

Even Vampires Have Regrets

A set piece idea that I reworked for my vampire book.

Just 1,270 Words.

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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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The End

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