

The Hornsey Vampires

(Season two of London's Night Stalkers)

Chapter 15 – London Bound

“Laura only realised how filthy she was, when undoing her blouse created a pile of dirt on the carpet. The lower left hand side of her chest looked as though it had been cooked. There was surprisingly little pain, as she prodded the raised area of blackened skin.”

»

At first his mornings had seemed a little empty, like the forerunner of retirement when he'd stay in his dressing gown and slippers until lunchtime. Only Simon was never going to retire of course, he'd simply move to another job when too many people started saying how young he looked for his age. “I could get used to this.” He muttered.

He hadn't really turned into a slob, it was only eight in the morning and he had showered. The downside of working the late shift was not getting home until late. Actually the worst thing about it was being sworn at by people eager to watch their TV in peace.

“Hmmm homemade cheeseburger I think.”

The contents of the freezer were anyone's, at least in theory. Only Laura usually ate huge numbers of frozen burgers though, so he felt guilty about putting two under the grill. After he'd added three cheese slices and a lot of mayonnaise it would be a weird breakfast. The door rattled as the postie pushed several envelopes through it. Simon knew he had to find a positive way to use his mornings, when looking at the post was the most exciting thing he was likely to do before twelve.

“Bill, bill, another bill and oh goody.....Another advert for hearing aids.”

The jiffy bag stood out as a gem among the dross of their usual post. Simon opened it and pulled out a recent copy of The Glasgow Herald. There was a post-it note on the front.

‘Page 7 – Tom.’

Either no one cared about dead mobsters, or it happened too often to warrant being at the front of the paper. There was one short column about the deaths and what looked to be an old picture of a Glasgow pub.

‘The Infamous Bridie's Tavern saw more violence on Tuesday night.....Local hard man Neil Murdoch was found to be dead on arrival at hospital.....Two of his known acquaintances....’

Three of them had died not by gunfire, but by stabbings. Bill Jarrold was evolving, moving with the times when a stabbing only made page seven, while a shooting was likely to get on the front page.

“Have you started a war Bill ? Neil sounds like a man with a legend behind his name.”

Such men usually had a gang and gangs often wanted vengeance. It crossed Simon's mind that it might be the perfect time to make life a little difficult for Bill and let the Glasgow boys take the blame. He called Tom.

“Thanks for the present Tom, can I come down to see you in the morning ?”

~

~

Getting through the hotel lobby in their grubby condition hadn't been a problem, the few staff they did see were easy for Mabina to put under her influence. They were both hungry and the man behind the desk had promised them a full breakfast, delivered to their suite within the hour.

“You've got to teach me how to do that.” Said Laura.

“I was born with it, though you might have the skill and not know it Laura. Start off with something small, like getting served first in a busy bar.”

“Oh, I will.”

It was strange going back to a darkened hotel suite, she was sure the others would still be up, waiting for their return. Laura turned on the lights, before taking the expensive bottle of vintage champagne out of the mini-bar.

“I think we’ve earned this, I might order another.” She said.

“Christ ! You both look dreadful.”

“Thank you Brendan, for those few words of inspiration.” Snapped Mabina.

Laura was torn between several desires. She wanted a long tall glass of champagne, a good hot shower and the promised breakfast. She wanted them all at once, but the champagne bottle was actually in her hand. She popped the cork and filled five random glasses.

“So you found it ?” Asked Magda.

Brendan had come out to see them in just a robe, but Magda and Liz had taken a couple of minutes to throw some clothes on.

“Yes, we have the Egg of Astaroth.” Said Laura. “Though you can’t see it yet, the damn thing has burned its way into my flesh.”

“I didn’t expect that..... Show me.”

Laura only realised how filthy she was, when undoing her blouse created a pile of dirt on the carpet. The lower left hand side of her chest looked as though it had been cooked. There was surprisingly little pain, as she prodded the raised area of blackened skin.

“The Egg is actually a disc and it’s under there.” She said.

“Is it painful ?” Asked Liz.

“Not really, though I seem to be good with pain. It was dreadful when it began to burn into me, but now it’s tolerable.”

Magda prodded her as though she a museum exhibit, muttering occasionally about not expecting the Egg to be that active.

“And what about the Guardian ?” Asked Magda. “Was that just a myth ?”

Laura exchanged a look with Mabina, still not quite remembering how much they’d agreed to tell Magda and how much to keep secret from the Psochics.

“There was a huge brute, part baboon and part something else, something nasty and unpleasant. It wasn’t easy, but we managed to kill it.” Said Mabina.

“Good, if it’s dead we can explore the whole site.” Said Magda.

“Probably not a good idea.” Said Mabina.

“Why not ? If the guardian is dead, we can search the entire temple site.”

“Baboons and a huge serpent.” Said Laura. “There is a chamber full of baboons, hundreds of them. They’re being hunted by a huge serpent. My weapons didn’t leave a mark on the serpent, we had to run away.”

“Oh, I see..... Perhaps best to leave the temple alone then.” Said Magda.

“Probably for the best.” Said Mabina. “We did find some dead members of your order down there and two other relic hunters we don’t think are your people.”

Mabina had the Psochic ID tags in her pack and the wallets that had belonged to Walter and Emily Couzinier. Liz gasped as Mabina placed the pile on the table.

“Oh, so many dead.” She said.

“There were others, their belongings too decomposed to identify.” Said Laura.

Breakfast arrived and offered them all a pleasant break between identifying the dead Psochics.

Magda knew them all, every ID tag had its own story. The wallets seemed to upset her the most.

"The Couziniers were famous, old style tomb robbers. They knew their history though, often discovering priceless relics before anyone else." Said Magda. "It was always assumed they'd made several fortunes and retired. Sad to know they died.... Did they suffer?"

Laura nodded at her.

"I'm afraid so, I think they died of thirst." Said Mabina.

"Dreadful.... Right, once breakfast is over Laura must get into the shower and dig out the Egg. Sorry if it's painful, but it can hardly stay where it is."

"No, I think the Egg is fine where it is." Said Laura.

Everyone was giving her a look somewhere between confused and angry, she hadn't even told Mabina her plan because she'd only just thought of it.

"What do you mean by alright where it is?" Asked Magda.

"It hurts, but I can handle that." Said Laura. "It just seems the safest place to keep it until we have all the artefacts and know which are ours."

"That is not what we agreed Laura." Snapped Magda.

Mabina might have been a little slow once, but now she was catching onto things really fast.

"I like Laura's idea." She said. "After all, you can't get a safer place to keep it than under the skin of a vampire. I'm sure she won't mind cutting it out once we have all the pieces of the puzzle."

"I will happily cut it out then, though a little local anaesthetic would be nice." Said Laura.

"Well Sam won't be happy." Said Magda.

At that moment Laura didn't give a damn about what Sam might not like.

~ ~

William Jarrold was happy about the news his solicitor had brought. Bill had seen most of the criminal defence people at Ryan, Steiner and Fain. It was rare to see a senior partner; they seemed to want to keep a distance between themselves and the murkier side of the criminal defence side of their business. Bill paid them well though, which he was never slow to remind them. His various run-ins with the law had probably put the man in front of him through college.

"Most of the evidence against you was circumstantial Bill." Said Craig Fain.

Craig Fain, great grandson of one of the founding partners, almost royalty in legal circles.

"So how badly did this outsourced lab fuck up?" Asked Bill. "Should I get Helen to begin buying champagne for when I get out?"

"Nothing is ever certain when it comes to the law, but I'm quite optimistic. The lab screwed up a lot of results and the CPS doesn't want to release dozens of convicted criminals without a fight. In your case the forensic evidence from the incident was contaminated with at least four other people's DNA. The review has no option than to throw it out and overturn the conviction."

"So I'm out of here?"

"Unless they go for a retrial Bill. You will be an innocent man until proven guilty if they do and you've been in jail for a while now. I'm confident we'd win the argument to get you released until the new trial."

"That is bloody good news Craig. Do you think they will put me through another trial?"

"Ahhh, the weirdness of the UK legal system. Have you read any Rumpole books bill?"

"No."

"You should, they give a pretty accurate picture. The forensic evidence is tainted, but I can't guarantee you won't go through another time in court. My guess though is that the judgement against you will be quashed and you'll be home soon. Soon in legal terms of course, which might mean two or three months."

Bill suddenly liked Craig a lot. The junior people on his legal team would never have talked about their best guess, or the weird legal system. He hadn't meant to ask a senior partner to be a messenger, but Craig seemed a decent sort.

"Brilliant Craig, I'll tell Helen to start buying stuff for my getting out party. I was wondering, could you deliver a message for me to Cyril Carter?"

There it was, the granite eyed look of a man who'd been to Oxford and didn't want to get drawn into trouble by the riff-raff. Ryan, Steiner and Fain had been involved in a few high profile human rights cases. Brilliant PR, one of their partners had even been on TV a few times. Good PR didn't pay the rent though and Bill knew his troubles with the law meant a lot of billable hours. Crap, he was probably paying a few grand an hour to watch Craig giving him the stink eye.

"It's important or I wouldn't ask." Said Bill.

Craig Fain pulled three or four pages out of his yellow notepad and passed them across the table, placing a biro next to them.

"When you're finished fold it up so that I can't see it." Said Craig. "I guarantee Cyril will get it today."

~ ~

Sam Isaacs had been a little displeased with Laura keeping the Egg. Finding the artefact meant a change of location though, the remaining items required were known to be in England. He was so busy with moving everyone to the house near Tonbridge, that anger at the two vampires was forgotten, at least for now.

"I'll leave you Omer, Judith." He said. "I need Yosef with me at the house in Kent. Don't open the door to anyone if you're alone and you'll be fine."

"I've been on my own here before, I'll survive." She replied.

His efficient and incredibly loyal personal assistant was angry. He'd promised her a place on the team going to England. That had been before Magda had insisted on becoming a semi-permanent member of the order in Jerusalem.

"I'm sorry Judith, but Magda insists on going." He said. "Some of it is her eagerness to find The Tooth of the Saint, but she's also become obsessed with Liz."

"All the more reason to leave her here Sam. We've seen her flings before, they never end well. Not so easy to clean up her mess in England."

Judith was right and she had a lot of useful information about the remaining artefacts in her head. Not as much as Magda though and that made all the difference. As for Magda turning on Liz? If he had to bet on it, he'd put a lot of money on Magda losing that battle.

"You know my business Judith and there are a few important deliveries coming up. I trust you to make sure everything goes like clockwork. There will be other times to visit England, I promise."

"Be careful around Laura, she's dangerous Sam, more dangerous than Mabina."

"I know.... Mabina needs my knowledge."

"For now she does and Laura has other vampire friends. I'm worried about what happens when you're no longer any use to them. If anything happens to you I'll need to find another job, and I like it here."

The grin told him she was teasing him, though he still felt a need to ease her worries.

"I'll force her take the oath before I tell her how to use the artefacts." He said. "The oath will clip her wings a bit and make her harmless, at least to our order."

"If she really does keep to the oath, I'm still not certain she will."

Sam wasn't completely sure either, despite his constant assurances to Judith and Magda. He had noticed that the best way to stop Judith from asking awkward questions, was to keep her busy.

"There's the Jade figurine collection to be sent to Julie on Monday." He said.

"I know, it's already wrapped and boxed."

"Let's go through everything just one more time Judith."

"If you insist."

"Come on, it'll be fun."

Judith sighed, but it never hurt to check the upcoming despatches when some were valued at over a million dollars. Sam had his own plan to thin out the opposition a little. If it didn't work there was no way of tracing the attempt back to him, even Judith didn't know about it. If his plan worked it would take care of the Liz and Magda problem and leave Mabina without Brendan. That would trim her claws a little.

~ ~

Laura felt tired, quite an unusual experience. She sort of dozed in the back of the Hummer the way cats do. It was that whole basal ganglia thing again, allowing most of her brain to turn off, while she was still alert. Cats could do the same trick, but humans were never likely to master it. The problem was Magda and her constant need for idle chatter.

"I still think I should have been in the car with Liz." She moaned, for about the tenth time.

"Everyone back in the vehicles they came in." Said Mabina. "It makes it simpler when we get to the airport."

"But I never even came with you people." Muttered Magda.

Laura woke for long enough to grin at Mabina. Liz had obviously made an impression on Magda that seemed to be veering towards being a full-fledged obsession.

"And I don't know how Laura can sleep at a time like this."

Laura had no idea what she meant by that, she just wanted to rest. There had been a long journey via the scenic route from Egypt, followed by a rush to get on the first plane out to London. Not only was Jerusalem Sam's backyard, they'd also used their correct names and credit cards. Laura had even used her own genuine passport. No matter what sort of footprint they left in Jerusalem it had to be a clean one, with nothing that needed investigating. The hotel had been paid and the hire cars would be returned.

"Come on Magda, it's a long drive." Said Mabina. "Tell us about the next object we need to recover, this Tooth of the Saint?"

"Sam was quite adamant that I shouldn't tell you about it until after the oath."

"But we have to find it, so we'll need a few bits of information."

The logic was inescapable, even to Magda who seemed to exist in a constant state of paranoia about everyone except Liz. Laura raise her consciousness level a little to listen.

"It's not a tooth as you know, it's a weapon." Said Magda. "The tooth is a blunt dagger, about seven or eight inches long. A simple bone handle, it doesn't look worth picking up, or so I've been told."

"I'll sense it when it's close, I'm sure of it." Said Laura.

"Ahh, you're finally awake." Said Mabina. "What are the origins of the tooth Magda?"

"Egypt again, all the objects seemed to begin their story in Egypt. The tooth was first found to have.... Certain powers by the Knights Templar. Samuel Westcott was the leading authority on the tooth, but his journal has been missing for several decades."

"I have that, that's how I found my copy of the Psochic bible." Said Mabina.

Poor Magda, she couldn't have looked more shocked if a unicorn had walked across the road. It was a good idea for Mabina to drive their Hummer, Magda's hands were shaking.

"You have Samuel Westcott's original journal?" Asked Magda. "I know there are fakes out there and some later attempts at reconstruction..... But you're saying you have the original?"

"Yes, written in his handwriting in a simple code that was easy to break. He was quite mad towards the end, but some of the entries contain priceless knowledge."

"How did you come by the journal?" Asked Magda.

"By conquest, I am a vampire after all. There was a territorial dispute with a male vampire and I won. The journal was among his things where he lived and became mine after I killed him."

"The spoils of war, it's how we survive." Added Laura.

"It all sounds so....."

"Barbaric Magda? Primitive perhaps? Say it, I don't mind." Said Mabina.

"That violent nature is why we can recover objects you can't." Said Laura.

"Could I see the journal?" Asked Magda.

"I can do better than that. I took it into work at a clinic where I worked in the sixties and ran off about four copies. You're welcome to have one, I'll bring it to the house near Tonbridge where we're all meeting up."

"Thank you, that is really appreciated."

Laura heard a sound that brought her fully awake. The weapon had been fitted with a suppressor, but Laura heard two shots. Looking through the back window she saw Brendan drive off the road before stopping.

"Brendan has driven off the road." Said Laura.

"Idiot, I should have been driving that car." Said Magda.

Laura ignored her, she had no idea about what was really going on. Mabina drove off the road and pulled up in a cloud of dry brown dust.

"I heard two shots." Said Mabina.

"So did I, stay with Magda."

"It's my turn to go first Laura."

"I know, but I'm fully rested.... Stay with Magda."

Laura heard Brendan screaming out Liz's name as soon as she was out of the car. It was bad, as bad as it could be; she was only sensing one heartbeat in the car. No point in using her time by trying to comfort Brendan, she was useless at that kind of thing anyway. The two men running away were some distance away, but not that far for an angry vampire to run.

"They killed her, they shot Liz."

She heard as she ran away from the road and towards where the men were heading. Laura had expected the terrain to be nothing but sand dunes, but it wasn't. It was never going to be lush, but there were green bushes and the ground was soil with a lot of stones. She ran as only a vampire can run; only slowing when she came to a single storey house, more of a hut really. A child, a young boy playing with a goat actually pointed, as if saying 'they went that way.' Laura simply waved her thanks and carried on running.

The shot when it came went wide. Hitting the ground far to her left and the second shot was even further away from her. The weapon was large, probably a military sniper rifle. Brilliant for hitting someone at a distance, but useless while running. Laura zig-zagged a little as the two men seemed to vanish into the ground. There was a shallow gully, invisible from the road.

"You picked the wrong tourists guys." She muttered.

It had to be that didn't it ? Laura knew there was always trouble in the Middle East, though she had no real about local politics. Two malcontents shooting at passing tourists seemed the logical explanation for the attack.

The two men had chosen where to stand their ground well, the two boulders at the bottom of the gully were good cover. Another shot went wide, the man with the sniper rifle wasn't learning to take his time over a shot. He never was going to get any better with it, Laura was among them before he could get another bullet into the chamber.

"Jinn." The man with the gun shouted.

"No, a vampire actually, one who hates being out in this much direct sunlight." She replied.

Running like that, leaping down into the gully, she could see why they thought she was something otherworldly. After she'd broken the neck of the sniper and thrown his weapon into some nearby bushes, she faced the second man. He had a gun, but seemed too terrified to pull it out of his belt. He actually knelt down and began to recite a prayer as he rocked back and forth.

"Do you speak English ? Why shoot at us ?" She asked.

As she came down from the state of mind for fighting, the sneezing started from being out in the sun, she'd guessed it would. By the time Brendan came running along the bottom of the gully, her sinuses were beginning to throb. She held up her hand to the huge angry Irishman.

"No Brendan, we need him alive so that Magda can question him."

~ ~

Brendan Roche didn't trust the aircon in the hired car, it didn't seem to be putting out enough cool dry air. Liz kept laughing at him for opening the window full as he drove.

"You're just trying to aircon the entire country." She said.

"Do I ever laugh at the weird stuff you do ?"

"I don't do weird stuff.....Name one, go on ?"

The shot arrived through the open window without a sound. It might have been aimed at him, but at first he didn't realise it was a bullet. The headrest on Liz's seat seemed to explode into pieces of tan leather and foam rubber. The second bullet hit Liz in the side of her chest. She fell forward, crumpling onto the car's floor like a rag doll. Brendan took the car off the road, stopping in a cloud of brownish coloured dust.

"Liz !" He shrieked. "Liz !"

Her body twitched a little, he thought she might still be alive. He'd heard about people surviving terrible bullet wounds. He leant over and put his fingers against her neck. No pulse and no breath as far as he could tell. He saw Laura run past, heading toward two men in the distance.

"They killed her, they shot Liz." He yelled at her.

Magda was too much for him to deal with, as she opened the passenger door and began to scream. He needed to do something, anything other than sit there and watch Magda having an emotional breakdown. He was reasonably fit for a big man, builders usually are. He got out of the car and ran after Laura, though she was only a dot in the distance.

It was hot and he'd slowed down by the time he came to a small hut with a few goats outside. A young boy smiled at him and pointed, before waving.

"Thank you." Shouted Brendan.

He kept hearing what might have been shots, though the popping sounds were very faint. Did crazy snipers use silencers ? Were they crazy, or maybe terrorists ? Brendan realised he was chasing after two men who might be trained members of a terrorist group. He didn't care though, he just wanted to cause them pain for killing Liz, a lot of pain.

"Do you speak English ? Why shoot at us ?" He heard Laura ask.

The gully was narrow, he heard her quite clearly. One of the men looked to be already dead and Laura might kill the other before he had a chance to deal with him. Brendan increased his pace until his heart was hammering against his chest.

"No Brendan, we need him alive so that Magda can question him."

He didn't care, he ran round Laura and grabbed the kneeling man, lifting him to his feet by the collar of his jacket. Seeing the gun still shoved down the man's belt triggered even more anger.

"You killed her you bastard..... You killed Liz !"

The man was shouting at him in a language Brendan didn't know. He held him up with his left hand, while punching the man hard in the head with his right. He carried on punching until the man stopped talking and screaming. It didn't seem enough, so Brendan dropped the man to the ground and began kicking him until there was no reaction to the kicks, none at all. Still not satisfied he stamped hard on the man's throat, at least a dozen times.

"Bastard." He yelled.

All the time Laura had watched him, never interfering. He turned and there was no judgement in her eyes, she didn't even seem upset.

"Well, that'll work too Brendan." She said. "Beating and kicking him to death has its appeal, but now we'll never know why he shot at us. Come on, we need to get back to the others."

Brendan looked down at the mess they'd created, the two broken bodies.

"Are we just going to leave them here Laura ?"

"I'm not burying them Brendan. I have no idea what local wildlife there is here, but I guarantee it'll thank us for the meal.... Come on Brendan, there are probably police patrols along the road."

Still something kept him standing there, looking at the two dead men. Laura was a good fifty feet away, walking back towards the cars.

"Come on Brendan, you don't want to spend the next thirty years in an Israeli prison. The others need us, there are things to discuss, problems to be dealt with."

He followed her, wanting to remain lost in his own thoughts, his own grief. Laura kept pestering him about what seemed thoughtless and inappropriate things. It was only later that he appreciated she was doing it to stop him from brooding and entering a very dark place.

"How bad is your car ?" She asked. "Is there damage, will we have to dump it ?"

"I'm not sure.....There was a lot of blood."

"Blood can be cleaned up Brendan. Do you think we can return it to the car hire people ?"

"The first bullet hit the headrest."

"That can be thrown away. Who was the car hired by, you or Liz ?"

"I'm not sure..... Do we have to talk about this now ?"

"Yes Brendan, it's important.... Who hired the car ?"

"Mabina arranged it from London and I used my UK driving license at the pickup point."

"Crap, that might be a problem."

They walked past the kid with the goats, who waved at them.

"He'll remember us." Said Brendan.

"No one ever listens to children.....We'll need to drive somewhere we can discuss the next step Brendan, you must be ready if the car needs to be dumped..... Liz with it."

He stopped and grabbed Laura's arm, spinning her around. Surprisingly she didn't respond.

"You can't dump Liz as though she's yesterday's rubbish." He said.

"I'm sorry Brendan, I quite liked her. It might not happen, but you need to mentally prepare yourself in case it does. The important thing is to get everyone on a plane back home."

It was alright for her, she'd probably disposed of thousands of bodies. She was a vampire after all, a monster.

"No. we're not dumping her." He said.

They walked on in silence until they were back at the cars. Mabina looked at Laura and shrugged, while Magda could be heard laughing. Laughing ! Maybe she'd had a breakdown ? Magda was in the driving seat of their car, talking to Liz as though she was still alive. There was that dreadful laughter again.

"Oh here he is, the one who had me panicking." Said Magda.

It had to be impossible, though he hadn't checked for a pulse in her wrist, or leant right over her face to see if he felt a breath. There was a chance he was wrong. He had to have been wrong as Liz was sat talking to Magda and she was very much alive.

"How does it go Brendan." Said Liz. "News of my death has been very much exaggerated."

He ran round to the other side of the car and hugged her. There really was a lot of blood on the floor, more than it seemed possible to lose without dying.

"I saw the bullet hit you." He said.

"It made a nasty hole in my side, but I think it must have bounced off a rib. I'm not fine and it still hurts like hell..... I'm alive though Brendan.... Really, it's me not a zombie."

Brendan wasn't into public displays of affection, but he kissed Liz as though he'd been at sea for a decade.

"Can I see the wound ?" Asked Laura.

"I put a dressing on it." Said Mabina. "Our Hummer came with a decent first aid box. It's a nasty wound and it needs looking at before we get on a plane."

Mabina and Laura muttered at each other for a while, constantly looking at Liz. Something wasn't right, though they weren't sharing whatever was worrying them.

"We need to drive to somewhere we won't stand out so much as here." Said Mabina. "There are a lot of decisions to be made about what to do next. I'm hoping Magda knows a local doctor who can keep his mouth shut ?"

"I do, and I'm sure he'll come and meet us somewhere." Said Magda.

Brendan drove the car again, with Liz leaning back in the chair next to him. She wasn't only alive, she had glow about her. She definitely didn't look like a woman who'd just lost several pints of blood.

~ ~

Liz Grant was enjoying the drive and Brendan's company. She was determined to make a complete break with Magda; it had been a mistake to sleep with her. Brendan though ? She was beginning to like his humour and had made up her mind to keep in touch with him once the business with the Psochics and vampires was over. She wasn't even ruling out sharing his bed in the future, as a fuck buddy rather than a paying client. He currently had the car windows fully open and the aircon on full and refused to admit that was a daft idea.

"You're just trying to aircon the entire country." She said.

"Do I ever laugh at the weird stuff you do ?"

"I don't do weird stuff.....Name one, go on ?"

She felt the headrest move, but didn't think it was anything to worry about. The bullet in her side had been incredibly painful. She'd heard people talk about shock being a good anaesthetic and that pain set in later. Not for her, it felt as though a red hot knife had been rammed into her chest.

“Liz ! Liz !” shouted Brendan.

She felt her heart stop, which was really weird. Not terrifying, she was still aware of the world around her, still alive. As she fell to the floor, her vision became different, as though someone had put a thick net curtain over her eyes. Brendan was panicking, feeling her neck, but she couldn't make her lips form words. She tried to yell, but her breath refused to come. There was a moment of panic as she felt trapped inside a body that would no longer obey her commands.

“They killed her, they shot Liz.” Brendan shouted at someone.

He was gone, leaving her to wonder why she hadn't passed on, or simply ceased to exist. Strangely her mind seemed clearer than usual, far more focused. Why would a terrorist ignore a nice big juicy Hummer and fire at the car behind ? It was Sam, she knew it with complete certainty. The Psochics needed the two vampires, but Brendan was loyal to Mabina and he had a temper. As for her ? Magda was now more of a devoted follower than a lover. Yes, Sam wouldn't have liked that turn of events.

“Oh no, No..... Liz..... No !!”

Magda was pulling at her, dragging her up off the floor, using the seat belt to hold her upright. The dreadful woman was all over her, kissing her face, causing fresh pain by constantly pulling at her. In the end it was the pain that seemed to pull her back from.... Somewhere.

“Get off me..... Fuck.... Leave me alone.” Yelled Liz.

Her voice wasn't that strong, neither were the muscles in her arms. Magda moved back though, staring at her without saying anything for at least a minute. There was laughter, some of joy, some nervous laughter, when Magda went to get Mabina and the first aid kit out of the Hummer. Neither of them mentioned that she'd been dead and should still be dead, but she saw it in their eyes. Once the wound had been cleaned and dressed, Mabina went to watch for Laura and Brendan returning.

“It worked didn't it ? The ritual with the Half Moon, it did work ?” Asked Magda.

“It seems so Magda, though I really did feel nothing at the time.”

“What did it feel like to die ?”

“Painful and then a bit like queuing at the Post Office.”

Magda laughed and was still laughing when Brendan returned and rushed round the car to hug her. That was nice, she liked the hugs and the kisses. Brendan was fine, but something needed to be done about Magda.

~ ~