

The Hornsey Vampires

(Season two of London's Night Stalkers)

Chapter 10 – A Family Emergency

“Liz Grant had been watching her weight and picking at her food since the age of fourteen and it was too late to change her habits. The lunch was good; some of the food in aluminium foil trays was superb. She still picked at it, but what she did eat, she enjoyed.”

»

It was really too early in the morning to be getting out of another bed and taking another shower and it had most definitely been an odd time of day to enjoy sex with Tim. Laura had to work with what life gave her and there were always early checkouts at the hotel. Business people catching the first flight to Dusseldorf or Tokyo, sometimes Moscow. They left behind them an empty room with crumpled sheets, a room the cleaners wouldn't look at for at least two hours.

“How do I look ?” She asked Tim. “Not too freshly ravaged I hope ?”

“You look gorgeous.”

He went to kiss her again, which was bound to lead to more touching. She wanted to be touched again, even after an hour of mattress pounding in room 311. It was an uneven battle between her own libido and Tim, against her own good sense. Luckily her good sense was having a good morning. She very gently pushed him away.

“I'm not putting on my makeup for a third time today.” She told him. “Anyway, I'm helping Clara deal with a hospitality booking in..... Crap, I'm late.”

“See you for lunch ?” He called after her.

“Maybe.”

Laura didn't run, staff running in the hotel wasn't permitted, even if the building was on fire. She knew that for a fact, there were regular fire drills. She moved swiftly, like an Olympic power walker in a hurry. Luck threw a ball at her from left field, Daniel and Gwen were walking across the main lobby and Jack had seen her. There was no way to avoid a quick greeting.

“Good morning.” Said Laura.

“Hello, we're going to see a friend of Olivia's today.” Said Daniel.

“Jack has promised to be good.” Added Gwen.

“I must rush, I'm seeing a corporate client.”

Laura headed towards Clara and the two men she was talking to, while Daniel and Gwen went through the main doors, Jack still waving furiously. Laura trusted him to keep her secret, but no one was likely to believe him if he didn't. Had Gwen realised that Daniel was a good few miles past plain, harmless eccentricity ? If she hadn't, she wasn't the smart lady Laura had taken her for. Daniel had some very strange books in his library and a fully equipped laboratory in the basement.

“Laura, perfect timing.” Said Clara. “This is Bob Page and Michael Poole, they're looking for a venue to host their firm's tenth anniversary celebrations.”

“Then they've picked the right place.....Let me tell you about.....”

Laura pulled on her sales girl persona and gave Bob and Mike the full treatment. They'd be back, she was certain of it.

“Sorry I was late.” She told Clara, once they were alone.

“Sex with Tim ?”

“Yes, we're still working out a routine.”

Clara wasn't a touchy person by nature, yet she grabbed her arm.

"No Laura, never get into a routine, I made that mistake with Felipe. Keep it spontaneous, even if that does make you late for things."

The timing seemed perfect and dealing with her idea now meant being able to see Tim for lunch.

"Can I talk to you about something Clara, something important?"

"Fine, in here, I'll lean against the door."

It was a small room where the housekeeping staff kept buckets, brushes and a large machine to polish floors. No lock or bolt on the inside, so Clara leant back against the door.

"I just know I'm not going to like this Laura... What do you want to talk about?"

"We now know about these relics Mabina is looking for in Jerusalem."

"Yes, your gift for seeing in dreams has been very useful, especially as none of us can just get on a plane to the Middle East, or at least not without losing our jobs."

Now came the awkward bit. Laura had learned early on that playing Simon and Clara off against each other was a non-starter. They'd known each other far too long and there was that whole vampire soul mate thing going on between them. Sometimes though, if she was careful, she could talk one of them into something and then get their help with the other.

"I've had an idea about that." She said. "Though Simon won't like it and Patsy might hate me."

~ ~

Daniel's eyes were watering and he felt the beginning of a headache. A lovely bright sunny morning was a joy to most, but not him. One of the drawbacks of being a creature of the dark, he was becoming quite good at blaming it on allergies.

"We're stopping at the first chemists to buy some antihistamines." Said Gwen.

"It's just the traffic fumes, I'll be fine."

It had been a good idea to bring Gwen and the boy to London. They not only provided him with the perfect cover to dawdle about and take pictures; Jack was saying more in an hour, than he usually did in a day back home.

"Pigeons, lots and lots of pigeons." Said Jack.

"We'll go somewhere you can feed them at lunchtime." Said Gwen.

Just three gawping tourists from North of the border, they'd been looking at the corner house for quite some time.

"Someone is home; I saw a shadow move past the window." He said.

"She might be fed up with talking about it."

"I don't think so Gwen, she went through the entire story with three journalists and a BBC news crew. Come on; time to knock on the door."

He had called ahead and made tentative plans to call that morning, but calling ahead gave people the opportunity to avoid unwelcome callers. Daniel pressed the doorbell, hearing it ring inside the house.

"The house looks nice, what does she do?" Asked Gwen.

"She writes technical manuals for software companies. Freelance I think."

The woman who answered the door looked nothing like the pictures of Tasha Wallis in the old newspaper article of course, they'd all been taken years before. Quite a short woman with her dark brown hair cut quite short. There was an intensity in the way she looked at them, but she was smiling.

"I'm Daniel, I called yesterday. This is Gwen and her son Jack. Sorry to arrive as a group, but we're combining research with a family vacation."

“That’s fine, come in..... Visitors give me an excuse to get off the computer for a while.”

The lounge was large and looked comfortable. There was a plump black and white cat sat on the end of a sofa. They sat down as a family unit, on the sofa nearest the fireplace, Jack looking at the cat.

“He used to put his hand straight out to stroke them.” Said Gwen. “Then he had a few bad experiences and some infected scratches.”

“Oh, my Rocky is completely dopey, he’s never scratched anyone. I’ll get us all some coffee, make yourselves comfortable.”

Daniel sometimes talked about aunts and uncles, though they weren’t really related. They were just people who’d passed through his very long life, some settling for longer than others. There had been an Aunt Enid, a tiny woman who’d moved quickly, fussing about like a sparrow. Tasha reminded him of Enid, with her movements. He was beginning to like Tasha Wallis. Once there was coffee and biscuits and Jack was happily stroking Rocky, she asked the obvious question.

“There was a piece on Olivia in the German media last year. Are you working for anyone I might have heard of?”

“I’m putting together an article I hope will sell to the mainstream media, but there are no guarantees I’m afraid. I’m a freelancer, which means that it might get into a major daily, or just the local rag, or not get picked up at all. William Jarrold is in prison and the public seem to have an appetite for organised crime stories. I hate to sound cynical, but I go for pieces that might pay the rent.”

“Bill Jarrold is a very bad man.” Said Jack.

“He listens to us talking.” Said Gwen.

“He’s right Bill Jarrold is an evil man, he killed Olivia, I’m certain of it.” Said Tasha. “You did realise they were seeing each other? There had even been talk of marriage at one point.”

“I honestly had no idea.” Said Daniel. “Everything seemed to indicate they were adversaries. I was wondering why he’d want to kill a forensic expert who was no real threat to him.”

“I watched a recording of the TV feature, there was no mention of their romance.” Said Gwen.

“You wouldn’t see anything, Jarrold set his bull dog lawyers on anyone in the media who dared to mention his connection with her disappearance, or their relationship. If it had gone to court it would have all come out, but Bill knows powerful people. Those he couldn’t set his lawyers on were paid off or threatened.”

“How did a forensics expert start dating a mobster?” Asked Daniel.

“For that you can blame Croydon Crown Court.” Said Tasha. “Drink your coffee and get comfortable and I’ll tell you how Olivia met Bill.”

“Can I record our conversation?”

“Yes.”

~ ~

Lunchtime in Jerusalem and Sam had asked Brendan and Liz to join him for lunch at his office. Judith had called all the best restaurants within a few miles and most had agreed to deliver if the customer was known to them. Magda was there too, using the delivery of the Half Moon of Thoth as an excuse to remain in town for a while and get a look at Brendan and his companion.

“That’ll be them, early and ten minutes ahead of the food.” Said Judith.

Brendan was smiling as Judith led them into his office, but Liz didn’t look happy at all.

“You’ve arrived before the food, there’s a mixture of cuisines on the way and a few vegan dishes.” Said Sam.

“I’ll eat anything.” Said Brendan.

“Sit, please get comfortable.” Said Judith. “This is Magda, who has flown in from Switzerland just to meet you and bring the Half Moon to us.”

Sam fussed over them; Judith fussed over them, providing drinks and friendly small talk. Brendan relaxed, but Liz looked as though she’d rather have been anywhere else.

“Sorry Liz, are you still having problems believing Mabina is a vampire ?” Asked Sam.

“Sam, that was a bit.....” Said Magda.

“We’re all friends here Magda, all believers.” Said Sam.

“I do believe, that’s the problem.” Said Liz. “I keep thinking about how many people this Gladitch creature has killed in the hundreds of years she’s been around.”

“We share your concerns Liz.” Said Magda. “Our aim is to bring her into our order, get her to take our oath. Then we can begin to use her powers for good.”

“Will she keep her oath to you ?” Asked Brendan.

Magda was giving him the ‘it’s your turn’ look. Sam was the leader of their order of course, part of his job was answering awkward questions.

“Normally vampires are totally immoral and follow no moral code of behaviour. They’re rarely social creatures and kill their own kind with as little thought as they kill humans. They’d laugh at the idea of keeping an oath, but Mabina Gladitch is different, she’s royalty.” He said. “If Mabina takes an oath as a queen, she will keep it, forever.”

“You’re certain about that ?” Asked Liz.

“I am.”

“That’ll be our lunch.” Said Judith, as the door buzzer was pressed.

~

~

“Blame the Crown Court, blame the legal system.” Said Tasha Wallis. “There is no segregation of witnesses for the prosecution and those for the defence. Everyone simply waits outside in the public area until they’re called. Olivia spent quite some time talking to a handsome and charming man, only to find out that he played for the other team, he was a crook.”

“The crook was Bill Jarrold I take it ?” Asked Daniel.

“It was and for some reason Olivia carried on seeing him. She always claimed he’d charmed her that day at Croydon, but I think it was always there, a thing for bad boys.”

Tasha looked at Daniel and smiled. She didn’t believe he was a freelance journalist, she’d seen enough of them to recognise the genuine article. Over a dozen had sat in her lounge, stroking Rocky and drinking her coffee. They set off like firework rockets, keen to know everything, promising wonders, before spluttering out and vanishing. She didn’t really care what Daniel was up to, she just hoped he might cause enough noise to get the police investigation rolling again.

“Why would Bill kill her ?” Asked Daniel. “Was there another man in her life ?”

It was inappropriate to laugh, but no one who’d come to see her over the years had ever understood the truth.

“Oh no, I caused her death, it was my fault. There was no other man, it was me. We were more than just friends, Olivia and I were lovers.”

“That wasn’t in any of the press reports.” Said Daniel. “You’re always described as a childhood friend.”

“Bill again and his ego.” Said Tasha. “If it had been a man they’d have been beaten, maybe their knees broken with a club hammer.... Bill’s macho image restored. The woman he loved leaving him to live with another woman though..... Again he used his connections and money to bury the truth.”

“Did he ever come after you ?” Asked Gwen.

“No, though I was expecting him to. About a month after Olivia went missing the phone rang quite late. Just a man laughing at me, until I hung up. It was him, I know it was Jarrold.”

“What a bastard.” Said Gwen.

“He is a bastard and he killed Olivia because she fell in love with me. He might have even killed her himself and dumped her body in a ditch somewhere.”

“Awful Tasha, really awful.” Said Daniel. “It’s a longshot, but I’m going to look at hospital records for when she disappeared. You never know, she might have been brought in as an unknown body. Did she have any scars or tattoos ? Anything that might identify her ?”

Was he fishing ? Did he know more than he was letting on. No good asking of course, he was hardly likely to admit it.

“There was one tattoo on her thigh, she had it done only a few months before going missing. It was a small tattoo of a strawberry, high up on her thigh. So high you had to be intimate with her to see it. Olivia said it was for me, my reward for putting up with her moods and still loving her.”

~ ~

Liz Grant had been watching her weight and picking at her food since the age of fourteen and it was too late to change her habits. The lunch was good; some of the food in aluminium foil trays was superb. She still picked at it, but what she did eat, she enjoyed.

“There will be dessert and coffee, but I’m sure everyone wants to see the object Magda brought all the way from Geneva.” Said Sam.

“After a trip to Tbilisi, acquiring it wasn’t as straightforward as I’d hoped.” Said Magda.

Sam and Magda exchanged a meaningful look. Liz accepted the fact that she was becoming a little paranoid, but she wondered if anyone had died to get the artefact to Jerusalem. Magda placed a simple cardboard box on the table.

“Watch the outside door Omer; no one comes in, no one.” Said Sam.

Magda opened the box and looked around the room, smiling at them all individually. It was like watching a magician about to perform their best trick.

“Ladies and gentlemen..... I give to you..... The Half Moon of Thoth.”

Liz was prepared to be disappointed. She’d been to see quite a few must-see museum exhibits that had turned out to be just a pile of old bones. The crystal Magda had just removed from a box was different, it was impossible not to be impressed by it.

“Wow, that is beautiful.....What type of crystal is that ?” She asked.

“Hard to say, no one has ever risked breaking off a piece to test it.” Said Magda. “It’s rumoured to have dropped from the skies somewhere in ancient Egypt, though I’m sceptical about that. The Crystal is gorgeous, but it’s what the Egyptians did to it that matters most, what they imbued it with.”

At first glance the grapefruit sized piece of crystal was just a common chunk of quartz, cut and polished to be a thing of beauty. As Liz watched swirls of red formed deep inside the crystal and they in turn changed to green, then blue and various subtle shades of yellow. It was as if a living thing had been trapped inside the artefact, an energy, a force of nature.

“I’ve never seen anything like it.....I’ve seen pictures, but the real thing.... Amazing.” Said Judith.

They all watched the kaleidoscope of colours inside the crystal, until Brendan spoiled the moment.

“Yes it’s pretty, but what does it do ?” He asked.

And most importantly, why would Mabina come all the way from London to obtain it. Liz assumed the excellent lunch was a way of leading up to answering that unasked question. Magda seemed to enjoy being centre stage, she’d have made a good politician.

"Sometimes the names of objects seem strange, or downright crazy." She said. "Thoth was the Egyptian God of the Moon, Magic and Writing, the wisest of the Egyptian gods. Some believe he still exists and a few still worship the old Gods of Egypt."

"Magda and I disagree on that, but the arguments can be interesting." Said Sam.

"What do you believe Magda?" Asked Liz.

"There's no need to dig too deeply into the history of....." Said Sam.

"Let her answer me." Said Liz.

Judith had been fussing about making coffee and unwrapping a few items intended as a dessert after their meal. All cold, but some smelt wonderful. Judith went round making sure everyone was fed, while Sam muttered quietly at Magda.

"Sam disagrees, but I believe Gods simply don't conveniently drift away into oblivion when the masses cease to believe in them. The Half Moon still works, there are well authenticated statements from those who've seen it work. If an article imbued with something by Thoth can still work, it implies the old Gods of Egypt are still with us in some way."

"Nonsense!" Snapped Sam. "Artefacts like the crystal are like mystic batteries and nothing more. Charged up by occultists and others skilled in the dark arts."

"I believe Thoth really did break the curse of Ra." Said Magda.

"But what does it do..... Why will my queen want it?" Asked Brendan.

Definitely someone who enjoyed being theatrical, Magda picked up the crystal and let them all watch the constantly changing pattern of colours.

"To put it simply Brendan, The Half Moon of Thoth can be used to gain deep wisdom and full rebirth." Said Magda.

"So Mabina will become a baby again?" Asked Brendan.

"We're talking about a rebirth of mind and soul Brendan." Said Magda. "There will be some healing and a little extra strength, but Thoth is mainly known as the God of wisdom."

"Was known Magda, was known." Muttered Sam.

"The wisdom granted by the crystal is staggering, there will be little your queen won't know Brendan." Said Magda. "The crystal will work on anyone, but vampires have always gained most from it. Every ancient ritual, every dark evocation, Mabina will know them all. Everything, going right back to when the first humans began to walk on two legs."

Liz suddenly realised what Sam and Magda intended to give to Mabina Gladitch.

"You want to give that fucking creature even more power?" She yelled.

"That does seem dangerous..... You've never met her." Said Brendan.

"Which is why we're not giving her the crystal until she's joined our order and taken an oath of loyalty." Said Sam.

"You're certain she'll keep the oath?" Asked Liz.

"I'm certain of it." Said Sam.

"We're certain of it, she'd never break an oath given as a queen." Added Magda.

Liz felt almost mesmerised by the colours inside the crystal. Power put there by the God Thoth if she believed Magda. Liz Grant was beginning to believe in a lot of strange things, so why not an Egyptian God.

"Could I use it?" She asked. "You did say the crystal would work on anyone."

"It's not a gadget you just turn on or off Liz." Said Magda. "There are rituals required and a few ingredients. The rituals are old dark magic, there will be consequences. Mabina will be happy to suffer such consequences, but you would never accept them."

“What consequences ?” She asked.

“Enough, we’ve given you all the information you need to persuade Mabina to come to Jerusalem and we’ll tell you no more until she’s here.” Said Sam. “Persuade her Liz, convince her to come and get the Half Moon, tell her it’s waiting for her.”

~ ~

“Yes Anthony, I’ll talk to Ronnie.” Said Simon.

“Just don’t forget the party, it means a lot to Nicola.”

“We’ll be there, Clara loves that sort of thing.”

Simon closed the door to Anthony’s office and felt slightly nauseous. Simon had always assumed he was cleverer than Anthony, most people tend to think their boss is a fool. It’s a way of dealing with the indignity of having to be subservient, comforting yourself with the idea that the boss is as thick as two short planks.

“He did me over though.” Muttered Simon. “Slammed me to the ground and stomped me into the carpet.”

Only metaphorically of course, but that was bad enough. The feeling of being bested in a battle of wits by Anthony was dreadful, Simon began to feel slightly giddy. He put his hand out and used the wall to steady himself. He wanted to rip out Anthony’s throat and feast on his blood, but couldn’t allow himself such a luxury. He opened a door and entered the swamp, the bear pit where at least two dozen sales people made phone calls at the same time. There were cubicles made from moveable partitions, but it was still noisy. Phone selling wasn’t for shy people, you needed to talk loudly and clearly. He listened to Ronnie going through her routine script.

“..... Mrs Jones, can I call you Iris ? We’ve been asked to carry out a survey by six of the top pension providers in the country.....”

It wasn’t a survey of course, but he didn’t care what Ronnie said, as long as her sales numbers looked right. He caught her eye and pointed towards his office. She’d know what he meant, Veronica Neophytou was one of the bright ones, not that he was fit to judge.

“Bright indeed..... Anthony just had me for breakfast.” He mumbled, as he entered his office.

The monthly results were on his desk, the numbers he lived or died by. They were doing really well, which always amazed him. His life was chaos and drama all the time, but he thrived on stress. Simon began to be anxious when his life was quiet and orderly. He was only truly happy when huge steaming piles of crap were being thrown in his direction. The numbers were good there was no denying it, the best yet.

“We’re making money faster than Anthony can spend it.” He muttered.

Ronnie knocked on his, before coming in and sitting opposite him.

“Good news and bad news Ronnie.” He said. “The good news is that you’ll be calling people about their pensions for the foreseeable future. We’re even getting a few extra staff in to help, though you’ll have to train them.”

“Oh, I hate training up newbies, they’re all muppets.”

“You were a muppet once Ronnie.... The bad news is that you owe me big time and if you work here until you retire, you’ll still owe me.”

“What did you have to promise Anthony ?” She asked.

“You must have heard about his dinner party ?”

“Oh no Simon, he didn’t make you go ? Anthony does great booze parties, but his quiet sit down meals..... Fuck, they should be banned by the UN as a cruel and unusual punishment.”

He stopped hating Ronnie just a little, she had made him laugh.

“Not only me, I’ve got to tell Clara she’s going too. That’s going to be tough, she’s already said no. I do have a couple of ‘you have to, it’s important’ cards left, but.....I’m going to suffer.”

“On the couch for a month huh ? Sorry Simon, I do appreciate what you did for me.”

“Oh Ronnie, a month on the couch I could just about live with. Clara will find a far worse and more imaginative way to punish me.”

~

~

They’d seen the new younger Mabina through the cameras in her garden, though it had taken a while to accept what they saw. She’d gone into her house as a crippled old lady and come out in the morning looking thirty years younger. She was the only person in there, it had to be her. There was a similarity about the walk and as Simon put it.

“She brought herself back from the dead using bodies buried in the basement. After that, a little rejuvenation must be child’s play.”

“She fed the hungry ground.” Clara had said.

Mabina now looked young again, it became something they accepted without proof. Much in the same way that everyone knew the new younger Mabina had spotted the cheap Wi-Fi cameras in her garden. The cameras were swapped around, their power packs didn’t last that long. No matter where they put a camera, Mabina made too much of an effort to never look at them.

“We’ll leave these ones and let their power packs run out.” Simon had said. “That might confuse her for a while.”

Laura was currently sixty feet or so above the ground, near the top of a tree in the park opposite what they still referred to as Vlad’s house. She was about to install an expensive camera, it even had night vision. They were all hoping that it was a camera Mabina wouldn’t spot.

“Come on Bobby, you can’t possibly need to pee again.”

A woman leading a dog across the park, seemingly unhappy that her pooch wanted to cock his leg at every bush. Laura wasn’t going to make much noise installing the camera, but she waited until Bobby and his owner left the small park. It felt wrong to use the blade to cut tree bark, but it was ideal for the purpose. She used the assassin’s blade Simon had given her to cut away some bark and smooth off the surface. It didn’t have to be perfect; the resin strip was guaranteed to stick to just about anything. Laura pressed the camera into place and held it for a couple of minutes. A quick movement of the lens and it was pointing straight at Mabina’s front door.

“Perfect.” She mumbled.

A courting couple next, it felt as though no one in that part of Chelsea went to bed at a sensible hour. Laura waited for them to finish kissing and walk away, before dropping out of the tree. Now came the difficult part of her plan. She had to do it alone, just the camera in the tree to witness events. Simon had no idea about her plan and Clara had agreed with some reluctance.

“If you’re not home for breakfast, we’ll all arrive and cut Gladitch to pieces.”

Laura crossed the road and looked at the house. She’d been in there, they all had. Normally she’d have used the door in the garden wall to reach the back door. There was the camera though, waiting to record events. Laura approached the door and rang the bell, before ringing it another three times, before anyone opened it.

“I saw you outside.... Is this it Laura, have you come to try and kill me again ?”

“I did kill you Mabina. But no, I have no intention of trying to kill you.”

They looked each other over for a while. Mabina now looked young, though her movements and mannerisms gave away her true age. Some affectations it seemed, only arrived with age and experience.

"Are you armed with that gun of yours ?" Asked Mabina.

"Yes, and you have the long kitchen knife on the table behind you."

"So why are you here ?"

Why was she there ? Laura had already asked Clara to see the infamous HR lady at the hotel and explain Laura's intended absence as a family emergency. Laura was determined to travel to Jerusalem, even if she had to travel there on her own. There were other reasons for facing her nemesis, some very personal.

"I'm here to offer you my help Mabina. I'm sure you don't trust the Psochic Order and you're right not to. They're much more our natural enemy than a friend. I can come with you to Jerusalem and support you. Two of us to contend with, Sam Isaacs won't expect that."

The old Mabina would have glared at her, giving nothing away. The young Mabina actually gasped with shock.

"How do you know about the Psochics and Sam ?" She asked.

"I know about it all, about Brendan and Liz going to Jerusalem, about Sam being the leader of his order, about them wanting you to fly to Jerusalem. Most importantly I know about the Half Moon of Thoth. I know everything Mabina and one day I might even tell you how I know."

"If I invite you in, how do I know you won't shoot me again ?"

"You'll have to trust me, as I trust you not to use that knife."

"I have warmed up pizza and a decent merlot for supper.... Do you like merlot ?"

"Who doesn't."

"Come in Laura, we'll talk in the kitchen. Did you find a good spot for your camera ?"

"Yes, the perfect place."

There was the smell of warmed up pizza in the kitchen and an open bottle of red wine.

"Sit Laura, sit, let me pour you some wine. I promise you won't be poisoned. I've been many things in my life, but never a poisoner. Such a cowardly way to kill someone."

There was even a plate supplied for her slice of pizza. It felt more like a sleepover with Patsy, than a discussion with a sworn enemy.

"Yes Laura, it would be nice to have you with me in Jerusalem and yes, I don't trust Sam. But what's in it for you, why do you want to come with me..... The truth Laura ?"

Laura wasn't completely sure why herself. She turned her half thoughts into words and hoped they made sense to Mabina, and herself.

"Firstly there is you and your basement, which is a potential danger to us all. We'd like to work something out to make sure the Van Helsings never get an opportunity to dig around down there."

"Van Helsings ?" Asked Mabina.

"Sorry, my name for the police."

"I like that, very..... Appropriate. As for my little insurance policy in the basement.....Yes, I can see the merit in having it hidden away... I'm willing to discuss that. What else ?"

"Knowledge, wisdom, call it what you like. Nearly everything written about vampires is crap. The Psochics have real knowledge, genuine facts about us. I want to be with you to hear what you hear, see what you see. There has to be a complete sharing of information."

"I too have been tricked by the nonsense written in ancient texts.... It can be dangerous. I agree, a complete sharing of everything we learn.... Anything else Laura ?"

"It's a bit personal really..... Patsy is my best friend and there's someone in my life now. You have Brendan and Liz as your eyes and ears in Jerusalem. Can we agree that in future, our human friends and helpers are thought of as non-combatants ?"

“Unless they’re coming at me with an axe of course.”

“Yes, unless we’re attacked.”

“Very well Laura, it was a mistake to abduct Patsy. I wanted to control Simon, but it just made him even more homicidal. We’ll need to talk over details, but in principle, I’m happy to consider your humans as out of bounds. So, a new man in your life, what’s his name ?”

“Tim, I work with him.”

“Good, we all need someone Laura. It’s one of the paradoxes of being vampires. We all need someone in our lives, usually a human, one of the creatures we feed on. I too have a requirement for our..... Collaboration.”

“What is it ?”

“Simple, tell me your source.... Who told you about Sam and the Psochics ?”

Difficult, Mabina might not believe in Laura’s visits to the realm of dreams. Keeping the information back for a while was the only strong card she had left.

“I will tell you, as soon as we arrive in Jerusalem, you have my word.”

“Very well, you should go home and pack Laura. We’re flying to Israel tomorrow.”

~

~

© Ed Cowling – June 2019