



Daughter of Darkness

By V.C. Andrews

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When I was a little girl, Daddy told me never to fear the dark. “We exist because of the darkness,” he told me. “All of you are daughters of darkness.”

Beloved bestselling author V.C. Andrews’s passion for vampires comes to spellbinding life in a long-awaited novel of dark desires as all-consuming—and forbidden—as in *Flowers in the Attic*. One night, with the sound of a young man’s scream, high school senior Lorelei discovers that her stern but loving father, who adopted Lorelei and her sisters as infants, is no ordinary man. He has raised his beautiful girls for one purpose: to lure young men into their world of shadows. Like her sisters, Lorelei has been trained in the art of seduction and warned never to fall in love. But when she meets a handsome and charming classmate, she boldly defies her family and follows her heart—even if love is a poison. . . .

Dangerously enticing and deliriously intoxicating, V.C. Andrews’s Daughter of Darkness will leave readers thirsting for more.

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In My Blood

“Stop that racket!” my older sister Ava commanded in the sharp, deep, stinging loud whisper only she could produce, after she had poked her head inside my bedroom door. Her words reverberated just under my breasts and shook my spine as if they had originated inside me and not inside her. Whenever she spoke to me like this, it sent a chill through my chest and into my heart. It was as if I had just gulped and swallowed a cup of ice water. Even my lips felt numb.

Minutes ago, our housekeeper and nanny, Mrs. Fennel, had ordered our thirteen-year-old sister, Marla, out of my room to go clean up her own. Cleanliness and neatness were as important in our house as they were supposed to be in a hospital. There was always a demand for tidiness and freshness that gave every home we lived in the appearance of being just created.

For us, time froze. We had new things, but we were taught that nothing became worn or out of style if it was cared for well. I grew up to understand that for the Patio family, days, months, years weren’t locked up in some old chest and left to be forgotten. Nothing fell back or away or died in our world. It was as though everything Daddy touched became immortal. Memories swirled about us with the dazzle of colorful butterflies caught in rays of sunshine. Every one was precious and special. One of Daddy’s favorite expressions was, “It’s so old that it’s new.” That was because so many of the things we possessed people hadn’t seen for some time, whether they were windup clocks and oil lamps or Victrolas and quill fountain pens.

We didn’t relegate the antiques to some attic cemetery, either. Nothing was put away to sleep under a blanket of dust. A hundred-year-old music box sat side-by-side with an MP3 player. Daddy still had his Gibson and Davis piano, built in 1818.

“The piano’s old, but the notes are new,” he would say when I played it. “Life,” Daddy told me, “simply means reinventing yourself every day. Every day is your birthday, Lorelei.” He told that to Marla and Ava and our older sister, Brianna. He said it was something he constantly told himself.

We held on to the past, cherished it, but we certainly didn’t dwell in it. The here and now and the future were always paramount. Maybe that was why, unlike other families, we had no family albums. There was little or no nostalgia. There were especially no early pictures of Daddy or Mrs. Fennel anywhere in our home and, of course, no videos of family events. Daddy never looked back at a time in history and said, “It was better then” or “I’d rather be alive then.” There were individual things that were better, perhaps, but “Every generation, every age, has something to offer us, something to cherish,” he said. “When you stop looking forward to the future, you begin to dig your own grave.”

Although we were given new clothing and shoes regularly, we never threw anything out or gave anything away. That certainly wasn’t because we were poor. We were far from it. The fact was, there was always a younger Patio daughter to assume some of what had belonged to the younger daughter before her.

And so my younger sister, Marla, had inherited many of my old things, some of which I had inherited from Ava. Most of them were barely worn. I grew out of them quickly, almost overnight. I took good care of everything I had, but Marla could be very sloppy, leaving a blouse on a chair, a skirt on the floor, or shoes in the doorway, which was the thing Mrs. Fennel hated the most.

Most of the time, Mrs. Fennel moved through the house as if she were on radar. No one could travel more confidently through the darkness. She seemed very proud of that, proud of all the things she could do and did

efficiently, effectively, and gracefully, so stumbling over something one of us carelessly left in her way infuriated her.

Mrs. Fennel didn't have to raise her voice above a whisper to indicate her displeasure, either, and that indication was enough to move a herd of elephants. It was as if the air were filled with static and your ears were drowning in heartbeats that resembled the sound of thundering wild beasts.

Marla didn't dare protest or even appear upset when Mrs. Fennel came looking for her in my room. She avoided Mrs. Fennel's eyes just the way any of us would and hurried to her room, chanting, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry." It was as if she were trying to memorize it.

Mrs. Fennel hated that word. "Don't tell me you're sorry," she would say. "Sorry doesn't mend fences well. Something broken, something ruined, can't be restored to what it was with an 'I'm sorry.'"

I certainly wasn't going to say "I'm sorry" to Ava. I had just inserted my iPod into the player, speaker, and charger, and it had barely begun to play. I had it so low I didn't think I needed to listen on my earphones, so I was genuinely surprised when she burst in on me. She frightened me, but as soon as I settled down, I was more annoyed than afraid. She looked half-asleep, even though it was nearly noon. Of course, I knew why.

Almost always, whenever Ava slept this late or took naps, so did Daddy. My recollections of my oldest sister, Brianna, were the same. Anyone would wonder how she could have heard anything through our walls when she fell into that comalike sleep, but what amazed me about both my sisters and my father was the sensitivity of their hearing. I really believed my father and my sisters when they were older could hear a pin drop, even when they slept deeply. It was as if they had a sixth sense, especially for danger. Would I inherit the same power? I hadn't yet.

In movies and on television, when someone's dog suddenly growls or barks, the person pauses to listen and doesn't hear anything but always in a dire whisper asks the dog, "What is it, boy? What's out there?" Usually, it turns out to be something evil.

I had seen Daddy do that many times. He would suddenly stop reading or looking at something and listen harder. His ears didn't go up, and he didn't growl, but his face changed into a dark, concerned expression. His eyes grew beady, and he moved his nostrils as though he were sniffing for some threatening scent. It was not fear, exactly. I had never seen him afraid of anything. I suppose it was more like suddenly being extra cautious.

Once, even though none of us was saying anything, he held up his hand and said, "Quiet." It was as if we were thinking too loudly.

My heart began to pound. Brianna's face mimicked his, and everyone froze. After a moment or so, Daddy nodded, relieved and satisfied, and returned to what he was reading. Brianna looked relieved and satisfied, too. I looked at Ava to see if she wanted an explanation as much as I did, but she didn't, or if she did, she was too frightened to ask. Ava was seven then, and I was four. Marla had not yet been born and brought to live with us.

If I asked what was wrong, why everyone looked so worried, Ava and Brianna would glance at me and then look to Daddy, who would simply shake his head and return to what he was reading.

Even at that young age, being so in the dark at times when it concerned my family made me feel like a total outsider, a visitor rather than another daughter. Eventually, I realized that something or someone was always pursuing us. I didn't know what or who it was yet, but, like all the information I was given, it would come

when Daddy thought I was ready for it to come.

There were secrets sleeping in every shadow, secrets cloaked in whispers, and secrets implied in glances. Sometimes I thought they were like mold in the walls. Not that we celebrated it, but I dreamed of a Christmas with packages of secrets under the tree, all addressed to me. All I had to do was open each one, and I'd learn the answers.

“Creepers, Ava,” I said now in a mild protest, “I can barely hear the music.”

“Stop thinking of only yourself,” she snapped. Her eyes suddenly came alive, lost their sleepiness, and were luminous. It was as if matches had ignited behind them. Even her cheeks turned crimson. Ava could never be ugly, but more and more lately, I saw movements and incremental changes in her features that made them harder whenever she was upset.

“I’m not.”

“Yes, you are. I don’t know why no one else sees how selfish you can be. I was never that selfish when I was your age. You don’t think of our family first. You think of yourself first.”

I shook my head. Tears filled my eyes. In this house, there was no greater sin than selfishness. “That’s not true!” I protested loudly.

Her eyes widened again. “Quiet, you fool. If you wake Daddy...”

“Okay, okay,” I said, and shut off the iPod. I never had woken Daddy. None of us had, but the threat of his and Mrs. Fennel’s anger should I do so was quite enough to make me tremble.

Daddy would have to sleep nearly the entire day at least once a month. Most of the time on those days, he didn’t even come to dinner. When I was much younger and asked Mrs. Fennel about it, my nanny cryptically replied, “Digestion.” She would say nothing more, and one look from her told me not to ask any more questions about it. She hated my questions anyway.

One time, she snapped at me and said, “Your questions buzz around my ears like annoying flies.” She waved her hand near her head as if they were really there.

Brianna would be just as disturbed with my questions and either ignore me or say, “Stop pestering me. You’ll know when you know. Try to be more like Ava. Be patient.”

Despite how much Brianna watched over me when I was very young, I never had a close relationship with her. I thoug...

Users Review

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Joyce Coolidge:

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because you can know every little thing by the book. So , let me make new experience and also knowledge with this book.

Alan Fan:

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Debra Weeks:

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