

London's Night Stalkers

Chapter 18 – Stalking Susan

“Clara knew that many would consider her to be cruel and evil, but she didn’t. Not until now at least. What she’d done to Gerald was true cruelty, leaving him to love her for his entire life, with no idea of where she’d gone.”

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Simon could drive of course, he just chose not to. Besides, he really was useless at it, a danger to himself and everyone else on the same bit of road. He had the reflexes of course and superb hand-eye coordination. There was just something about motor vehicles though, the cussedness of animated inanimate objects. You could talk to a horse; trust it to remember the way home. Cars weren’t like that; they were just dumb metal and cheap upholstery. Sometimes though, driving was unavoidable, even if he didn’t have a licence.

“Nice Mercedes you had Elias, seems such a waste to crush it.” He muttered.

If Elias really had been the man’s name. He’d been told by someone, who knew someone in an East London pub, that Elias had a stock of everything. Uppers, downers and everything inbetweeners, he’d been reliably informed. Elias operated out of an expensive Mercedes Sports, parked at various different locations. The same Merc Simon was driving, badly.

“At least Tom will love what’s in the boot.”

Elias obviously believed in supplying what the punters demanded. There was everything in the boot, even some tablets Simon didn’t recognise. Simon currently had enough drugs in the boot of the Merc, to get half of London stoned, for a week. Plus Elias had a few grand on him in cash, which was always useful. He wasn’t certain how much cash, he’d count it when he had a quiet moment and wasn’t being scared by his own incompetence behind the wheel.

“Why do I drive like a drunk driver ? It’s embarrassing.”

It happened occasionally, the dealer had a man with him, sometimes even two men. Usually they were low level street thugs, but Elias had found himself someone good. Only one minder, but he handled himself as though he’d been military trained. The man had been fast and good with a blade, Simon had two nasty wounds to prove it. Hence the need to drive the dead man’s Merc, Simon was covered in blood, with a nasty gash across his cheek. The deep stab wound in his side was painful, but wasn’t serious, for a vampire.

“You just had to hire one of the good ones Elias.”

He’d broken the minder’s arm and been a bit too rough in doing in it. Broken bones had penetrated tissues, arteries and finally the skin. Simon had snapped his neck to stop the screaming. He’d expected Elias to run, but the drug lord of East London, looked anchored to the spot with terror. It happened, dishing out violence to others, was a whole different thing to being on the receiving end. Meek as a lamb, Elias had even helped him lift the body of his dead henchman into the back of the Mercedes. Simon had driven just a few streets, before stopping and feeding on Elias. The blood had tasted good, but then again, it always did. The rest of the night though, that looked set to be a disaster, as Simon called George and discovered that he was sat at home, watching football.

“It’s the big match ! Come in tomorrow night.”

Big matches, local derbies, back of the net and dozens of annoying football clichés, were all a mystery to Simon. He heard others talk about the national game of course, though he often wondered why a few guys kicking a ball about was so popular.

“No problem George, I’ll make other arrangements.”

Lugging bodies about with a four inch stab wound in his side, hadn’t been fun. Luckily he knew of a brownfields development in South London, which seemed to have been put on hold. A disused chemical plant with underground storage tanks. One day someone would discover Elias and his man, at the bottom of one of the tanks. By then time and corrosive materials would have done their work on the soft tissues, the recognisable parts of a dead human. Maybe their teeth too, if he was really lucky. Simon was so tired that he didn’t really care anymore, he just wanted to ditch the Merc and get a few hours sleep. He stopped just up the street from Tom’s yard and called him. Tom would be in the office at the back of the breakers yard, he seemed to live there.

“Hi Tom, hope I didn’t disturb you watching the match ?”

“Nahh, turned it off. They were playing like muppets.”

“I’m driving a cream coloured Merc Tom, with something in the boot that I’m certain you’ll like.”

“You, driving ! This I must see, come to the gate and I’ll let you in.”

There were two cameras on poles and probably others he couldn’t see. Tom could obviously see him though, the gate began to open the instant he stopped in front of it. It was a relief to get off the road, his driving was erratic enough to earn a pull by the police. Tom was just inside the gates, opening the passenger door to get inside. Not without checking the seat first.

“That’s fine Tom, the real mess is in the back.”

Tom leant over the seat, examining the blood left by the dead minder.

“The boot would have been better.” Said Simon. “That is literally full of merchandise though.”

“Christ Simon ! More thinning out of the competition ?”

“Something like that.”

“Drive right down to the fence at the back of the yard. We’ll use the shed there.”

Shed was too small a word for the large building where Tom’s various minions, stripped down vehicles, before their shells went in the crusher. There were no minions working a night shift though, the shed was in complete darkness, though the front roll down doors were open.

“Drive inside, right up to the far wall.” Said Tom.

The car lights showed an interior full of tools and winches hanging down from the ceiling. Tom directed him to drive over an inspection pit, at the far end of the building. Tom got out of the car and a few seconds later the shed was brightly lit, with the roller doors beginning to close. Simon winced a little as he got out of the car, but the pain just below his ribs, was far better than it had been. His body was working the minor miracle of healing, which he tended to take for granted.

“Jeez Simon..... Are you alright ?”

The three inch slash across his cheek was no longer bleeding, though Simon knew it still had to look nasty. He was wincing as he walked and there was a lot of congealed blood on his clothing. The blood had reached the slightly evil smelling sticky stage.

“It’s alright Tom, most of the blood isn’t mine.”

“I can get a guy to look at you, if you want ? Not a proper doc, but he was a medic in the army.”

“No, honestly Tom, it looks far worse than it is. I could do with clean clothes though and somewhere to get cleaned up. After I see your face though, when you open the boot.”

“More dead bodies ?”

“Just look Tom.”

He knew Tom would react when he saw the cornucopia of all things druggy. Tom seemed especially keen on two large bags of tablets.

“Designer stuff, used to come out of China.” Said Tom. “I heard there was a new supplier in Eastern Europe, but hadn’t seen any of it. This stuff is worth a fortune.”

Simon really wanted to get a shower and clean clothes, but for Tom, the Merc’s boot appeared to be his Christmas come early. Simon simply watched, as Tom enjoyed his treats. Some money would change hands of course, but Simon never charged Tom the full wholesale price.

“Wow this is from Turkey, purist on the market.” Said Tom. “Do you know the source ?”

Simon didn’t have a clue, but saying so was likely to blow his cover as the North London version of Pablo Escobar.

“Tom, I don’t tread on Bill’s business..... So you don’t.....”

“Yeah, of course Simon, forget I asked.”

Tom suddenly looked less happy.

“I’m small time Simon and I’m careful who I supply. This would give me enough stock to take me through to twenty twenty. Plus I haven’t got enough spare cash to pay for it, not in one go. I can sell it on wholesale, if you like ?”

“You’ve done me a lot of favours Tom and I can see me needing a few more. Work out a fair price for it all, then knock off a third. I’m sure we can work out a way of that being paid off before we hit the next millennium.”

“That is very generous, just so long as you don’t get home and think I’m taking the piss a bit.”

“I won’t Tom..... now if you can find me some clothes ?”

“Yes, of course. I’ll even give you Laura’s recent purchase for free, that seems only right.”

“What did she buy ? More accessories for her pimpmobile, I bet.”

“No, she wanted a top of the range sniper rifle.” Said Tom. “American military piece, had all sorts of trouble getting ammunition for it.”

Crap ! Simon just stood there for a moment, terrified by what Laura might have in mind as a target.

“I’ll take it home to her.” Said Simon. “Did she mention what she wanted it for ?”

“No, I thought you’d know. She did mention something about the benefit of always learning new skills. She is a bit of a case..... If I may say so ?”

“Oh, you may Tom and she really is quite a case.”

Simon stripped and used the showers, even though they looked a good place to pick up various infections. As far as he knew, vampires were immune to most fungal infections. The shower gel was green and came in a five gallon drum, but he felt much better once the hot water had run over him for a while. Tom brought in some second hand clothes, which looked better quality than the ones he’d taken off. Clara was always telling him not to buy most of his casual clothing on Ebay. Once clean and presentable, he called Clara for a lift home.

“I can sleep here for a few hours and get a cab home.” He said. “It is a long way for you to come.”

“No problem, on my way.”

He’d tell her what was in the long rifle shaped box when she arrived.

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Laura had taken to following Susan Eversley home at least twice a week. It was good old fashioned stalking, before the term had picked up unpleasant sexual overtones. Knowing the route her prey took, her habits, any likely problems on the route, was important. Susan wasn’t very observant; Laura had picked that up on her first night of Susan watching.

“Tickets please !”

A ticket inspector, actually two of them, one guarding the other. Their rounds seemed to coincide with the time Susan tended to head for home, it was the second time in a week. Laura produced her Oyster card to be looked at by inspector. Not even a thank you, as he handed it back to her.

“Have your tickets ready !”

There was some muttering and the usual travellers claiming to have left their Oyster card in their other bag, coat, pocket.... You name it. Not just scruffy travellers, fare evasion seemed to be a middle class sport too. One woman with a designer handbag, was arguing over a three quid tube fare.

“Sorry, what ?”

Susan, sat barely ten feet from her, close enough for every word to be heard. Despite all the shouting from the inspectors and the muttering of disgruntled travellers, Susan seemed oblivious to what was going on. Fatigue or stress maybe, or perhaps Susan was one of those people who zoned out while travelling. She dug in her bag and found something which the inspector seemed happy with.

‘The next station will be Kingsbury.’

To back up the voice, a rolling LED screen repeated the announcement. Susan never reacted and Laura had watched her time after time, get in a panic as the train arrived at her stop. Hardly a super nemesis, but being a Van Helsing with an overactive curiosity about her, made it essential for Susan to die. Not yet though, the game had to be played to a certain etiquette, there were rules. Laura left her seat and walked to the door furthest from Susan.

“I don’t care if your scanner doesn’t like my card. This is my stop !”

Trouble, as one middle aged woman tried to push her way past the inspectors. Susan seemed to be brought out of her daydreams by the noise, watching the woman, while she collected up her own things. Her usual shoulder bag, plus a Waitrose carrier bag. Just cat food and a TV dinner, Laura had watched her buy them. No panic or confusion, as Susan stepped off the tube at Kingsbury.

“Why do they bother with a timetable, they’re always late ?”

One passenger moaning in her general direction, though Laura chose to ignore it. Hoody pulled a little more over her face, Laura followed Susan along the street. Sometimes there was a quick look in the large ALDI on the corner, but Susan already had dinner for herself and her cat. Along Honeypot Lane, before she followed Susan into the maze of narrow residential streets.

“Hello, late again.”

“Aren’t I always.”

Susan knew people in the area and was often greeted by people on the way home. It was dark though, with plenty of shadows to hide in. No one noticed the girl in the hoody, walking in the same direction as Susan. As they turned into Berkeley Road, Laura decided to begin the game of cat and mouse, which would end with Susan’s death. Not now though, not that night.

There was a dark corner, two badly parked vans almost completely blocking the street lights. As Susan stepped off the kerb, Laura approached close enough to breathe on Susan’s neck. Nothing more than the equivalent of the finest silk being pulled over her neck, but Susan felt it.

“What..... Leave me alone.”

Susan fell, her tins of cat food coming out of the bag and rolling into the gutter. There was no one there though, Laura was back in the shadows. Susan stood up, pulling her phone out a pocket. There was no one to photograph though, just the darkness. Laura was there of course, actually standing quite close, but completely unseen.

“I see you ! Leave me alone.”

Lies of course, Laura now had faith in her ability to hide. Human sight just wasn't that good in the dark. In many ways it was amazing they were the most successful creatures on the planet. Laura watched Susan retrieve her shopping and walk towards her house. That was enough stalking for tonight, Laura walked back towards Kingsbury Station.

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Clara didn't expect Laura to be home when they arrived. She was out on a date, though she'd refused to give any details. There had been a lot of extra grooming in the hotel washroom before leaving, so it was probably the truth. Even if it wasn't, Clara could hardly follow her around all night. Laura was a grown woman and for better or for worse, she had to be allowed to live her own life, as she pleased. The sniper rifle was weird though, even for Laura.

"So tell me Simon." She said. "Tell me again, why we've come home with a military sniper rifle and a carrier bag full of cash?"

In the kitchen again, Simon making coffee, while she poured bundles of used twenty pound notes over the table.

"There's more cash to come, the same again every month." Said Simon. "It's brilliant how much cash there is in the drugs business. I wish I'd targeted dealers years ago."

"I see you're still favouring your right side Simon. Drug dealers tend to be armed and employ henchmen."

The money was nice though, they could afford to fly up to Scotland to see Daniel, without touching their nest egg from Vlad's house. Did they do business class to Scotland? If they did, Clara was going to book them the best seats on the plane.

"She has a den somewhere." Said Simon. "I can't see her keeping the rifle in the house."

The rifle was an oddity, she's never heard of any other vampire with a thing about firearms.

"Laura might actually have a point." She said. "It might prove useful to have a way of dealing with threats in a completely non-vampire way."

She'd amazed herself with that answer and Simon looked stunned.

"So you're not going to give her grief about it for weeks?" He asked.

"Simon! You make me sound like an overbearing monster."

She had to grin and kiss him on the cheek, he looked so confused.

"Yes, I know I can be a monster, but Laura is an adult. Plus there was that blood specialist once....

Getting rid of him was awkward. If Laura can do it with one bullet from a distance.... We just have to make sure she doesn't use it too often, or on the wrong targets."

Laura wasn't home by the time they went to bed, so Simon put the box on her bed. He added a post it note, just in case she brought a male friend home.

'From Tom, open when you're alone – Simon.'

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Clara waited until near the end of their working day, before asking Laura a little about her new toy. They were in the kitchen where breakfast was prepared, currently an empty room full of spotless equipment and shiny stainless steel worktops.

"Just promise me you'll discuss any potential targets."

"Oh yes, of course Clara. I don't have any target in mind." Said Laura. "It just seemed to be a useful skill to have."

"It might, we once had a blood specialist to get rid of, one of Simon's very few errors of judgement."

"What happened?" Asked Laura.

Clara looked around, satisfying herself that it was impossible for anyone to be close enough to hear their conversation.

“Simon trusted a consultant at a major hospital, a leading haematologist. Daniel again I’m afraid, talking Simon into something potentially dangerous. There was a chance, just a hope really that he might be able to decrease our sensitivity to light.”

“Oh, I hate sunny days. I can see how that would be useful.” Said Laura.

“We thought that too, no more eye streaming walks on a sunny day. No more pretending to have the world’s worst case of hay fever..... Anyway, he took a few samples and decided to make himself famous. The doctor who proved to the world that vampires really existed.”

“Oh shit, what did you do ?”

“Simon killed him, but it was in the street and very messy. The police put a lot of effort into the investigation and one woman out walking her dog got a good look at Simon. Luckily the police artist didn’t do a good sketch from her description. It might not have been a close one, but it felt like it at the time. A bullet from a nearby window, would have been a far easier solution.”

“Oh, I’m surprised at Simon.”

Poor Laura, Simon was still very much her hero and heroes had to be infallible.

“Don’t think too badly of him.” Said Clara. “Like all mentors, we haven’t told you about our failures. There haven’t been many, but I’ve made one or two bad decisions. Remember the senior civil servant, whose death had to look like suicide ?”

“That was your fault ?”

There was a clatter as a man carried a tray of plates into the kitchen. Clara knew him, Moroccan with perfect English and good hearing.

“It was, though I’ll have to tell you about it another time.”

“Are you getting the tube home with me.”

“Not tonight, it’s late shopping in Oxford Street. I feel like treating myself.”

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Late night opening was perfect for Clara. Enough people about to give a feel of somewhere throbbing with life, but no sunlight to cause migraine headaches and fits of sneezing. At night she was just one of the crowd, she fitted in. She’d already bought a pair of boots she’d been admiring for months, when a scent claimed all her attention.

Smell can bring back memories in humans and the effect was far stronger in vampires. She knew the male scent, they’d been lovers for some time. His own body scent mixed with his favourite soap, aftershave and even..... Yes, a subtle hint of cigars. A scent as personal and unique as a fingerprint, if you had the nose and senses of an apex predator. Clara spun around, looking for the man to match the scent. All too young, the memory refusing to budge from her mind, was of the sixties, the age of flared jeans and flower power.

“Oh, too many people.” She muttered.

There was one man, his walk looked familiar, even if he now used a cane in his right hand. Still a good head of hair, even if it was now almost pure white. Clara moved closer, getting a good whiff of the man’s scent. Yes, it was him, the memories of that six month dalliance came flooding back. He’d put on a few pounds, but everyone tended to as they reached retirement age. Right in the middle of her bad boy period, he’d been a good guy. Gerald, yes she now remembered his name.

“This isn’t a good idea Clara.” She mumbled.

Good idea or not, she followed him, as he turned into a side street and entered a coffee place. Gerald knew the routine of the shop, ordering quickly before sitting at a table in the window. All her instincts were telling her to leave, to buy the underwear she'd been promising herself.

"A milky cappuccino and..... That pastry." She said, pointing.

She paid and it was expensive. The sort of place where ordering a full meal, probably needed a loan from the IMF.

"Take a seat and I'll bring it over."

They should, delivered by Johnny Depp for the prices they charged. There were lots of free places to sit, but only one unoccupied chair in the window, the one opposite Gerald. She made a lot of noise, pulling the chair back, enough to gain his attention.

"Sorry..... May I ?..... the view from the window is so beautiful."

"Yes, of course."

She was pretty and looked about twenty two, of course he would never have said no. Clara pulled her hood right back and eased her hair out a bit, before smiling at him.

"My first time here." She said. "Is their coffee any good ?"

People's eyes really could appear to come out on stalks. She was worried he might be having a seizure or something.

"Clara..... After all these years."

Crap ! Fucking Crap ! Surprisingly in a city of eight million and change, she had run into people from her past before. Actually three or four times, now it was five. There was a simple way to explain herself that was always accepted. Besides, the alternative meant being immortal, which was impossible of course.

"Oh, you must know my mother." She said. "I have had people thinking I'm her before. We don't see it of course, but I have been told I look exactly like her, when she was about twenty."

His eyes lost their crazed glare, but his forehead was still covered in sweat.

"Yes, that makes sense. Sorry to stare at you, but you look so much like her."

He held his hand out, which she gently shook.

"I'm Gerald."

"I'm Laura."

Damn ! There hadn't been time to invent a back story, but becoming Laura for the next few minutes might actually work.

"I do remember my mum mentioning a Gerald." She said. "You were really close in the sixties."

"Yes, yes we were... Very close."

He was looking at her suspiciously, obviously troubled by something.

"Clara..... Your mother..... There was no note, no clue, she just vanished one weekend. I looked for her, but no one had ever heard of her at the address where I'd dropped her off a few times."

Poor Gerald, she had been a bit cruel, but a clean break was often the kindest in the end. He had been getting far too intense for a fling, even talking about marriage. She put her hand on his, smiling into the sad face opposite her.

"I'm not going to defend her, or apologise for her." She said. "My mother, Clara used to be a little eccentric, some might say a little crazy. In fact, she still is."

"Is she well ?"

"Yes, very much so."

"Did she marry and have lots of children ?"

So many questions and there was that look on his face again, of a man still in love.

“Clara does have someone, a long term relationship that has stood the test of time.”

“And children ?” He asked. “Do you have brothers and sisters Laura ?”

She actually found herself squeezing his hand.

“I don’t feel comfortable telling you about her life.” She said. “You knew her a long time ago, over fifty years ago. You have your memories of one wonderful summer in the sixties, treasure them.”

“I can give you my number. Please at least give that to her.”

Oh, following him was one thing, but sitting at his table had been a mistake. She nodded at him and waited for him to find a business card and write a number on the back.

“My home number..... Please tell her I still miss her.”

“I will Gerald, I promise.”

Clara picked up the bag with her new boots in and was at the door, when he called out to her.

“Laura..... Please tell her I’d like to see her.”

She nodded at him and walked back towards Oxford Street, knowing he’d be at the door to the coffee shop, watching her walk away. She did look back briefly before losing herself in the crowd.

He’d been there, watching and waving, though she hadn’t waved back.

“That really was a wonderful summer in sixty five.” She muttered.

His card she ripped into tiny pieces, before dropping it into a litter bin. She’d done some terrible things since becoming a vampire and rarely thought about her actions. Clara knew that many would consider her to be cruel and evil, but she didn’t. Not until now at least. What she’d done to Gerald was true cruelty, leaving him to love her for his entire life, with no idea of where she’d gone.

“Are there others ? There must be.”

Lots of passing shoppers and tourists, all ignoring the muttering woman beside the litter bin. There had been other wonderful summers with gorgeous men and a few women. There had been no goodbye said to any of them. How much suffering had she caused ? Clara imagined a queue of people like Gerald, stretching back hundreds of years.

Vampires had a handy trick for unwanted emotions. Clara wiped it all from her mind, just keeping the wonderful memories of a hot summer spent with Gerald in sixty five. Everything else went out of her mind. Guilt, remorse and most of all regret. It all vanished from her mind, leaving her with just one concern.

“Where to buy some decent underwear ?” She muttered.

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Things had changed in his relationship with Patsy, all of it for the better. Her bedroom door was locked, while her mum watched TV downstairs. They were lying naked on her bed, covered in post sexual sweat, while Patsy examined the wound in his side.

“You heal so fast, it’s amazing.” She said.

“Stop prodding at it, I’m not a science project.”

Being able to get physical in her bedroom was sensational, no more nights on grubby sheets at The Lancelot. Best of all, was not having to constantly self-censor his thoughts and words. Patsy knew what he was, how he fed. She even knew his was born in 13th Century Pisa.

“What is your mum’s name ?” He asked.

“Huh, talk about random. Why do you want to know ?”

“When you were kidnapped. Clara though it was strange that I didn’t know you mum’s name.”

“Hmmm, relax Simon, you’re a guy. You all seem to be a bit like that. Her name is Evangeline.”

“Wow..... I mean, no offence, but that is some name.”

"Yeah, I know. The entire family were just as shocked at the time, from what I've been told. No one calls her Evangeline, just plain Evie."

"I like Evie, nice name. Names go in cycles, London was full of Evangeline's in the nineteen thirties, knee deep in them."

There was that look on her face again, as she realised he'd been there, had actually walked the streets of London in the thirties. They'd had a few conversation about how most of the stuff in films and TV was crap. What did blood taste like? Did he feel old? And lots of other questions he hadn't minded answering. One day the awkward questions would come about the number of dead humans left in his wake. Did he feel guilty? Was it all worth it, to extend one life? Plus all the questions about emotions and feelings, which he felt ill-equipped to answer. That was the going to be the awkward conversation, the conversation he was dreading. He leant over and kissed her belly button, licking the moisture from it. Her body tensed, ready for sex again.

"Pity I have to leave by half twelve." He said.

"Mum is pretty cool about you being here, it's the neighbours.... You know."

Of course he did, Evie didn't want her daughter getting a reputation for being a bit loose. Actually an arrangement where he was sent home at about half twelve suited him fine. Actually it was just about the perfect arrangement. He entered her, enjoying the way she tensed and gave a long drawn out sigh of pleasure.

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Saturday morning was still the main time for them to get together over breakfast. Usually Simon's famous bacon sandwiches and mugs of proper coffee. There had been a brief period of trying out other things, but they always came back to bacon sandwiches, with lots of brown sauce.

"We should firm up our pencilled in date to see Daniel." Said Clara.

"To Daniel it always was firm." Said Simon. "We're expected there for a long weekend, flying up to Aberdeen in three weeks time. Are you alright to mind the place Laura?"

Of course she was. Being on her own was the perfect opportunity to stalk Susan, maybe scare her shitless in the process.

"Yeah, just stock up on coffee and I'll be fine."

"Right, I'll take my coffee into the lounge and call Daniel." Said Clara.

"Expecting a tough call?" Asked Laura.

"With Daniel... you never know. Best if I make the call in private."

Great, she'd noticed that Simon opened up more if Clara wasn't there. Her mentors had made some fairly bad errors in the past and that intrigued her. Plus she might learn how to avoid making the same mistakes. Laura refilled Simon's coffee cup.

"Clara told me about the blood specialist." She said. "How close to being a disaster was it?"

"Oh that... It was a while back. It might have been serious, so he had to be killed. Actually breaking into his lab and destroying his records was the hardest part."

"I heard he'd had some samples of your blood." She said.

Good old Simon. She did sort of hero worship, but sometimes he needed prodding to get the full story out of him.

"Yes, I thought he was on our side, wanting to help myself and Clara and our issues with bright sunlight. Then he began calling a few journalists and making waves about vampires being genuine."

"Crap! That sounds serious."

"I'm not sure if it ever was that serious. Want another sandwich? I'm having one."

"Yeah great, so why wasn't it the beginning of a vampire apocalypse?"

“He’d told several journalists before I found out what he was doing. None of them believed him. If he’d send my blood to other doctors, they were likely to have assumed it was all some elaborate fraud. No one believes in us Laura, which has probably saved us all from destruction. Do you honestly think that no doctor has ever looked at our blood under a microscope ?”

“Well, no Simon.... To be honest I did wonder why there had never been peasants with pitch forks and torches, screaming ‘Vampire,’ and hammering on doors.”

“See Laura, even you’re talking about it in a fictional TV way. No one believes in us, all evidence is ignored, witnesses considered frauds, fakers or crazies. That is why I never thought my mistake was all that serious.”

“That does relieve me a little.” She said. “In case I do something daft.”

“When don’t you?”

“Oh, Simon.”

“Sorry Laura. No, I don’t think anything you might do will cause our destruction. Humans haven’t believed in us for far too long, to start believing in us now. I really do think I could write our story into a book and publish it on the Web and people would still think it was fiction.”

“How about Clara’s problem with the civil servant ?”

“That.... Is Clara’s story and you’ll need to ask her about that.”

Clara came back into the kitchen, holding her phone and looking pleased about something.

“All firmed up, I’ll book the airline tickets and car hire.” She said.

“How was Daniel ?” Asked Simon.

“Great.... For Daniel.”

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