

Chapter 6: *When the rain washes you clean, you'll know, you'll know. You will know, you'll know'*
Fleetwood Mac (Nicks, S 1977)

'Did you know that the word *'vampyr'* was only used from *circa* 1725, in Serbia, and it may have been misheard, mistaken. There are no precedents for this word,' stated a portly man, stuffed into an overly stuffed armchair. Quillam was staring at the man with interest, perhaps a little incredulity, while Deepak stood by, and watched through, a large, framed window looking out onto an avenue with regular trees into the distance. 'There are stories, mythologies, even official reports for centuries from before then, but one could argue that the *modern vampire* was born then, in 1725, and further embellished ever since,' he continued, 'and what you describe is fairly typical of the myth, *the legend*, even the creature being a close relative,' he ended his summary with a slap of his hands resting on his large thighs.

'You're saying, you're suggesting, that *my daughter* is a, is a, *vampire*, walking dead, Hammer Horror, fangs, bats, garlic, and all?', Quillam responded, 'in 2025, in a sleepy country village, hanging out in a cemetery and *attacking* her father?', this last question said staccato, as if Quillam was speaking to a crazy, slow witted person. 'I'm saying what you related to me is typical of *historical* reports of a vampire, not necessarily that your daughter *is a vampire*,' the portly man answered with a more sensitive tone. 'Professor, even so, to discuss such things, it sounds somewhat crazy, surely?', interjected Deepak, turning his gaze to focus on the two seated men. The room was large, but minimalist, a desk and a few chairs, little in the way of stereotypical piles of books, no mustiness, no roaring open fire, and very well lit by large windows on two sides. 'What have I *taught you*, young Deepak?', snapped the Professor. Deepak blanched a little, and as if by rote, answered, 'Study the event, examine the data, collate and synthesise a logical conclusion, however at odds it would seem to your initial, subjective interpretation.'

'Precisely, that is what *I am doing*,' the Professor stated glibly. 'Oh, *undead*, Mister Quillam, *undead*, not walking dead. Like a virus, neither living, nor dead, but certainly *animated*' he added. Quillam snorted, resting back into his chair, 'Professor Nichols, you're saying that such creatures exist, that vampires are real, that they can take your loved ones over. They are here, *now?*' folding his arms, his body language hostile and defensive. 'No, and *again*, I am *saying* that what you told me fits the stories of old, but whatever was really the truth then, is possibly likely now. I.e., there is probably a plausible explanation for those, and what you experienced, but without more data, it is hard to say, either way', Nichols stated with a frustrated undertone. 'Furthermore, it is a good thing that young Deepak brought you here, to me. The police would have likely had you carted off, a jacket that does up the back, a smarting buttock from a rather large injection!', he asserted with a wide smile, 'no crime would appear to have occurred, other than an attack on your good self, and perhaps loitering with intent in a public cemetery.'

Deepak looked from one man to the other as he sat down in another empty chair close to the pair. 'I am going or have gone mad, *quite crazy*,' Quillam anguished. 'Well, you must have had well founded reasons to go to a cemetery in the early hours with a silver crucifix?', enquired Nichols. 'As I said to *you*, and *Deepak*, I had to know if seeing Becks was real or grief. To know she was okay, that she was at *peace*,' and Quillam's voice cracked, inhaling strongly to avert the tears he felt might rush from his bloodshot, tired eyes. Nichols leant over, struggling a little in the armchair, and rested his hand on Quillam's folded arms, giving them a reassuring squeeze. 'Understood, *honestly*. And, this does also fit with some other bizarre episodes locally of late. An exsanguinated, grieving grandmother, on her doorstep two nights ago, and the mysterious disappearances on a bus route over the last couple of years*,' Nichols outlined gravely. 'There is definitely something going on, whether it's supernatural or made to look like that, well, we'll just have to see. Gentlemen, will you join me in a visit to the cemetery for a closer look?' asked Nichols, like he was inviting them both to a football game or the theatre. Quillam shuddered, but slowly nodded, and Deepak paled even more, but nodded once affirmatively.

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