

## Quid Pro Quo

(Season three of London's Night Stalkers)

### Chapter 16 - George

**"A vampire is better than any hospital machine at monitoring human life signs. Heart rate, oxygen levels, body temperature, even a pretty good idea of whether a person was likely to see their next birthday."**

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Simon had plans that included a few hours in front of the TV, a Thai takeaway and at least four cans of decent beer. He'd decided on his Thai order and the Netflix series he wanted to watch. The beer he'd left as a last minute decision, just to add a little edge to the evening. The telephone call from a lady at the local hospital had thrown all his plans out of the window.

"Am I speaking to Simon Atherton?"

He was no longer worried about it being the taxman, going on about his returns from about seven years previously. He'd hired a proper accountant to sort that mess out, and anyway.....He'd changed his phone number, just in case.

"Yes it is."

"I'm Joy, calling from the North Middlesex."

What was it about people having names totally unsuited to their chosen career? He would have happily bet a month's pay that Joy wasn't calling with a message of joy.

"Hello Joy, not bad news I hope?" He asked.

"The main contact I listed have is Clara Copley. Any chance I could speak to her?"

"Clara is abroad at the moment. You'll have to make do with me I'm afraid."

"I'm calling about George Harper and Clara is listed as next of kin."

It took a second for the penny to drop, George had only ever been George to him. Of course George had a second name, everyone did. Clara would have known his full name. She'd probably know his birthday too and whether he owned a dog.

"Yes, George and Clara have been close friends for years." He lied.

"He was admitted to hospital because of a deterioration of a long term condition. It is quite serious I'm afraid.....You should come in to see him as soon as possible."

"Oh, poor George.... Is it that bad?" He asked.

A strange situation where Clara had been trying to keep a distance between herself and George, for fairly obvious reasons. Yet there she was, right at the top of his contact in case of need list. Actually down as his next of kin. Clara was his insurance policy though, his route to immortality when his congenital illness seemed likely to kill him. Not that Simon knew what was killing George. Clara would know, she'd probably know its name in Latin.

"I can't give details over the phone." Said Joy. "You should prepare for the worst though and come in to see him as soon as possible."

"Yes of course, I'll come in this evening. What are the visiting hours?"

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When Liz saw the wraiths were carrying weapons, she began to wonder if lighting the huge bonfire had been a good idea. At first it had felt like watching an old recording, a memory of a dreadful local event, a minor apocalypse. The fire had been lit and the people of the small town had answered the

alarm. Men, women, even quite small children. They were all filling the field, wielding whatever weapons they had. One young boy was holding a pitchfork twice as tall as he was.

"Is all this real?" Asked Clara. "It feels like something that happened a very long time ago."

"Wraiths no longer, I felt one touch me as she walked past." Said Mabina.

The field and town weren't as brightly lit as if they'd been under a sunlit sky, but Liz could easily see the approaching cloud of flying wolves, the vargouilles. She raised her bow and realise there was no need to take part in the battle about to be fought. The small crossbows carried by many of the ghosts, could hurt the flying beasts. Liz saw one of the vargouilles twitch and fall, with many arrows sticking out of its throat and chest. Once on the ground, those only armed with farm tools, hacked it to pieces.

"Should we help them?" Asked Clara.

"It's their fight....Now the fire has been lit." Said Liz.

The ghosts weren't having it all their own way, several were lifted into the air, to be dropped from high enough to be killed, or dreadfully injured. The wraiths could bleed now and some managed to cry out. Liz still had the feeling she was watching something that had happened over and over again, perhaps for centuries.

"I can't just stand and watch." Said Mabina.

The ancient vampire moved into the centre of the battle, but couldn't reach the flying monsters with her sword. After a few minutes shouting at the vargouilles to come closer, she began to help butcher those brought down by bolts and arrows.

"They don't need our help." Said Clara. "For once.....I'm happy to stand and watch others fight."

At one point it looked likely the flying monsters would gain the upper hand. There were definitely more dead and injured ghosts on the ground than vargouilles. Liz felt a hand on her shoulder, a good firm hand.

"Now, it is time." Said the headman.

He wasn't just a headman in peasant's clothing anymore. He looked taller, broader and far more imposing. He wore armour that shone with reflected light from the bonfire. In his hands he held the largest crossbow Liz had even seen. The bolt already loaded looked huge too and made of metal. Strangely she could never remember seeing him reload the powerful bow, yet he fired it dozens of times.

"I think he means us." Shouted Liz. "Time to do our bit for the war effort."

Liz soon ran out of arrows and then the huge axe found plenty of work. As the headman and the ghostly villagers brought down the flying monsters with bolts and arrows, the three women finished them off with their heavy antique weapons.

"Now I feel we have a part to play in all this." Said Mabina.

The light from the fire became a little less, as they seemed to spend hours killing huge numbers of the vargouilles. It was still bright enough to see by though and the wraiths had no trouble finding targets. There was no final wave, no truly monstrous leader of the pack to defeat. One moment Liz was swinging the war axe and feeling tired, the next they were alone, just the three of them.

"Is that it..... Did we win?" Asked Clara.

"I have no idea." Said Liz.

Every wraith had gone, though the fire still burned brightly. Around them lay the bloody remains of the vargouilles in numbers too vast to be easily counted. Of the brave ghostly villagers though and their leader. There was no sign at all, no evidence they'd ever existed.

"Aren't you supposed to know about this sort of thing?" Asked Mabina.

"Believe me Mabina, I have no greater comprehension of what happened here than you. We seem to have helped with a little unfinished business. Why or what was achieved.....I have no idea."

"We fought and we won, that's enough for me." Said Clara.

Liz shrugged at Mabina.

"I tend to agree with Clara.....Now we can enter the 11<sup>th</sup> gate. Once we've recovered our packs of course."

"Oh those things.....If only we could leave them here." Said Clara.

"Well.... If you want to travel for days with no food, water or bedding." Said Liz.

"There are times dear Liz, when I hate that damned pack enough to be tempted."

Once loaded down again with all the paraphernalia required for their journey underground, they carefully walked between the bodies of their dead enemies.

"Seems wrong to leave them..... Just lying there." Said Mabina. "But no..... I'm not volunteering to help bury them."

"There will be night creatures, carrion beasts who need a meal." Said Liz.

"Now she knows something about this place." Muttered Clara.

"Careful.....Something waits for us." Said Mabina.

At the gate stood four giant hounds, the same type they'd seen at a previous gateway.

"Four somethings, guardians of the tombs of the dead." Said Liz. "See Clara, I do know a few things.

It seems we've been rewarded for helping the ghosts of the villagers. They're hard to kill, have sharp teeth and wicked claws. They'll also give their lives to defend us."

"Useful." Said Mabina.

The gate was another crude arch, a rough lintel on top of two large upright stones. There was a distinct glow as Liz activated the gateway in a way she still didn't fully understand. No need to ask if they were ready. Clara and Mabina were stood beside her, with the huge hounds behind them.

"Here we go again." Said Clara.

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Simon had no trouble finding George in the huge hospital complex. The reception desk had told him the right ward and then his green eyes and natural charm worked their spell on a young nurse. She even took him right up to the window of the small room with two beds in it.

"George has the room to himself at the moment." Said the nurse. "I'm glad he has someone, he's a nice man when you get to know him."

Was she trying to say what a relative wanted to hear ? Probably, the George Simon knew was a miserable bastard who'd probably feed his own mother to the furnace to earn a few pounds.

"Yes, he's an old friend of our family." Said Simon.

Who he knew almost nothing about. It was a relief when the pretty nurse left without asking him anything specific about his old family friend. Simon pulled a chair right up to the bed and looked at the man in the bed. George seemed to have aged twenty years since Simon had last dropped off a body to go into the furnace. Even he found it hard not to feel pity for George. He looked so frail.

"No grapes then ?"

His eyes popped open and the George he knew was back again. Still frail looking, but his eyes were intelligent and alert, almost feral.

"Hello George..... Why didn't you call me yourself ?"

"I collapsed at work Simon, my phone is still in my locker."

"Anything on it I should be worried about ?"

"No, I'm careful."

A vampire is better than any hospital machine at monitoring human life signs. Heart rate, oxygen levels, body temperature, even a pretty good idea of whether a person was likely to see their next birthday. Simon didn't understand how he knew it, but George wasn't putting on an act. Their most reliable disposer of bodies, didn't have long to live. He actually held George's hand.

"What have they told you?" Asked Simon.

"Probably what you can see.....I've a congenital incurable disease, that is nearly always fatal, and I shouldn't bother booking a holiday for next summer."

He must have seen the look on his face. He might be dying, but George was no fool.

"So, next summer was an overestimate, I had guessed that. Tell me the truth Simon, how long have I got?"

"I'm not a trained doctor."

"No, but I bet you've seen more people die than a whole hospital full of doctors. Tell me the truth?"

"About two weeks, maybe three."

"How often do you get it wrong?"

"Almost never."

Simon knew what was coming next and there was a problem. Clara had promised to turn George into a vampire when his time came, but she'd never intended to honour the deal. With luck George would have died in his sleep, or on the bus. Clara detested George as a human and had no intention of even trying to give him immortality. She hadn't bothered to even warn him that there was a ninety five percent likelihood that even trying to turn him would fail.

"You know what I want Simon..... You both owe me."

George in hospital with just a few weeks to live would make a dangerous enemy, he knew too much about them. No need to use the 'V' word, he could get them life imprisonment as good old fashioned serial killers. They trusted George enough to tell him far too much about their lives. Simon made a decision on the spot.

"Yes George, but it can't be here. Too many cameras and staff wandering about."

"Fine, where do you want to take me?"

Now came the awkward bit, though his vampire senses told him George was still just about strong enough to do it.

"I can't wheel you out in a wheelchair, believe me, I wish it was that easy. Far too many cameras old buddy and nurses with good memories for faces. You'll need to get dressed and meet me outside."

"You're kidding.... I'm fucking dying."

"We all are George, even me, it's all a matter of how long it'll take. You have enough strength to get out of the building, trust me. Did they leave your clothes here?"

"Yes they did.....You really think I can do it, get outside?"

Telling him it was a close thing wasn't going to help.

"I'm certain you can do it. Wait until after dark, when the last few visitors are leaving. Walk out to where all the bus stops are and then head towards the underpass. Wait there, I won't leave you waiting long.... You know the van I use."

"And you'll turn me into a vampire?"

"Yes, I'll park the van somewhere out of the way and do it there and then."

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Ronnie quite liked the old beige Mercedes she'd been given for the run to Watford. A large and very comfortable automatic, even if it did look the sort of car her dad would have loved. She could just imagine him blocking traffic, driving it around Green Lanes, just to be seen. He'd probably have worn

the same type of leather gloves she was wearing. They looked cool, but were mainly to stop her finger prints being all over the car. Alright, the car was getting on a bit, but as a one day untraceable loan car, it was pretty damn good.

"Pity about the tapes though." She muttered.

Somewhere along what was probably a long list of former owners, there had been a Pat Benatar fan. The glove box was full of old cassette tapes, all Pat bloody Benatar. A few tracks were alright, but after an hour or two, anyone's voice can begin to get on your nerves. The radio refused to work, so Ronnie turned off the old cassette player and drove in silence. She'd already dropped off a box at a haulage company on a trading estate near Watford. Now she just had to return a heavy kit bag to Tom's place in Erith. The bag probably contained cash, though she had no intention of opening it to find out. Tom was paying her good money, very good money. The late nights could be a bit rough, but she'd never had so much disposable income before, ever. By the time she'd reached the end of the M1, boredom had made her turn on the tape player.

"...We are strong

No one can tell us we're wrong

Searching our hearts for so long..."

Ronnie's knew she sang flat, but as there was no one around to moan about it, so what the hell. She carried on singing along to the old classic, even drumming on the steering wheel as she took the final M1 exit and turned towards the North Circular.

"...Both of us knowing

Love is a battlefield..."

Damn, she'd been lost in the moment and wasn't used to the width of the car. She'd side swiped a parked car. No harm though, there was little traffic and there was no way she was going to stop and put a note under a windscreen wiper. Probably not a serious hit anyway, though the rear view mirror gave her a view of a large blue saloon, its offside wing mirror dangling on the end of a few wires.

"Oh fuck !"

The blue lights seemed to come from nowhere, the siren drowning out even Pat in full swing. Ronnie was in a car with dubious ownership, with a bag full of cash on the passenger seat. For some reason she thought that she probably wasn't even insured, worried her more than the drug money. With just a split second in which to decide whether to stop or run, Ronnie decided to run. Actually it felt as though her unconscious mind had caused her foot to floor the accelerator. Her mum had been angry when she'd been done for no insurance.....Never again.

"....No promises

No demands

Love is a battlefield.."

"Fuck you Pat, I need to concentrate." She yelled.

No silence after turning off the tape player though, blue lights and sirens seemed to fill every mirror she looked at it. She'd run with a fairly iffy crowd when she'd been a teenager, she knew the cops could be outrun. She just had to ignore all the lights and noise.... She needed to focus on just driving as fast as she could without killing herself, or anyone else.

"Shit."

She rattled along the side of a parked van in...She had no idea where she was, but it was probably the top end of Finchley somewhere. Cops want to go home at night with tall tales, not injuries. The police car behind her slowed a little, as sparks and debris flew off the parked van.

".....Crap girl you can run fast...I bet you could beat that Jessica Ennis."

She'd just beaten George the IV in a drunken race at Highbury fields, but he'd been right. She could really run, faster than any copper, probably. She'd dated quite a few guys called George, it was a popular name in the Greek community. In her mind she'd begun numbering them and George the IV was one of the better ones.

"Damn, damn..... Damn."

There was a secret compartment inside the boot, a flap that gave access to an area behind the rear seat. It wasn't that well-hidden, but it would fool anyone not really expecting to find anything. Simon had told her not to leave the goods or cash on the passenger seat, Tom had told her too. Even Beetle had told her it was a stupid thing to do. No stopping and pretending to be just a stupid uninsured driver when there was a bag full of cash sat next to her.

"Oh come on..... Give me one damn break tonight."

Another set of flashing cop lights and more volume to the blaring sirens. Again, she hadn't seen the second cop car, it was as if it had just appeared out of nowhere. Ronnie knew where she was though, she knew the streets of North London fairly well. A sharp left turn and she was on a local rat run. A long straight road that would take her right through to Golders Green. Provided no one backed out of a driveway into her, or another four cop cars didn't appear out of nowhere. It was one of those nights.

At last her luck was changing, the rat run looked free of traffic. Ronnie saw the cops recede in her mirror, when the old Merc touched around 80 miles per hour. She braked hard enough to leave long black smoking marks on the road and swung a left near Hampstead Garden Suburb.

"I just need a bit of a head start." She muttered.

Still far too fast for small local roads, she just hoped no one's ageing aunt decided to step out in front of her. The cops seemed worried too, their lights weren't getting any closer. They were probably calling ahead, arranging a nice little trap for her in the Highgate area. With helicopters and modern communications you really had to outrun the cops and vanish within about fifteen minutes, or you were screwed. That was yet more valuable information from George the IV.

"Now..... Now I can outrun them."

She actually parked the car fairly tidily and turned off the lights. One parked saloon in the dark looked pretty much like any other. A little confusion in the minds of the cops might make all the difference. Ronnie grabbed the heavy bag and ran into the Hampstead Heath Extension, running in the direction of the golf club. It was her old haunt as a teenager, she knew everywhere that was private from what her mum would have called her courting days. Screwing really, she knew all the best spots to have some fun in private.

"Crap ! I thought I was fit." She muttered, while breathing hard.

Through the same gap in a chain link fence that had been there since she'd been about fifteen and wanting somewhere to drink cider with her friends. Ronnie knew she'd got away from the cops when there was no sign of pursuit. No sirens, no helicopters annoying the great and good of Hampstead. She turned on the cheap burner phone she'd been given and almost called Tom, before deciding Simon was a better choice. He sounded a bit put out to receive her call.

"Simon..... It's Ronnie."

"I'm in the middle of something Ronnie."

"I've no transport and a few people eager to talk to me Simon. I have Tom's goods.....I don't want him to think I can't be relied on. Please help me."

"Oh shit, of all nights."

"Tell me about it."

“Where are you ?”

“Hampstead.”

“Alright, I’m on my way. Is there somewhere I can plug into my GPS ?”

“I’ll be outside Golders Green Tube.”

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The bus shelter with the heavily scratched Perspex windows, felt colder than the night before. As she now knew the location Laura had used the Egg to travel there. Tim had wanted to come, but Jim (Hacker) Weaver seemed a little smitten. She’d noticed over the years, that smitten can turn into downright hostile fairly quickly, if an existing boyfriend was added to the equation. Laura sent the agreed two ones by text and after a few seconds, Jim sent a reply of two twos. It was safe to enter the house and he had acquired the log on she needed. The front door opened when she was halfway up the garden path, Jim waiting to greet her. He didn’t actually speak until they were in his computer room. She didn’t know him that well, but she had noticed he only seemed to come alive when he was in front of a PC.

“Sorry I couldn’t get it yesterday, but I have it now. A full log on Laura, you can access their entire system.”

“I brought the money.”

The amount didn’t seem large, though she had no intention of handing it over until she’d made sure the log on to the British Museum’s back office systems, actually worked.

“Sit here, this terminal is routed via an IP address in the Ukraine. Did you manage to park alright ?”

“Yes thank you.”

“Can I get you coffee ?”

“That would be wonderful Jim....Can I print from this terminal ?”

“Yes, it’ll go straight to the colour laser.”

The terminal had a yellow sticker at the top of the screen, giving the log on of an Ann Mitchel, complete with password and her personal verification questions. It appeared Ann was, or recently had been, a Senior Researcher, though there was no mention of what she researched. Was Laura about to get her arrested ? It seemed a high price to pay for the bundle of cash in the envelope, especially after Jim took his cut.

“Here Laura, coffee.....I even bought a few biscuits. If you don’t have to rush off afterwards, we could order food again.”

“I’ve no intention of running off to anywhere Jim. An ordered in meal would be nice. You can decide what we eat.”

“There’s a decent Chinese place.”

“Perfect.”

She’d decided not to ask about Ann Mitchel and her chances of spending time in jail. Jim had told her a contact with the police had been giving him information for years without being caught. It seemed that game keepers turned poachers knew how to hide their activity. Jim pulled up a chair and sat slightly to her right.

“I created an icon for their systems, top left.” He said.

“Have you tried the logon ?”

“No, this one is fairly hot off the press, the person is still working there. You’ll get two chances to use it, maybe three if you’re lucky. Then it’ll be automatically deleted.”

Laura was no novice when it came to using a keyboard. A few computer literacy classes had been mandatory at her secondary school and most of her jobs had involved using a PC on her desk. After

pressing the icon, a pretty log on screen came up for the British Museum, complete with a few nice background pictures. Laura entered the logon name and password for Ann Mitchel.

“Good, you’re in.” Said Jim. “My source is usually reliable, but you never know.”

Finding the list of exhibits was easy, the system was pleasantly user friendly. From exhibits she found her way to the items not currently on display. It was huge, many times the size of what the public could actually see.

“Wow, is everything on here ?” She asked.

“I’m not a museum expert Laura, but what they’re aware of should be on there.”

“Aware of ?”

“You must have seen items on the news Laura. They’re always finding this or that in old shoe boxes, that no one knew they had. How valuable is what you’re looking for ?”

“Priceless and they’ve had it since the war....The piece has a troubled history too.”

“It’ll be on there then. Museum people are only human, they love an artefact with a dark past as much as the rest of us.”

He was too close to hide anything from and it was probably a silly thing to do, but she was beginning to trust Jim. Laura entered a line of all the key search items she knew about the Ankh, which weren’t that many. Four such pieces came up on the screen, complete with pictures. Perhaps Horus had put an idea into her mind, but she knew with certainty that Item RDS84007H was the Ankh she needed to acquire.

“Wow, there are even all the notes about how it was found and acquired by the museum.”

“Print it all out if you like, I’ve plenty of spare toner.”

She did and everything was there, pages and pages of information. The most useful was the exact location of the Sacred Ankh, right down to a drawer number. Laura gave the envelope with the cash in it to Jim.

“Thank you Jim, I’m sure I can rely on you to be discreet.”

“Yes, of course. Acquiring the item for someone are you ?”

“Yes.”

“Budge over a bit, let me get to the screen.” Said Jim.

It was awe inspiring and a little humbling, to see the speed which his fingers moved over the keyboard. He even talked to her as he kept refining the search parameters.

“I did a little research, untraceable of course. By drawer they mean anything from what we’d think of as a drawer, to something six feet wide and two feet deep. Often pieces from the same period, or acquired from the same source, go into the same drawer.”

He sat back from the screen and grinned at her. He’d done it so quickly, pulling the entire contents of the drawer where the Ankh was kept, from the database. He scrolled through page after page of what had to be priceless artefacts. Some were from ancient Egypt, but not all.

“The first two screens are from the same source as the Ankh.” Said Jim. “You’ll notice the name has been withheld and they’re referred to as just NK.”

“Is that normal ?”

“No it isn’t Laura.....Look at what’s in the same drawer. You know your business, but if you’re going through all the risks of getting in there, you might as well make it worth it.”

She knew what he meant, though selling those kinds of artefacts would probably be difficult. Not impossible though, Mabina boasted of knowing middlemen who’d buy just about anything, for a percentage. As for anything calling out to her the way the Ankh’s picture was grabbing her gaze....They were all nice pieces, but she felt no deep desire to acquire them.



“Can I print these pages ?” She asked. “As you said..... If I’m in there anyway.”

“Print whatever you like.....I was wondering Laura. I might be useful to you when you go in there. I can deal with alarms, power supplies, even a few electronic door locks.”

She respected his abilities, but Jim looked like a grown up version of the kid who sat at the front during physics classes and got beaten up every day behind the bike sheds.

“Maybe you could help from a distance.” She said. “I know the people I usually work with, we’ve built up a certain way of doing things.”

“I’d really like to go into the British Museum with you Laura. Trust me, I can be useful and you will need me.”

He hadn’t tried to negotiate his fee for helping. Laura realised her vanity had stopped her realising that. Jim wasn’t just a nerdy guy hoping to get into her knickers.

“I get it Jim.... Be honest, which pieces do you want ?”

At least he had the decency not to lie about it. He scrolled down two pages and pointed twice at the screen.

“Those two Laura. Both light and easy to carry and I know someone who’ll give me a fair price.”

Tempting to ask how much, it would give her an idea of what value he was putting on his services.

She really didn’t care how much he was going to make from the two rings he wanted as his personal fee. Very pretty gold rings from the reign of Hatshepsut, dated at roughly 1470 BC. Jim would obviously be useful, but she’d learned a lot from Mabina and Tom who ran the breakers yard.

“Never work with anyone you don’t know..... Well.” Tom had once told her.

There was a real chance Jim would panic at the first sign of trouble and become a huge liability. On the other hand he might be useful to her in the future. An expert IT guy independent of the Silver Dawn was someone worth cultivating.

“Order the Chinese Jim and I’ll have a think about it.” She said.

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“Always wear something with a hoody attached to it.”

She did sometimes listen to advice, especially from Simon. Ronnie had shaken her jacket to get the leaves off it and any traces of Hampstead Heath. Her sweat shirt had a hoody, which she’d pulled around her face enough to hide her features, without looking like someone trying to hide their face. She wasn’t the only person stood outside Golders Green Station, with a bag at their feet. Two other women looked as though they were waiting to be met and about three young men. She’d been there about ten minutes and a police car had driven past, but the two uniformed guys inside it hadn’t even looked in her direction. Simon’s tatty Fiat van pulled up in front of her after about twenty minutes of waiting. Always a gentleman he got out to open the passenger side door.

“Sorry I’m late dear. The traffic was dreadful.” He said, while planting a kiss on her cheek.

She playfully thumped him on the arm.

“About time, I nearly got picked up by the guy in the yellow jumper.”

“Do you want me to thump him ?”

“No.”

No matter what the situation, Simon could always make her laugh. She sometimes wondered if he ever took anything seriously. His van was so old; it had a curtain to separate the driver from the rear of the van. Ronnie climbed up into the passenger seat, throwing the kit bag into the back.

“Oh....No.... Too late.” Said Simon.

She had to look in the back, it was impossible not to. Her bag had missed what looked like a body wrapped up in a sleeping bag, but it had been close. Once she’d have been jumping about, asking a

million and one questions. If one thing working for Tom had taught her, it was how to stay calm and not to make a drama out of every crisis. As Simon closed the driver side door and started the rather clattery engine, she had to ask....

“Who is that in the back ?”

“Don’t worry about him..... Anyway, ten to one he’s dead.”

Never making a drama out of a crisis only went so far.

“You picked me up with a dead man in the back ?!”

Her voice was getting a bit shrill, but there was nothing she could do about it.

“Might be dead Ronnie, I won’t be sure for a few hours.”

“But..... Who the fuck is he ?”

“Do you remember the conversation we had about not getting too curious ?”

“Vaguely Simon, vaguely.”

“This is one of those things not to be too curious about..... Anyway, what happened to Tom’s old beige Merc ?”

Crap, the might be dead, might not be, guy in the back had made her forget the story she’d been working on. No good, she’d just have to wing it.

“Just bad luck I guess....This silly bastard in a blue saloon side swiped me as I was coming off the M1 at Staples Corner..... Bloody idiot was all over the road.”

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