

Vampire
Dawn

Every Drop
of your
Blood

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The Story So Far

Hungary, August ...

Juliette, Omar, Finn, Ruby and Alistair find a dead body in the forest ...

... Twenty-four hours later, they tie the murderer, Ava, to a tree, as one by one they fall sick ...

... When they wake, they are vampires, and that murderer looks rather appealing ...

... Mysterious nobleman Ignace, 400 years old and more sophisticated than is good for him, prevents them snacking on her ...

... But that dead body isn't as dead as it looked ...

... They go to Ignace's castle for a crash-course in being a modern vampire.

And so their adventures begin.

This is Omar's story ...

One

'Passport?'

The guard didn't look up until Omar handed his passport over. Then he did.

'Iraqi? What will you be doing in the United States?' the guard asked.

'Work experience,' Omar answered, and smiled. He was looking forward to working in a research laboratory for a few weeks. The man didn't smile back.

‘This is a tourist visa – you can’t work on it. You’re an Iraqi trying to enter the United States on the wrong visa. Get over there.’

And so the nightmare began.

Two armed guards hustled Omar into a hot room crowded with frightened people. There weren’t enough seats, and no food or drink. He’d spent eight impatient hours on a jumbo jet to New York. Now all his excitement turned to fear.

Soon he was dragged out and pushed into an interview room. They gave him a glass of water and fired questions at him until his head was reeling.

‘I’m sorry, I’m confused,’ he said. ‘I’ve had a long flight, I’m tired. I don’t understand ...’

A man with a gun slammed his hand on the

table in front of Omar.

‘Just answer the questions. Who sent you to the United States?’

‘No one. I’m here for work experience, I told you,’ Omar said. It was getting scary. He was in a padded room with three large men carrying guns – and they weren’t on his side.

‘Who are you working for? What will you be doing?’ the man asked, leaning close to Omar’s face.

‘It’s a laboratory, the Gamaleya Institute. It’s doing virus research. I’m going to university to do biology and ...’ Omar was starting to panic.

The man interrupted him.

‘Who runs this laboratory? Who organised this ‘work experience’?’

Omar stalled. He could hardly say ‘a vampire I met in Hungary organised it’.

‘Answer!’ the man shouted.

‘A man called Ignace,’ Omar said. ‘I ... I met him in Europe. I don’t know his second name.’

The man typed on a keyboard, waited a moment, then looked hard at him.

‘This Institute doesn’t exist. So,’ he said with a sneer, ‘you are Iraqi – ’

‘I’m a British citizen!’ Omar interrupted. ‘I’m allowed to live in Britain!’

‘You are Iraqi,’ the man continued, ‘you’re trying to enter the US on a tourist visa but you intend to work – illegally – on viruses in a research establishment which doesn’t exist. This isn’t looking

good, is it? Do you have links with any terrorist organisations? Are you working on germ warfare?’

‘NO!’ Omar shouted, and two hands clamped his shoulders immediately. Instinctively, he twisted away from the hands, and then everything went black.

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When he opened his eyes, Omar was in a white room. It was empty except for the bed he lay on. Bars of shadow on the floor led his eye to a heavy, steel door with a barred window. Not a room, then – a cell.

He put a hand to his head, which ached, then raised himself on one elbow. He felt sick. What had happened? Where was he?

Slowly, it came back to him. The interview room, shouting. Words floated into his mind: ‘terrorist’, ‘Iraqi scum’, ‘Egypt’, ‘make you tell us’.

Tell them what? Tell who what? Someone had handcuffed him and dragged him somewhere. He lay back on the bed and tried to remember.

He’d drunk some water, but it had tasted funny. Was that because it was American water, or was it drugged? Omar reached for his phone – but his pocket was gone. He looked down: he was in a green jumpsuit. He had no memory of getting changed, or of anyone removing his clothes. He did a mental tour of his body and couldn’t feel anything hurting apart from his head, so they hadn’t hit him or anything. Yet.

Suddenly, there was a clang and the scrape of

metal against stone, then the door opened. Omar sat up, expecting to see an armed guard. Instead he saw a stooped old man with brown skin, thin arms and legs, and strings of long black hair. He carried a covered plate and wore a tunic something like a Roman toga. Where he should have had eyes, a broad band of scar tissue spread from one side of his face to the other.

The man walked straight to the side of the bed without stumbling and put the plate on the floor.

‘Is that what will happen to me?’ Omar blurted out.

The man opened his mouth and pointed to the stub of tongue that was all he had left. Then he went, closing the door behind him.