

Drafts

First draft

The vampire steps out of the shadows, her blond hair glinting in the moonlight.

‘Glinting in the moonlight?’ says her victim. ‘Isn’t that a cliché?’

The vampire sighs. ‘I’m sure the writer will fix it in the edit.’

The man takes in her sharp teeth and dark clothes. ‘Have you got a name yet?’

‘Kat. No, Sarah. The writer keeps changing her mind. You?’

‘I’ve been Tom, David and Kevin.’ He pauses for a moment. ‘She’s settled on Kevin.

It’s back to David. Dave? No, David.’

‘Aren’t you meant to be scared of me?’ Sarah bares her teeth, her fangs lengthening as she leans closer.

‘Am I? Right.’ David trips and falls hard on the ground. His breathing becomes ragged, his pupils dilating. He’s terrified of this creature, yet can’t fail to notice her beauty.

‘What’s the writer thinking? I’m about to kill you and you’re wondering what I look like naked?’ Sarah’s dark hair falls across her eyes.

‘No, eh, course not,’ David says. He squints up at her. ‘Wasn’t your hair blond a moment ago?’

‘The writer’s forgotten that. Are you going to run away from me?’

‘Not right now. The kettle’s just gone on. Once she’s got a cuppa, I’m sure I’ll start running.’ David plays with a blade of grass, then fear overtakes him once more. He scuttles away. Sarah pounces, his blood singing to her.

Before she lands, he rolls to his feet, his robes billowing about him.

‘Back away, monster!’ He bangs his staff on the ground and strokes his long white beard. ‘The writer has decided I’m a wizard. And my name is ...’ He looks upwards for a moment. ‘Pandalf?’

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Sarah snorts. 'That can't be your name. And you've got to lose the beard and robes. Too stereotypical.' She takes in his clean-shaven face and jeans. 'Much better.'

'Are you going to kill me?'

'No.' She touches her fang-less mouth. 'I'm not a vampire anymore. Now I'm just a normal girl en-route to my sister's wedding. My ex will be there and I don't want to turn up alone. Why don't I pay you to be my date? The fact that you're gorgeous and a bit of a player will only add conflict to the story.'

'Of course,' says David, smouldering. 'That sounds logical. Despite your good looks and feisty nature, I'm not attracted to you. Although I'll probably fall in love and reject your money in the end.'

She steps up to kiss him, but before their lips touch, she falls to the ground, blood dripping from her lifeless body.

'What's happening?' he cries. 'And how can blood drip from a lifeless body?'

'The writer has killed me. We're now in a crime story, David.'

He straightens his tie. 'I think you mean DS Warner.'

Confusion passes over the corpse's face. 'Shouldn't it be DI Warner?'

He shrugs. 'She'll Google it later.' He picks something off her sleeve. 'There's not much evidence here, yet I can tell from this one piece of hair that an ex-lover killed you, a banker living three streets away who murdered you when he realised you've bought a new cat and called it Snickers, which is the name he was going to give his cat.'

'How do you know that?' says Sarah, her lifeless body still dripping blood.

'I'm an excellent Sergeant. Or Inspector or whatever.'

Sarah tries to move. 'Help me up, I can't breathe.'

'Course you can't, you're dead.'

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‘Not anymore. It’s this corset, it’s cutting me in two.’ Sarah struggles to her feet, her long skirts threatening to trip her.

‘So it’s now a historical piece?’ David adjusts the wig on his head. ‘What century is this?’

‘All I know is that I’ve returned from milking the cows, or whatever people did for fun before the internet, and there you are, a tall dark stranger threatening to overturn my simple life.’

A blink and Sarah’s pink-streaked crimped hair has added two-feet to her height.

‘Who’s Frankie?’ says David, looking down at his t-shirt. ‘And why does he want me to relax? What kind of story is it now?’

‘It’s...’ She struggles for a moment then shrugs. ‘No idea. I got nothing.’

David opens his mouth but doesn’t say anything.

‘What?’ says Sarah.

‘The writer’s on Facebook. She’s been sucked into a social media black hole.’

Sarah plonks on the ground and fiddles with the beads around her wrists. ‘Great. One of two things will happen. Either she’ll chat to her best friend about their upcoming holiday to Magaluf, which will make her turn you into a woman and send us on a road trip. Or she’ll see photos of her ex with his new girlfriend, and I’ll be forced to dismember you slowly and excruciatingly.’

David sits next to her. ‘So I’m not going to be David anymore? I like being him.’

‘Me too.’

‘Is there any way to escape?’

Sarah shakes her head, her blond locks glinting once more. ‘Maybe if you were still a wizard, you could’ve magicked us out of here.’ They look up. ‘She’s back.’

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Sarah jumps to her feet, a mask covering her face and a cape flowing behind her.

‘Perfect.’ Grabbing David, they fly off into the night. Up and up, until they crash through the screen of a laptop, thumping down on the floor of a small room.

‘What the -’ cries a woman from the corner, her unwashed hair tied off her face. The smell of stale Chinese food wafts from old containers littering the floor. ‘Who the hell are you?’

‘We’re Sarah and David.’ The woman backs away, taking in their outfits.

‘But, how? It’s not possible.’

‘You’re a writer,’ says David. ‘What’s possible is only limited by your imagination.’

Sarah steps forward. ‘Why did you make us superheroes instead of sending us on a road trip?’

‘The writer glances at the half-empty bottle of wine on the desk then shakes her head.

‘A friend sent me the trailer for the new Marvel movie just before I logged off. I almost didn’t see it. I was about to make you dismember him slowly and excruciatingly.’

‘You’ll need to thank your friend for his timing. Now, you’re going to delete everything you’ve just written and start again. You’ll write exactly what I tell you.’

The writer pushes her glasses up her nose, then turns back to the screen.

Second draft

There once lived two people named Sarah and David. They were free to choose their own destinies.

The End.