipe it with the tissue I found in my messenger bag.

After finally calming down from the Max lecture, I can actually take a look at my room. I'd expected it to be similar with the decoration downstairs, but I was sadly mistaken. The wall color and the flooring is the same, but the only things that were actually in the room were a twin bed, nightstand, dresser and a closet. It seems to be lit by the ceiling fan, but it doesn't look like it'll be that bright.

I begin to unpack some of the things I carried with me when I heard a knock at the door. Turning around I see Jill holding two suitcases. She smiles.

"Hey, this is your clothes that has been sent." She said placing them next to my bed.

"Thanks Jill." I smiled back.

"Ah Ah. It's Mom remember Tessa?" She said looking at me with her hazel eyes that are too green to actually be hazel.

"Right. Thanks Mom." I corrected myself.

"How are you liking the place so far?" She asked examining my room.

"It's nice." I said looking around my plain empty room.

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"Liar. Once you're settled in we'll get some wall decorations just to make this place more of your own."

"What if we have to move?" I asked curious.

"This is a safe place. Plus it's across the country. We'll be here for a while, so while we are here let's make the best of it and not ruin your teen years. But you do understand you can not go out with any new friends you make." Jill said softly, but surely.

"Yes ma-Mom. I understand." I said nodding.

She smiles and begins to get up, "Oh, Seren- I mean Tessa, dinner will be ready at 8 and tomorrow we will go up to your school to sign you in and get the date for your official first day." I nod. She leaves the room and me to my unpacking and folding.

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Max, yet again, recaps the whole reason why I am here before we go into the school building for my meeting. I nod along showing that I understand when in reality I am just annoyed. I'm also irritated with the sudden change of weather. I'm not use to heat. Finally Max looks as if he's finished. I hear the same words over and over again, from last night's dinner, this morning's breakfast and now here in the school parking lot.

Max is not extremely tall, but he's average. His body makes up for it though. With every movement he makes I swear he's going to rip his shirt off. He's also not as bad looking for a 40 or something year old man. He has this rugged look, with his messy black hair and black eyes, that girls will swoon over and a deep sultry voice that I'm definitely into and I'm pretty sure many others are too. What makes me dislike him at times is that fact that he treats me as if I'm naive to what's going on. He keeps repeating this lecture and by now I'm pretty sure I can repeat it word for word.

"Okay Max I'm pretty sure she has heard enough. She understands. She's 16, not 10." Jill said stopping Max from repeating his lecture.

Jill on the other hand is the soft, polite one. With every smiles she gives the more happy or comfortable I get. About 5'11 she looks like a model. Her long bright blonde hair shapes her heart shaped face perfectly. Her hazel eyes which looks more green glitters in the sunlight with every movement she makes. Sometimes I wonder why she chose this profession. She would've been a beautiful model. To add to my jealousy she's nearly into her late 30s.

"I'm taking precautions, so she doesn't slip." Max said sternly

"She won't and if you keep pressuring her like that then she will slip." Jill replied agitated. Max didn't say a word. He steps out of the car prompting us to do the same. We weren't far from the school, but even from this view it looks humungous. I follow Max and Jill inside. Stepping into the halls, I am overwhelmed by the decorations that covers nearly every inch of the walls. It practically screams 'PREP RALLY' 'HALLOWEEN DANCE' 'YEARBOOK CLUB' etc.. This reminds me so much of Richmond High, my old high school. I've only been there for one year, but I've been apart of the Richmond family since elementary school. I started from Richmond Elementary to Richmond Middle School. I was planning on finishing with Richmond High, but that didn't go as planned. I've made great long lasting friends there. Abbie Smalls is a mixed indian girl whom I befriended when her family came to America from india. She had the cutest accent and she was the sweetest person you'll ever meet. Then there was Emily Cast. She was the complete opposite of Abbie, the troublemaker of the group. She always went against the rules and what her parents wanted. She even went as far as to shave her head just to piss off her mom. I miss them so much. We planned to finish high school together, go to college together and even planned on babysitting each other's babies later on in the future. I don't know if that will happen anymore.

In the office we wait to be called into the principal's office. I am forced to sit between Max and Jill and act like their sweet daughter. To distract myself from their presence I look around the fairly large office. The decorations are plain. There's no flash of color like there is in the hallways. The plants are way past dead and it smells of paper and pens if that's even possible. At times I notice the secretary lady peeking glances at us, or Max to be exact. She looks to be his age, maybe a little older. Her firey red hair is up in a tight, sleek bun and her rectangular glasses masks her murky green eyes.

"Tessa Rossi?" A tall lady asked emerging from her office.

Max, Jill and I follow her into her office. Walking into her office I can smell the lit cinnamon candle on her desk. She motions for us to sit.

"So how's our new student?" She asked giving me the smile kindergarten teachers give their students.

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"I'm well. How about you?" I said

"Great thanks for asking." She replied flipping through my fake papers. I could see my fake name printed on it with my real high school classes I've taken freshman year.

"Okay. Welcome to Kole High! I am Principal Heckler." She introduced herself.

"Max Rossi." Max said offering his hand for a shake. She shakes it.

"Jill Rossi." Jill said offering her hand for a shake. She shakes it. Principal Heckler looks at me with her golden brown eyes prompting me to introduce myself.

"Tessa Rossi." I introduced myself. She offered out her hand for a shake and I took it. Her hands are dry and cracked, but her handshake is strong and firm. I feel like a noodle.

"Well Tessa Rossi, your academics are outstanding. I'm happy to see that you've participated in many school events. Does that mean that you'll be participating in our upcoming events? We really need the spirit."

Principal Heckler said and I don't know how to answer.

"If we don't have plans for her at home you'll see her at the events." Mac said with a smile knowing that I wouldn't know how to answer that question.

"Alright. Well we are happy to see you here! Here's your schedule and Sam will be here shortly for your class tours." She said handing me my schedule. Principal Heckler thanked us again for coming and showed us out.

"You guys wait outside. I need to talk to the principal for a bit." Max said heading back inside. He leaves Jill and I in wonder. I look at Jill confused.

"Maybe he's making sure that you wouldn't have to deal with things here." Jill said sounding as if she is trying to convince herself more than me. Waiting outside, I'm starting to get impatient. Max has been in there for a while talking about who knows what and we are here waiting for some person to give us the tour. I look at my schedule.

1st Hour -- AP Chemistry

2nd Hour-- AP Geometry

3rd Hour-- Physical Education

4th Hour --AP English II

5th Hour-- Art

6th Hour-- European History

7th Hour-- Study Hall

Wow. I know I have outstanding academics, but this is going to kill me. I think they over exaggerated on my papers about my academics. To take a moment for myself, I head to the restroom across the hall. The door squeaks when I open them.

"BOOO!!!!" someone screamed causing my to go into panic mode. My heart races and I could feel the adrenaline rushing through my veins. I fall onto the floor. I feel like I've been transported back to the night of the killing. Thoughts were racing through my mind, 'Have I been found out already?' 'What do I do?' 'Is it him?'

"Oops, sorry! I thought you were my friend." A girl voice said sounding sympathetic. I don't respond. I can't. My body is in panic mode and I can't control myself.

"Hey, you okay there? I didn't think I scared you that bad." She said again. I look up and found a girl with long wavy brown hair that's covering half of her small, slim face and she looks at me with those soft brown eyes. No, it's not him. It's not that man with those cold blue eyes. I begin to feel myself calming down. I quickly get up.

"I- I'm fine. I just didn't expect anyone to be in here." I managed to say. The girl smiles and says, "I'm sorry I didn't mean to give you a heart attack. I was trying to scare my friend."

"It's okay." I said giving her a smile this time.

"Are you new here?" She asked. "Yea. I'm starting tomorrow." I said. She smiles even bigger. "My name is Sue Martinez. American first name because I'm half white and hispanic last name because I'm also half spaniard. Yours?" she asked. I hesitated for a moment, thinking I forgot the whole cover story.

"Uh I'm Tessa Rossi. Italian and white." I said recovering my memory.

"Well Tessa, tomorrow, as an obligation of being your first friend, you can come to me if you need any help." Sue said smiling. She's my height, but a little heavier. She also has bigger of everything I have or wished I

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have. Sue leaves apologizing to me again. I don't think I need my moment anymore, so I head back.

When I come back Max finally comes out of Principal Heckler's office and Jill is nearly half asleep waiting on the bench. Principal Heckler comes out and calls for our tour guide. I thought our tour will be done by an administrator, but to my surprise it's a student. He walks up to Principal Heckler and greets her, then he turns to us and greets us. He's very tall, looks to be a little over 6 ft and he's incredibly handsome. He has dark blue eyes that glints, sun kissed skin and bright blonde hair like Jill's. He also looks nice in the Kole school uniform, white dress shirt with a navy blue tie and navy pants paired with black vans. I am in awe and I'm pretty sure he can tell because he gives me a smile that made my heart jump a beat. He laughs.

"Tessa Rossi this is Sam Harris. He's a senior here and he's also our star quarterback. He will be showing you the ways of Kole High and if you have any questions today or tomorrow or any day don't be afraid to ask him. Sam wouldn't mind helping, right Sam?" Principal Heckler said giving Sam a knowing look.

"No ma'am. I would be delighted to Miss Tessa." Sam said overtly polite and smiling at me. His voice along with his looks makes me tremble. "Let's begin. Follow me."

The tour was quick and to the point. He showed me all the classes and the easy routes to get to them. He also made it clear that the mystery meat monday is something I should steer clear of. That made me laugh, but looking at Max's face I shouldn't have done that. Throughout the rest of the tour I tried to control myself from laughing at Sam's joke, but failed at times. Jill seemed fine about everything, but she was tired and didn't want to pick a fight with Max again. Upon leaving Principal Heckler gives me a bag with the uniform clothes. It's filled with navy skirts, pants, shirts, and ties, white shirts and blouses and khaki pants. Max and Jill pre ordered them before we came.

"We will see you tomorrow Miss Rossi." Principal Heckler said giving me that smile again.

"See you tomorrow Tessa. Remember you can ask me for help anytime." Sam said giving me that smile that made my heart jump last time. Max clears his throat, "Well it was nice to meet you Principal Heckler and Sam. We need to get going." he said slightly nudging Jill and I.

We got into the car and that's when the arguing starts. "Do I need to make myself clear with you again because seeing your actions today shows that you didn't understand." Max yelled from the driver seat. "What actions?" I asked confused. He took a deep breath and shook his head.

"You are here to be safe. You're not here to flirt or befriend boys or girls. If you do you're just going to hurt them and put them in danger. It'll even put you in danger. " Max stated.

"What did I do that was so bad that it'll put me in danger?" I asked growing furious by the second. Before he could go on Jill intervenes, "Max, I see where you are coming from, but like I said before, you can't isolate her from society. You have to trust that she won't grow too attached to them or mess up. She is still a teenager and she needs at least a little part of a social life. She needs friends. We are far away from him. He doesn't know we are here with her, so loosen up and quit being too hard on her. She understands." Max says nothing. He just gives me a look that just makes me even more furious, but I say nothing. I can't say anything. He's protecting my life. He's putting his life on the line just so I can live longer. What makes me mad is, like I said before, the fact that he treats me like I am too naive to understand things.

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