

The Hornsey Vampires

(Season two of London's Night Stalkers)

Chapter 7 – A Sullied Offering

“A quarter of a million people vanish each year in the UK. Some are found or turn up years later, but only a few. Strangely mankind has never made much of an effort to discover why large numbers of people simply vanish, never to be seen again. The vampires could tell them why of course, but no one really believes in them.”

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“Oh, I’d forgotten we were entertaining Daniel tonight.” Said Laura.

Her plan relied on the flowers being fresh and anyway, she was desperate to see if her idea was right.

“Not just Daniel, he’s bringing Gwen and the boy with him.” Said Simon.

“But the flowers will die.”

“What flowers ?” Asked Clara.

“It’s complicated..... What time will they be here ?” Asked Laura.

“But you volunteered to help us get the place ready.” Said Simon.

“Please.....This is important.”

Laura knew everything was going to be fine when she saw Clara grinning at her.

“You’ve got two hours Laura and then you need to be down here, changed and ready to be charming..... Or you’ll be grounded for a month.”

Laura wanted to run straight up to her room, but the flowers were in the Tupperware box and that was in the bag she’d brought home from work. Collecting the bag from the kitchen, put her in range for another comment from Simon.

“Gwen doesn’t know what we are, so no calling up anything weird.” He said. “Especially something that makes growling noises.”

“I won’t.”

“Oh, don’t tell me she’s summoning monsters.” Said Clara. “Tonight of all nights.”

It was relief to get into her room with the door locked. She really had forgotten Daniel was bringing Gwen and the boy over for dinner. There was even a chance of them staying the night. There was just about enough room for them.

“You’re a silly bitch Laura Selway.” She muttered. “You’ve got to put important dates into your journal.”

She had learned one thing, her room was clean now, spotlessly clean with no sign of abandoned items of underwear. Laura opened the Tupperware box and examined the two large yellow blooms inside.

“Still perfect.”

Laura had no idea what plant the blooms were from; flowers had never really been her thing. Wiremi had picked a yellow flower in his world and given it to her as a gift. She was beginning to understand that nothing he did was done without purpose.

“No brushstroke is ever wasted.” She muttered.

It might be nonsense, her mind overthinking, but Laura thought she’d been offered a clue to talking to him in the world of dreams. She’d picked a yellow bloom in her world, and being a vampire she’d

stolen the yellow flowers from a bunch of wedding flowers at the hotel. The symbolism seemed important to her, though she had no idea why.

“Now I feel too excited to sleep.”

Laura sat on her fluffy bedside rug, her back against the bed, the yellow flowers in her lap. It had been a long hard day at work; she’d sometimes fallen asleep on the Piccadilly Line on the way home. As soon as the back of her head touched the blankets on her bed, she was asleep.

“Gudara, Gudara, Gudara.”

So familiar to her, the ancient forest sped by below her at its own pace. There was no way to hurry the trip; she’d tried so many times. The journey gave her time to compose her thoughts and gain focus on why she was there. As her foot touched the ground in that world, her body became corporeal. She looked down; the yellow flowers were still in her hands.

“Now we shall see Wiremi, now we shall see.”

Laura now felt no shyness around Wiremi; he had become an old friend to her, an annoying friend who seemed to always be out when she called. She sat in front of him, her back to the fire, her knees pushed hard up against his. Part of her was angry at him, even though she knew it was illogical.

Wiremi had his hands in his lap, palms upwards as though in supplication to some unknown deity.

Laura dropped the two yellow blooms into his hands and they began to glow.

“I knew it Wiremi, I knew it.”

His eyes changed, becoming more alert and looking straight at her. Laura knew he was there, really there, before he spoke to her.

“So Laura Selway, you are becoming your own seer.” He said. “I was certain you’d understand.... Eventually.”

“You could have just told me.”

“Then you’d have never understood something important.”

He was smiling at her and there was still something strange about him, something that marked him as not being human, or at least not the sort of human she was used to.

“I have come to ask about my Devourer.” She said. “Can I summon him to kill another vampire ?”

“No, that was not why he was given to you. He is after all, a vampire himself. There are three of you where you live Laura, surely you can deal with this vampire you wish to kill.”

It all sounded so easy when said like that, but Wiremi hadn’t seen what Mabina was capable of.

“We did kill her and she nearly killed Simon. Death didn’t finish her though, she’s come back Wiremi. Could I summon my devourer and walk him into her house ?”

Wiremi became agitated, perhaps even a little angry with her.

“Laura, such a lack of gratitude..... I have given you a weapon which is yours to summon at will. No human can hide from your Devourer, or beat him in battle. No walls can stop him, no enchantment can even slow him down. Be grateful for what you have.... But he will not kill another vampire for you.”

“I am sorry Wiremi, no ingratitude was intended.”

“You are still learning, I realise that. Tell me about this vampire who came back from true death Laura, tell me every detail ?”

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Mabina had understood the underlying symbolism for most of her life, the contrast of good versus evil, tainted contrasted with wholesome. Wasn’t Satan often called the unclean one ? Not that she believed vampires were Satan’s dark children, sent to feed on God’s creation, the billions of humans who infested the world like noisy, garish rats.

“We’re not the servants of any deity, I’m sure of it.” She muttered.

The clean against sullied meant something though, the underlying symbolism which few vampires understood, even though it controlled their lives.

“And deaths. Yes, I know why the offerings must be sullied, obvious really.”

She was sat in the medical room on the 1st floor of her house. Being surrounded by the tools of her trade was comforting. Most of the neighbours thought Mabina was a doctor, though she was really a fully qualified senior nurse. She’d specialised in geriatric care, looking after the elderly who often ended up living out their last few months of life in an NHS hospital. Bed blockers some called them, but Mabina often worked nights and enjoyed listening to nostalgic stories from the oldsters under her care. Even the occasional slip didn’t matter, she’d once compared notes on wartime London with a woman in her nineties.

“Alice died within two weeks and who would have believed her anyway ?” Mabina mumbled.

Mabina Gladitch still had her NHS contacts, though taking away a mini-bus full of terminally ill patients wasn’t likely to go unnoticed, even by the most over worked hospital administrator.

“I just need one..... To make sure it works.”

One would do and not all those considered terminally ill actually died. There was Neil Scoular, a tough little man from Glasgow, who had to be approaching his ninetieth birthday by now. Neil had been given three months to live before an inoperable pancreatic tumour sent him into the afterlife. He was a tough Scot though and simply refused to die. Eventually the consultant treating him had grudgingly accepted that Neil might not be at death’s door after all, and he’d been sent home.

“I seem to remember we got on rather well.”

She had a handwritten book in a drawer, her notes on most of the patients she’d treated at the local hospital. There hadn’t been any unpleasant intent about keeping the notes, just her control issues and a need for order in her life. The book was in date order and she knew there was an entry on the day Neil Scoular had been released.

“Address and phone number..... To think Roy complained about my obsession with details.”

She remembered Neil as a cantankerous old guy, ‘an independent old bastard,’ as he’d often described himself. Not the sort to have carers coming in every day, even if he had to be in constant pain. He was just the sort to soldier on, shunning all offers of help, until a neighbour noticed not seeing him out and about for a while. He might already be dead of course, she had been out of circulation for a while. Her hand hovered over the phone, before her well-honed instinct for survival stepped in.

“Elderly guy vanishes, the police might look at his phone records.”

Mabina quickly made up her mind to go there, to knock on his door. If a relative or carer came to the door, she was Mr Scoular’s nurse from the hospital, who’d come to see how he was doing. If he came to the door himself, she’d be let in, she was certain of it. Neil was then likely to be her first sullied offering to the hungry ground.

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Sam Isaacs often worked late into the night and when Judith went home, there was a man sat at the front desk, an armed man. The business district was usually a safe area, but a lot of dealers knew about his stock and how valuable it was. There were alarms, but having someone on the premises all night had reduced his insurance by half, and improved his peace of mind.

“I’m going to make some fresh coffee.” Said Yosef. “Can I get you anything ?”

“Coffee when it’s ready, with just a splash of milk.”

Yosef was wasted on just being an armed guard of course, Sam had poached him from the local police. Sam paid him twice what he'd ever earned risking his life on the streets. Yosef had shot and killed an armed robber once, which was important to Sam. There was no way of knowing if someone would actually use a gun, until the situation required it. No good yelling at a guard if he froze when someone was busting through the front doors. Sam was sure that if it came to it, Yosef would use the gun he carried. His phone rang, an overseas number he recognised.

"Magda, I didn't expect you to call back until tomorrow."

"You said it was important Sam. I checked the last known whereabouts of the artefacts you mentioned. As you suspected, four are in known locations in mainland Britain. It seems the early members of our order were like Lord Elgin, they believed in bringing everything home to England."

"And the fifth item Magda, where is that?"

"Here in Geneva with Jake Rice. He's a member of the order of course and will let you have the Half Moon of Thoth without an argument. He has already asked me about compensation though, the Half Moon is a priceless object."

Sam was the current head of the Psochic order, he could have simply ordered Jake to hand over the artefact. Times had changed though, since Howard Carter had been leader of their order. The world was more commercial and few were willing to simply give away valuable possessions.

"Yes, he will need to be compensated Magda. I'll leave the negotiations to you, but remind him of the vows he once gave. Pay him what you think is reasonable and I'll reimburse you. Thank you Magda I knew I could rely on you."

"Obtaining the other items won't be so easy Sam."

"I know and once I tell her what they are, she'll need our help to find them."

"You're certain it's her? There have been false sightings in the past."

Was her certain it was the old vampire queen, once empress of half of Eastern Europe? There was still a slight doubt in his mind, but he wasn't going to admit that to Magda.

"It's a feeling Magda and the questions she put together. I feel certain it's her, as certain as if she was sat here in my office. In return for our help she'll need to join the order, take our vows. Imagine what we can accomplish with her as a member of the order."

"It does sound exciting Sam. I won't trust a courier with the Half Moon, I'll bring it myself, if that's alright."

"Yes of course, it'll be good to see you."

She wanted to be there, to see the people from London with her own eyes, he could understand that. It might well be a time of rebirth for the order, all the members would want to be part of what he hoped was about to happen. Once Magda's call was over and Yosef had brought the coffee, Sam looked at the list of artefacts he needed to recover... Actually three were needed and two were for him. He just needed a powerful vampire to help him acquire the items from their current owners. Owners who might put up a stiff resistance to giving up the artefacts.

Half Moon of Thoth was on its way, a crystal the size of an orange and needed by the old vampire queen.

Scales of Pendally was a mixing bowl, again needed by the vampire.

Tooth of the Saint, oh how they'd loved such names in the middle ages. The tooth was a blunt dagger which was used with the mixing bowl.

Circle of Arcardis was for him, a golden torque which he'd wanted to own since reading about it when he'd been about twelve.

Egg of Astaroth wasn't really an egg, it was a metal disk. A disk which gave access to.... No he wasn't even going to think about it until he had the disc in his hands.

Sam wasn't going to tell the vampire or her people which items she needed, until they'd helped him recover them all.

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Neil Scoular opened his own front door, she'd guessed he would. He looked truly dreadful, which again was what she'd expected. She'd met terminally ill people like him before, holding on not because of a fear of death, but surviving on pure stubbornness.

"Neil, it's been a while..... It's Nurse Gladitch, if you don't remember me?"

"Of course I do nurse, you were one of the few people who talked sense in that place. Come in..... Did I miss another appointment or something?"

Good, he seemed happy to see her and obviously didn't realise she hadn't worked at the hospital for some time. He lived in a bungalow which was reasonably clean, 'pretty good for a guy living on his own,' was the phrase she'd heard so many times.

"There is a little concern when anyone misses an appointment." She said. "I'm just here to make sure you're alright Neil."

"Box ticking.....I understand. I hope you don't have to rush off? I can make tea if you've got time?"

"Tea would be nice."

She liked Neil, though liking someone didn't mean she wouldn't feed on them. The bungalow had been for his wife when her arthritis meant stairs were becoming a nightmare. Neil had outlived his wife and their two daughters. Mabina thought she was probably doing him a favour, by giving him a helping hand into the next life. He returned from the kitchen with two mugs of tea.

"Sorry about missing appointments. I put them under a magnet on the fridge and still forget."

"You seem to be doing well Neil."

"Can't complain..... Damn, see I forgot the biscuits."

She had been wondering how to get the sedative into his tea and he'd given her the perfect opportunity. At one time Mabina had been able to make a whole room full of people submit to her will, using just her voice. Since her death and rebirth though..... The brain fog had robbed her of so much. Hopefully the sedation would make Neil more open to her suggestions.

"The fig biscuits have been in the tin for a while, but the digestives are fresh."

Mabina talked to him for about forty minutes to give the pill time to work. Where she knew it, she told him the truth about other patients he'd known at the hospital. She happily filled in the gaps in her knowledge with invented stories.

"Yes, Archie went into remission and went home."

Archie might well have died, but it seemed a kindness to tell Neil what he wanted to hear. Eventually Neil seemed to be drifting slightly, his eyes closing at times.

"I have things to do at home Neil, but you could come with me."

"Not sure if that's a good idea, don't like to impose."

"Nonsense Neil, we can catch up on old times. It would mean so much to me."

Adding force of will to the end of the sentence was easy, but getting it work had proven difficult for quite some time.

"Yes nurse, that would be nice."

"You'll need a coat and your door keys."

She was staging a scene for when his disappearance was discovered. An old man likely to be suffering from mild dementia, who'd left home and never returned. He'd become just another statistic, another missing person.

A quarter of a million people vanish each year in the UK. Some are found or turn up years later, but only a few. Strangely mankind has never made much of an effort to discover why large numbers of people simply vanish, never to be seen again. The vampires could tell them why of course, but no one really believes in them.

"I like your car."

"So do I Neil, I've only had it for a few weeks."

She helped him buckle the seat belt and Neil was asleep, his head leaning back against the head restraint. Mabina drove fast, probably too fast, but she didn't see any speed cameras. She was keen to get Neil into the cellar and see if he was acceptable to the hungry ground.

"We're there, this is my house."

No resistance as she woke him and took him through the kitchen and down the stairs. Neil didn't even ask why he was being taken into a cellar with a dirt floor.

"Your house is nice."

An automatic response born out of natural politeness, even Mabina would never have described the cellar as nice. She led him over a shallow hole she'd made earlier, simply by using a rake in an area of fresh compost.

"Here Neil, stand still."

As the first drop of blood went down her throat, the sensation was pleasurable beyond description, almost as good as sex. The blood was all that mattered, not whose veins it had been flowing through. Mabina had fed on fit young athletes and those who'd been older and more frail than Neil. The blood was always wonderful, always with no exceptions. When his heart stopped, she dropped him into the hole and straightened out his body.

"If this doesn't work, I will order Brendan to kill Sam Isaacs." She muttered.

Using the rake to cover the body was easy, the fresh blood giving her strength, making her feel elated. Once Neil's body was covered by about three inches of compost she stepped back, not knowing what to expect.

It began quite slowly and arrived with a terrible stench of death. Long green tendrils appeared out of the hungry ground, pulling the compost away, allowing her to see the absorption on Neil's body. Absorption was the only word that fitted, as the tendrils oozed a foul smelling liquid, which digested the fresh, sullied offering. It took barely ten minutes, though the stench remained. Everything was absorbed by the hungry ground, the clothing, the bones, even the metal buckle on Neil's belt. The tendrils retreated into the dirt floor, leaving nothing but a hole in the ground and an awful lingering smell of corruption.

"You told the truth Sam and just earned your money."

The daunting thing was the thought of going through it all another five times. She felt better than she had since waking up in the cellar. It wasn't just the recent feed, she felt less drawn to the ground, less pestered to feed the soil floor. Mabina didn't run up the stairs, but getting to her medical room wasn't as tiring as it usual was. She called the number Brendan had given her for his hotel in Jerusalem.

"I'd like to speak to Brendan Roche, he's a guest there."

"I'll try his suite for you. May I know who's calling?"

"My name is Mrs Gladitch.... He's expecting my call."

Only a two hour time difference, Brenda was unlikely to have gone to bed, though he might be enjoying himself with Liz. It seemed to take him a long time to take her call.

"I wasn't expecting you to call so soon my queen. Good news I hope?"

"Yes Brendan, Sam Isaacs wasn't a liar or a fraud. Offer him the top number I agreed to pay him, more if you have to. I must have his notes and thoughts on the other questions I gave you."

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Clara liked having Daniel and Gwen in the house and Jack had proven to be far from stupid, with a wicked sense of humour. Gwen seemed to sense they wanted to talk to Daniel in private, going to bed quiet early.

"I'm used to getting up at five, this is late for me." She'd told them.

Wine was needed, probably quite a lot of it. Clara had a decent bottle of Merlot in one hand and a corkscrew in the other. Even from the kitchen, she could enjoy Laura teasing Daniel in the lounge.

"..... Alright I'll admit it Laura, I have a real problem with feeding on women."

"Daniel ! I never realised you were such a sexist." Said Laura.

Clara waited for the explosion, but it never came. If she or Simon had said that, Daniel would have been red faced and angry. Laura was the youngest though and allowed to get away with just about anything.

"I'm not sexist young lady..... Quite the opposite actually."

"No Daniel you're wrong, sexual equality means equality in everything, even being a meal for a hungry vampire."

Daniel laughing again, maybe turning him into a vampire had humanised him a little, though Clara would never have dared suggest it. She decided one bottle of Merlot wasn't enough. Clara opened another and took them both into the lounge.

"Clara..... You'll back me up on this. Tell this child I'm not sexist." Said Daniel.

"She has a point Daniel, not feeding on women is being a little sexist. We should always strive to be equal opportunity feeders."

"It makes it harder for the damn Van Helsing's to catch us." Added Simon.

"You are all mad, all three of you."

"You're probably right Daniel." Said Laura.

Another glass of wine each and Simon asked Laura about Tim, her new boyfriend. Seeing his chance for revenge, Daniel began to tease her.

"..... Leave me alone, we haven't even had a proper date yet." Pleaded Laura.

"He's keen though Laura, I can see it in his eyes when he talks to you." Said Clara.

Yes, she was betraying the great sisterhood, but it was fun to see Laura squirm a little.

"But..... Why don't we tell Daniel about the mystery woman?" Suggested Laura.

They had decided to keep the matter to themselves, Daniel would hardly thank them if an angry gang of London hoodlums came looking for him. Daniel was hooked though and Laura's love life forgotten.

"What mystery woman?" He asked.

"Nothing really, just something that came up in a recent job we did." Said Simon.

"Tell me about it?"

Simon had been busy; he'd spent his free mornings investigating the mystery body they'd left in the paintworks. He'd printed out quite a few pictures and press reports. The file was under the coffee table, hidden under two years' worth of unread copies of The Economist. Simon put the file on the table.

"I'm still not a hundred percent sure, but I think her name was Olivia Reed, a forensics expert with the police."

Simon opened the file, producing a print out of an old article in The Independent, about the disappearance of Olivia Reed. The picture in the paper showed a woman in her forties, with dark hair cut quite short. It was the sort of photograph the media obtained from relatives, probably an old passport photo. Olivia was unsmiling, her lips closed, her expression giving nothing away.

"If you know who she is, why is she a mystery woman?" Asked Daniel.

"We have her body." Said Laura.

"The job was to obtain a crate for William Jarrold, a local mobster." Said Clara. "We were supposed to incinerate the crate and its contents."

"But you decided to look inside it, of course you would." Said Daniel.

"She was in there, all wrapped up and preserved in layers of plastic." Said Laura.

"I'm assuming there must be a connection between Olivia Reed and this mobster?" Asked Daniel. Clara knew there was, though it was a fairly tenuous one.

"She was the lead forensics person on a court case involving Bill Jarrold..... And before you ask, it wasn't a capital crime and one of her colleagues appeared in court after she vanished. A company owned by Bill was given a fine and that is it, the only connection we found. Or rather Simon found, he's done most of the hard work on it."

"There has to be something else."

"I know Daniel, no one hangs onto a dead forensics expert without having a damn good reason." Said Simon. "We just don't know what it is."

"I could help, Gwen too.... I'm sure she'd enjoy getting involved."

"It might be dangerous, Bill's gang can be brutal." Said Simon.

"Don't worry, we'll be discreet. Just give me the file and let me do some of the legwork."

Simon tidied the file and handed it to Daniel.

"Can I see the body?" Asked Daniel.

"That depends." Said Laura.

"On what?"

"Have you ever had a job in the circus, a high wire act maybe?"

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Mabina spotted the camera when she went out to check her car. Neil had pulled on his coat in a hurry; there might have been loose items in his pockets, objects that could have ended up on the floor of her Mercedes. Her brain fog was lifting; she was regaining her old caution.

"Good job I checked." She muttered.

There was a bunch of keys in the passenger side, right in the middle of the carpet. She recognised the Arsenal key fob, Neil had been fiddling with it as they'd left his bungalow. The keys weren't a huge risk, but they needed to be dealt with. A street litter bin would do, one a long way from her house.

"A job for in the morning."

Mabina might not have noticed if her senses weren't still buzzing after feeding. There was a glint in the untidy pile of bushes next to her driveway. A lens probably and she didn't need to think about who had put a camera in her garden. It was them, the three North London vampires, probably back to finish off the job of killing her. Her heart picked up speed, rare for a vampire.

"Bastards." She mumbled.

There were junk food bags among the bushes, there always were. The local school children seemed to favour something beige and disgusting called Hula Hoops. Brendan usually cleared up the mess. Mabina walked towards the bushes, picking up about six assorted junk food bags and sweet wrappers. As she looked up she saw it quite clearly. A small camera had been clipped to the woody stem of her Camelia. Tempting to destroy it, but that might cause them to react while she was still alone and far from fully recovered.

“There will be other cameras, bound to be.” She muttered.

She looked into the small park opposite her house, wondering if there were cameras in the trees. Mabina scrunched up the junk food wrappers and walked back towards her house. She was going to ignore the camera for now, in a way it gave her an edge. They wouldn't know she'd seen it, which might be useful.

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Sam Isaacs changed his car every few months as part of his routine security procedures. He'd hired an expensive risk management organisation and not listening to their advice would have been foolhardy and a waste of money. Some cars he'd fallen in love with, parting had been a wrench. His current vehicle was a blue four door Toyota, which he'd be glad to see the back of. His cell phone made a whooping noise, a tone which had sounded cool for about the first five incoming calls, but was now driving him nuts.

“Morning Judith. Yes, I'm running a bit late, I was in the office until about three this morning.”

“Sorry to pester you Sam, but there are two voicemail messages from Brendan Roche for you and they're both..... Weird Sam, really weird.”

“The traffic is fierce; I'm just turning out of Ben Yehuda Street. I'll be in the office in about ten minutes.”

Sam tried to change his route into the office every few days and his time of arrival. It wasn't just that he was a dealer in expensive antiquities living in a troubled part of the world. Being the current head of the Psochic Order brought its own enemies and he'd upset a few people in the past. Strangely he'd never seriously considered moving, Jerusalem was now the place he thought of as home. His phone gave a quiet beep, its way of telling him a text message had arrived.

‘Make that three weird messages from Brendan Judith.’

“I'm going to add another zero to my quote if he keeps being a nuisance.” He muttered.

His building had underground parking protected from the street by a strong set of metal doors. There were cameras too, but the walk from his car to the elevator always had him looking around for trouble. It was the echo of his footsteps and something to do with being surrounded by so much concrete, though he'd never really worked out why he was so nervous. Sam only relaxed when he was in the elevator and heading up to his office. Judith was in his office, placing a cup of coffee next to his blotter.

“I knew you'd be fifteen minutes.” She said. “There's a broken down truck in Jaffa Road, its clogging everything up.”

“Oh, coffee. You're a life saver.”

Judith sat down in one of the chairs on the other side of the desk. Their routine when he wasn't out of the country, was a quick talk about the events of the day. There was only one thing on Judith's mind that morning.

“Brendan refused to talk to me.” She said. “Insisted on being put through to your voicemail. He already left two messages, one at four this morning and another at six.”

“I'll have a word with him Judith.....How weird are his messages ?”

“He’s crazy Sam, press your voicemail retrieve.”

The calls came up in order and even the first one at four in the morning, showed Brendan to be desperate to please his employer.

‘Hello, this is Brendan...From London...My employer is happy with your notes on the hungry ground. There is some urgency about going through the rest of my question. This needs expediting Sam and soon.’

“Expediting isn’t his sort of word.” Said Judith. “It’s her word, she’s been pushing him.”

Sam kept the message and moved onto the voicemail left at six. It seemed strange that Brendan would expect an answer that early in the day. Another sign of desperation, maybe fear ?

‘This is Brendan.... Please call. My employer has agreed a figure I can offer as your fee. I believe it to be a very generous offer. I need to see you soon to discuss this....I’d like to come into your office before lunch. Please call me.’

Poor Brendan, he almost felt sorry for him. Being pressured by the most power vampire who had ever lived, had to be terrifying.

“What’s in it for him I wonder ?” Asked Judith.

“Power, wealth, immortality, she can offer it all and a slow death if he fails her. Do you still have that old Ruger pistol in your drawer ?”

“Yes, do you think Brendan might become violent ?” She asked.

“He may, I intend to increase his stress level quite a bit. Yosef has a few friends in the police who’ve worked for us before. Call him and get someone in for tomorrow. Now though, let’s listen to his recent voicemail.”

‘This is Brendan.... Look, you obviously don’t realise what is at stake here.... My employer is sick....Please call.... Today. No excuses Sam, call me !’

“I told you..... Weird.” Said Judith.

A stressed and neurotic Brendan was good in some way but not in others. Sam needed a few days to get everything ready and he couldn’t engage with Brendan and his insistence on everything being done at a rush. Sam intended to demand that she came to Jerusalem, the old queen from the east.

“Call him and tell him I’ve been called away on business Judith. Tell him I can meet him here tomorrow at eleven.”

“Tomorrow ! He’ll be climbing the walls by then.”

“I know Judith.”

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