

## The Hornsey Vampires

(Season two of London's Night Stalkers)

### Chapter 5 – Crate E T H

**“She could see it in his eyes, he knew what she was. Simon had told her that in over seven hundred years, none of his victims had ever told him it was impossible, that vampires didn't exist. There was a deep memory, like feeling afraid of loud noises, fire and spiders. Deep down, really deep down, at some level all humans knew that vampires were real.”**

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Clara really had intended to tell him it was over, that their fling was at an end. Felipe had begun to bore her, though she wouldn't tell him that. She could only remember being deliberately cruel to two of her flings and they'd deserved it.

“Hmmm your skin smells of Aloes.” She said.

“Sorry, I ran out of shower gel and used hand soap.”

“No, it's nice..... I like it.”

She'd taken him into a room vacated that morning, asking the cleaner to leave it until last. It was a silly risk; the lady who ran the HR department was always looking for an excuse to fire her. Clara had a pretty good idea that being naked and engaging in sexual intercourse in one of the rooms was considered gross misconduct, a sacking offense.

“I missed you Clara..... We mustn't leave it as long next time.”

Would there be a next time ? He kissed her tummy and moved down, using his tongue in a way that drove her crazy. They had a repertoire worked out for their sex, a good repertoire.... It was just that something in her mind had decided she was finished with him, even if her body disagreed. Her mind won.

“That is wonderful Felipe.... But there will be no next time.”

He didn't stop, which surprised her. She'd ditched several flings while in the middle of sex and they invariably dressed, before leaving in a temper. Felipe carried on for some time, going in deep with his tongue, getting her wet. Eventually he moved up, his dick entering her. That too was a wonderful part of their routine. Routine was the problem, routine was for married couples. Routine was for sex with Simon, because she loved him.

“I'm sorry.” She whispered.

“No, I understand..... It's been fun.”

No more words were needed or said, the only sound was the steady beat of the headboard hitting the wall.

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There seemed to be a rule of the universe, that major events in someone's life, all wanted to occur at the same time. Vampires were not immune, with Daniel due to arrive in London, at about the same time Brendan was due to be in Jerusalem. Brendan Roche, yes they knew his full name, after Simon and Clara had visited a few local shops near Vlad's house. They all still thought of it as Vlad's house and probably always would. There was also the job for Bill, which was due to happen the following night.

“Oh Laura..... Hearing her voice is one thing, but seeing her.” Said Simon. “She came very close to killing me, permanently.”

“We did kill her,” she said, “and it should have been the permanent kind.”

The surveillance had been well organised, with Tom lending them a few vehicles so that Mabina wouldn't see the same one parked in her street. Tom hadn't asked any questions and probably assumed they were watching a competitor, a West London drug baron. Laura liked the old van they were using best, there was even room to stretch out and have a nap. The van was parked a few doors down from Vlad's house. A friend of Tom's had managed to place two Wi-Fi cameras in Mabina's neglected front garden. She and Simon were watching what the cameras saw, Mabina getting into her Mercedes.

“I knew we'd see her when her minion was away.” Said Simon. “I'm almost tempted to break in and be waiting for her when she returns.”

“Clara will be annoyed.” Said Laura. “We all solemnly promised there'd be no more spur of the moment attacks, no homicidal impulses, as she put it.”

“I know Laura... I know, it's just so damn tempting.”

They'd talked about it all one night, for what had felt like the entire night. The problem of dealing with Mabina and probably more importantly, the horror which lay beneath the dirt floor in her basement.

“Several thousand decaying bodies, some of them interred just after the war.” Clara had said. “We should treat this as an opportunity to do something about it.”

“I agree it's a potential problem.” Simon had agreed. “But how do we get rid of what must be hundreds of tons of soil and rotting remains ? It'll stink for one thing, the neighbours will call someone, maybe the police.”

“Concrete, we could pour concrete over it all.” Laura had suggested. “Turn it into a house without a cellar.”

“Might work, but we'd need to control the house for quite a while.” Said Simon.

That had been agreed upon as something which needed to happen. They'd taken an oath and vampire oaths were rare and never given lightly. Whoever survived the coming battle with Mabina, swore to deal with the Vlad's house problem. Taking the house over permanently would be investigated. Everyone loved the house in Hornsey, but as Clara had pointed out;

“A second home might be useful if we need to make an escape one day.”

The Wi-Fi cameras didn't have night vision, though Mabina did have a streetlight near her driveway. As Laura watched the grainy image on the screens, she found it hard to equate the crippled lady getting into her car, with the powerful vampire who'd come so close to killing Simon.

“She's having trouble getting into her car.” She said. “And that car.... It's not her usually type of transport. It's hardly low profile.”

“I'm guessing it was Brendan's choice.” Said Simon. “Power steering, large comfortable seats. It's not a bad choice of wheels for a sickly vampire.”

They watched the screen, as the Merc turned left out of the driveway and out of the range of the cameras. They'd learned quite a lot from watching the house for several nights. There was no team of muscle bound minions, just Brendan. They'd also learned that until he returned from Jerusalem, their nemesis was alone in the house.

“Are we going to involve Daniel in all this ?” She asked. “He does think he's coming to London for a vacation. He's bringing Gwen and Jack with him to see the sights.”

“Who is Jack ?”

“Gwen's son, the boy.”

“Oh, right... Did Daniel tell you his name ?”

“Yes, when he last called, he didn’t even need to think about it. He’s helping Gwen find a tutor for Jack, someone to improve his language skills.”

“Crap ! Daniel must be well and truly in love with Gwen.” Said Simon.

“Hmmm, becoming a vampire seems to have humanised him a bit.”

They both chuckled as the cameras showed them an empty house, with just a few lights showing through the upstairs windows. If it was to deter burglars it was a mistake. Always the same lights and always left on all night.

“I say we give her an hour to get home, before calling it a night... Agreed ?” Asked Simon.

“Agreed, I want some more time in my Den tonight. I might be able to find out some more information about why Brendan went to Jerusalem.”

Two weeks and despite a good start, she hadn’t managed to dream within a dream again. She’d tried getting drunk again, downing half a bottle of vodka before sleeping, or more accurately, passing out. That hadn’t helped and she’d spent a day at the hotel, nursing a hangover.

“I meant to ask about this devourer creature.” Said Simon. “Can he help us fight Mabina ? Is there some way you can aim him at her ?”

The question was an obvious one, she’d expected it sooner. Sadly she still didn’t understand the rules for using her devourer as a weapon.

“I don’t really know Simon, it’s so hard to communicate with just yes and no. If I ask him about attacking another vampire, he just goes silent, sometimes for quite some time. I think he’d protect me from her, but even then I’m just guessing.”

“Can’t you talk to the seer in the forest ?”

Sometimes she wished she’d told them nothing. Everything she mentioned to Simon and Clara sounded so weird when they talked about it. There was no way to explain the dream world, it needed to be experienced.

“It’s the realm of dreams Simon, nothing is straightforward. I rarely get to talk to Wiremi the seer and when I do, he can be quite cryptic.”

“No pressure Laura, but your devourer might make all the difference in a fight.”

“I know, I’ll keep talking to him and have another go at dreaming within a dream.”

There was no sign of Mabina returning home within the hour. Laura drove the old van back to Hornsey, before going to her secret sanctuary, her den.

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Brendan Roche discovered he wasn’t a good flyer on a cheapo charter flight to Benidorm. He’d hoped the larger and more modern BA airbus might not trigger the feelings of nausea, but it had, the instant the wheels had left the tarmac. Luckily he’d pre-warned Liz and taken several travel sickness tablets. The flight to Israel was going to be hell, though he was hoping to avoid actually throwing up.

“Oh, you poor thing. Can I get you anything ?” Liz had asked.

“I’ll be fine, just ignore me if I groan.”

She actually patted the back of his hand. He’d slept with Liz twice in the past two weeks, which had made him feel more confident around her. Not just confident, he now thought of her as a friend. As for the sex ? Oh, the sex had been staggering, the earth had well and truly moved. Sex so good it was worth going to hell for.

There had been a bad moment, when one of the cabin crew had insisted on telling him about the meal choices. He made it though, a full five hour flight with headaches, nausea and one panic attack, but no actually vomiting.

“You’ve been very brave Brendan.” Liz had told him. “I’ll make sure you have really nice time tonight.”

Those few words had made everything better and prepared him for the next irksome part of the journey. He was tired and just wanted to go to their hotel and take a shower, preferable not on his own. Like many other travellers, his plans were ruined by what had to have been conceived as a joke. Someone had decided to build the airport for Tel Aviv in the middle of nowhere, it almost felt like an international airport had been dropped into a random part of the desert. Tel Aviv was about twenty six kilometres away and Jerusalem nearly sixty kilometres.

“Stupid damn place to build an airport.” He’d ranted.

“Shush, you’ll upset the locals. I’ll drive while you get some sleep.”

They had a hire car booked, but he hadn’t expected to be able to sleep. He had though, dropping off as Liz drove out of the airport and not waking up until they were in the outskirts of Jerusalem. He blinked a little, before rubbing the sleep out of his eyes. It suddenly hit him, he was being driven through the streets of Jerusalem, he was in the holy land.

“The city, it’s beautiful.” He said.

“We’re not far from the hotel.”

“Have you stayed there before ?” He asked.

“No, but your employer has booked us into the best in the city.”

The American Colony Hotel was in a good location and he’d spent some time looking at the pictures on trip advisor. Nothing had prepared him for the opulence of the hotel entrance. He tensed a little, as someone seemed to appear out of nowhere to park their car.

“Relax Brendan, learn to strut a little.” Said Liz. “Act as though you own the place, that you’re doing them a favour by staying here.”

Checking in was mercifully fast and he was soon enjoying a long hot shower. He wasn’t on his own either, he and Liz taking it in turns to use the shower gel on each other.

“Did you arrange anything with Sam Isaacs ?” She asked.

“No, we’re just going to turn up at his address in the morning.”

“Is that wise ? He might not like uninvited guests.”

For a moment he wondered if she was right, but Mabina had been quite insistent about not warning Sam about calling on him.

“My employer told me Sam is too clever, too clever by half.” He said. “If we call him he’ll have time to think up mischief, perhaps even tell others about our presence in Jerusalem. I’m told dealers in antiquities are often like that. My orders are to simply turn up unannounced.”

“Yes, I see the sense in that.” Said Liz.

She was gently using a sponge to move suds around his most sensitive area, which made him forget all about Sam Isaacs, who was said to be far too clever for own good. Brendan looked down at Liz and saw her perfect figure and her gorgeous face.

“You are the most beautiful woman I’ve ever seen.”

“Strut Brendan, behave as though you always live like this. Believe it yourself and this Sam Isaacs will believe it too.”

“I will try Liz, I will try.”

She turned off the water and they took it in turns to dry each other, before dressing and trying out the hotel restaurant.

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There was a sign in a first floor window saying 'Brown & Sons,' but it looked old and faded. Simon looked up at a building that could have been anything. They're dotted all over every major city, anonymous buildings that could be anything from harmless warehouses to drug factories. They'd decided to use one of Tom's vehicles, an old cable repair van. It was raining hard, which was a blessing; passers-by don't dawdle or loiter about in bad weather.

"One last look at the floor plans." He said.

"Really ? We know them by heart." Said Laura.

"It can't hurt Laura." Said Clara.

Bless her for backing him up, though he knew Clara was keen to begin their little job for Bill Jarrold. He was keen himself, after realising they could feed on anyone they liked. All they had to do was make sure the fire was intense enough to remove any evidence of soft tissue damage, puncture wounds from fangs.

"I'll destroy the junction for the phones here." He said, jabbing a finger at the plans.

"While I follow the instructions on how to disable the alarms." Added Clara.

They were all going through the main doors together, trying to neutralise the opposition as quickly as possible. They were going to wear body armour, even a vampire will die from a bullet through their heart. Gunfire was their enemy for another reason, the noise was likely to be heard and mean the arrival of Van Helsings, vans full of them.

"No matter how hard we try to stop it, there will be gunfire." Said Simon. "Once it starts we need to be out of the building within ten minutes, carrying the crate. There needs to be a fire raging in the basement by then too, one that'll be hard to put out."

"So we're definitely going to keep the crate ?" Asked Laura.

"Yes." He replied.

Clara was nodding furiously, it had been her idea to take the crate as an extra unofficial bonus.

"If what it contains is valuable, we'll keep it." She said. "If not, we'll destroy the crate. Either way as far as Cyril is concerned, we'll have carried out his instructions."

He had a sword from his days as an assassin for the Medici and Clara had the Yemeni Janbiya, her blade of choice for several centuries. Laura had one of his Italian blades, priceless, made by the best Florentine weapon smith. He could still see the disappointment on her face.

"Sorry Laura, use your blade and feed as you move through the building. No gunfire unless they shoot first and even then.... We'll be too busy for you to go all Lara Croft with your guns."

"I know..... I'll behave... I promise."

It wasn't a part of the city likely to have much in the way of CCTV, but they were taking no chances. Hoods up, blades under their jackets, they became almost invisible once they were in the shadows. Simon used his bare hands to rip the cover off the BT junction box. The men inside would still have mobile phones, but the tip of his blade made sure no one would be calling in or out on a landline. Clara with her more nimble fingers, had the job of bypassing the alarm system.

He joined Laura at the main doors, waiting for Clara. The torrential rain was perfect, better than a thousand policemen at keeping trouble off the streets, or so he'd heard. The street glittered with the bouncing rain drops. On a good night there would have been people walking past, there was a cellar bar just two streets away. The rain gave them privacy, keeping all sensible souls indoors. To add to the perfection, he heard the first roll of thunder. Thunder would confuse the sound of gunfire, planting doubt in the mind of anyone who thought they heard shots. Clara joined them, another soundless shadow in sodden clothing.

"Ready ?" He asked.

Two nodding heads. It takes a very strong door to resist the strength of a determined vampire and the doors weren't particularly strong. One good hard kick and they burst inwards.

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Daniel hadn't appreciated what an expensive city London had become. The taxi fare to the airport in Aberdeen had always disturbed him a little, but the fare from Heathrow to Central London, was giving him palpitations. He didn't argue, he'd promised Gwen a decent week's holiday, so he wasn't about to start their stay in London with a row. No tip though, he had to show his disapproval in some way. The taxi driver muttered something before driving off, something probably unpleasant.

"Is this our hotel Daniel?" Asked Gwen. "It's beautiful."

It was beautiful, all glittering glass and windows full of lush looking palms. Even the torrential rain didn't stop the front of the hotel from looking opulent and expensive. Not that Daniel was going to begrudge the cost, Gwen needed a break, the boy needed a holiday and so did he. Daniel had a rarely used Amex card and his bank balance was fairly healthy. A week in a five star hotel would make a dent in his finances, but not a serious one.

"Let me help with those sir."

A man in a uniform with a trolley, another with an umbrella. Their bags were quickly loaded onto the trolley and they were inside, away from the awful weather.

"Are we really going to stay here?" Asked the boy.

"Yes Jack, for a whole week." Said Gwen.

She held the boy's hand, but he wasn't a boy any longer. It was just his brain, his mind, whatever lurked inside his head that kept him locked into childhood. They'd worried about Jack, it was his first trip in a plane. The boy had enjoyed it though, fully formed sentences coming out of his mouth at the rate of two an hour, positively garrulous for the normally taciturn Jack.

"We've a booking." He told the young man behind the counter. "A suite for three."

Daniel produced the booking details he'd printed out and his Amex card. There was that few seconds of nervousness, as the man swiped his card.

"Thank you sir, enjoy your stay."

The key seemed to be a thin strip of plastic, handed to the man with their cases on a trolley.

"This way please. I'll show you how everything works in your suite. First time in London?"

"No, but I haven't been here since the eighties." Said Gwen.

"Will Clara be here soon?" Asked Jack.

"No, we'll see her tomorrow." Replied Daniel.

The man with the trolley realised Jack was a little 'special' as people tend to say nowadays. He told him the button to press, while Jack seemed immensely pleased with himself, as the lift began to rise. They would be seeing both Clara and Laura the next day, as he'd booked into their hotel. Laura had been a little quiet when he'd suggested it, but Clara had been very keen.

"Brilliant Daniel, I'll be able to keep an eye on you."

No meeting them at the airport, they had something to do that evening, something important. The man pushing the trolley began to upsell to Gwen as soon they came out of the lift.

"We've a full service beauty salon on the premises and a qualified masseuse."

Daniel tried to cringe without showing it, their holiday was likely to be more expensive than he'd budgeted for.

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As they'd agreed, Laura turned left once through the doors, while Clara turned right. Simon went straight ahead, whispering in the quiet voice that even other vampires could barely hear.

“Have fun children.” She heard him whisper.

The lighting was just a few emergency lights and signs pointing towards fire exits. The building looked derelict and deserted, though they knew it wasn't. Laura hurried along the corridor, quickly checking each room she passed for signs of life. Her disappointment at not being able to use her guns was quickly forgotten, as she remembered the pleasure of hunting with just a blade and her fangs.

“Who is.....Ohhhh.”

He hadn't heard her, humans rarely hear an approaching vampire who doesn't want to be heard. Her left hand went over his mouth, as her right jammed the assassin's blade hard into his thigh. Not to kill, just to incapacitate. If her wet hands lost their grip, he wasn't going to be running very far.

“Thank you.” She whispered.

Her hold didn't slip and once her fangs were in his neck, he wasn't going to reach for the gun jammed down his belt. Laura drank deeply, loving the feel of hot fresh blood in her throat. The pleasure was intense, only sex was better. For a few seconds everything she looked at was given a red tinge, like looking through a crimson filter. She drank too fast for the euphoria to kick in, she had two upper floors to clear of enemies. After carefully lowering his body to the ground, she moved on.

“Theo.....Are you sleeping again ? The boss will.....”

Laura never did hear what the boss would do to poor Theo, whose blood was still staining her teeth. No time to feed, though she had promised herself one more feed that night, hopefully a more leisurely experience than Theo. She grabbed the man, clamping her hand over his mouth, while thrusting her blade up under his ribs. He grunted twice before dying.

“Such a waste.” She quietly muttered.

All that blood, left to form a puddle on the grubby floor. There were no other men between her and the staircase. She went up, the others were going down. It was her job to clear the upper floors, before joining the Simon and Clara in the basement.

Laura heard a single muffled gunshot as she reached the top of the stairs and checked the first two rooms. A shot so muffled that she doubted if anyone outside the building had heard it. She certainly wasn't about to start using her much loved Glocks. Laura had rediscovered the pleasure of using a blade to subdue and kill.

“Did you hear that ? Sounded like a gunshot.”

“Nahh boss, just the thunder.”

They couldn't see her standing in the shadows, but she could see them. A large man sat behind a desk, his face lit up by a desk lamp. One man stood to his left and another had just looked straight at her, without seeing her.

“Shall I check downstairs boss ?”

“No, you're right, it'll be the thunder.”

As the man turned back towards the room, she ran at him, plunging her blade into the back of his neck. The tip appeared through the front of his throat, accompanied by a powerful stream of hot blood. Such a waste, yet it had served its purpose, the boss behind the desk looked terrified.

“Christ !” Yelled the man to her right.

The boss seemed frozen to the spot, but his surviving minion was reaching for a gun. Laura pulled her blade out of the dead man, letting his body fall to the floor. No human could match a vampire for speed in a fight and humans were always acting with restraint, even the really good fighters. Laura showed no restraint, as she rammed her blade into the minion's eyes, briefly pinning his head

to the wall. The boss didn't move, he barely breathed as she pulled her weapon free and let the minion fall.

"What do you want?" Asked the boss.

She had to look terrifying, her face and jaws covered in blood, which was dripping onto her clothing. There would be no hurrying this one, she'd earned the euphoria that came from a leisurely feed. Not too leisurely of course, five minutes would do it.

"You, I want you." She said.

He didn't resist as she dragged him onto the desk, turning him over so she could get at his throat. She could see it in his eyes, he knew what she was. Simon had told her that in over seven hundred years, none of his victims had ever told him it was impossible, that vampires didn't exist. There was a deep memory, like feeling afraid of loud noises, fire and spiders. Deep down, really deep down, at some level all humans knew that vampires were real.

"Thank you." She muttered.

Her fangs went in deep, penetrating his Jugular vein. Never an artery, that was messy and killed the human too quickly. Laura drank, enjoying every drop. She was approaching that wonderful euphoric state, when she heard a gunshot. Damn, she really needed to join the others, but the blood tasted so good. There was the sound of another shot, the sound louder now, with more of a bark to it. Laura leant back, allowing her fangs to go back into her head.

"Fuck!" She yelled.

The need for quiet had gone, she really did need to hurry up and join the others. She was angry though, her sex life had been crap lately and now her feeding had been spoiled. The boss was still alive, though she doubted if he'd survive the loss of blood. Laura leant forward again, biting deep, using all the strength in her jaws. She pulled up and back, before spitting out a bloody section of his windpipe. He was drowning, choking on his own blood. A nasty and wasteful way to kill anyone, but it made her feel so much better.

Simon had mentioned only having ten minutes after the first audible gunshot. Laura remembered the floor plan and ran towards the closest stairs leading down.

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Simon too had fed on the first armed guard he'd found, though several centuries of feeding during battles had taught him to drink quickly and move on. He had no idea who the men were or who they worked for. They were just on the wrong side in a gangland squabble. They were an impasse, a problem to be removed.

"How many are down there?" He hissed, quietly.

The man guarding the top of the stairs had been armed with a long barrelled shotgun, until Simon had taken it off him. The guard had been alert and doing his job, it was the lighting which had been his downfall. The glow of the emergency lighting left deep shadows, perfect conditions for a vampire who'd once been an assassin for the Medici. Simon moved his hand slightly, allowing the guard to talk.

"Fuck you."

The sword Simon was using was old, it would have been a prized exhibit in any museum of militaria. Its blade was strong though, the cutting edge still as sharp as the day Umberto the legendary swordsmith had presented it to him. Simon had been told the blade would last a lifetime and it had, many lifetimes. He held the Guard's jaw firmly, his fingers blocking any screams.

Simon pushed the tip of his sword into the guard's thigh. Not deep enough to cause a massive loss of blood, but deep enough to cause pain, intense pain. He then slowly ran the blade right down the man's leg, from thigh to ankle.

"Ready to tell me now?"

He was holding the head too tight for it to move far, though there was a slight nodding movement. Simon eased his hold a little.

"Five men and Rutger."

"What's so special about Rutger?"

"You'll see, he's huge. Rutger is built like a train."

Simon used his fangs to turn the guard into a harmless rag doll. Even Daniel didn't understand how the neurotoxin worked, but it worked in seconds. A snapped neck finished the job, before Simon quietly descended the stairs. He stopped being cautious and began to run, after hearing the first gunshot.

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Clara had stolen the curved Yemeni Janbiya from a merchant from the east, a visitor to England in the early eighteenth century. In those days stealing was as good a way as any of obtaining the things you needed, as long as you weren't caught. Having vampire strength and speed meant Clara was never caught. Her first kill was going to be messy, she liked it that way if there was the opportunity. Nearly all the time her kills had to be clean, precise, designed to make sure no one saw anything strange, nothing that screamed vampire. In truth she yearned to be covered in the blood of her kills, almost ached for it.

"See this?"

Clara had already taken a pistol off the man and made sure he wasn't carrying any other weapons. She held the razor sharp blade in front of his eyes, the metal glinting in the light from an emergency exit sign. She had her hand over his mouth, but the man could nod.

"How many men in the basement?"

She gave his lips just enough of a gap between her fingers to speak. Someone had bitten her fingers once, though he'd regretted it during the hour she'd taken to kill him.

"Six including Rutger."

"Rutger?"

"The boss hired him.....Austrian I think, real hard case."

No using her fangs, she pushed her blade in just below his left ear and dragged it round, opening up his whole throat. There was something wonderful about feeding on the fountain of blood coming from his ruined throat, something primal. He was squirming, his racing heart adding to the amount of blood, far too much for her to drink. It was all wonderful and she was managing to ensure no part of it was making any audible sounds.

"Thank you."

She'd thought Laura's habit of thanking her kills was crazy, but she'd begun to do it herself. She carefully let the body crumple, placing it on the ground. Clara looked down at her clothes, which were covered in blood. They'd all brought spare clothing in the van, knowing things could get messy. She was covered in the hot blood of her enemy, almost a sacred thing to a vampire.

Clara felt elated, she wanted to shriek, she wanted to hammer her fists on the wall, she wanted to shout her defiance at any who might try to stand in her way. Centuries of being careful won in the battle with her emotions though, they always did. It was a very cool and calm Clara who walked down the stairs, straight into the path of a guard armed with an assault rifle.

“We’re being attacked !” Shouted the guard. “Get fucking Rutger !”

Fate did that sometimes, walking you right into the path of one of the guards you’ve been trying to quietly deal with. No feeding, Clara used her Janbiya, once to cut his throat and a thrust up under his ribs, with a quick twist to destroy his heart. The body still twitched as she dropped it to the ground, but the guard was already dead.

“Here, here..... Christ ! There’s something here.....It just killed Dillon.”

She probably did look more like an It, than a woman. Her face and hair were covered in blood, which was rapidly congealing and she was holding a blood covered antique weapon. The man coming up the stairs fired twice, both bullets hitting her ballistic vest. She felt the bullets hit, but there was no pain, no being thrown across the room. Clara didn’t like guns, though she had taken the time to find out how they worked, how they killed. Bullets travelled very fast, but had very little mass and low momentum. Bullets killed by penetration, not blunt force trauma. A human would have been winded, maybe suffering a cracked rib. Clara just felt anger as she ran towards the man.

“Help !”

He said nothing else, Clara used her fangs to subdue him, before opening a few arteries to silence him forever. Like Laura, she felt saddened by the waste of so much precious blood.

Clara had expected to meet Rutger on the stairs, as she ran down the final two flights and into the basement. She didn’t see anyone, either the cries for help had been ignored, or the guards were considered expendable. The lighting was only slightly better in the basement, still only a few emergency lights, though there appeared to be quite a few of them. Clara saw movement on the other side of the room and centuries of being lovers told her the movements belonged to Simon. He was pointing to the other end of the room, something hidden behind rows upon rows of boxes.

“Anyone runs, I’ll gut them... I mean it.”

No hint of an Austrian accent, but she assumed it was Rutger giving his troops a bit of a pep talk. Simon put his finger to his lips and began to move. Clara walked slowly and silently along her side of the boxes, which seemed to be full of sanitary products.

“He said ‘It’ got Dillon. What the fuck is up there Rutger ?”

They’d left a flickering fluorescent turned on inside the stores cage, which was a mistake. Clara could see them, but they couldn’t see her. The guy on the stairs must have been one of the five, Rutger now only had four men to help him guard the door to the cage.

“Shut up you idiot.” Spat Rutger. “It’s just a few men sent by William Jarrold. We’ll take care of them easily enough.”

It had to be Rutger talking, he was one of the biggest men she’d ever seen and none of it was fat. The assault rifle he was carrying looked like a toy in his huge hands. The others looks scared, terrified more than likely. Rutger looked happy to be there though, like a berserker waiting to enter Valhalla. There was no way to communicate with Simon, though she knew he’d begun his attack when the men in front of her gasped.

“Rutger.” She yelled. “I’m going to kill you.”

Clara raised her blade high and ran at the huge monster of a man.

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As Laura ran down the stairs, her first thought was that there was an awful lot of unrequited stuff in her emotional baggage. Not love, no it definitely wasn’t love she needed. Biting out the boss man’s throat though, that was pretty hard core, even for an angry vampire.

“I need regular sex.” She muttered.

She needed to find a cute looking guy and start a proper relationship. Nothing one night stand about it or the weird flings Clara always engaged in. Laura needed a nice guy, though she wouldn't complain if he was hung like a donkey. A relationship meant to last.....For at least for six months. Laura stopped and listened, as an assault rifle was fired somewhere below her. There'd be no confusion about that when it was heard outside, no thinking that steady bark was thunder. No time for caution, she drew both of her guns and ran down to the basement and right up to the stores cage.

"Where have you been ?" Asked Clara. "Didn't you hear the gunfire ?"

"I found their boss on the first floor."

"Did you kill him ?" Asked Simon.

"Yes."

Laura was totally absorbed by the huge body on the floor. There were other dead men, but the huge carcass seemed to fill that end of the room. It would taste bitter, but she had to taste his blood. Laura ran her finger over a wound in his neck and licked her finger.

"Laura.... Meet Rutger." Said Clara.

"He's like something out of a super hero film. Who killed him ?" Asked Laura.

"Simon."

"Clara helped."

"No I didn't, he's being modest. Simon killed the brute before I could reach him."

"If only we could cut off his head and put it on the kitchen wall." Said Laura.

She could hear the others struggling to get something out of the stores caged area. They were carrying a crate out of the stores, a long crate with E T H stencilled on it, though they had no idea what the letters meant."

"What can I do." Asked Laura.

"Set the charge, it's in my backpack I left in the cage." Said Simon.

Laura found the backpack and placed the explosive charge on top of a barrel full of chemicals with a highly inflammable sticker. Two wires to connect and the device was ready.

"How long do want on the timer Simon ?"

"Five minutes and fill the pack with some tablets."

"Which ones ?"

"The ones in the bags marked with a blue square, they sell for a small fortune."

After filling the backpack, she set the timer and pressed the green button as she'd been shown many times by Simon. This time wasn't a drill though, the digital timer began to count down from five minutes.

"Get in front of us Laura and shoot anything that moves." Said Clara.

Ever since buying her Glocks, she'd been dreaming of someone saying that to her. Laura went up the stairs with a gun in each hand, ready for anything.

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