

The Hornsey Vampires

(Season two of London's Night Stalkers)

Chapter 11 – A Collaboration

“We’re vampires, we can’t ignore a problem and hope it goes away until after we’re dead. Even if it’s a hundred years from now, the police finding that cellar could be very dangerous.”

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‘Tim There’s been a family emergency Need to go abroad Will call you once I’m there Laura.’ She had tried to call him in the early hours of the morning, but his phone was switched off. Probably for the best, it might have been an emotional call. There was the chance of the ‘L’ word being used and that had to be avoided. Laura pressed send and hoped he didn’t think she was too crazy.

“But he seems to like crazy.” She muttered.

No time to call Patsy, Clara was going to see her and explain in person. Why not let Simon do it? Laura didn’t know and there wasn’t time to think about it. Her head was already far too full with all the problems she might face during her strange collaboration with Mabina Gladitch.

“I’ll get your case, do you want to text Patsy?” Asked Clara.

“No, she might call me back.... There’s no time for that.”

They hugged and Clara took her case downstairs, leaving her to give her bedroom that final look, the last check for anything essential she might have missed. Her Glock was in her private lair, the hidden room near the old listed building. Taking them on a plane was impossible, but she had her speed and strength, and her fangs. Simon was in the kitchen, making coffee and offering a bacon sandwich to anyone who wanted one.

“I’ll tell Daniel when they wake up.” Said Simon. “Though to be honest Laura, I don’t understand it myself. Help Gladitch and you just make her a more dangerous enemy.... Why Laura, why?”

She hugged him, still feeling that loyalty to the vampire who’d turned her. Partly she was going to keep Patsy and Tim safe, but there were other reasons.

“I can’t explain it now Simon, just trust me.”

“Just come back in one piece. Here, this isn’t enough to cause trouble if they look in your carry-on bag, but I’m sure it’ll be useful.”

A thick bundle of twenty pound notes, secured by at least a dozen elastic bands. Laura recognised the technique, it was Simon’s regular payment from Tom for various designer drugs. She wanted to refuse but he was right, it might be useful if she needed to make a quick getaway.

“Thank you Simon, I will come back in one piece. Wiremi has talked about my destiny and I’m sure it isn’t dying in Jerusalem.”

He’d managed to sneak up on three vampires, pretty good going for a human. Laura saw Jack lurking outside the kitchen door, at about the same time as Clara.

“Shit ! What did he hear ?” Asked Clara.

“Jack is alright, he’s cool.” Said Laura. “He can keep secrets, can’t you Jack ?”

“Yes Laura.”

She gave him a hug and kissed him on the cheek.

“I have to go away for a while Jack, but when I get back, I will come to Scotland and see you all.”

“Do you promise ?” He asked.

“I promise.”

Simon had his own early morning chores to do and his driving skills were still atrocious. Clara was driving her over to Vlad's house, though she wasn't going to leave her car.

"If I see that creature..... Best if I stay away from her."

Laura stood next to Clara's Peugeot 208, looking up at the house. She tried to take the image in and lock it into her memory. Partly to remember while away, but also in case something stopped her from returning to Hornsey.

"Hey, Dolly Daydream, get in the car." Called Clara.

"I was just....."

"I know, it'll all still be here when you get back."

~ ~

One advantage of working a late shift, was time to get over to Erith and see Tom once a week. There was no netting off of what who owed who, their kind of business arrangement didn't work that way, Tom had people to pay. Besides, Simon doubted if Tom kept much in the way of records.

"The cameras worked well Tom, but we'll need another one with night vision." Said Simon.

A bundle of cash went across the table and there was trust now, Tom never bothered to count it.

Tom owed tens of thousands for the drugs Simon took from dealers and he owed Tom a fee for disposing of blood spattered cars. There were Tom's contacts too, the ones who could supply a brand new state of the art sniper rifle for Laura, or reliable Wi-Fi cameras. Not to mention the loan of vehicles that were registered and insured by non-existent people.

"We haven't seen much of Clara lately." Said Tom. "I hope she's well."

"Yes, we've had visitors Tom, family from Scotland."

"Oh, went there once.....June and it was still freezing."

Beetle had been sent out for breakfast. Not coffee in a polystyrene cup and fast food, but a proper breakfast from a nearby greasy spoon café.

"Sorry Boss, had to wait for the fried bread." Said Beetle.

Everything came out of an old cooler box. By the time it was all out on the table, they could have been sat in the café, which was owned by another of Tom's friends.

"Ahhh authentic, you'll never get this in McDonalds." Said Tom.

"Thanks Tom, I do look forward to my visits here." Said Simon.

"You're like family now, you and the ladies."

Beetle took two slices of toast and hovered about, which made any private conversation with Tom impossible. There were others too, people who monitored the camera on the front gate and dealt with the public who came to buy car parts. Simon waited until they'd both enjoyed their breakfast.

"Any chance of a quiet word Tom, in private?"

"The lads are fine Simon, they'd never say a word to anyone."

"It's important Tom."

"I'll walk you round the yard, you can see the river from the back fence."

Simon quite liked the yard on a decent morning, when the ground wasn't muddy. The buildings looked dilapidated, as though the breakers yard was on its last legs. Inside the buildings was a different story, lots of expensive equipment to turn car breaking into recycling, with some individual cleaned up parts selling for nearly two thirds the price of new.

"We used to let the public in years ago." Said Tom. "They nicked more than they bought, we caught one guy trying to steal the offside wing from a Ford Granada. Now the public only ever get into the spares shop. We're recyclers now Simon, even the local council loves us."

"Do you get pilferers coming over the fence?"

“Nothing serious, just a few kids at weekends, little bastards.”

There was space to expand, the last building was a good fifty yards from the back fence. It was a nice day, the river beyond the fence twinkled in the sunlight. The water was almost empty, just one ship heading downstream.

“Wow, you really can the river.” Said Simon.

“Yeah, on a really hot day I come down here with a deck chair and a fold up table.”

There was nowhere to sit, Simon stood and watched the river through the chain link fence. It would have been a perfect morning, if the sunlight wasn't making his sinuses itch. He wasn't quite sure how to begin sounding Tom out.

“This is the first serious conversation you've asked for Simon, what's going on ?” Asked Tom.

“You're a vital part of my network now Tom, I bet you make more money out of us than you do out of Bill Jarrod.”

“I do and I don't mind admitting it. If you're worried about Bill being in Jail ? We've had internal fights before, people trying to make a move to be top dog. None of it has ever affected business, we all need to make a living.”

“Supposing Bill went away for a really long stretch, or just vanished one day ?”

“Don't worry Simon, everything will still run. Maybe not like clockwork, but most of the people I know aren't part of Bill's inner circle. I guarantee that if Bill was to do a thirty stretch out on the island in Parkhurst, you wouldn't even notice.”

“Nice to know Tom, but you're not getting my drift.....What if I was the cause of Bill's removal ?”

“You..... Taking on Bill ! I don't underestimate how skilled your people are, I've lost count of the number of blood stained cars I've dealt with for you. Bill has numbers on his side though, literally dozens of hard cases. He could put a few big guys everywhere you go and eventually it'd be goodbye Simon.”

“I know what you mean Tom, but supposing I could pull it off. Would you be with me ?”

“I'll keep it quiet and I'll tell you something I'm hoping you'll keep to yourself. I had a similar conversation with Cyril Carter recently. Like me he's doing well and doesn't want to go back to the bad old days. No one should be rocking the boat, but Bill is like a fucking wave machine.”

“So you and Cyril would be with me ?”

“I can't talk for Cyril, but take Bill out of the picture and he wouldn't be your enemy. I'd want something out of it of course, though I'm not sure what....Ask me when you're ready to do it, whatever it is. No wiping out half of Bill's firm though, no slaughter.”

“I won't Tom, you have my word.”

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It was Patsy and Laura's usual pizza and get drunk on cheap wine night. Clara had sent a text saying she'd be there, but not that Laura wouldn't.

“If I say it's just me, she might find an excuse to cancel.” She'd told Simon.

Clara drove over to pick Patsy up using Laura's pimped SUV. It was easier to drive than she'd imagined and the V8 gave it fast acceleration for a big heavy vehicle. By the time she was entering Patsy's street, Clara had fallen in love with the Chevrolet, red flame paintjob and all. Patsy was stood waiting at her garden gate.

“I saw the SUV and thought it was Laura.” Said Patsy.

“It's great fun to drive and just in case your mum looks out, less questions.”

Patsy got in the car, sitting as close to the door as she could squeeze herself.

"You're one of us Patsy, relax I'd never hurt you. I have something important to tell you, something about Laura."

"Simon is coming over tomorrow, I just wondered why he wasn't the one to tell me about Laura, is he alright ? Is Laura in trouble ?"

"Simon is fine, though he might not put a good spin on where Laura has gone, that's all. Can we leave explanations until we're eating pizza ?"

"Fine..... But Laura is alright ?"

"Yes, on a plane out of Heathrow as we speak and ready for the time of her life."

"Good."

They drove on in silence, Clara picking up the smell of scent and male aftershave from the rear of the SUV. The vehicle made a good sin bin on wheels and a reasonably secure place to feed. She began to wonder about upgrading her hatchback for something similar, but without the lacquered wheels and paint job.

"Sometimes I still miss the old house."

Said Patsy, as they parked just over the road from the house in Hornsey.

"To be honest so do I, but we have more space here."

Clara ordered pizza from the local place, the man at the other end even asking if Laura was alright.

"Yes, she's on holiday, please send her usual order."

They were chewing pizza and on their second glass of prosecco, before Clara thought it was the right moment to talk about Laura, the weird wild child of the house.

"You really do care about Laura, don't you Patsy ?"

"Yes, she feels like a sister.....Weird I know, I must have a thing for vampires..... Sorry."

"That's alright, she feels the same about you. Just remember that part of the reason she's gone away is to protect you. Laura is on her way to Jerusalem, to follow up on the artefacts Mabina is looking for."

"Good, we don't want her getting their hands on them. Did she go on her own ?"

Here it came, the part where Patsy was going to get angry and feel betrayed. Perhaps she should have left it to Simon ? He thought it was an awful idea though and he was still angry with Laura. Simon in a temper could say anything and he might turn Patsy against Laura forever.

"Laura has gone to Jerusalem with Mabina..... We've formed a sort of collaboration with her."

"After what she did to me..... How could you ? That.... Monster almost killed Simon."

"I know Patsy, I understand why you're upset. We need to know what she wants from these Psochic people and there is a chance of a lasting truce."

"A truce Clara ! You always said that was impossible." Snapped Patsy.

"There are people she could go after and not just you, we've all formed attachments with those who aren't like us."

"Humans you mean ?"

"Yes, if you want to put it like that. A truce means not having to worry about Mabina abducting or killing those we care about it."

"Killing the bitch would work better."

"Then there is her house and that cellar with thousands of dead bodies buried under the soil floor. We're vampires, we can't ignore a problem and hope it goes away until after we're dead. Even if it's a hundred years from now, the police finding that cellar could be very dangerous. Daniel talks about a catalyst, an event that causes humans to question, to look again at strange blood test results and

reports of missing people. All it takes is one event too big to ignore and that cellar might be it. If they believe in us they'll start hunting us again."

"I understand, but couldn't you get control of her house ? Simon has mentioned that to me."

Simon had told Patsy so much, it was quite a surprise, he was usually so taciturn.

"We're forming a temporary collaboration Patsy and hopefully a truce. I'm not saying that one day, if the situation was just right..... That getting rid of Mabina Gladitch won't be considered. We're vampires, we're not naturally social creatures. Personally I hope to one day bathe in Mabina's hot fresh blood..... Does that make you feel better."

"I feel bad for saying this, but yes it does."

There came that point, when Clara knew Patsy wasn't going to scream, or run off into the night, or try to burn down Mabina's house.

"Is there anything decent on Netflix ?" She asked.

Clara relaxed and tried to remember the programme Gwen had been raving about.

"Have you ever watched Riverdale ?" She asked.

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Mabina had been true to her word, or they were the only available seats at short notice. Laura leant back in the first class seat and watched the world spin below her, as the plane turned to land.

"I can hardly decide not to bring you now, or harm whoever it is." Said Mabina. "Tell me who your source is, how do you know so much about my business ?"

Laura had decided to tell Mabina the truth, though not about asking if her devourer would kill other vampires. There were her mistakes too, those she'd leave out. She was even going to tell her about Wiremi, Mabina didn't seem the sort to seek him out in the world of dreams.

"Have you ever heard of the Gudara ?" She asked.

"My family had the best collection of books, scrolls and tablets on the dark arts in Europe Laura. As a child I read them all, the way modern children read Grimm's fairy tales. The Gudara is our mythical equivalent of Adam and Eve, the first of our kind, created by an ancient dark deity."

"Not mythical, I've seen them, I can even summon one." Said Laura. "I'm not sure how, but that ability is linked to the realm of dreams. I dream within a dream and see things, like Sam Isaacs talking about the artefacts you seek."

Mabina believed her, she could tell by the expression on her new young looking face. The vampire queen had managed to obtain a passport in the name of Elena Gladitch in less than a day, she still obviously had more people and contacts in London than just Brendan.

"That makes sense Laura, I've heard such stories before. The problem with old books and scrolls is knowing what is true or false. The hungry ground worked, though I'd always assumed it was nothing more than a tradition, like Christians not eating fish on Friday."

"My Gudara is very real Mabina, he's even agreed to take me to his time, his world."

"Not a good idea, unless you want to stay there forever."

"But he said, or rather he nodded when I asked if he could bring me back."

"Did you ask if he'd bring you back alive Laura ?"

"I meant to..... Surely he'd know....."

"All such creatures answer questions in a very literal way. I once summoned an elemental.....But that is a story for another day. If a question is important, think of three ways to ask it and make sure you get the same answer all three times. Don't try to go back in time Laura, there is no way back from that. You have to be very careful, perhaps there is time to tell you about the elemental, we seem to be caught in a holding pattern."

"I'd like to hear it Mabina, mainly to take my mind off the landing, I'm not the world's best flyer." Mabina leant in closer, though engine noise already made it difficult for their conversation to be overheard. It was an advantage of paying a small fortune to fly first class, the seats were well spaced out.

"The vampire trait in my family is passed down the female line, something hidden away in our mitochondrial DNA I suspect." Said Mabina. "It also makes it easier to summon the spirit of my dead ancestors, the female ones. I always used a fire elemental as a conduit of course."

"Of course." Said Laura.

Had Mabina realised she was teasing her ? There was a slight change of expression, but it didn't last. "Anyway, I would always try to verify anything I intended to do that might be dangerous. One of my favourite sources of knowledge was Mihaela, a vampire occultist of some fame. She'd died about a thousand years before my birth in a fight with her brother.... These things happen."

"We are definitely not social creatures." Said Laura.

"Indeed Laura, most vampire deaths are at the hands of our own kind. I summoned the fire elemental and sent it to find the eternal soul of Mihaela, which was probably cursed to one of the lower levels of hell."

"So hell really does exist ?"

"Of course it does.....I had found an incantation to create a powerful shield, a way to turn an item of clothing into a shield that granted invulnerability."

"Are we all going to hell Mabina, all vampires ?"

"Focus Laura, your mind is like a butterfly..... Some stories are for another day. Anyway.... I wasn't sure about using the spell, others from the same era had proven to be disastrous, two of my servants had died from the effects of one. The elemental found Mihaela, who gave the same answer to my three variations on the same question. It seemed the incantation was safe and reliable. I chose a silk scarf and spent two days using the spell on it and various ingredients."

"Did it work ?" Asked Laura.

"It seemed to, remember I'm telling you this story as a warning. I had a maid wrap the scarf around her neck, before one of my guards tried to stab her with his dagger. The maid wasn't hurt, not even a scratch, I was delighted."

"So I suspect was the maid."

"Yes she was, too delighted as it turned out. The ungrateful girl stole the scarf, probably intending to sell it for a small fortune. Not that she got far, my guards caught her trying to escape to the south. They fired arrows at her and those she travelled with. The wretched girl laughed, actually laughed at my royal guards, as the arrows bounced off her skin."

"Wow, do you still have the spell Mabina ? That sounds useful."

"Wait Laura, you modern girls are so impatient, the story isn't finished. My guards didn't give up easily, they knew the price of failing me. They kept firing arrows and eventually one pierced the back of the treacherous girl. When they looked for the scarf it had broken apart, becoming nothing but a little dust on her neck. Now it may be that the spell was faulty, or I made a mistake in the incantation. It might even have been the deities, angered at her laughing at those who pursued her. I have heard that the most ancient of the old Gods can be angered by such behaviour. The girl died though Laura, even though I asked the right questions and thought the spell was good. Never just ask once Laura and don't try to go back to the past."

"Oh, I won't..... It was a silly idea anyway."

Hell, old ancient Gods angered by bad etiquette, Laura did wonder if it was all Mabina trying to mess with her head. If it was some sort of mind game it was working, though not completely in a bad way. She hadn't even noticed the plane's wheels land on the tarmac.

"So Laura, I've told you my story, now you can tell me yours. The baggage hall here is famously slow to get through, as is Israeli immigration. I want to hear all about your Gudara and your trip to this..... World of dreams. Tell me everything Laura, every tiny thing."

Laura told her it all, even about considering using the Gudara as a weapon against her. If it was a day for mind games, two could play that game. Laura told it all in interrupted quiet conversations and whispers, ending as they walked towards the car hire pickup office.

"Wow, I didn't expect that." Said Laura. "It's hardly low profile."

"I had to yell down the phone a lot and pay over the odds, but isn't it beautiful? Ideal as we're likely to travel to some inhospitable places to find these objects for Sam."

It was a Hummer, a brand new shiny civilian version of the military Humvee. It looked civilian, but it also looked as though it could drive through a brick wall if it had to.

"I heard the streets are a bit narrow in Jerusalem." Said Laura.

"We'll be fine, get in..... You're driving."

"Me !?"

"I've seen your V8 paint job on wheels Laura, you're driving."

The SatNav understood English, it probably understood languages Laura had never heard of. The route looked fairly straightforward, it was just driving on the right side of the road that felt wrong. Laura had this constant instinctive need to move to the other side of the road, it was tiring and stressful to keep fighting it. The whole vampire basal ganglia thing was probably to blame, she was locked into a pattern of driving on the left. She didn't really relax until they stopped the beast of a vehicle outside the American Colony Hotel and several people arrived as if by magic.

"Leave the keys, we'll take care of the car and your bags."

Did everyone get that kind of service, or had Mabina been shouting down the phone at them too? Despite being tired Laura took it all in, the opulence of the hotel lobby, the lush plants that seemed to cover the hotel in a sea of green.

"Crap Mabina, this is better than an eighteen-thirty club trip to Benidorm."

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Daniel was a little upset and it wasn't just the expected size of the final hotel bill. Laura had gone away on a family emergency and it had taken a lot of pestering for Simon to tell him the truth. Laura going away with Mabina and they'd wanted to keep it from him.

"Yes sir, I'll prepare your final bill." Said the man behind the counter.

Daniel hadn't expected taking to the airport, he'd already booked a car service. Simon had a job the other side of town and Laura was in Jerusalem, but Clara worked in the hotel. There was no reason for her not to come and say goodbye.

"Here you are sir, we take all major credit cards."

It was like a small toilet roll being unrolled across the desk. Daniel felt a little sweat forming on his brow, as he saw the total. It was a lot, enough to..... No he wasn't going to ruin what had been a very enjoyable time in London. He could afford it, though he still held his breath as his Amex card went through the machine.

"Thank you sir, please come again."

Jack began to become a little excited, as Daniel folded up the bill and put it in his inside pocket.

"It's Clara." Said Jack.

Gwen was pleased to see her too, there was quite a bit of hugging and many promises to visit each other in the near future. It might have all been said with no intention to keep the promises, if Clara hadn't said it to Jack.

"As soon as Laura is back we'll all come and see you Jack, I promise. I'm assuming Daniel will let us in when we arrive?"

"I will Clara, I will."

"If he doesn't you can come and stay with us." Said Gwen.

"Yes, stay with us." Said Jack

Jack hugged Clara again and someone was paging him, saying their car was outside. It felt that everything that needed to be said had been said.

"Thank you for getting the information from Tasha Wallis, it was really helpful." Said Clara.

"There might be more to come, I gave her my address." Said Daniel.

Jack and Gwen were walking towards the doors, two hotel staff pushing a trolley full of cases, two more bags than they'd arrived with. Clara was hanging onto his arm, not letting him move.

"That wasn't a good idea Daniel, I warned you Bill Jarrold can be dangerous, the guy is a psychopath."

"It was just the PO Box I use for the business."

"It'll take them about an hour to trace that Daniel. Promise me you'll be careful and alert."

"I will Clara, I hear the Post Office van half a mile away on a windy day. No one will catch me unawares."

"I hope you're right Daniel."

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Liz Grant had expected Mabina to come banging on their room door as soon as she arrived. The civilised call asking them to join her for dinner was unexpected, as was the news that she hadn't arrived alone.

"I know this Laura; she's one of them, the North London coterie. She's the one who shot Mabina three times." Said Brendan.

It struck Liz that if anyone was bugging their hotel suite, they'd probably spend the rest of their lives in a secure psychiatric facility.

"They've joined up; the enemy of my enemy is my friend and all that." She said. "It seems our vampires don't trust Sam and his order, to be honest I don't either. They're too eager to please, too keen to get Mabina to take their oath."

"Unless you decide on a dress, we'll be late Liz....."

"Don't rush me..... So you liked the little black dress?"

"It's perfect. Have you ever met Mabina? I know she was a client of your agency."

Liz pulled the dress up over her feet and prodded Brendan until he did up the zip at the back. It took a few seconds of thought to remember if she had met the ancient vampire queen.

"No, not met, though I did once talk to her on the phone. I mainly know her by reputation, the people at the agency were terrified of her. She always paid well though."

He was looking at her, a look in his eyes that was flattering but a little worrying. Of course she wanted all her clients to fall in love with her, it meant repeat business. Not when they were so far from home though, with more than enough problems already.

"You look gorgeous Liz..... I think I'm falling in love with you." He said.

She put her finger up, pressing it against his lips.

"Shush Brendan, I'm here to help you and share your bed, nothing more..... Don't over think it."

"I'm sorry."

"Don't apologise, swagger into the restaurant, strut.... Let's go and have dinner."

They were expected, a waiter led them over to the table where two young women were waiting. The rejuvenation had been talked about, but Brendan still grabbed her hand as Mabina greeted him.

"It is me Brendan, you have my word.....Sit, both of you." Said Mabina.

"You look so different my queen."

The other woman in a red evening dress had to be Laura. She looked young, though she might well have been born centuries ago. Liz wasn't only a believer now, she was beginning to think differently.

"This is Laura Selway, we're now working together." Said Mabina.

"She shot you." Snapped Brendan.

"Quiet Brendan, no raised voices." Said Mabina. "Laura actually shot me three times and if I can forgive that, so can you."

"We've agreed a truce Brendan, a collaboration." Said Laura. "I'm not a threat to you or your queen."

"Can we order now ? I'm starving." Said Liz.

"Yes, where are my manners." Said Mabina.

Their table was ideal, far enough from the other diners to be able to speak without being overheard. A waiter must have been waiting for Mabina's wave, he arrived almost immediately. Liz noticed that ordering food and wine relaxed everyone, it brought a sense of normality. Even the chatter became aimless small talk, at least for a while.

"I'm going to call Sam Isaacs in the morning and arrange a meeting for the afternoon. All of us should be there, though I do realise Liz was only expecting to be in Jerusalem for a month." Said Mabina.

"I've heard things I can never un-hear." Said Liz. "I'm here to support Brendan until this is all over, though I do have bills to pay."

"You'll be paid Liz, I'll call the agency tomorrow."

"Sam might not see you, he ignored me for a day." Said Brendan.

"The boot is on the other foot now Brendan, he will want to see me." Said Mabina.

"You shouldn't trust him, there's something about him and Judith." Said Liz. "They actually had a gun ready in case Brendan became angry, I saw Judith holding it."

"Guns are fine, but I have my fangs with me all the time." Said Laura. "I don't trust them, it's why I'm here, to support Mabina in whatever needs to be done. I definitely won't be taking any oath of loyalty to these Psochic people."

They were quiet as the waiter took away the dessert plates and brought coffees.

"The Psochics have never been our allies." Said Mabina. "There are numerous rumours about them, aiding those who once hunted us. No proof of course, but enough rumours to be taken seriously."

"We're here for the artefacts and any of their knowledge that might be useful." Said Laura. "After that....."

Laura drew her finger across her throat and Liz felt like applauding. It was obvious that Laura hadn't come to join Sam and his order. Besides, anyone who could put three bullets into Mabina had to tip the balance in their favour. Sam, Judith and the rest of them might possess masses of ancient wisdom, but they were just ordinary humans.

"Sam is going to be so shocked when you arrive in his office Laura." Said Liz.

"I think Sam will already know she's here." Said Mabina. "I'd be surprised if he hasn't got someone at the airport who lets him know about people arriving who might be of interest. We're in his territory and we need to remember that."

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There was something about sex with Simon, though Clara had long since stopped trying to work out why it was better than with any of her flings. Good emotions could draw you into introspection as much as bad ones. Fill your head with it all and you became a slower and less efficient predator. Being a vampire she pushed emotions away and just enjoyed the sex for its own sake.

"Oh Simon, you can do that all night." She muttered.

He was covered in sweat and so was she, no human has ever come close to the pure animal ferocity of two vampires fucking each other's brains out. She felt him tense before cumming, amazed that he had any fluid left, they'd been screwing for hours. Clara didn't use her fangs, just her usual teeth. As he moved away from her, she ran her teeth across his cheek, biting him hard as her incisors found his neck.

"Ow, it's been a long time since you did that." Said Simon.

"I just needed to taste your blood, just a little of it."

They lay there, side by side, letting the salty sweat dry on their skins. The early hours of the morning, they both had work the next day, but sometimes the desire was too strong to be ignored. Clara knew they hadn't finished, the screwing would go on until the sun came up. She reached out her hand, finding his in the dark.

"I don't want to start the argument again..... Actually I do, you have to tell him." She said.

"Anthony will go crazy, he'll never believe Laura had an aunt die on her or something. He'll go into a mega sulk, you don't know him Clara. He might even sack Ronnie just to piss me off. Did I tell you about the guy he sacked just for reading the job adverts in the paper?"

"But he'll go nuts when just the two of us turn up. Nicola will be upset, empty places around the table..... You have to tell him."

"Nicola will understand and Anthony can't go into a massive sulk at his own dinner party."

Clara listened to a car start up as the world outside prepared for a new day. She hadn't wanted to go to Anthony's dinner party, but once she'd agreed to go, she didn't want their host to sulk all night.

"I could ask Tim to still come, he must be at a loose end with Laura being away." She said. "At least then it'll be three of us and Tim can back up the family emergency story. What do you think, good idea or crap?"

"Sounds great, maybe he can bring an old flame along? Ask him, tell him we promise not to tell Laura."

Clara leant towards her lover and hit him hard on the upper arm. A really brutal dig into the muscle with her knuckles.

"Ow, what the....."

"Men! Vampire or human, you're all such..... Bastards."

Her libido was kicking in, they still had unfinished business, at least one more go at pounding the bed springs, maybe two. His attitude was turning her on, though she had no intention of wondering why. Her hand found his dick and she was pleased with how quickly it hardened and grew in her fingers.

"Bastard." She muttered.

"Bitch." He replied.

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