

Ruby V : Machu Picchu

Chapter 3 - Huaral

“Specialisation had been frowned on by Kallina, though all of the wunderkinds had things they seemed to be better at. Monique had been better than Ruby at sensing left over emotions, strong feelings that seemed to leave a trace of something in the air, like an emotional odour.”

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Sarah had been given the job of monitoring local TV and radio, mainly their news broadcasts. It made sense as she was fluent in everything from Spanish to Quechua and even Aymara, which was only spoken by two percent of the population. She hadn't moaned about having to get up early to listen to the radio news. She was the only person who could listen to all the channels and languages were her thing. Maybe not a super gift, but it made her feel one of the gang. She listened with headphones, so as not to wake Spider up. He could be a grouch if he didn't get a full seven hours sleep. She felt a touch on her shoulder and pulled the headphones to one side.

“Anything on the two injured muggers ?” Asked Spider.

“No, I'd be surprised if there was.” Said Sarah. “I'm listening for anything out of the ordinary. Ruby gave me a list of red flag words and phrases. Any of those in a news broadcast might mean something that needs investigating. Like say.....customers from last night's seafood restaurant meal, suddenly going down with food poisoning.”

She grinned at him, but knew he'd still ask. She'd used the same joke on Sophie and she'd asked. It wasn't so much being gullible, not really. It was just that so many strange things had happened during trips with Ruby, that nothing could be ruled out.

“Erm.....Did they ? The customers I mean ?” Asked Spider.

“And I heard they just took the word gullible out of the dictionary.”

“To think, I hung around to go down to breakfast with you.” Said Spider.

Sarah dropped the headphones, the way a stand-up comedian drops a microphone. She'd heard about events in Huaral, though Ruby had asked her to keep anything she might hear, to herself. Nothing they were intending to get involved in, but a Foreign office warning, couldn't be ignored. Actually, they'd ignored worse warnings in the past, but this time was different. They were tourists now.

Officially the advice was to avoid Huaral and its environs, because of civil unrest. Sarah had listened to the local news and a station that gave out political news. There seemed to be nothing specific to worry about. Sarah put her arms around Spider's neck and kissed him hard on the lips.

“Sorry.....I couldn't resist.” She said. “I'm a bad and horrid girlfriend. And just after you said we should start a family.”

There was a look of horror on Spider's face, worse than when she'd called him Rupert in front of his old army buddies. Spider had a decent memory, but it was ruined by alcohol. Half a bottle of wine and he was fine, but a whole bottle.....He had often forgotten having a whole conversation with her. Of course, she occasionally used that to her advantage.

“What.....Exactly, did I agree to ?” Asked Spider.

“That gullible should come out of the dictionary.” She said. “Come on, Ruby will mutter at us if we're late for breakfast.”

Sarah held Spider's hand and noticed there was still a scared look in his eyes. No matter what she said he'd still have that scared look, as he wondered what he might have agreed to. Not that she was in any hurry to multiply and spread their genetic material, but one day.....Maybe, one day.

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For what was mainly intended as a vacation, there seemed to be a lot going on. Ruby had been grabbed by Sophie as soon as she'd stepped out of her room. Poor Todd had been shocked to hear someone in the Miraflores district not only knew his name, but was aware he was in Alessia House. "Not the end of the world, Sophie." Ruby had said. "I can think of many people and organisations who might be interested in our location and what we might be doing. We'll need to be vigilant, but we'll carry on with our planned trips in the bus."

"It might even be something to do with my service in the military." Todd had added.

Ruby had liked that, the way Todd seemed to think of his military service as something in the past. Officially he was still a serving member of the UK's armed forces, but as quite a few people had commented, he did seem to have a lot of time off. Ruby was hoping to make him an ex-soldier in the near future.

After Sophie's news, being briefed by Sarah had been almost a piece of cake. Ruby had been spooning kedgeree onto her breakfast plate, when Sarah invaded her personal space.

"Ooooh, I'm not keen on that stuff." Said Sarah.

"Kedgeree is an acquired taste, I'll give you that." Said Ruby. "I tried it once on a trip to India with George and fell in love with it."

What Sarah's news lacked in excitement, Sarah made up for in style and attitude. Her best friend leant in close and almost hissed in her ear.

"Tension in Huaral, but no likelihood of violence, according to several news channels."

"Good, we'll keep to our planned schedule." Said Ruby. "It is only seventy five kilometres by road from Lima. I'd have been amazed if it wasn't reasonably safe. It'll give us a chance to get used to being in the bus and being tourists. I've heard the countryside around Huaral is beautiful."

Ruby picked at her breakfast and knew the day might bring friction with Lily. There was no way Lily could be their driver all day and then drive them back to Lima in the evening. All those miles, much of it on local roads. Lily was great; she just wanted to do well in her new job. It was just that she was so keen on giving it a hundred and ten percent, all the time. Ruby would have almost preferred facing Ishel again, to telling Lily that Todd was driving them back from their day in Huaral.

After breakfast, everyone was quiet. It seemed everyone had decided that post breakfast announcements from her, were going to be the new normal. Ruby actually stood up, it seemed the right way to do it.

"I know our little group leaks like a sieve." She said. "And why not, we are on holiday. As you'll all have heard, we're going to Huaral today. Lots of time in the bus, followed by plenty of time to look around the town. There has been social unrest in Huaral, but nothing recently. Huaral was founded in fifteen fifty one, so there is a lot of history and a lot of gorgeous scenery."

"Does Spider need to be armed with a pocket Howitzer?" Asked Caleb.

Spider glared at Caleb, while everyone laughed.

"No, my feeling on weapons hasn't changed." Said Ruby. "Tourists coming to Peru are happy to go around without being armed to the teeth. So, we're going to be ordinary, gawping, photo taking, tourists."

Everyone looked happy, but Ruby knew she was right about information being leaked. Some would know about Sophie picking up surveillance in the area and eventually they'd all know. Not mentioning it would just feed the rumours.

"Before you all go off to change into your tourist clothes." Said Ruby. "It seems we are being watched by an organisation, or persons unknown. I'm not overly worried; there must be a lot of people in the intelligence community, who think we need to be watched. I will be monitoring the situation, but for now.....Have a fun day."

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Sophie wasn't yet a raven haired brunette. The whole process was time consuming and at one time she'd have stayed up all night to change her hair colour. Now though there was Caleb in her bed, which meant far more enjoyable things to do at night. She had made the effort though, with tourist clothing in primary colours and a new pair of almost dayglow green trainers. There was a real holiday feel, with everyone cheering as the bus moved away from the kerb.

"Seventy five kilometres to Huaral." Said Ruby. "We will be stopping about halfway though at Santa Rosa, for coffee."

"And a pee." Added Sophie.

"This reminds me of school outings." Said Sarah.

Sophie had grabbed the window seat, with Caleb sat next to her. She'd even briefly held his hand, as the bus pulled away. On the surface she was a tiny red haired girl, without a care in the world.

Underneath she was letting part of her mind scan the roads the bus drove along, looking for anyone who might be a threat. So many people out there, wide awake, their heads full of what they were thinking about. It gave Sophie a headache, by the time they reached the main highway north and headed away from the city.

"Wow, this is beautiful." Said Caleb. "Everywhere I look, there are mountains."

"It is gorgeous."

Sophie's day would have been perfect, if Ruby had selected her to go with her that evening. Ruby was taking Caleb with her, but Sophie needed to remain at Alessia House, to guard the others. It was important and needed to be done, but that didn't make the pill any easier to swallow. The house near the sea food restaurant was likely to be deserted and full of nothing but dust and rat droppings. On the other hand there was a small chance that it would be full of terrorists. Spider was going, but not Sarah. It felt like a shambles in the making, but Sophie trusted Ruby. There was a reason for everything she did, even if it wasn't always easy to see.

"Are there really bears in Peru ?" Asked Caleb. "Besides Paddington, of course."

"There's the Spectacled bear, though we won't be in their area, at least not today." Said Ruby.

The bus wasn't the most comfortable she'd ever been on; it rattled and seemed to find every bump in the road. Sophie was happy though and looking forward to a day in Huaral.

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Lily's Spanish wasn't brilliant, just what she'd picked up on several package holidays to Benidorm. Normally she'd have followed Ruby around the town, but she and Todd had things to do. Joining Sophie and Caleb seemed a bit like being a third wheel, so she'd simply followed Spider and Sarah. They were a long established couple and didn't seem to mind her joining them. It was a good choice, Sarah's Spanish was perfect.

"What do you think of the town ?" Sarah asked her.

"Hmmm, to be honest. A nice mixture of shabby chic and history." Said Lily. "Not for everyone, but from what we've seen so far, I like it."

"I'm hungry." Said Spider. "You've got the map, Sarah. Anywhere decent we can get lunch?"

"For a small town, they've got a good variety." Said Sarah. "Let me look.....A couple of expensive sounding restaurants in the centre of town. Near us.....A Chinese food place, a chicken joint and something that sounds Tex-Mex. Do we vote on it?"

"I wouldn't mind Chinese." Said Lily.

"Me too." Added Spider.

"Then Chinese food it is." Said Sarah. "It's not far, just past the post office."

The street had a slightly unfinished feel, a lot of single storey stores. Everything looked clean though and there was an internet café next door to the Chinese restaurant. It was a hot dry day, likely to reach twenty eight degrees by mid-afternoon. There was no aircon in the restaurant, just several large ceiling fans. To Lily it screamed shabby-chic, which she quite liked. Spider said it reminded him of a place near Kandahar, which sounded like a compliment. Ordering their meal had the look and feel of a negotiation, with Sarah ignoring the menus. Lily and Spider said what they wanted to eat and drink, while Sarah discussed it with a woman who looked to be at least eighty.

"Well.....We may not get exactly what we want, but it'll be close to it." Said Sarah. "The wine will surprise you, if they really have it."

"The cooking smells from the kitchen, are encouraging.....Wonderful." Said Lily.

The wine was a wonder in such a place, a perfectly cooled bottle of Pouilly-Fuissé. Again, Spider said he'd been similarly surprised by the wine selection in the place in Kandahar. Lily made a mental note to go to the restaurant one day, just to see if it really was that good. By the time the wine had taken the edge off the day, the food arrived. A young man brought their food and introduced himself as Thiago, though he said most knew him as Thio.

"Hmmm.....Almost, sort of what I wanted." Said Lily. "But.....It is delicious."

"To be honest.....Better than the place in Kandahar." Added Spider.

"Sounds like we're leaving a decent tip." Said Sarah.

They never did see the old lady again; Thio was there to collect their payment. No bill, it all seemed to be done by word of mouth. Sarah dug a wedge of American dollars out of her bag and paid the young man less than Lily thought she'd have to. The almost, sort of meal, she'd really wanted, ended up being surprisingly cheap. As they were leaving, Thio muttered at Sarah for a moment. They spoke in a language Lily had never heard, but Sarah understood. She nodded at the young man and actually hugged him, briefly.

"What was all that about?" Asked Lily, when they were outside.

"Thiago may be waiting for us later, or he might not." Said Sarah. "If he is, he'll be joining us for the trip back to Lima."

"Why?" Asked Spider.

"Let's just say.....There are reasons." Said Sarah.

"What will Ruby say?" Asked Lily.

"I'll talk to Ruby." Said Sarah.

After that, they had a great day in the town. There were some great places to visit, all within easy walking distance of where they'd parked the bus. All Lily could think of though was Thiago and why Sarah was willing to take him to Lima. It would have been such an anti-climax if he hadn't been waiting for them. There he was though, leaning on the restaurant wall, with a bag over his shoulder.

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Sophie saw the young man talking to Ruby, both of them under a row of trees near the bus. Her first thought was that he might be one of them, another wunderkind, lost in the world and gone feral.

Since finding Abshir Duale and his sister Calaso, Abe and Cal, they'd all been hoping to discover more of their kind. Kurt and Kallina hadn't kept perfect records of their experiments and now both of them were dead. Even Ruby sometimes seemed excited, at the idea more like them were out there somewhere, waiting to be found.

"Who is Ruby talking to?" She asked Todd.

"No idea, Sarah found him somewhere."

Found him sounded provocative, though a quick, shallow look into his mind, showed he wasn't one of them. Sophie didn't delve too deeply, just enough to confirm the young guy was totally human. With Caleb to chat to on the bus, Sophie almost forgot about the mysterious young man, or at least she pretended not to be curious. Not easy to fake indifference, when there seemed to be something going on. There was part of a conversation overheard, between Lily and Todd.

".....Yes, Thiago will be coming to Lima with us....."

Did that mean the man was going to be a new guy in the group? Was Thiago going to live in the house with them? They had spare space and when it came to collecting strays, Ruby did have some previous. It was almost an anti-climax when Ruby introduced the man getting onto the bus with her. "This is Thiago, who will be joining us at Alessia House, for a while." Said Ruby. "He likes to be called Thio. Don't pester him; there will be plenty of time to get to know him."

Lily announced that they were already late, so the break halfway back to Lima, was likely to be just enough time to have a quick toilet break. And that was it, no further details about the mysterious Thio.

"Bit of a cheek really." Sophie muttered to Caleb. "Adding him to the group, with no explanation."

"Can't you dig into his mind?"

"I could, but Ruby is bound to find out. Then she'll go crazy."

Nothing else to do other than being patient. Sophie contented herself with looking at the new guy's clothes, especially his shoes, which looked locally made in Peru. Add on the skin tone and shape of his eyes.....Thiago was a local, born and raised in Peru, Sophie was certain of it.

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Everyone seemed surprised, even perplexed, by Ruby's choices for the group to enter the house near the sea food restaurant. Not Spider though, he had an inkling about why Sophie and Sarah had been left at the house. Ruby was preparing for the worst, ensuring there was someone at Alessia House who knew all the local languages. Ruby's choices had been more about who was left behind, than who was with them in the stolen car. Sophie had been left behind, because if Ruby was in a police cell, there needed to be someone with special gifts in the house.

"There.....The house with the green door." Said Ruby. "Go past it, the first street on the right. Park somewhere in the shadows, if you can."

Spider knew why he was there, even without weapons. Sophie had given him a lock knife, a really good quality one. That was in his jacket pocket and was his only weapon. He was there because he could steal a car, with ease and with no real likelihood of being caught. The four door Toyota was quite old, but it had looked clean and reasonably well maintained. Plus, it wasn't the sort of vehicle anyone would fit with trackers or sophisticated anti-theft devices. It was a borderline clunker, which made it the perfect choice. It had to be a stolen car for the night, in case everything went pear shaped. All three of them were also wearing gloves and had hoodies for when they walked from the car to the house with the green door. Just him, Ruby and Caleb, though Ruby was an army, even on her own.

"Ahhh, broken street lights are our friends." Said Spider.

A few trees added to the general gloom and shadows, where one of the street lights had gone out. It was a perfect spot to leave their stolen car. Spider hoped it was still there when they came back. They really were leaving it in a good spot to be stolen. He relaxed, knowing he could easily steal something else to get them back to the house.

"Alright....Hoodies up, check your gloves cover your palms." Said Ruby.

All three of them had backpacks, the cheap canvas ones that teenagers seemed to carry everywhere. Out of the car, which Spider was already becoming attached to. Pity its ultimate fate was likely to be a burning wreck in a quiet street in a bad area. Let the street thugs get the blame; they definitely deserved the bad karma. It seemed to take no time at all, until they were in front of that green door. It looked solid, though the window a few feet away, didn't. No shattering of glass, that was too noisy and left razor sharp shards of glass attached to the frame.

"I think we're in your area of expertise, Spider." Ruby muttered.

He'd been a burglar once; it was a pretty good money earner, if you weren't prone to anxiety. It was how he'd met Ruby, when he'd broken into her apartment. He had a small jemmy in a jacket pocket and the window frame was old and beginning to suffer from rot. Spider used the Jemmy to get enough of a gap, to get his fingers on the ageing, rusty lock. It was almost too easy.

"Inside, both of you.....Quickly." He muttered.

There was a thin curtain on the inside, which Spider put back in place. There was no way to know if someone had seen them, at least not for him. He looked past the edge of the curtain and examined the street.

"Can you feel any interest in us, Ruby?" He asked.

"No, nothing at all."

"Good."

"Wow, you guys make a good team." Said Caleb. "You should do this for a living."

"The next bit is a little tedious." Said Ruby. "I'll wander from room to room, hoping to feel, or sense something important."

"Judging by the amount of dirt.....No one has lived here for a while." Said Spider.

"We'll start on the top floor and work our way down." Said Ruby.

The stairs made noises, but the wood seemed solid enough. Spider watched, as Ruby went through the three rooms on the top floor. Caleb simply sat on the stairs, waiting for Ruby to finish. It took a while, she was obviously being thorough. It was Caleb who felt something on the next floor down.

"I have a memory of this place.....I was here and I remember two names." Said Caleb. "Two men were killed, right here, in this room. Named as traitors, though I was shocked they were killed in front of me. To them I was just a courier, but they trusted me."

"What were their names?" Asked Ruby.

"Eduardo Sánchez and Jason Ganzel." Said Caleb. "I remember their names so clearly, but not the name of their boss, or the logistics woman I talked to most. I suppose my damaged mind still has a few tricks to play on me."

"Any other names?" Asked Spider.

"No, none at all. I saw them die.....That must have burned them into my mind."

The next floor down was a blank. Just more watching Ruby as she tried to feel, or sense, anything that might have left some kind of residue in the building. A mental residue, a spiritual residue....

"I'd settle for finding anything." Ruby muttered. "So far we've had the risk of stealing a car for a spot of burglary, to learn two names. Even those might be a blind alley, as they're both dead."

Spider had been hoping they'd find a terrorist still living there, with a wall safe, full of incriminating material. He did have faith in Caleb's hit and miss memory though. They were back on the ground floor, when Caleb held his head in his hands, as though he was in pain.

"It's all wrong.....The door, the size. All wrong, Ruby.....All wrong." Said Caleb.

It was a small storage room; they hadn't even been in there when they'd entered the building.

"Are you saying the size of the room has changed?" Asked Ruby.

"Yes, the door is closer to me now."

Spider had his own way of sensing things; he banged on the walls in several places. To the right of the door was an entire wall, which sounded hollow. He did it again, in case the other two hadn't realised the significance.

"We could probably knock the wall down." He said. "Ten to one it's just painted plasterboard."

"Noisy, Spider, very noisy." Said Ruby. "I have another way to enter a sealed off room. You must remember me showing you how I could become just a shadow."

"I do, can I go with you?"

"It looks a tight fit for me on my own. Stay with Caleb."

Ruby dug a flashlight out of her pack, before sitting cross legged on the grubby floor. There was no way of telling when her consciousness had left her body. Her physical form still breathed, but Ruby was no longer inside it.

"She should be in the mystery room by now." Said Spider.

He tapped gently on the hollow wall.

"Ruby.....Are you in there?" Asked Spider.

There was a noise, a metallic click that sounded like a latch of some kind, being opened. A section of the wall brushed over the floor, as it opened towards them. Ruby was there, coughing at all the dust she seemed to have disturbed.

"Both of you.....You have to see this." Said Ruby.

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Monique was quite pleased that London was going through a cold, wet period. It meant that Nazili could wear clothing that hid his alien appearance. With her wearing a hooded cape too, they probably looked like members of a strange sect, or a wannabe goth-rock band. It was a look that fitted in well in Hackney; they'd arrived at Ruby's apartment, without anyone getting over curious about Nazili's height and shape.

"Why didn't Ruby get Cal's brother out of jail?" Asked Nazili. "She knows all the right people and after Norway, they owe her a few favours. It should be easy to get Abe released."

They were in Ruby's building; Monique had already tapped on Angie's door. No sound of a TV, and no Angie opening the door. Occasionally Angie went to a divorced and separated evening at a local pub, in the hope of meeting the one, or at least a warm body to bring home. It looked like it was one of Angie's nights at the Three Daws.

"Ruby is going through a tough love phase." Said Monique. "We all have to realise that our actions can have consequences.....Yada-yada. It won't last, but while it does, Abe is stuck in a Swedish prison. Not a bad place to be, it sounds a bit like an expensive spa hotel."

"Prison is always a prison." Muttered Nazili.

Monique knew what he meant. Kallina had been like a mother to all the wunderkinds, but there had been years where they hadn't seen the outside world. There comes a point when the most well intentioned love and protection, can feel like a prison without bars. Plus, Monique had never been told the place and date of her birth, just that it had been somewhere in the Middle East. Monique

often felt that Kurt and Kallina had robbed her of the most precious thing anyone possesses, her history. Up the stairs and past the funky smell on the landing, which she hoped Ruby never managed to cure. That weird odour said they were there, in Ruby's home. Nazili tapped his bony fingers against the door. Cal must have heard them on the stairs, the door was instantly opened.

"I'm so pleased you could come." Said Cal. "I'm sure it's not just my imagination."

Ruby's flat looked clean and tidy, with Constanze fast asleep on the sofa. So, it didn't look as if Cal had gone crazy. Cal had offered them the traditional hot beverage or glass of wine. It had been a long day, so Monique chose wine, with Nazili opting for a coffee.

"First things first, are you alright for money?" Asked Monique.

"Oh yes, lots of it. Ruby left a drawer full of cash, so much I haven't bothered counting it."

"Good, now tell us about the feeling you're being watched?" Asked Nazili.

"It's not just me, I'm not crazy." Said Cal. "Sometimes Constanze will press her nose against the window and stare across the street."

"No one has suggested you're crazy." Said Nazili.

Monique opened the kitchen curtains, just enough of a gap to see the street. It was dark out and although it was cold and wet, there were quite a few people on their way somewhere, or heading for home. Specialisation had been frowned on by Kallina, though all of the wunderkinds had things they seemed to be better at. Monique had been better than Ruby at sensing left over emotions, strong feelings that seemed to leave a trace of something in the air, like an emotional odour.

"You're not crazy, Cal." Said Monique. "I can feel it too, someone had been watching the apartment from across the street. I'm not picking up hostility though. If I had to pick an emotion for whoever is watching, it would be.....Regret."

"So, I can ignore it then, it'll be alright?" Asked Cal.

"Being watched, should never be ignored." Said Nazili. "If Monique feels them outside later tonight, we'll go out there and deal with them."

"Will you hurt them?" Asked Cal. "They just watch the flat. I'll admit they scare me, but please don't hurt them."

"We'll do what's necessary for your safety." Said Monique. "Hurting whoever or whatever it is though.....That will always be a last resort."

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Holding the flashlight in her ethereal hands felt weird, but Ruby could carry quite a few objects while being a shadow, as long as they weren't too heavy. Yes, it all seemed to go against the rules of physics, but so did wunderkinds with special gifts. Ruby now accepted that while certain things she could do were impossible, it didn't stop her doing them. She left her physical body sat on the floor and moved across the room. A slight hesitation before walking through the partition wall. Walking through walls still made her feel nervous and probably always would. Once on the other side of the wall, she turned on the flashlight that should have been impossible for her to carry.

"Oh....This place has been sealed up for a while." She muttered.

Having his mind messed about with, must have left Caleb with problems judging time. He'd implied that the partition wall was relatively new, built since he'd last been in the house. The amount of dust and dirt though, considering it was a sealed up room. It had to have been walled up for many years, maybe even decades. Ruby heard Spider tapping on the wall and calling to her, as she noticed what was left of the body.

"Caleb must be wrong, they've been dead for a long time." She mumbled.

No idea of gender or age, the body had gone past normal decay and putrefaction, to become just bones and a few remnants of clothing. On the floor next to a desk, with its hand of bones, reaching towards a small filing cabinet.

"Ruby.....Are you in there ?" She heard Spider ask.

It was one of those days to believe six impossible things before breakfast. Since Kallina had forced her to return to her physical body, the rules appeared to have changed. Ruby could return to her physical body, or have it come to her. A quick mental switch and Ruby was fully in the sealed off room, coughing as the dust hit the back of her throat. There was a latch device on the wall, which took a little playing with to open. Ruby had the impression she was the first living being in the sealed off room, since probably the Reagan era. Spider was there as the wall swung outwards, with Caleb just behind him.

"Both of you.....You have to see this." Said Ruby.

Her flashlight went straight at the skeletal remains, which seemed the most important thing in the room. Caleb seemed to have some kind of memory surge.

"The cabinet, why didn't they take the cabinet ?" He yelled.

"Quiet, or you'll get us all arrested." Said Spider.

"Do you know who died in here ?" Asked Ruby. "Their remains must have lain there for years."

"It was Tilda, she was left here, after.....The boss killed her, strangled her in front of us."

"Did Tilda have a last name ?" Asked Ruby.

"Obviously she did, everyone does." Said Caleb. "I can't remember it, though I get a recollection of us being lovers for a while."

"Are you sure, Caleb ?" Asked Ruby. "I'd estimate that the body has been hidden in here, since the mid-eighties, maybe longer."

"Maybe.....Maybe I've become confused again."

Poor Caleb, he sat on the floor outside, his head dangling down across his chest. He might have been given yet another false memory, or even set of memories. He definitely didn't seem old enough to have been a lover of the long dead Tilda. Spider was busy, pulling open the drawers of the small filing cabinet. All empty, until he reached the bottom.

"It's full, someone wasn't thorough when they emptied the cabinet." Said Spider.

Her flashlight showed some damage due to damp, but most of the documents in the hanging files, seemed fine. Papers had yellowed with time and a few spots of rust had begun on the metal hangers, but overall; the files looked intact and readable.

"Can you see a date on anything ?" Asked Ruby.

Spider tugged a typewritten document out of a file. He showed it to her, complete with the CIA reference number and mention of the George Bush Centre for Intelligence in Langley. The document was dated the seventh of November in nineteen ninety. It was stapled to an older document from nineteen eighty seven.

"It all looks so old." Said Spider.

"That doesn't mean it isn't potentially important." Said Ruby. "We'll take it all, some in each of our packs. You begin doing that and I'll try to get Caleb on his feet."

"Are you going to use the whammy on him ?"

"I think he's had enough people fucking with his head." Said Ruby. "I'm going to try and avoid doing any more damage. I'm sure I can get him up on his feet. Then between us, we must be able to get him back to the car. Remember, Spider.....I'm stronger than I look."

"What about the body ?"

“A quick anonymous call to the police I think.” Said Ruby. “Sophie can do it after we get back, she sounds like a local.”

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