

London's Night Stalkers

Chapter 12 - Aftermath

“It was strange for a world that thought vampires a myth, that all human’s had an instinctive terror about the feel of fangs against their skin.”

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Normally decent power steering wasn’t essential for her. Laura was grateful that it worked well in the old Zafira though, as she fought to stay awake. She’d already opened the window to get a constant breeze of cool air on her face. Her passenger wasn’t helping, Patsy had sobbed for half an hour, before becoming completely silent.

“Talk to me Patsy, help me stay alert.”

“What about ?”

“Anything you want. I know almost nothing about you.”

“He’s going to die isn’t he ? I could tell by the way you and Clara were behaving.”

Oh hell, maybe getting her to talk had been a mistake. Laura had to swerve round a bus, which pulled at her chest. The pain did at least make her more alert.

“Why aren’t you freaked out by all this ?” Asked Laura. “Simon being a vampire and the whole hostage thing.”

“I don’t know. I was, when Mabina showed me her fangs and dragged them over my face. There’s only such much freaking you can do, when you’re tied to a heavy chair.”

“And now ?” Asked Laura.

“You don’t need to worry, I won’t start screaming to everyone about vampires. I do realise that the first rule of vampire club, is probably the same as the first rule of fight club.”

“Yes Patsy, never talk to anyone about vampire club.”

“It is odd, but with so many vampires in films and on TV, I wasn’t that surprised to find out they really existed. You have to be honest with me now, is Simon dying ?”

Back to that awful question. Clara seemed to think Simon was going to end up in the pond at the old paint factory. Patsy wouldn’t want to hear that though and of course, Clara might be wrong.

“It’s not good.” Said Laura. “About fifty-fifty to be honest. Clara has known him for a long time and wanted to be alone with him, just in case.... You know. He’ll either be home in a few days or he won’t. If it’s bad news, I promise to call you. Put your number in my phone, it’s in my left jacket pocket.”

Patsy rummaged, her fingers bringing out the spare clip of bullets.

“There’s a lot of blood on your jacket Laura.”

“Most of it is Mabina’s.” She lied. “I’ll be fine once I get home and get patched up.”

“Do you want to clean up at my house ? I can tell mum we were mugged or something.”

Laura was starting to like Patsy Smart and it was nice to be the wise one of the group for a change, the one with the answers.

“Vampires get injured Patsy and we heal quickly. We have medical supplies at the house I need though. We probably have a better selection of battlefield trauma kits than most hospitals.”

“I can imagine.”

“The phone Patsy, don’t forget to get my phone.”

By the way Patsy was holding it, there was blood on it. She did plug in her number though, before gingerly putting it back in her jacket pocket.

“Don’t tell your mum you were mugged.” Said Laura. “She’ll insist on calling the Van Helsings.”

“The what ?”

“Sorry, my name for the police. Tell your mum that you were trying to buy a couple of ecstasy tablets and the dealer turned nasty.”

“Oh no, she’ll go crazy !”

“Exactly, but most importantly, she won’t call the police. The best lie is always one closest to the truth. Make the dealer a woman, who cut you during a fight.”

“Ok, I get it. Who taught you to lie ?”

“Clara mainly, though Simon has his moments. I’m just passing the knowledge along. Now keep talking to me. How you met Simon, what music you like, everything.”

“I’m just a student at Southgate College. I picked it because.....”

The rest of the journey was uneventful, though Laura cursed everything that caused her to break suddenly, jarring her chest. The bleeding must have stopped, or she’d be dead by now. A punctured lung was painful though, even for a vampire. She parked right outside Patsy’s house, there seemed no reason not to. The car was clean a set of wheels as far as she knew and unlikely to be on any watch lists.

“Got your story ready ?”

“Yeah, female dealer, fight, big knife yada yada.”

Patsy actually hugged her, which felt weird and nice at the same time.

“Don’t forget to call me.” Said Patsy.

“I won’t, or Simon will call you himself.”

The journey to the house in Wood Green was short, but by far the hardest part of the drive back. No Patsy to keep her alert and every move of the wheel seemed to pull something that didn’t appreciate being pulled. Laura parked just two streets from the house, trusting that no one was looking for the Zafira.

“Think you idiot, what would Clara do ?”

She’d check the inside of the car over for blood and anything else that might cause some busybody to call the cops. For a car that had recently held several badly wounded people, it looked surprisingly clean and tidy. There was a sticker on the window, Mabina’s pass for the staff car park at the hospital where she worked. Laura decided to leave it, but a blood stain on one of the rear seats needed a clean. Crap ! Already feeling like shit and there was work still to be done. No cloths in the glove compartment, so she got out of the car and walked towards the rear door. She felt a little dizzy and nauseous.

“Shit girl, keep yourself upright.”

Mabina had a holdall in the back and an old Tesco’s bag with a few cloths in it and a spray can of cleaner, perfect. Cleaning the seat hurt like hell, but the movement did ease up something that had pinched whenever she moved. A last look at the interior and it looked just like any other neglected family SUV. Before locking the car she looked into the holdall and found Mabina’s emergency medical kit. Trauma packs, syringes and vials of drugs, which might have been useful if she knew what they were. Gauze too and plenty of cleaner for wounds. Laura took it with her, far easier than digging about in the loft for their supplies. First she was going to shower and examine the hole in her chest, then she’d play with Mabina’s medical kit to make herself feel better.

“First you have to walk home though.”

Head up, back as straight as she could manage, police were likely to be watching the house. There was a nasty red stain on her jacket where her blood was congealing, but the streets looked quiet. Laura held onto the holdall and headed for home.

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A man with an almost morbid fear of spending money, it was a miracle that Daniel didn't book into The Lancelot, favourite trysting place of Simon and Patsy. It was within his self-imposed price range and not that far from the house in Wood Green. He'd gone online though before leaving home, wrongly assuming that hotel reviews were fair and honest. The bed and breakfast hotel he'd looked at online, bore little resemblance to reality. A sign above the door with several missing letters, pebble dashed walls and peeling grey paintwork.

"This is it?" He asked the taxi driver.

"Chaplin's Hotel, postcode you gave me."

Bounds Green, almost walking distance from the house where they all lived. That was the big advantage the Chaplin offered. That and being close to Bounds Green Station on the Piccadilly Line. Daniel decided the hotel had to look better inside, it just had to. As the cabbie drove away without a tip, he grabbed hold of his case and entered the Chaplin. If anything the paintwork inside, looked worse than outside. A man in just his dressing gown, was arguing with a lady behind the desk.

"He's stealing my mail again! You have to do something about it."

Daniel was famed for his politeness, or at least known for it by the half dozen or so people he talked to in a year. Normally he'd have waited for the agitated man to finish his conversation. It just looked like a long complaint though, from someone who enjoyed complaining.

"I have a reservation."

He knew his physical appearance could be intimidating, conversations often stopped as he entered a room. The guy in the gown just kept shrieking about another guest stealing his post. The woman ignored him though, turning towards Daniel and smiling. A small woman who looked about thirty, but with grey streaks in her dark brown hair. He decided that working at the Chaplin was probably enough to make anyone prematurely grey. She booked him in.

"Breakfast is from six until eight, come late and you'll go hungry. Hot water from six and it doesn't last long."

He thanked her for the key to his room and was pointed up the stairs.

"First floor back." Said the woman.

"They steal your post!" Shouted the guy in the gown.

It was cheap, he kept telling himself and cheap was good. No worrying about verrucas from a dirty shower or scabies from a grubby mattress. Like the vampires, his physiology seemed to discourage most human infections.

"It will do nicely." He muttered.

The room was grubby, with thick dust where a quick vacuum over wasn't likely to reach. The shower and toilet looked clean though, which surprised him. Daniel unpacked his case, pleased that there had been no weight surcharge at the checking in desk. He had just a few clothes, but quite a few books and some scientific equipment. All legally come by, though for some reason the airport scanners hadn't even beeped. All made of metal, glass and some containing batteries, but no one had asked to look in his case.

"So much for airline security." He mumbled.

He had everything he needed in London for a little research, all he lacked was a plan. Daniel lay on the bed, staring up at the cracked plaster ceiling, while he tried to come up with an idea to be allowed into their house.

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Laura had woken up at her usual time for a working day, though she had no intention of going to work. She swung her legs out of bed and actually screamed from the pain.

“Oh Fuck, fucked up !”

She pulled the dressing off her chest before standing up, pleased to see there was no fresh blood on it. Yippee, she probably wasn't going to die, though the pain was making that a bit of a mixed blessing. There was a syringe on her bedside table, the table she'd liberated from her old rented flat. She'd played with local anaesthesia the previous evening and knew how it had to be injected for best results. No messing about with shallow jabs, the needle had to go in deep. The stuff was precious to them, supposed to be only for emergencies.

“I think this counts as an emergency.” She muttered.

It was going to hurt, worse than any toothache. Worse than stepping on a lego brick in the dark, yet it had to be done. Laura held onto her bedside table with her left hand and drove the needle in deep, right next to the wound.

“Oh, crap ! Please let it heal up soon !”

Three more times, she pushed the needle in, injecting herself with large amounts of anaesthetic. It wasn't the right thing to do, she knew that. Laura had watched just about every episode of 24 Hours in A & E. Not once had she seen a doctor jab a syringe full of local anaesthetic into a wound. It had helped her get to sleep the night before though and with luck, it would get her on her feet.

“Please work quickly, please work quickly.” She mumbled, over and over.

Like waiting for the injection to work at the dentist, the anaesthetic wasn't instant. It took several minutes for a wonderful numbness to fill the left side of her chest. She could still feel a gentle tugging at something when she breathed, but the pain had gone. Laura stood up and ripped another dressing off her right thigh. She had no idea when that stab wound had occurred. A deep wound that was healing fast, though she'd put on another dressing to be safe.

“Cleanliness is next to ungodliness.” She chuckled.

Laura got into the shower and cleaned herself and her wounds as well as she could. Simon had told her about being immune to most human diseases, but old habits die hard. After carefully drying herself, she placed two new dressings over the stab wounds Mabina had left on her body. Before dressing, she dug the syringe in deep and poured more anaesthetic into her chest. A human would have been dead of course, the pain was awful, yet better than being dead. She'd barely reached the kitchen, when the doorbell rang. Laura looked out of the window and saw the postman on the front step.

“Parcel for a Mr Atherton.”

“I'll sign for it.”

She placed the box in the centre of the kitchen table, next to the bottle of ketchup. The parcel was symbolic. Like it or not, for the next few days, she'd have to look after everything. There hadn't been time or the inclination to discuss it with Clara, but the house needed to function. Laura started to make a mental list, beginning with a call to the hotel after she'd had breakfast. They couldn't simply vanish, she'd call Simon's boss too. A family bereavement maybe, unsure when they'd be back. They'd need to look for new jobs of course, but at least no one would be knocking on the door, or sending letters asking where they were.

“Coffee and a proper written list my girl.”

The world felt much better after two cups of strong coffee and a bacon sandwich. Laura called the hotel, being put through to the grumpy lady who looked after HR.

“Bereavement or not, a failure to be here in the morning will be considered to indicate that you no longer wish to work at the hotel.”

“Fine, it was a hell hole anyway.”

That bridge burned and their final pay probably wouldn't turn up. That was how the world of semi-casual jobs tended to work. She'd heard that the hotel had a bad reputation for not paying leavers. Laura called Patsy to find out if she was alright, not realising the call would panic her.

“Sorry, so sorry Patsy. No news, just making sure you're alright.”

They chatted for a long time, all about nonsense. By the time Laura's phone was beeping a low battery warning it was lunchtime. Laura looked in the freezer, bringing out a box of frozen burgers.

“I hated you guys when I was human.” She muttered.

Since being turned she loved meat and ate it with just about every meal. Three burgers crammed into a seeded bread sandwich, was now her perfect lunch. Covered in brown sauce of course. Her old Vegan self was gone now, but still made her feel guilty once in a while. About two in the afternoon, she heard the sound of tapping on the backdoor. A large man was all she could see through the net curtains, as he tapped on the glass. Fear was her first response, until she remembered that even injured, she could snap any human in half.

Laura pulled back the curtain, finding man in a suit outside. He had a gold coloured tie, which seemed strange and a black face above the suit. He was grinning furiously at her.

“Laura, it's me, Anthony..... Simon's boss.”

Simon's ex-boss probably, but she could hardly leave him stood on the back steps. The door was harder to open since their security upgrade, two bolts and a much better lock. It took her a few minutes to open the door a little.

“I remember you Anthony.” She said. “Simon isn't here, or Clara.”

“Melvyn misses you.”

She had to think for a moment. The rugby fullback after the party of course, her experiment to see what her sex life as a vampire would be like. He'd been clingy the next morning, never a good thing.

“He wasn't a keeper.”

“Poor Melvyn, he's quite smitten. Look Laura, can I come in for a moment ?”

“Why ? And why are you lurking at the rear of our house ?”

Furtive, he was definitely looking furtive. For one dreadful moment she thought he might have designs on her.

“It's just that Simon was supposed to be present at a meeting this morning and when he didn't show, I got worried.”

“So you thought he might be taking a duvet day and decided to nose about.” She said.

“Ok, fine, you sussed me out. Can I come in though ?”

Oh Crap ! The cops would have seen him peering in windows. It was easier to let him in and find out what he wanted. She opened the door and let him inside.

“Tea, coffee ?” She asked. “I can even cook up a pretty good bacon sandwich.”

“Coffee and that sandwich sounds good, I missed lunch.”

“Sit and talk to me while I cook.”

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Clara was now certain that there were no security patrols at the abandoned factory. A group of about six teenagers had arrived during the night, lighting a fire and getting high. Two had paired up, having sex up against the wall below her. They had no idea she was there though, watching over Simon as he was either dying or healing. They'd left, leaving their fire still burning. She'd gone down and sat next to it for a while, enjoying the heat on her skin. It was after dawn by the time the fire burned itself out. Simon's eyes were open when she returned, though he didn't react to her presence.

"Simon, Simon, are you feeling better?"

Her lover still looked more dead than alive, but his head briefly nodded at her. Clara hugged him, hope building that he might not be destined to go into the pond below. He was muttering into her ear, words too weak and jumbled to understand. Eventually she did hear them and understood his need.

"Blood Clara, blood."

He needed to feed, to take in blood to rebuild his ruined body. Hers was no good, or she'd have happily opened a vein. It needed to be human blood, pushed out by a still beating heart. She kissed his forehead.

"I'll be as quick as I can."

No car and it was daylight. Quite a risk, but Simon needed blood to survive. She remembered a new housing development to the north. New housing meant housewives, husbands sent off for the day, feet up and ready for daytime TV. She could move very fast when she needed to and Simon needed her to move fast. She was at the fence in a few seconds, looking out at the new houses in the distance. It was like a sign sent to guide her, if any Gods did look after vampires. A woman putting washing out on the line. Awkward movements, she was probably elderly. Not that it mattered, all blood was good blood. Clara was behind her, arm round her throat, before the woman could react. She ran her fangs over the old woman's neck.

"Whisper replies, or I'll kill you right now. Do you understand?"

"The head under the grey hair nodded."

It was strange for a world that thought vampires a myth, that all human's had an instinctive terror about the feel of fangs against their skin.

"Do you live alone?"

"Yes." Barely audible.

Again the slight nod of the head. Perfect, or as perfect as any dangerous and unplanned kill ever is. Too close to the abandoned factory, the police might well search it when the old woman was reported missing. He needed blood though and he was going to get it.

"Don't struggle!" She hissed.

One of the towels off the line as a gag and a ripped up sheet to bind her wrists and ankles. Clara looked around and didn't see or hear anyone in any other garden. Maybe there was at least one dark deity, looking after his vampire children. She carried her prize back to Simon, pushing the whimpering woman against him. She pulled her head forward, taking care not to kill Simon's meal. "Her neck is there Simon, feed."

He leant forward, his fangs entering the old woman's neck and quietening her. It might take him some time to drink all her blood, but at least he was feeding. There was a chance now, a real chance that he would recover. Once he'd finished feeding the bloodless body would be weighted with rubble and go into the pond below.

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Anthony had told her about his house, his new Mercedes and even about a few of the women he was seeing on the side. He was munching a bacon sandwich and still hadn't talked about why he'd really driven out to Wood Green that afternoon. She topped up his coffee and her own, before sitting opposite him.

"Out with it Anthony, why are you here?" She asked.

Laura was tired and the wound in her chest was aching. She really wasn't in the mood to be sociable, even if Anthony was being charming. He must have seen her wince.

"Are you alright?"

"I had an argument with the corner of a luggage cart at work and lost. I'll be fine in a day or so. Talk to me Anthony, I'm feeling tired and achy."

"We're friends aren't we Laura? You came to my house, slept with the guy who was best man at my wedding."

He was grinning at her and all she wanted to do was jab the syringe of anaesthetic into her chest again.

"I get it, we're buddies." She said. "I can keep a confidence, or I can pass on a message to Simon when he gets back."

"There's two grand in my desk, cash." He said. "It's Simon's commission for last month. He likes cash, but the number of companies willing to pay that way, shrinks every day. Please tell him that."

The light was beginning to shine, she had a pretty good idea why Anthony was there.

"He hasn't found another job, I swear. He's away with Clara, following a family bereavement and will be home in a few days. I was going to call you this afternoon anyway."

"Truthfully?"

She held up her fingers in the Spock salute. No one can lie after the giving the Spock salute, everyone knows that.

"He hasn't found another job Anthony, honest."

"Fine, fine. I'd better get back to the office, before my sales team start beating each other with sticks."

She took him to the front door to leave, knowing he'd be logged out by a Van Helsing hiding somewhere.

"Simon isn't just a key guy in my business, he is my business Laura. I'm thinking of promoting him, a full directorship in a couple of years. Tell him all that Laura."

"I will."

She would, if she ever saw Simon again. It was all guaranteed to make him find a new job though. Directorships and steady jobs weren't right for vampires. People tended to wonder why they didn't age or die like ordinary people. A minute after he'd left, an Amazon guy delivered a brown box for Clara. It went on the kitchen table next to Simon's parcel.

"This is me now," she muttered, "official message taker, parcel minder and general dog's body." Fuck, her chest was hurting! She went upstairs to find the syringe full of wonderful anaesthetic.

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Maybe there was a powerful deity looking after them. The police had been informed about several suspected gunshots in the area. It was Fulham though, so the police hadn't exactly hurried to investigate the matter. A young uniformed copper rang the bell on Vlad's house and of course, there was no reply. He banged the flap on the letterbox, while looking over the outside windows. He was about to mark the house down for a follow up visit.

"She works at the hospital."

A woman walking by, pushing a young child in a buggy.

"Her husband left her for one of his customers, or so I hear."

"Do you know them well?" He asked.

"Not friends or anything, but her husband is called Roy. He works as a children's entertainer, quite a good one from what I hear. Ran off with one of the mums. Her name is Mabina and she's a doctor at the local hospital. Usually she does nights, but she might be on days now."

The information matched the electoral register and the list he'd been given. He decided to tick the address off as not needing any further visits. He doubted if there had been gunfire anyway, it was Fulham.

"Thank you for your help."

"No problem. Pity about her husband running off."

They both walked away, leaving Mabina Gladitch to decompose in peace.

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Daniel rose early enough to get a hot shower, which always improved his mood. He was downstairs in time for breakfast, a very passable sausage, eggs and fried tomatoes. A young woman in a dirty apron seemed to be cooking and serving breakfast for about fifteen guests. She was shouting at someone in the kitchen and he recognised the language as Bulgarian. He thanked her in her own language, for an excellent breakfast. True his Bulgarian had been learned a hundred years previously, but she seemed to understand him.

"You've been to my country?" She asked.

"Yes, but it was a long time ago. I need to get to Wood Green by public transport after breakfast. What's the best way to do that?"

"The buses and tube will be full, it's the rush hour. The train will be packed too, but at least the route is pretty."

"I'll try that then, thank you."

He'd done his homework before leaving home and had decided against using the local railway. He wasn't in a hurry though and hated enclosed space. As Bowes Station wasn't that far away, he decided to risk the crushed train. At least it was travelling in the open and as the woman had told him, the route was pretty. The train was full, yet it still only took him a few minutes to reach Alexandra Palace Station. The house was only a short walk from there.

Caution was important, the whole female vampire business could have gone badly. He knew vampires well and like cats, they all seemed a little bi-polar. On a good day Clara would treat him like a long lost relative, on a bad day.....She might well attack him. Then there was a chance the house might be full of cops, if hunting the second vampire had gone very badly.

"You never see incautious immortals," he muttered, "they're all dead."

He had a limp anyway, from several past battles. He accentuated it to walk past the house slowly, giving him a chance to look it over. Daniel liked the large alarm box on the wall and the discreet CCTV cameras. They were beefing up their security, which had to be a good thing. No sign of movement, though someone had opened all the curtains. He carried on past the house, buying a newspaper from a shop fifty yards down the road. He was just a guy who'd gone out to buy a newspaper and would be ignored by anyone watching the house. He crossed the road, to walk back on the other side.

"Caught you." He mumbled.

A car a little too neglected and old to fit the street. Two men sat in it, one pouring something into a cup out of a flask. He noticed them before seeing the glint off the camera lens. Not that Daniel was

congratulating himself, no pat on the back. There would be another car back up the road and he must have missed it. They ignored him of course, the two coppers with their thermos and cameras. Finding the house under surveillance wasn't a total surprise, how to deal with it though, that was going to take a little thought. There was a small park, where he sat on a bench and closed his eyes. "I have to assume every phone is being intercepted, even their work numbers."

He had a business selling cheap electronics, which meant he had useful contacts. Phones could be cloned, wiped, renumbered and messed about with in lots of ingenious ways. He was certain the second phone in his pocket would be extremely hard to trace back to him. Not impossible, everything can be traced if the authorities are willing to throw enough time and money at it. Daniel sat upright on the bench, as if someone had prodded him.

"Incautious, but it just might work."

One assumption was needed, a dangerous one. He was going to assume that the police weren't inside the house, opening up anything coming through the letterbox. His next stop was a newsagents he'd walked past. One with the usual collection of dusty and unimaginative birthday cards. He bought a cheap biro and a huge card, depicting swans in flight. Daniel rested the card on the wall outside to write on it.

'House under surveillance. Call me on 079..... Use a newly bought pay as you go phone to call me. Daniel.'

He then sealed it in its envelope and wrote in the address panel.

'To. Simon, Clara and Laura.'

Opening each other's mail was probably some kind of forbidden taboo, it usual was in shared houses. If anyone was home, he hoped they opened it right away. Delivering it was the next problem. He walked back towards the house, spotting the police surveillance car he'd missed the first time. They'd parked facing the house, good.

Daniel wanted anyone other than a kid, but those were all he could see on the street. Maybe it was half term or something, he had no idea. Ideally he wanted a sprightly looking lady of a certain age, someone he could use a bit of charm on. After loitering for a while, he decided a kid on a skateboard would have to do.

"Excuse me, I need a favour." He said. "It'll only take you five minutes and I'll pay you for your time."

"How much?"

What had the world come to? The kid looked about twelve and should have been telling him to piss off.

"See that house down there, with the blue door?"

"You mean Simon's place?"

"Good you know him. I'm his uncle and it's a special occasion soon. If I put this card through the door and they see me, it'll spoil the surprise. Could you do it for me?"

"How much?"

Crap, he should have waited for a middle aged lady to turn up. He brought a five pound note out his pocket, seeing the boy's face scrunch up.

"How about ten pounds?"

"Fine."

"I'll be watching, no throwing it away."

"I won't, Simon is ok."

It cost him a tenner, but he saw the envelope go through the letterbox. All he could do was go back to the Chaplin and wait. If no one called him in forty eight hours, he'd return home.

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Mike Marcou wasn't having a good day either. After a good start and quite a bit of information from the surveillance teams, his case was falling apart. He knew she was guilty of something though, knew it in his bones, as his dad liked to say.

"But Guv ! You were just as adamant about her being squeaky clean, only last week." Said Susan. She was right of course, he had viewed Laura Selway as an innocent victim of circumstance. Until she'd acquired a large and expensive SUV from a known felon, a major criminal. Knowing William Jarrold moved her out of being an innocent victim and into the category of friends of major criminals. But that was falling apart.

"These people don't do paper trails boss." Said Susan. "Our William gave his car to an agent, knowing he was likely to end up inside. The agent was a motor dealer from Erith that the locals think is at it in a big way..."

"How at it ?"

"Narcotics Guv. But the agent sold the vehicle to Simon Atherton, who appears to have given it to Laura to use. As I say, paperwork isn't their strongpoint, but the vehicle has been changed at the DVLC and Laura Selway is now the registered keeper. The guy in Erith says it was bought by Simon though. You know what that means Guv...."

"Simon is screwing Laura ?"

"Maybe, probably definitely. It also means Laura hasn't suddenly become wealthy. It also means she comes off the known associate list, for our William."

"Fine, fine, call off the dogs." He said. "Cancel the surveillance on the house and cars."

He banged his fist on the desk, grazing his knuckles.

"Call off every fucking thing."

He wasn't happy, but the police no longer had the resources to follow whims and gut feelings. He had a tray full of cases, but he wasn't going to give up on the house in Wood Green. His bones ached, he knew they were up to something.

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Daniel reacted as though he was still at home, reaching the wrong way for his phone. Three in the morning according to the screen on the phone, the number unknown to him.

"Hello."

"Daniel, this is Laura."

"Good, are you on a clean phone ?"

"One the owner won't need anymore. I'll buy a new one tomorrow. I almost didn't call you, after what happened at your house."

"The phone Laura, are you sure it's safe ?"

"Shut up about the fucking phone, it's safe. I'm on my own for a while, or at least I hope it's only for a while. I need help Daniel."

"Do you have the journal ?"

"The journal.....Maybe, no yes, it's in her car."

"You left it in a car !"

"Shit Daniel, you have no idea what has happened here !"

"Then tell me Laura, tell me it all."