

## London's Night Stalkers

### Chapter 8 – Good Cop, Nosey Cop

**“So slow, yet his approach was inexorable. The serpent God opened his mouth and roared at her, a deep earthy roar, which seemed to shake the mighty pyramid to its foundations.”**

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They did have quite a few callers at the house, though most were selling something, or trying to get them to sign a direct debit for a charity. Those were the worst to get away from, all highly persuasive and determined that their cause was more deserving than the last three or four charity callers. The kitchen window overlooked the front door; it would have been so easy to ignore the constant stream of annoyance at their door.

“An unanswered front door gets noticed.” Simon had told her. “We’re just three normal people. We’re nice, we’re friendly, we open our door when people call. We’re just the usual gang of idiots who end up being pestered by chuggers.”

The callers that afternoon were expected though. Simon looked out of the kitchen window, as a finger held their bell push down for longer than is usually polite.

“Man and woman, both in the suits that only the police seem to wear.” Said Simon. “You answer the door..... and stay calm.”

Clara wasn't home yet and Laura had so needed her advice. Her help in hiding the bruises from the fight with Vlad too, she was sure her makeup wasn't hiding them completely. Simon was fine; guys with bruised faces were cool. Men were supposed to be rugged and aggressive, women weren't. Unfair maybe, but it was just the way the world worked. Laura opened the door wide, trying to appear open and welcoming.

“Hi, you must be detective Marcou. Please come in.”

He introduced the woman as he came in, a detective Susan Everley or Eversley; he spoke too quickly for her to be sure. Laura led them through into the kitchen, where Simon was busy making tea and coffee.

“We thought the kitchen table might be better,” said Laura, “in case you had any..... files and things.”

Mike did have a laptop case, which he didn't open, before putting it on the table.

“Tea, coffee ?” Asked Simon. “And we've a good selection of biscuits.”

“Tea thanks.” Replied Mike. “And I wouldn't say no to a biscuit, the journey was longer than I thought.”

“Yes, N22 is further out than I realised.” Added Susan. “I'll have tea too.”

Laura felt disappointed, they seemed so ordinary for Van Helsing's, boring even. Simon gave them tea in their nicest cups and put an assortment of biscuits on the table.

“And you are sir ?” Asked Susan.

“Simon Atherton.”

“And your relationship to Miss Selway is ?”

Mike was all smiles, while Susan was polite, but had the facial expression of someone who badly wanted to be somewhere else. They seemed to be working some kind on good cop, nose cop routine.

“I just rent a room from Simon.” She answered.

“My girlfriend Clara, and I rent this house.” Said Simon. “Laura works with Clara and needed a place to stay. One thing sort of led to another.”

“Looks like you’ve been through the wars.” Said Mike.

Simon looked completely unconcerned, rubbing a yellow bruise, just under his left eye.

“Oh, you should see the other guy.” He replied.

Mike gave him an almost conspiratorial grin, but Susan looked even more fed up than before.

“Just the three of you living here ?” She asked.

“Yes, just us.” Answered Simon.

Mike finally opened his lap top and sipped his tea, as it powered up. He looked directly at her, his eyes never leaving hers.

“Were you aware that Stuart Martin is missing ?” He asked. “That he went missing at about the same time you left your previous address ?”

“I did hear about it.” She replied. “There are a few people I keep in touch with, who told me that Stuart had left his wife.”

Mike was tapping something into his laptop, maybe making a note of her replies. If only they were allowed to hunt the police ! How easy it would be to stop the questioning.

“There are..... Complications.” Said Mike. “It’s the twenty first century and if a man decides to leave his wife for a younger woman, it’s no business of the police. Though, as I said there are.... Other factors.”

“Is he here ?” Asked Susan.

“No ! I’d never..... I mean, he was awful, I hated him. Stuart used to find excuses to touch me, he was a monster..... I’d never..... NEVER !”

“It’s ok Laura, they have to ask these questions.” Said Simon.

Mike spun his laptop around, showing her a picture of Stuart’s desk blotter, the one she’d covered in insults, before leaving the office for the last time. It was all there, name calling and accusations of bullying and sexual harassment.

“We have to ask,” said Mike, “though after seeing this, I doubted if he was living with you. We have to be certain though, cross every T and dot every I. If we looked around the house, would we find Stuart Martin ? In an upstairs room perhaps ?”

Her heart was pounding, it was so hard to keep control. It wanted them both dead, the reptile part of her mind. They were a threat and an annoyance, easily dealt with by a few seconds of violence.

Simon put his hand on her shoulder.

“Look if you want.” He said. “Don’t rummage through our things, but you’re welcome to look around. Laura has told me about Stuart Martin, his wife is well rid of the bastard.”

“Thank you sir.”

Mike nodded at Susan, who stood up and headed towards the stairs. There were a few items in the bathroom cabinet that worried her. A proper kit for stitching wounds, probably army supplies bought by Vlad. It might look weird if Susan looked in the cabinet, but then again, she probably wouldn’t look.

“His wife is sure his disappearance is foul play,” said Mike, “but wives usually do think that. So much easier to accept than the thought of their husbands running off with another woman. His wife is persistent though and then there is the matter of missing money from various client accounts.”

Her look of surprise didn’t last long.

"It doesn't surprise me." She said. "He was a qualified conveyancing specialist, not a lawyer. I saw some of the letters he typed himself, claiming to be a solicitor. He even told one local business, that he was a practising barrister with chambers in WC2. Fantasy, all fantasy."

Mike tapped her answer into his computer and had it closed up again, by the time Susan was back. She simply shook her head at him.

"Three last questions." Said Mike. "Then we'll leave you to forget all about Stuart Martin. Have you had any contact with him, since leaving your job there?"

"No."

"Do you know anyone, who might know of his whereabouts?"

"No."

"Anything else you can think of Laura. Anything you know that might help us find him? It looks like he's run off with a lot of other people's money."

It was the first time he'd used her first name. She still wanted to kill him, but the edge had been taken off her anger.

"His car." She said. "He loved his car, more than his wife, more than anything. Find his Lexus and you'll find him."

"Thank you."

All true, but the Lexus was gone of course, broken down into its constituent parts and the shell crushed, by good old Tom in Erith. Simon saw them out, while she watched from the window. Their car was some way up the street. She watched, noting both their walks, so she'd recognise them again. It was what all predators did. Their personal scents were already noted and filed away.

"I wanted to kill them." She told Simon. "Probably would have, if you'd left me alone with them."

He held her and kissed her gently on the tip of her nose, before getting a bottle of scotch out of the cupboard. He poured them both a large measure, without asking her.

"I know Laura, still feel it a bit myself." He said. "Those annoying humans with their pointless rules and constant questions. It would be so easy to take them out, shut them up and enjoy the taste of their blood."

"Yes! Yes, Simon, that..... I felt exactly that!"

"But of course we can never give in to those feelings Laura. There are more of them than us, they're like a tide that never stops coming in. Kill two police officers and they send another ten. Kill those and a hundred will come next time, then a thousand. Troops next, their elite special forces. Kill a thousand of those and ten thousand will come next. No one will mention vampires of course, we'll just be wanted criminals, terrorists perhaps."

"So what do we do?" She asked.

"The same as our kind has always done. We hide in the shadows, hunt carefully and put up with their constant bullshit."

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Mabina Gladitch knew that her body could do without sleep for quite some time. The trick was not to overdo it and bring on some kind of sleep deprivation psychosis. She'd talked to other vampires, who'd known other vampires, about how much abuse their bodies could take..... The usual long string of apocryphal information and myths. A week it would take her, two at the most, to clear up the loose ends caused by losing Roy. She was quite capable of working her night shifts at the local hospital, while spending her days sorting out the problems created by Roy's disappearance. Two weeks without sleep was nothing, there would be no long term ill effects.

"Mrs Lister?"

Six women to call, mums always seemed to get the job of organising kid's parties. Mabina had worked out a short script, designed to gain sympathy, without causing alarm.

"I'm Roy Barlow's wife.... Yes the magician. I'm afraid he won't be able to perform at your child's party next month."

Anger coming down the telephone line, Mrs Lister was going to find it hard to get anyone else at such short notice. Mabina looked at Roy's diary and spotted a first name.

"I am truly sorry Annabel, a full refund will be sent to your credit card today. I'd love to be able to give you a proper explanation, but Roy seems to have packed up and left, with one of my best friends."

Mabina sobbed, she could cry to order.

"Yes, thank you..... No we weren't blessed with children..... Thank you, you're so kind."

The call, the refund to send, it was all so time consuming and she had it all to do, another five times. Then there would be the usual trickle of calls asking for information about booking him. She heard his business line ring and the muted muttering as another mum wanted Roy to make balloon animals at her kid's birthday party.

"Oh Roy, if only you were shackled up with some yummy mummy."

He'd slept with a few of the mums, though she didn't begrudge him his fun. She had her own thing going on with one of the hospital porters, a bull of a man called Conrad. They'd both had their flings and dalliances for year, it would give credence to the rumours she was spreading. The police would have to be informed of course; Roy would soon be an official missing person. Not that she expected them to do much, she'd already looked up their standard procedures on the net. A risk assessment, based on the missing person's history and likelihood of being in danger. By the time she'd given them a few names of women he'd had his flings with and a few other juicy morsels of information, they'd quickly lose interest. Just another guy running off with a younger woman.

"Forgive me Roy, I will need to trash your reputation."

She'd prepared a list of the people she needed to contact and a few she was calling to add a little colour to the picture she was building. A locksmith had already heard about Roy and his women, as he'd fitted new and expensive locks to all the outside doors. His credit cards and bank, to be told about his philandering and disappearance. They'd refuse to cancel his cards of course, but her call would be remembered and recorded. She was behaving like a murderer, covering up her crime.

"I mustn't overdo the emotion, not yet." She muttered.

The house was theirs, or more accurately owned by a property company, who rented it to them on a standard annual assured tenancy. There were a lot of links, through a lot of lawyers and offshore companies, to hide the fact that Mabina owned the property company. People were supposed to wither and die after their three score plus ten, companies didn't. It was a simple yet effective way, of avoiding the legal problems of unnatural longevity.

"The joint savings account might be..... Problematic."

They were that rarity though, vampires with a bit of business sense. There were certificates of deposits in her hidden room in the attic and some uncut diamonds. Quite a nest egg, even a drawer full of Krugerrand. Mabina had money, serious wealth, all in forms that didn't get regularly changed or re-issued. Paper money was fast becoming a ludicrous way to hoard illicit wealth. She picked up the phone.

"Mrs Fawcett ?"

"I'm sorry Roy Barlow won't be able....."

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Vlad's old Volvo Estate, had been parked up in the area for three full days, a really daft thing to do. Clara or Laura had been moving it about, even running it through a car wash once, to stop it looking too neglected. Never that far away from the house in Wood Green, just far enough if the police started looking for it.

"We'll know if the police ever go into Vlad's house..... Trust me we'll know." Simon had told her.

"The media will probably be running extended news bulletins until the end of time."

Laura felt it was weird that Clara wasn't getting angry with him. It was a really silly and dangerous breach of their rules on not bringing down the wrath of the Van Helsings, yet Clara seemed unconcerned. She knew something was being planned, when Clara told her;

"We'll all take Vlad's car over to Tom's, on Saturday."

A family outing, obviously her new family was plotting something. As it was a trip to see Tom, the guy who ran a car breakers in Erith; Laura assumed it was something to do with her getting a set of wheels. Maybe not the brand new super van that Simon had sort of promised, but Laura wasn't about to complain. Anything reliable with four wheels would do, as long as it was jet black of course.

"We can drive out into Kent on the way back." Clara had said. "Get something decent to eat and make a day of it."

That gave it away of course. Coming home from Tom's usually meant booking a cab, as the vehicle you'd arrived in, tended to be in the crusher. Tom always treated them all with respect, bordering on fear. Hardly surprising, considering how many blood stained cars he'd crushed for Simon and Clara.

Simon had gone up into the attic before they'd left, to get a fairly heavy carrier bag.

"Just to re-inforce my persona as the UK's version of Pablo Escobar." He'd told them.

Laura drove, mainly to get her used to the route. Driving herself was very different to simply watching as Clara went through the streets of South London. It was all so different to the roads north of the river, more roundabouts, less traffic lights. Through Blackwall Tunnel, turning left to drive through Woolwich and Plumstead. On, always heading east, past Abbey Wood and into Belvedere in Kent. Not far from Erith, Simon decided to mention the elephant in the car. He was in the back, looking half asleep, as usual.

"I mentioned the van you're after to Tom." He said. "He found something, it'll be there today, but you don't have to accept it. If you hate it, just say."

She really didn't care if it was a twenty year old diesel transit, she just wanted her own vehicle.

Actually, part of her did care, she was just not listening to it.

"What is it?" She asked.

"It sounds just your sort of thing." Said Clara.

Simon was nodding furiously, grinning at her.

"Not new, but it sounds so..... You!" He said. "You can say no though and I'll call a few dealerships."

Something Tom had found, that she might refuse to drive. The part of Laura with a few doubts, was beginning to get worried. She drove through Erith, remembering the turn to take them down towards the Thames. The gate to the yard wasn't signed, but everyone knew it was Tom's car breakers. She parked near the portacabin, where Tom and his boys seemed to live seven days a week.

"I don't see it." Said Clara.

"Probably round the back." Replied Simon.

As soon as they were out of the car, one on Tom's small army of helpers, put his hand out for the keys to Vlad's elderly Volvo. A guy who looked about twenty one or two, always fidgeting. Tom called him Beetle, though she had no idea why. Beetle knew the routine; the Volvo would be

stripped of anything worth selling, the shell going into the crusher. Simon approached the portacabin door, but the SUV coming round the corner, grabbed everyone's attention.

"Is that mine?" She asked.

Tom got out of the jet black SUV, smiling and handing her the keys. It was perfect! Chunky, with tinted windows and that whole 'don't mess with me,' thing that large 4x4s exuded like an aura.

"It's your decision Laura." Said Simon. "Try it out if you like."

"I want it Simon, I've wanted this since I was about ten or eleven."

She had! Most girls of that age wanted lots of nice girly things, all in pink, of course. Laura had wanted a mean son of a bitch, jet black SUV. She heard Tom talking, but had trouble concentrating on his words.

"Not new, about a year old." He said. "Belonged to a friend who's doing a bit of time inside. Six years actually, so he won't be needing a car for a while. It's a 4x4 Chevrolet Suburban V8, 5.3 litre. He was into street sleepers, had quite a bit of work done to the engine and upgraded the torque converter....."

He carried on, as she opened the door and sat inside. It was like a dream, a wonderful waking dream. Simon was handing two thick jiffy bags to Tom, with the carrier bag full of drugs.

"Thanks Tom, I think she wants it."

She nodded and looked at Simon, tears running down her face.

"It's..... Perfect!" She said.

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Simon rarely saw Patsy at weekends, actually this was the first Sunday he'd called and asked to see her. At her house today, no getting hot and sweaty on the grubby sheets at the Lancelot. Her mother was beginning the obligatory trips to see various in-laws and was spending the day with people in Stevenage. The sex had been incredible since the death of her father, yet he felt that all her passion was being used to hide something. Patsy needed something from him, but he had no idea what that was. He just hoped it wasn't marriage, a mortgage and two point four kids. He looked in the bathroom mirror, giving himself a lopsided grin.

"What do you know about fucking emotions anyway?" He muttered.

Laura was taking her new SUV for a bit of a run and Clara had gone with her. There had been a few moans about him staying at home, yet Clara hadn't demanded to know where he was going. They had a good relationship, based on years of affection and a huge lack of curiosity about each other's private lives.

"Why do you think humans have emotions?" Daniel had once asked him.

He'd been there with Clara, not really expecting to have much to do with Daniel. Then the subject of feelings had come up, or rather the lack of them, in the average vampire. Clara seemed to have lost interest in Daniel that weekend, it had been left to him to answer their hosts constant questioning.

"They get harder to understand as I get older." He'd answered. "I used to remember how I felt about a friend being hurt or sick, before Giovanni sunk his fangs into my neck. Now I find it almost impossible to recapture those feelings."

"So what do you do Simon? Just wing it?"

"I watch TV and films on DVD." He replied. "You'd be amazed at some of the junk I've sat through."

All useful though, building up my ammunition of appropriate responses to situations that require an emotional response. I've become quite good at it."

It had been a strange weekend, they'd actually formed something resembling friendship. Daniel had actually agreed with him on a few things, an almost unique experience.

“To get back to my question Simon. Why do you think humans need emotions ?”

It was something he'd given some thought to, it seemed so important to them, all those feelings. You couldn't turn on a TV, without seeing someone angry, upset or just wanting a news crew to film their grief.

“I think it's like pain.” He said. “If something hurts, pain tells you to leave it alone, or perhaps get it looked at. Emotions are like pain, they tell people you're hurting and that they need to leave you alone. It's rarely that simple though. To a stranger it tells them to keep away, to someone you know, it can tell them you need help, maybe even some sort of physical intimacy.”

Daniel had actually looked surprised at his answer.

“So Simon, do you think emotions are good, or bad things to have ?”

“Both at times ! Sorry, but there is no straightforward answer. Someone rending their clothes and pulling at their hair, helps no one, especially them. On the other hand, physical touching by a family member can help bonding and the healing of emotional wounds.”

“I have a theory Simon, one still very much in the first draft stage.”

“Come on, I can tell you're dying to tell me what it is.”

“I don't think vampires are creatures stripped of human emotions. I think you're the next level of evolution, cleansed of the need for pointless stress and hysteria. Most human emotions were useful when we were glorified apes, living in trees. They're redundant now though. I see you as the beginning of the future. What do you think about that ?”

“You sound like Spock ! You may have a point, but a world without emotions ?! It sounds like a very boring place to me.”

Now, thinking back on it, Daniel's theory seemed bizarre. It was the last time Daniel mentioned it though, so perhaps he'd given up on it ? It was a strange theory for someone who wasn't a vampire. He might not be quite human, but he definitely wasn't a vampire. His phone was beeping at him, the Uber driver was outside. Simon decided his hair looked as good as it ever going to look. He gave up looking at himself in the mirror and left the house. Little traffic on a Sunday, he was walking up the path to her house, just a few a few minutes after leaving his own. Patsy opened the door, instantly kissing him, like someone who'd been at sea for several years.

“How are you doing ?” He asked.

“Fine, let's go upstairs.”

He held back, even though he couldn't think of a nicer way to spend a Sunday afternoon, than having sex with her.

“Wait Patsy ! Are you really fine ? We need to talk.”

“We can talk afterwards.”

Simon was a blind man in the world of human emotions, but he was certain he was reading this one right. He also didn't quite believe he was refusing the instant gratification of his sexual needs.

“No ! You can't bottle it up, it'll come back and mess up your life.” He said. “The sex has become like your mum's diazepam, something to take the edge off the pain. Talk to me Patsy ! You can talk to me about anything !?”

She hugged him and cried, as he led her into the lounge. Tears followed by an afternoon of more tears and strong female emotions, including grief. Maybe he was a masochistic idiot ? No, he might be a bit of a blind man in those worlds, but for once he'd got it right.

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Laura knew that strange recurring dreams were part of being a vampire. Simon had his dreams of battles fought by men in armour, wielding brutal weapons. Clara too, had hinted at her own

recurring and mildly disturbing nightmares. Details were something neither of them would give her, so she wasn't looking forward to her own starting. That night, when she'd taken her new SUV for a long drive around North London and Hertfordshire, the first dark vampire dream arrived. She was happy, not a care in the world, so why choose then to cause turmoil in her sleeping unconscious? She knew she was dreaming, but that didn't help to make it any less disturbing.

Laura was high up on some kind of structure or building. Details were difficult to see, as they are in most dreams. No vivid colours, she was dreaming of a vast city during the hours of darkness. An ancient city of stone buildings, with little light to lift the darkness. The dream version of her looked up and saw a sky full of stars, though she had no idea what constellations she was looking at. This wasn't too bad after all! If this was the extent of her recurring dreams, it was a small price to pay for her new strength and longevity.

Boom..... Boom.....

The sound of drums, people running through the streets below her. Panic below her, she felt it, knew that it had come to claim its tribute. Fires being lit now, large pits of fire at each major crossroads. The truth occurred to her, it was a game, a tournament to find the one to be his tribute. Shouts from the people running, in a language either unknown to her, or long forgotten. She was still human, still a woman, though there was no way of checking her facial appearance. The dream version of her, ran her fingers over her face, finding higher cheekbones than she was used to and a longer nose. It was her but not her, which she found oddly exciting. Now she understood the words coming up from the streets, the chanting now had meaning.

"Q'ug'umat, Q'ug'umat, Q'ug'umat comes!"

Laura had no concern about what was going on below, she was high above it all, right at the top of a large stone pyramid. Not the only such structure she could see, but by far the largest. She was alone and in total darkness, feeling completely removed from the excited panic in the streets below. Did they want to be caught and suffer a slow and agonising death, or escape? She knew how they'd be feeling, the contradiction of fear and the wish to be the one. The chosen, the one out of the tens of thousands, to be consumed by the great feathered serpent.

Boom..... Boom..... Boom.

He was there, just visible by the light of a fire pit, still a long way off. He was in their city, Q'ug'umat, the great God who was their creator. Other Gods had aided him in the task, but it was Q'ug'umat who the people loved the most. A single life once a year, was little to ask in return for the creation of their world and every living thing it contained.

"Q'ug'umat, Q'ug'umat, Q'ug'umat."

Chanting from below, his name now, spoken not as a warning, but in homage. She watched as the huge serpent God, moved ever closer. No rush, he made the occasional swipe with his massive claws, at those who came too near. It was half hearted though, the real tournament hadn't started yet.

Boom..... Boom..... Boom. The constant thump of drums.

Q'ug'umat walked low on four legs, his belly almost touching the ground. A long creature, who filled the street. A ruffle of white feathers round his throat, but otherwise his skin looked green and reptilian. A dragon rather than a serpent, at least to her eyes. Even horns at the back of his head, a living embodiment of the dragons she'd seen at Chinese celebrations in London.

"You're no serpent." The dream Laura muttered. "You're a dragon!"

He'd heard her! Out of all the thousands of screaming and shouting voices and above the constant thump of the drums, he'd heard her muttered words. His head turned towards her, his large yellow



eyes staring right at her. He turned and began to climb up the side of the pyramid, his eyes never leaving hers. She could have run, down the other side and away into the night. No, if he wanted her, she'd go willingly. It was a great honour to be chosen, her family would rise high in the local hierarchy, her siblings would be honoured. Instead of running, she moved two steps down on the great pyramid and waited for him.

Boom..... Boom..... Boom.

He was large and hardly designed for climbing. Q'uq'umatz put one giant claw in front of the other and ever so slowly, moved towards her.

"I am yours Q'uq'umatz !" She shouted. "Mighty serpent, who spewed forth our world."

The crowd below weren't happy, their God wasn't following the age old traditions of the tournament. They shouted for his attention, a few even threw stones at his long reptilian tail. It did no good, their God had chosen his own offering. Laura still had no idea of a name for the dream version of herself, but she was certain of one thing..... It wasn't a dream. It was a history, a part of the past that was now carved into the stone of time. Nothing could be done to save that version of herself, nothing at all.

Boom..... Boom..... Boom.

So slow, yet his approach was inexorable. The serpent God opened his mouth and roared at her, a deep earthy roar, which seemed to shake the mighty pyramid to its foundations.

Boom..... Boom..... Boom.

He lunged at her, one of his teeth actually scratching the side of her face, as he attempted to swallow her whole.

"Q'uq'umatz, Q'uq'umatz, Q'uq'umatz."

"Stop it Laura, wake up !" Shouted Clara. "You just had a bad dream, snap out of it."

She was sat upright in her own bed, in her room in the house in Wood Green. Oh, how much she loved that room and the feeling of security it brought.

"It was so real, I can still smell his breath, feel his teeth." She said.

Clara was sat on her bed, nodding at her. Simon was still by the door, as if deciding if it was a make some coffee incident or just a minor drama, before going back to bed.

"Was it Mayan Gods, all claws and yellow eyes ?" Asked Clara.

"Yes, exactly that..... He was going to eat me. I was some sort of offering."

"I don't get those." Said Simon. "I think you need to be a girl. I used to get dreams about primitive tribes in Africa. Now those were brutal !"

"How do I get these dreams out of my head ?" She asked.

"You don't." Said Clara. "Daniel says they're a proof that we've been around long before the guy in Romania showed up, the one the religious nuts think was the first. The girl in the Mayan city was one of us and the serpent God knew it."

"A better offering than one of the locals." Added Simon. "So, is it coffee in the kitchen, or shall I get three glasses and a bottle of wine ?"

Her hands were still shaking, the thought of going back to sleep.....

"Coffee in the kitchen." Said Clara. "I'll get her dressed and bring her down."

Simon vanished, leaving them alone. Clara hugged her, as though she was a younger sister.

"You'll be fine Laura. Simon and I went through this alone, but you have us."

"Do the dreams ever stop ?"

“No ! You’ll get your own recurring dreams, but the old ancient dreams will keep resurfacing, constantly causing you to wake in a sweat. The feelings of fear do become easier to control though, with the passing of time.”

“He ate her didn’t her ? Q’uq’umatz I mean.”

“Yes, I believe he did.”

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It wasn’t any form of faithfulness to Simon, that had recently stopped Clara from having sexual interests outside of their relationship. Laura needed help and Simon had been going through a few personal dramas. Like a mother hen, she’d devoted all her time to her chicks. Simon had once gone over a year between flings, when there had been a problem in their lives. It seemed so natural, for her take on the role of mother hen.

“They don’t need sitting on anymore.” She muttered. “They’re hatched out and doing nicely.”

It was obvious Simon had someone he was seeing and Laura was now fully independent, stalking her prey from her new jet black SUV. Something inside Clara switched itself on, she needed a little sex without consequences. She needed a fling and needed it badly.

“You haven’t been in for a while Felipe.” She said.

A courier rider, she did have a bit of a thing for them. Not the guys on grubby motorbikes with halitosis and personal hygiene problems. Felipe was a cycle courier, which tended to mean fit and wiry. Clara liked fit and wiry.

“They put me on the EC1 circuit for a while.” Said Felipe. “I prefer W1 though, easier to get around if you know the side streets.”

He’d dropped off a package for a hotel guest, a good six months or more before. She’d talked to him for a few minutes and a few other times since. She’d gradually learned most of his life story. Felipe was a Brazilian, working as a bike courier, because they tended not to ask about minor things, such as his immigration status. Not that Clara cared, she was a member of a much smaller minority than illegal Brazilians. The main thing about Felipe, was that he was.....drop dead gorgeous. Clara decided to have a dalliance, she was owed it for fuck sake !

“How’s the new flat share ?” She asked.

“They’re all arseholes, but the rent is cheap for Zone 3.”

“Oh, I’m in Zone 3 too, out in North London.”

Three more sentences and she’d arranged to meet him for a meal on Friday night.

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