

Disclaimer

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Dreams Made Flesh (Part Two)

It was dawn when I awoke. My sleep had not been interrupted in any shape or form and I felt thoroughly rested.

A warm orange and red glow peered through the gap between the curtains and was inviting me to open them and let in the radiance of a new day. For a moment I lay on the spare bed gazing at the wash of colour. No thoughts in particular entered my mind; not even the revelations from the night before and the emotions that came with it.

Finally the impulse took over and I got out of bed feeling slightly less the usual dull aches and pains of ageing sinews and made my way over to the curtains. Drawing them back I let in the brilliance of the morning wash over me. I stood and looked out on to the sea. It looked calm and the sun's glow danced a billion waltzes on its gentle current. Almost lost in its serenity I was distracted by a figure standing on the veranda below with its back to me.

I realised then it was Anna.

Instinct told me to take a step back but I kept her in view. I watched for a moment longer and the thought occurred to me that how 'normal' she looked just standing there seemingly contemplating the morning scenery. Occasionally she would just lean on the railing and brush her fingers through her hair then rest her chin on her hand. Then I thought about what Karin had told me the night before that this young girl had committed the most heinous of crimes in Blackeberg history; indeed the whole country. 'A lunatic in the guise of a vampire' the headlines had said and yet only feet away from me in the morning sun wearing pink pyjamas was that very person. I shuddered for a moment and cast any more thoughts on the matter away. Then Anna looking at the sea and sky once more turned around and headed back inside.

After showering and getting dressed I found myself hesitating to go downstairs where there were obvious sounds of life and preparations for breakfast. I felt somewhat foolish sitting on the side of the bed nursing the feeling apprehension. Was I becoming afraid of facing Anna? Or was I afraid of something else? Then the overpowering smell of fresh coffee and fried bacon began to seep into my senses like a welcoming musk that gradually convinced me to gather myself and go down stairs and face Karin and Anna in the new morning light.

Stealing myself for a moment I opened the door and walked into the kitchen.

At that moment I found myself a little relieved to discover only Karin sitting at the table. She was still in her night cloths and was holding a coffee in both hands.

'Good morning.' She said smiling.

'Good morning.'

'I sent Anna on an errand,' Karin said as if reading my thoughts. 'She'll be back later. We've cooked breakfast, would you like some?'

The smell of freshly cooked bacon with all the trimmings simply overpowered any apprehension from earlier and I accepted the offer. I took a seat opposite to where Karin had sat while she went over to where the food was prepared to dish it out. There was an awkward silence between us and I couldn't think of anything to say to break it.

'It's a beautiful morning.' I finally mustered.

'Isn't it just?'

The silence continued until Karin came over with the plate. Placing it down in front of me I gingerly got to work so I wouldn't have to start the conversation first.

'Thank you for understanding last night.' Karin said as if apologising for something.

'It's ok Karin.'

'I told Anna this morning about what I told you.'

I looked at her and simply nodded and carried on with breakfast not sure what to say.

'She's looking forward to you staying another night.'

A tightness formed in my chest as the apprehension came back and then quite un-expectedly a slight annoyance. 'Why?' I asked.

Karin looked surprised if not confused. Then getting back up out of her seat she went over to the coffee machine and poured out coffee. 'We both are, really.'

'No, Karin, why are you telling me all this now? What's really going on?'

She came back over with a sullen expression and placed the coffee next to my plate and sat back down opposite.

'I was serious about the trust issue last night and we trust each other. The truth is that I'm not going to be around forever and you are my only friend. I owed you an explanation and our support network is virtually non-existent and Anna has only me.'

I was not completely sure what she was getting at so I asked, 'Do you want me to take her in or something like that after you pass away, is that it?'

'No, just be a friend but you need to know everything.'

I said nothing but looked on at her.

'There is far too much to tell in just one night.' She paused for a moment. 'And the rest is best coming from Anna herself.'

'What happened in Barcelona and what brought you back?'

'Yes.'

My apprehension must have shown as I simply nodded then I glanced at the clock and thought that the next bus home was about two hours away.

Karin looked concerned at me and said, 'You are coming back today aren't you?'

I hesitated then said, 'Yes, Karin, it's just...I do trust with you with all my heart and like I said last night I trust Anna and that is only because of you. It's the...'

'Situation.' Karin said understandingly.

'Yes.'

Karin got out from her chair and came around and sat next to me.

'You must believe that I got in touch with you with nothing but good intentions. I am asking for your complete trust in this. It is only Anna that faces uncertainty and challenges only *she* can deal with.'

'What are these uncertainties Karin and these challenges?'

Karin breathed in and looked as if she had regretted saying what she had said.

‘Like I said last night, she still faces challenges because she is still discovering who she really is now and there are more to discover along the way. But she desperately does not want to be here.’

‘Why?’

She hesitated for a moment, ‘Because she wants to find Oskar.’

I was taken back by this but she continued.

‘The search for Oskar could have continued back in Barcelona but the circumstances were too severe and I was feeling my age and convinced her to come back home to give us some time and particular Anna time to grow and develop a little first.’ She was silent for a moment as if caught up in the memory. ‘It was very difficult to leave; logistically and emotionally for the both of us. Anna had to leave Oskar behind and I left without Stefan.’

I looked at Karin and although the memory seemed freshly etched on her face she managed a smile. I couldn’t think of anything to say other than reach for her hand and give it a gentle squeeze.

‘I’d better ring you that taxi.’ She said breaking the silence and squeezing my hand back as she left the table to make the phone call.

After finishing breakfast Karin and I had little chance to talk further as the taxi arrived and was waiting outside. After seeing me to the front door she gave me a hopeful smile and then we hugged each other before I left.

After waving I settled in the back seat of the taxi and began to ponder over last night and this morning’s discussion. I couldn’t help but think I was gradually becoming part of something very large and otherworldly and the apprehension reared its head once more. But my sense of loyalty and trust in Karin seemed to take the edge away from this grating feeling even more so as I travelled away from the cottage and in the distance walking towards us was Anna. As I approached her I noticed she was carrying a large and quite seemingly heavy looking shopping bag in one hand and under the other arm a package of some kind. I noticed how briskly and unhindered she seemed walking and as we got closer and as we were about to pass each other we looked straight into each other’s eyes and for a brief moment we smiled as she raised her free hand to give a little wave. Her smile was just as warm and friendly as it was the day before.

I was left with that sense of wonder again.

Getting off the bus in Blackeberg it was good to be back but walking through the shopping centre towards home the place seemed different. It was like being excited to return home after a holiday only to discover you had forgotten to do the washing up before you left. Maybe that was not the right description but a threat of melancholy surfaced briefly.

Opening the main entrance door to my apartment block and making my way up the steps I was more aware than ever that nothing had really ever changed much since the place was built. I mused for a moment that all it needs is a facelift.

After letting myself into my apartment and picking up the junk mail I immediately opened a few windows to let in some fresh air. After only a short time away already the place seemed so still and musty. I stopped and looked around me and I thought the old place could do with redecoration. Without giving it any further thought I got changed into some fresh clothes and proceeded to make dinner.

It was another warm day so I decided to sit and eat out on the balcony. It wasn’t long before I started looking at the neighbourhood around me and most of all the balcony below and I thought of

Karin and Stefan and the pleasant times we spent together and when they had left the country I had wondered how they were and often missed them terribly; although I am embarrassed to admit that to myself.

I had enjoyed spending time with them and was sometimes envious of their relationship. They had each other and had been a single unit until they went to Barcelona. I guess my feelings about being alone were nothing compared to how Karin felt but my feelings were not part of this story.

Yet a stoic heart cannot be on guard all the time.

Time had slipped by all too quickly and I found myself quickly moving about the apartment tidying and scurrying between the wardrobe and chest of drawers packing away what I'll need to stay at Karin's home.

I was in the hallway finally and I realized that I had packed more than I intended; two bags to be exact resting at my feet. With the door keys in my hand I turned and looked down at the rooms that I grew up in. Something *had* changed. It was peculiar feeling at first like when you come home and something had either been moved or had gone missing but you cannot for the life of you know what it was.

Then it gradually dawned on me, it was I that was starting to change and things were going to change in ways that will never be quite the same again for me.

Picking up my bags I opened the door. Locking it behind me I could not shake off the feeling that I may never return to this place and yet, in a way, I was beginning to welcome it.