

## The Hornsey Vampires

(Season two of London's Night Stalkers)

### Chapter 17 – Abduction & Murder

**“Den, lair, home away from home, the name had ceased to matter. Laura loved the comfortable space she’d created and loved any excuse to spend a night there. Now she knew why she’d wanted to bring Liz, she’d had a need to show it all to someone.”**

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Five artefacts to collect and they now had three. Liz Grant had never claimed to be a mathematical genius, but she could work out there were two left to be found. A meeting over breakfast with two vampires who were moving about quite slowly and looked dreadful. The child’s coffin was in the centre of the table, where the muesli jar normally stood.

“Do we have to have that..... There ?” Asked Brendan. “We should bury the poor thing in hallowed ground.”

“Why was the dagger placed like that Magda ?” Asked Laura.

“The dead brat looks a bit small for a guardian.” Added Mabina.

Everyone was laughing apart from Brendan and Magda. She understood Brendan with his strict catholic upbringing. Magda on the other hand, looked genuinely scared. The chance to tease her was too delicious to waste.

“Come on Magda, take the dagger out of the coffin.” She said.

“Not until everything has been properly photographed. First and foremost we are seekers after knowledge, not barbarians. What those two did, burning down that chapel....”

“I think you’re scared to touch it.” Said Liz.

“No fighting ladies, we’ve done well at keeping personal animosity to a minimum.” Said Sam. “There are stories about infants who’ve died from dreadful diseases being used as curses. All nonsense of course, but I can appreciate that Magda wants to record the contents of the coffin before they’re disturbed.”

“If it’s all nonsense..... Why not carefully remove the dagger from the child’s embrace ?” Asked Laura.

“No, No... I will not be baited like this.” Yelled Magda.

Liz couldn’t resist standing up and pushing the coffin slightly towards Magda. Yosef seemed confused by it all, they were supposed to all be friends, working in collaboration.

“Please Liz..... We need to discuss the next artefact, the Scales of Pendally.” Said Sam.

“Enough of this, I’m bored with it.” Said Liz.

Liz picked the dagger up, pulling it free of the tiny skeletal arms. She knew there had been power in that long dead child, when the bones gave off a small cloud of grey smoke. The bones disintegrated, becoming nothing but dust. Liz felt something, a tingling in her fingers. Without knowing what she was doing, she absorbed the power of the curse into herself, consuming it completely.

“Look, no puss filled boils, no blood filled eyeballs.....I’m fine.” Said Liz.

She waved the dagger about, but the curse had been real. If Magda had been the first to pick up the dagger, she’d have probably died an unpleasant death.

“Really Liz, I don’t know what’s got into you.” Said Sam. “We need to discuss the next item and the risks involved in acquiring it.”

“We’re all beginning to wonder what’s got into Liz.” Said Mabina.

Liz dropped the dagger, noticing Magda move back as it rolled across the table towards her. Liz had expected Magda to hate her, but there was something else in her eyes, fear mixed with intense desire.

"The children have settled down now Sam." Said Mabina. "Tell us about these Scales of Pendally?"

"Not really scales and Pendally was the British army colonel who brought it home from the Napoleonic wars." Said Sam. "A metal bowl about two feet across, associated with several successful alchemists. That isn't why we're keen to get hold of it, but until you take the oath...."

"Fine, what does it look like?"

"And is it fragile?" Asked Laura.

They were back into what was fast becoming a successful routine. Sam took a picture printed on A3 paper out a file and dropped it over the top of the tiny coffin.

"The picture is from nineteen fifty three, the last time it was sold by auction. Value then was in excess of half a million dollars, so treating it gently might be a good idea. Silver of course, as you can see, with precious and semi-precious stones inserted in a pattern around the outside."

Everyone looked at the picture for a minute or so, before Laura got down to basics.

"Beautiful Sam, who are we stealing it from?"

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To Tasha Wallis it seemed strange that no one senior in the police came to talk to her until the next morning. She hadn't expected the commissioner to turn up; Olivia had vanished a long time ago.

There was a body now though, in a large cardboard box in the alley behind her house.

"Did the man on the phone tell you where to find the body?"

There were two of them, men in crumpled suits who looked fed up and slightly pissed off with being dragged away from their breakfast to sort out a dead body in a box. The older and far plumper one was doing most of the talking.

"I told the uniformed officer. The phone call was threatening and he told me I'd be next for the same treatment as Olivia. I thought there was something strange going on, Rocky was going nuts."

"Rocky?"

They'd all asked her that, every policeman she'd spoken to, despite knowing she was alone in the house and a large fluffy cat was sat next to her on the sofa.

"My cat.....By the time I found a flashlight that worked, it had started raining. The box was closed when I found it. I opened it and.....To see that face again after so long."

Simon had been right about her reactions needing to be genuine. She'd had no idea what to expect, she just knew that Olivia's body was going to turn up somewhere that night. In the grubby alley behind her house though.... That had caught her off guard. Tasha began to cry and every tear was genuine.

"You're certain the body was Olivia Reed?"

"Yes, we were lovers for many years."

A lot of scribbling in notebooks. It would all get in the press now, Olivia leaving him to live with a woman. That would hurt Bill more than spending the rest of his life in prison.

"You mentioned two calls, about an hour apart?"

"Yes, the first was just Bill's usual threats.....The second told me about her body. It's the way he works, two calls, the first to make me scared and anxious."

"William Jarrold is currently in prison, a high security prison."

“And we all know prisoners aren’t allowed cellphones.... Don’t be naïve... It was him both times, I know his voice well. He called once, a long time ago to boast about killing Olivia. Since then he’s tended to send some of his firm round to see me.”

The thinner one went away, probably to make a few calls to verify parts of her story. The older plumper one remained. He experimented with a smile, not his best look.

“So you’re saying William Jarrold has been harassing you for some time ?”

“Yes, usually he sends Steve Gorman round to go through the house and remind me what they could do to me and the people I care about.”

“Why did you never report any of this ?”

“Because I didn’t want someone finding me in a cardboard box behind their house.”

She cried and the plump police detective experimented with another smile. The second one was far more convincing than the first.

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They’d both needed a little time away from someone. Liz had needed to get away from Magda for a few hours and Laura had needed a break from Mabina. Laura hadn’t brought anyone back to her lair before, or at least no one she was expecting to leave alive.

“I don’t usually come here during the day. We’ll need to keep an eye out for tourists who’ve gone a little off-piste.”

“The rain will help.” Said Liz. “No one enjoys trudging through a wood in a drizzle.”

Of all people why bring Liz to her ultra-secret, location never to be divulged to a soul, lair ? They had run off to get drunk the night Beetle dropped off her SUV, both of them getting the full wrath of Sam’s anger the next day. In truth getting told off by Sam was about as brutal as being mugged by a koala bear. So why bring Liz with her ? Something felt different in Liz, she was changing, darkening. Whatever she was becoming..... Laura was certain she’d be more friend than foe.

“There it is Liz..... I changed the lock on the door and anyway, no one ever comes here.”

“How about maintenance people ?”

“They’ll probably just think a squatter set up home here. My guess is that they’ll just change the lock and do a few regular inspections for a while.”

Inside the building she’d placed a sleeping bag on top of a grubby mattress. Over time Laura had added to the fake persona of the non-existent squatter. There were a few old shirts, a couple of pairs of boxer shorts and some worn out socks. A few empty bottles of cheap wine finished the tableau.

“Ewwwww, not nice.” Said Liz.

“That is just the effect I was going for.”

Her lair was difficult to get to for a human, but Liz looked fitter than most. Up into a false ceiling, across a few boards at the back of a disused chimney, before opening a well-hidden trapdoor. Laura dropped into her lair first, switching on a battery lamp hung on the wall. It was an eight foot drop from the trapdoor, yet Liz managed it with ease.

“Wow, this really is a home away from home..... Is that a chesterfield sofa ?”

“Yes and it was a nightmare to get it in here. I’ll light a few candles, it looks best in softer light.”

Den, lair, home away from home, the name had ceased to matter. Laura loved the comfortable space she’d created and loved any excuse to spend a night there. Now she knew why she’d wanted to bring Liz, she’d had a need to show it all to someone.

“Oh, I had a tree house as a kid, but it was nothing compared to this.”

“You’re the first person to see it.”

“Not even your Tim who you seem so keen on ?”

“No, not even Tim.”

“Wow I feel honoured..... Can I nose about ?”

“Nose about all you like, there are some cans of drink in one of the cupboards.”

Laura had come for her guns, the two Glock 32s with modified grips to suit her hands. Most importantly she wanted to take the sniper rifle with her that night. She'd practised with it quite a bit, always choosing a different secluded part of the countryside. The expensive weapon had never been used properly though, she'd never fired and seen an enemy fall. The cache for her guns was under the rug in the far corner of her lair. After rolling back the gorgeous Indian rug, she'd needed to pull up a section of floorboards.

“Found the tins of coke, do you want one ?”

“Yes please.”

The sniper rifle was still spotlessly clean with just the right amount of gun oil on its moving parts. Laura lovingly fondled the barrel, before closing up the case.

“You've got a lot of guns.”

“Yes, Simon started giving them to me. At first it seemed a bit strange, but now I like having them.”

“Where does Simon get them ?”

Laura decided to share a little with Liz. Tell her a few secrets and she might say how she could come back from the dead.

“Simon can be a little eccentric, but his obsession with hunting drug dealers has proven to be very useful. They carry lots of cash, have a stock of expensive drugs and the police are unlikely to spend long on trying to find out what's become of them.”

“And they have guns.” Said Liz.

“Yes, they have guns, all sorts of guns. I'm now quite proud of my collection.”

Liz dug through the couple of dozen hand guns under the floor and pulled out something big and heavy. A gun you could use as a doorstop. Newbies to guns were like that, she'd been like that.

There was a tendency to think that big, heavy and shiny was best. Laura chose something small with a light polycarbonate grip.

“Try this Liz. Smaller and lighter, but still capable of getting the job done.”

“Wow, that feels so much better in my hand. What make is it ?”

“A Glock like mine, just an older version.”

“Feels so light..... I bet it's hard to use.”

Liz wanted a gun, it was obvious. Whether she got one from her was another matter. Liz might well decide to go psycho on Sam and his Psochics before all the artefacts had been found.

“Not hard at all..... See this ? That's the safety catch and like this.... Now the gun will fire. Get as close as you can to the person you want to kill. Hold the gun tightly in both hands, aim and pull the trigger. Not just once, fire three or four times to make sure.”

“Is it really that easy ?” Asked Liz.

“That's exactly how I killed Mabina.”

“I thought that was all nonsense..... How did she come back again ?”

“That's very complicated and we should be driving back to Tonbridge by now.”

“I don't mind the short version.”

“Alright..... Mabina is a vampire. Vampires sometimes come back.”

“I meant longer than..... Oh well, I guess that'll have to do. Can I have this gun Laura ?”

Straight out with it and she hadn't really made up her mind on whether to say yes.

"I'm a bit worried, there's more to all this than just the artefacts." Said Laura. "There's a truce with Mabina and the lives of quite a few people involved. If you decided to get rid of Sam or Magda..... It might make things more than a little awkward."

Liz gently ran a hand over her cheek, before kissing her. Laura kissed back and enjoyed it, even attempts at manipulation can be enjoyable.

"Nice, very nice..... But I discovered girls can be fun when I was about fifteen Liz. I'm not strictly a men only type of girl, but..... There's Tim."

"That is such a pity."

"So, use your words, convince me I can give you a gun and not regret it."

"Someone tried to kill me, probable Brendan too. I know it sounds crazy, but I've developed genuine feelings for the idiot. Not true love or anything, but I'd hate to see him hurt. I'd just feel happier with some way of defending both of us. I promise not to go on a shooting spree."

It sounded genuine and apart from a few outbursts while in Jerusalem, Liz hadn't shown any homicidal tendencies. There was just that constant nagging feeling. Laura found the right clip and pushed it into the gun.

"Ready to use and yours for one little bit of information." Said Laura. "Tell me what happened to you. How did you die and come back good as new. I've already shown you my biggest secret, my lair. Your turn now to trust me."

The way she was looking at the gun, Laura knew she was going to tell her.

"Not exactly good as new, I still get pains in my side." Said Liz. "I slept with Magda so that she'd use the Half Moon of Thoth on me. At first it didn't seem to do anything. Then I was shot and..... I'm not sure how, but it kept me alive."

"Oh Liz, all those consequences even a vampire would think twice about. You're either very brave, or very stupid."

"Stupid, definitely stupid, but I am alive. I saw things quite clearly when my heart stopped. I'm almost certain it was Sam who sent those men to kill me."

"Only almost certain?"

"If I was certain I wouldn't use the gun on him, I promise. If there's definite proof I'll let you kill him." Laura handed the gun to Liz.

"No shoving it down your belt Liz, keep it in your bag."

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Tom was known to everyone by his first name. Tom Ives was the name on his driving license and bank debit card. Tom had spent most of his life living by using cash for everything, keeping his contacts with bureaucracy to a minimum. He had a passport, but only because his wife insisted on two weeks somewhere hot every summer.

"You've done it now you idiot." He muttered.

His life was still portable, but only just. Running away with a suitcase and a bag of cash was still possible, but it would mean leaving a thriving business behind. Calling the car breakers a legit business was going too far. He had several awards on the wall from the local council though, two for recycling and one for being an eco-friendly business. He was never going to get the Queen's award for industry, but the breakers yard was his life. Tom looked at the old Nokia phone and smiled, before leaning over the edge of the bridge and dropping it into the Thames.

"I hope you got it right Simon." He muttered. "I'm too old to leg it to Argentina and learn Spanish."

The phone had been one regularly used by William Jarrold to contact his minions. A phone with a proper contract and a number known so well to the police that it was still bound to be in their files.

Not that long ago really, but a long time for phone technology. The old Nokia classic had been almost glued to Bill's hand from late two thousand and five until late two thousand and seven.

"Old school we were our firm, dinosaurs really. We laughed about the ponces who worried about their digital footprint."

Bill's firm had started using burner phones when known cellphone numbers and locations, began to be used as evidence in court. Tom had been given a bag of cash and a holdall full of phones to destroy. Being a cautious man he'd kept two of the phones as an insurance policy. He hadn't even needed to buy a new battery; the old phone held enough charge for two calls.

Tom walked across Tower Bridge, heading south towards where he'd left his car. There was a slight chance there'd be a transmitter tower location for the calls, but even that didn't matter. The phone was linked to Bill, known to have been his property.

"The police want you in jail until you die Bill..... I just hope they get their wish."

No Beetle in the car to drive him home, Tom had kept his team well away from the potential consequences if it all went wrong. Besides, what the kid didn't know, he couldn't tell.

Tom had made both the threatening calls to Tasha Wallis, knowing she was in on the plan.

"Gruff angry voice, do it for real Tom." Simon had told him. "The timings will then be right and if by some one in a million chance someone is recording the call....."

Tom had made both calls, the second telling her she'd was going to die the same way as Olivia. He'd hated doing it, he'd never hurt a woman in his life. If only Tasha Wallis hadn't gasped when he'd threatened her.

"All over now though, all done."

Tom drove south, wondering if a drinking club he knew in Deptford was still in business. Not a night to get drunk, he just needed one or two to take the edge off.

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"Looks impressive, all lit up like a Christmas tree." Said Mabina.

Clufford Hall on the edge of the New Forest, not far from Sopley. Hopefully far enough from anywhere to avoid gunshots being heard, though they weren't relying on that.

"Not a huge local police force." Sam had told them. "If they do arrive it will be after driving for miles with their sirens on."

At one time schools sent kids to Clufford Hall, it was a favourite destination for school journeys. That was before an offshore company had bought the property and the land surrounding it for just over eight million. The Psochics were thorough, Magda had everything in a printed report, with floor plans and pictures.

"Ownership is hard to trace, but we're certain the Silver Dawn own it."

Magda had gone on to tell them about the Silver Dawn, describing them a group with similar interests to the Psochics. Words like rivals had been used, but Laura definitely got the idea that deadly enemies and nemesis were probably more accurate.

"They've got money." Sam had mentioned. "You'll be up against well trained guards with modern weapons."

"And every occult force that they can summon." From Magda.

A real challenge, Laura was looking forward to it. She took the sniper rifle out of its case and rested it on the top of a rock she'd carried all the way from her SUV.

"I still don't know why you couldn't fit a silencer to that thing." Muttered Mabina.

"Silencers take away accuracy and range, we talked about this."

The building in front of them really was well lit, as were the well cared for gardens in front of it. That much light wasn't about the new owners seeing the estate in all its night time glory. That kind of lighting was about seeing and discouraging would be burglars.

"I count seven guards between us and the front of the building." Said Laura. "More will be waiting to come outside in the event of an attack and there are more on the roof. This isn't going to be as easy as recovering the last two artefacts. When you're ready, I'll thin out the opposition a little."

The problem wasn't death from a bullet to the head or heart, that wasn't impossible, just unlikely. The problem was a bullet anywhere that slowed either of them down. Clufford Hall had to be a fast in and fast out job, just in case a nosy local farmer heard the gunfire and called the police.

"I'm ready when you are; I just hope I remember how to use this thing." Said Mabina.

Not an antique weapon, Mabina had brought a modern tournament bow and a quiver full of arrows. All the way down in the SUV, she'd been boasting about winning medals for archery when she was younger. Personally Laura preferred her rifle, but the bow did seem to suit Mabina.

"I'll start with the guards directly in our path."

Laura began to feel for heart beats and found something else inside the seventeenth century building. The vague feeling of something vast and supernatural she'd been expecting, but not the slow steady heartbeat deep inside the house.

"Do you feel it Mabina, something in there that's not quite human?"

"No, but it doesn't surprise me. I've heard of this Silver Dawn, they're not just occultist. Rumours talk of them being expert practitioners of the dark arts."

"Now you tell me."

The range to any of the guards wasn't a struggle for her rifle and the lighting was perfect. Add on a non-existent breeze and conditions couldn't have been better. Practise targets don't react though, targets don't work out what's going on and run for cover. Targets definitely didn't shoot back.

"Such a waste of blood." She muttered.

"Just get on with it." Hissed Mabina.

A shot to the chest gave a bigger target, but the guards were almost certain to have body armour. Laura placed the telescopic gunsight on the guard's nose and fired. A flash of red behind his head, and the man was down. No time to think about it, she moved her rifle to the right and focused the sight on the second closest armed guard. He was looking about, her rifle wasn't designed to be silent. It might have been a mistake by another guard though, he still wasn't reacting like a man under attack. Her shot was a little low, hitting him in the throat. That would do though, the thrashing arms and legs meant he was no longer a threat. One of the guards was firing, but not in Laura's direction. Confusion sometimes happened in battles, Simon had told her of soldiers charging the wrong way in trench warfare.

"Is that it?" Asked Mabina.

"No, not yet."

Three shots with a very quick aim. Two were good hits, almost certain kills. The third was a bit suspect, she might have hit his left shoulder. No time to try again, the guards knew where they were now. A burst of automatic fire hit the ground far too close for comfort.

"Now we go." She said.

The sniper rifle went over her shoulder on its strap as she held her beloved Glocks, one in each hand. Laura ran to her left, towards the cover of several well grown rhododendron bushes. Mabina put an arrow against her bow and ran to the right.

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Cyril Carter had expected a call from the police in the early hours of the morning. Not a phone call either, but a few burly uniformed coppers bashing on his door. Times changed though and even the police seemed to be more civilised, sometimes. When the large car arrived on his driveway it wasn't even full, just three of them and only one in uniform. Cyril was quite disappointed when they rang his doorbell and waited for him to open the door. Where were the twenty aggressive coppers waving truncheons and threatening to bash the door in. It was all a bit tame.

"Must be the cuts." He muttered.

An old adversary was standing at his door, though he was a bit older and plumper than the last time they'd met. Detective Chief Inspector Harry Beck he'd been then, but Cyril had heard he'd been promoted again. His one-time nemesis must have been doing well, his suit looked expensive.

"Come in Harry, it's been a while."

They left the uniformed man to stand just inside his front door, as if a middle aged purveyor of artificial meat products might try to make a run for it. Cyril decided to take it as a compliment. He took Jack through into the lounge, the other man in a suit following them.

"I thought my days of looking into the affairs of William Jarrold were over Cyril. Then I got a phone call while trying to enjoy my bowl of muesli." Said Jack.

"I didn't expect them to send you Jack; I thought it'd be a detective constable in the usual crumpled suit."

They hadn't even sat down and the other man was getting agitated.

"So you know why we're here?" He asked.

"Of course I do.....I still have my sources in the Met." Said Cyril. "I probably got a call about a body being found before you did. And that the body was likely to be that of Olivia Reed, a forensics expert with the police until she disappeared."

Now that was what coppers were supposed to be like, the man was looking angry and getting his phone out a pocket.

"That information hasn't been released to the public." He said. "I must formally caution you that....."

"No caution Burnett, go and wait in the car." Said Jack. "Go on and take the uniformed officer with you. Cyril and I have a few old stories to share..... Go on, fuck off."

He went and as he left, Jack began to look through the cupboards in the lounge. Cyril was feeling a definite rosy glow of nostalgia for the old days and wasn't about to ruin it by mentioning things like search warrants.

"Do you want to know what I think Cyril?"

It was a rhetorical question of course. Cyril had been asked the same question dozens of times by dozens of police officers. Never once had any of them expected a reply.

"It's all a bit too neat, a bit too convenient for anyone who might want Bill to stay behind bars for the rest of his natural. A body lost for years turns up, looking in perfect condition.... The lab boys are loving that. I'm sure there will be lots of DNA found, all belonging to Bill. The young'uns like Burnett will think that's wonderful, but you and I.... We know it sounds like a fit up. Oh, for fuck sake Cyril, have you got a decent bottle of something in any of these cupboards?"

"Ahhh, I did wonder what you were looking for. All the drinks are in the kitchen these days; I've several decent bottles of single malt."

His guest didn't want anything to eat, just a tumbler full of scotch at room temperature. It was a bit early for Cyril, but he poured himself a glass to be sociable.

"Now where was I ? Yes, all that damned convenient evidence that fits too neatly together. Phone calls on a prehistoric phone, threats from henchmen. Not that we're worried about locking up Bill Jarrold for years. No one at the Met is going to try and dig too deeply into what's going on. I take it you'll be happy to see the last of Bill ?..... I need an answer to that Cyril."

"Oh yes, that would suit me just fine."

"Just no wars when you take over." Said Jack. "I heard rumours that you're working with some new people, quite dangerous people."

"Dangerous but professional Jack.... There will be no wars."

"Good to hear it....I'll finish my drink and then I must get Burnett back to the office. I'm sure he has lot of forms to fill in and boxes to tick."

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If you're already in a top security prison on an island, no one comes banging on the door to arrest you. William Jarrold knew he had problems when the prisoner officer who passed on his messages started blanking him. His solicitor had told him he was quite likely to be released, so he wasn't too concerned. Loyalties change, warnings were given by management. There were plenty of other prison staff with money problems and wives who expected the best in life. Bill began to worry when six warders came to escort him to the governor's office. Six of them ! It was ridiculous, he hadn't inflicted serious mayhem on a warder for years.

"We're to take you to see the governor, you're being transferred Jarrold."

"Can I box up my things ?"

"We'll do that later, after we've searched the cell."

After they'd searched his cell, that hadn't happened for a while. Two of the warders were on his payroll, yet they were giving him the granite eyes look. Something was going on and without contact with the outside world, he had no idea what.

"Don't cause trouble Jarrold, come with us."

He wasn't going to cause trouble, but he could see they wanted him to. Six prison officers who'd all taken a bribe for something, even if it was just bringing him in a Chinese meal on a Friday night. Now they were itching to give him a beating.

He wasn't taken to the governor's office, he hadn't expected to be. That was a generic term that could mean anything from a week in solitary, to a full invasive body search somewhere in the depths of the old Victorian prison. Parkhurst was officially now called HMP Isle of Wight, but no one ever used that name. Now officially only a category B prison, it still housed some dangerous criminals. Bill was taken to a room where more prison officers were waiting for him and two men with the look and feel of police detectives.

"Please confirm that you are William Jarrold." One of them said.

"Yes I am."

What the crap ?! If it was Cyril making a move to be top dog he'd regret it.

"You are being arrested for the abduction and murder of Olivia Reed. You will be taken to Belmarsh, where you will be interviewed under caution."

"I want to see my solicitor."

"They have been informed about the transfer to Belmarsh and you may call them when you arrive there."

Bill wanted to shout, he wanted to leave a few of the warders as wet blood stains on the floor. He wanted to shout out the details of what he was going to do to Cyril, for not incinerating Olivia's body. Of course he didn't do any of that.

“Take him out to the van.” Said one of the warders.

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