

The Vampire Across the Hall-2

The Murmuring Lift

By Daisi Malone

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The Murmuring Lift

Sleep rarely came easily to me and after the 'backpacker incident' the insomnia was worse. The image of the dead backpackers in the lift, their twisted bodies, bloody fingers and shredded Union Jack t-shirts invaded my dreams and I regularly woke in a sweat. Part of this was due to my illness, but there was something unsettling in the air. The birds could sense it too, they were silent during the day but chirped loudly at night and they began to spend more time on the bottom of the cage, hiding in corners and shredding paper to cover the floor.

But life at the Presidio apartments continued, the bottles shattered every morning and the glee club sang monthly, the trains continued their rattling, the planes flew overhead and I had to work.

Finally one morning I had an interview. I looked in the mirror before leaving, making sure my long brown hair was tidy, my blue eyes were clear and my pale, freckled skin was clean. I was wearing what passed for conservative clothes, mid length skirt, blouse and stockings which were scratchy.

I walked down the hall to the lift like a sleep walker and then, floating through my dazed mind, I heard murmuring. It echoed off the walls and increased in volume as I approached the lift. I shook my head, waited for the doors to open, then hopped in.

The doors closed with their usual groaning and moaning and the lift car grunted and jerked and started to fall. But in the midst of the usual sounds came a soft whispering, a soft wave of voices, and the lift stopped dead, between floors.

My stomach sank and I panicked, images of dead backpackers swirled in my mind, nausea rose to my throat and I swallowed the bile. Then there was a sound, and a voice clearly said in English accented falsetto, ‘Shaddup’ followed by maniacal laughter.

It was terrifying; I banged on the lift doors frantically, desperately trying to escape. The lift started to move, the doors opened and I tumbled out to the ground floor.

I picked myself up, started to cry, and ran up the fire stairs to my own apartment. Tear stained, with torn stockings and loose hair, I reached home and slammed the door shut, trying to stay calm. The job interview was completely forgotten.

I stayed in the apartment for days. I thought my illness was finally taking me to the edges of insanity. When I ventured to the hall, voices followed, bouncing off the walls, chasing me, surrounding me like cloudy smog, they always came from the direction of the lift. There were only two alternatives, the lift was haunted or I was losing my mind. I had to find out.

So I did the only thing I could think of, I called my mum

My mother, Rosie, is a great, tolerant and generous woman and has a cousin who is a psychic.

‘Hi Mum,’ I said as she picked up the phone

“Daisi love, how wonderful to hear from you’

I explained that I thought the lift in my building was haunted.

‘Daisi, have you been taking your medication?’ She asked

I sighed, ‘Yes mother’. “Please, can you get Cousin Louisa to ring me?’

‘Oh Daisi, if it will make you feel better, of course.’

About 30 minutes later, Cousin Louisa rang and arranged a visit. She said to pick a flower and added that it would cost 150 dollars an hour for her to ‘assess the psychic vibrations.’

I rang mum back and asked for a loan

Chapter 2

My cousin, Louisa Maychild, is a flower reader. Maychild isn't her real last name, but her psychic group insisted that members pick a new name to suit their personality. Louisa chose 'Maychild' because she was born in May.

She arrived on a Tuesday Night. She was wearing a long pink tent dress, with tassels and bells decorating it. A bright fluorescent pink headband was wrapped around her head. Her long grey hair flowed down her back and her face was curiously crinkled. A flower poked out of the headband at a jaunty angle, and she carried a black bag. I buzzed her in around 8pm.

She knocked on my door and as I opened it, I was surprised to see that she was talking to Madden. Or rather, giggling at Madden, who had her hand to his lips.

'A pleasure to meet you, Miss Louisa,' he purred and then he turned and winked at me.

She giggled, 'and you. You have a very soothing aura, you must let me read you one day.'

I interrupted.

'I really don't think that's necessary Louisa, really, come in, Bye Madden.'

I hustled her inside.

'Daisi' she protested, 'how rude of you, that nice young man was showing me the way to your door. He is a man of great destiny, a gentleman, a...'

'Yes, yes, right Louisa.' I interrupted again, 'of course he is. Can I get you something? Tea? I lowered my voice to a whisper, 'A tissue for the drool?'

'What was that dear?' Asked Louisa

'Nothing. Cuppa tea?

'No, No, thank you dear.' She was all business, 'Let's start your time from now shall we?'

'Where is your flower?'

I took a wilting daisy from the mug I had dumped it in. Louisa believed that she could read a person's destiny from a flower; apparently they are very sensitive to a person's aura. Or something like that- I don't know, I had called her in desperation, the murmuring lift was either madness or psychic phenomenon and I was hoping for...I don't know what I was hoping for.

Louisa instructed me to hold the flower between my hands and concentrate.

'Meditate dear, let your senses flow into the flower. Be one with the flower, you are the daisy, the daisy is you, you are one.'

I closed my eyes and hoped for the best.

After 5 minutes, Louisa took the flower from my hand and clasped it in her own. She closed her eyes and bowed her head over the flower, then suddenly, she arched her back, began to rock back and forth, her eyes rolled to the top of her head and she spoke in a deep spooky voice.

‘I see, I see trouble, hardship, unemployment, poverty, yet there is a light, a man, a tall thin man, a friend.’

She shuddered.

‘I see spirits, souls trapped in darkness, lost wandering...’

She shuddered again, and opened her eyes with a loud sigh.

“There you go dear. I see trouble and some lost souls. Does that mean anything to you?”

I was shocked, ‘um...maybe...that’s ... what should I do now?’

She looked astonished, ‘pay me of course.’

‘Oh...of course, I mean...yeah...sure’

I stuttered, ‘I mean what should I do about the spirits?’

She shrugged, and looked thoughtful, ‘mmm I might be able to help you with that.’

She looked meaningfully at the money that was on the table.

‘Oh sure,’ I handed her the cash.

As she counted it, she looked at me, ‘I have a friend who may be able to help you with your spirits. His name is Gavin Cloud, and he is a medium. Perhaps we should arrange a séance- and invite your friend from across the hall. I sense he is involved in this too.’

‘A séance? How much will that cost?’ I asked

‘For you my dear, I think we can make a deal, around 750 for half an hour. Here’s Gavin’s card- give him a call.’

I took the card, she kissed me on both cheeks and floated out the door.

I’m not ashamed to admit that I was pretty scared by now. ‘Lost spirits?’ It had to be the backpackers and their lost souls. Gavin Cloud could probably tell me more. I looked at his card and held it tightly as if it had all the answers I needed. I also realized that I’d have to give my mother another call.

Chapter 3

‘They’re crooks’ Madden was firm in his conviction. ‘They prey on people who are scared or alone.’

It was our first conversation since the night we found the backpackers and I was explaining the séance.

‘Louisa was right though, about the spirits. I mean there’s definitely something in the lift.’

‘Yeah, there’s your imagination.’ He scoffed.

‘Well you’re supposed to be a vampire, if there are vampires, there could also be spirits you know.’

Madden was startled, ‘shhh don’t tell the whole world.’

I shot back

‘I will tell the world. I’ll tell the world how you ate those poor English backpackers.’

‘Ate them? I didn’t eat them. Ok... so I might have, well, taken some blood from them’ he shrugged ‘but they were dead anyway, so it didn’t hurt them, but eat them? I mean, c’mon Daisy, that’s a bit farfetched, even for you. I’m a vampire not a cannibal’

I was irritated, ‘Ok ,so you on-ly, took their blood.’ I put sarcastic emphasis on ‘only’, ‘but I will tell the world you’re a vampire if you don’t come to the séance. I’ll go to the papers I’ll go to the TV, somebody will publicise it.’

‘Ok, Ok’, Madden relented, ‘I’ll go to your damn séance.’

#### Chapter 4

Everything was set up for the séance. I rang Gavin to make a date, and he told me that my apartment was too small, so I asked Mark and Anna if we could use their place. They were very curious about the whole experiment, and agreed.

‘What about the kids?’ I wasn’t sure how many kids they had and didn’t think it was polite to ask, but I knew they had at least two.

Mark smiled and said, ‘No worries love, we’ll send them to their grandparents, give the missus and I a break.’

‘Thanks’ I replied and literally skipped away, it was all very exciting.

The preparations for the séance had temporarily distracted me from the whole whispering voices thing, but the night before Gavin was due to arrive, I had another visitation from them. Or rather, I went out to buy some sugar at the little store on the ground floor and on the way back I heard a

whispering, sniggering, laughing sound that seemed to emanate from the lift. I really quickly raced up the fire escape to the apartment, and caught a quick glimpse of red clothes and white wispy hair before breathlessly slamming the door.

Finally the big night arrived. I met Gavin and Louisa at the front door of the Presidio, I wanted to make it a formal occasion.

They arrived right on 8pm. Gavin was wearing three quarter length black shorts and a black silk shirt. He looked like a very ordinary, balding, plump middle aged man. Louisa of course was dressed in her usual flowing dress, but I noticed that this time she was wearing more makeup and her hair had turned from grey to a vibrant red colour.

‘You must be Daisy,’ Gavin intoned in a deep bass voice which ricocheted off the walls. As he shook my hand his shirt lifted to reveal a hairy white stomach.

I guided them to Mark and Anna’s place on the third floor.

Mark and Anna met us at their front door. Anna’s dark skin glowed in the light and her smile was beatific. Mark was tanned, tall and athletic. They looked like movie stars. Madden was already there and he looked his usual cadaverous self.

I made the introductions and Gavin and Louisa made preparations.

They sat us in a circle around a table. Madden was about to sit next to me, when Louisa protested,

‘No, No, Madden, you, my dear must sit near me. I feel that you are very sensitive, very sensitive, we will need your energy to guide us tonight.’ She took his hand and held it closely. Madden and Mark exchanged a look and their lips twitched in a smile.

Louisa placed us carefully, ‘Daisy you between Gavin and Mark, Madden, you between Anna and I, then Gavin at the head of the table, between me and Daisy.’

Gavin had been sitting quietly in a corner, breathing softly, his stomach wobbled with each inhalation and his head was bowed and clasped in his hands. After a few moments he came over to address us.

He sighed dramatically and spoke in a deep voice.

‘I must now convey the instructions, you must follow these instructions or you could harm those who wander in the spirit realm. You must be quiet during the séance, you must not break the circle of hands or move. If you do so you could harm the medium, myself. You must understand that I do not enter the spirit realm lightly, that it is a dangerous journey. During the séance you may see phenomenon that you cannot explain. Do not attempt to investigate this phenomenon, it could endanger our lives. You may see ectoplasm, white luminescent expulsions from my body,

do not attempt to touch the ectoplasm, it could permanently injure you. You may sense movements...

‘Alright already’ Madden snapped, ‘we get the idea, let’s get on with it.’

‘Madden,’ Anna walked up behind him and gently touched him on the shoulder, ‘relax, we don’t want to disturb the spirits.’

Then she turned towards Gavin Cloud,

‘Please forgive him Mr. Cloud, we are all very eager to begin.’ A beautiful smile illuminated her perfect face

Gavin Cloud frowned, then he looked at her and his features relaxed, ‘of course, dear lady, let us begin our discourse with the spirits.’

We all held hands and Gavin Cloud sat at the head of the table. Louisa turned off the lights, and took her place next to him. The only illumination was the candles glistening in the darkness, the only noise, the soft breathing sounds of the night, the only movement the gentle rise and fall of our bodies inhaling and exhaling in unison. Gavin Cloud’s deep hypnotic voice rose softly over it all

‘Join hands everybody and concentrate. Concentrate on the candle.’

I felt Mark on one side and Gavin Cloud on the other. Mark’s hand was warm and gently held my fingers. Gavin Cloud’s hand grasped mine so firmly that it almost crushed the bones. It was rough and his fingers were like stubby, sweaty sausages.

We sat there for five minutes, then there was a sudden movement at the table, the candle winked out and I felt a breeze past my neck, I shuddered. The table moved again and Gavin convulsed violently.

‘Come,’ He intoned ‘I am ready for you... come, spirit of the netherworld, visit your humble servant.’

Madden leaned over and murmured something to Mark and he snuffled in response...

Gain Cloud faltered, his fingers tensed

‘COME’, he boomed, ‘COME.’ there was sudden violent movement of the table...Cloud’s body tensed, he shook...he shuddered, and then...then...he spoke in a completely different voice....a high pitched female voice

‘I am Gertruda, I died in the presidio....I am here....’

Cloud jerked violently..., Louisa whispered,’ he has been mounted’

Madden whispered to Mark, 'he wishes,' there was another snuffle...

There was a violent spasm and the table almost tipped over.

'GERTRUDA...I am here....I am the ghost of the presidio....there is one here...her name...her name is ....a D....I see a D... I see a flower, a yellow flower...a daisy...it is her fault that I have returned..... I will return...She is evil....'

A white luminous substance began to slowly emerge from Cloud's nose.

I was terrified. Me? Evil? I wondered what I had done to upset Gertruda.I was trying to think of somebody I knew called Gertruda.

Suddenly, Cloud stood up, the white stuff was flowing down his chest now, and another voice took over...

'I am Oscar....I am Oscar....Daisi...Crazy Daisi...'

'NO!' I screamed, I knew this spirit and I didn't want to talk to it. Oscar? Oscar? And then, I'm ashamed to say, I started to cry.

'NO' I ripped my hand from Cloud's grasp as tears started streaming down my face 'No'

Cloud continued to chant, 'crazy Daisi, crazy Daisi...'

And then Madden's voice cut through the chant 'that's enough!'

Mark turned on the lights and Gavin Cloud screamed, 'No!'

I slumped down on the table, my head in my hands, I couldn't stop crying.

Madden put his hand on my shoulder, 'Look Daisi, the man's a fraud.'

Mark tugged on the white material flowing from Cloud's nose, and with a sick, slushing sound, it came streaming out in a mess of blood and snot.

Mark threw it on the floor in disgust, 'Ugh, cheesecloth scarf.'

Cloud was indignant, 'that my dear sir was ectoplasm, of course to your uneducated self it seems to be mere cheesecloth.'

'Get off it mate, pick up your cheesecloth ghost, take the flowerchild and get out of my house.'

I didn't hear much more, I was too distraught. Anna came over, she took my hand and whispered to me softly, 'don't worry Daisi'

Through my tears, I could hear Madden and Mark in the background angrily talking to Louisa and Cloud. I heard the words, 'disgusting' 'exploitation', 'money' Mark hissed and then Louisa's



voice, stridently said, ‘ we know all about the Presidio. It’s a prison, a prison, for freaks like you. You’re all freaks.’ Then there were sounds of scuffling, the door slammed and I knew Anna and I were alone.

‘Daisi’ she whispered, ‘Are you OK? Was Oscar a friend of yours?’

I finally regained some control and nodded.

‘And Louisa knew him didn’t she?’

I nodded again.

‘Daisi, it wasn’t a ghost, these people are frauds.’

‘But...but’ I stuttered, then I sighed, ‘I guess so’

Anna gave me a tissue, it looked a little like the cheesecloth that had oozed from Cloud’s nose. I looked up and met Anna’s deep brown eyes. She smiled at me gently.

‘What about the ghosts in the lift?’

She considered a moment then suggested, ‘Well, if you think they are there, maybe you should talk to them and see what they want.’

‘Really?’

‘Yes I think so’

I sniffed and sighed again

The front door opened and Mark and Madden returned. Anna left me and went to speak to them. I heard the word ‘exspellers’ or something similar, hissed by Madden.

Anna walked me back home that night and we left the two men, or the one man and the vampire talking. She made a cup of tea and then left.

I was Ok, after a couple of days. It had been unnerving and absolutely terrifying to think that my ex, very dead, boyfriend Oscar had appeared. I thought of him a lot over those couple of days.

Finally, I had to go shopping, so I left the apartment. I heard the murmuring voices as I walked towards the lift. They got louder as I approached it. I took a deep breath and pressed the lift button and waited for it to arrive. The doors opened and after hesitating, I took a step inside the car.

The lift slowly descended. Then it stopped dead between floors. The whispering started and then a voice clearly said, ‘shaddup’

I gulped, and tried not to panic. ‘ummm...Hi is anybody there?’ I whimpered.

‘Did you say something?’ The voice came back, ‘Hey Ethan, I think this bird actually said something? Were you talking to us love?’

‘ummm yes, umm...’ I wasn’t sure what to say, so I went with cliché, ‘My name’s Daisi, what’s yours?’

The relationship between me and the ghosts in the lift improved steadily from that day onwards.

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### About the Author

This is the second story in The Vampire Across the Hall series.

The first story in the Vampire Across the Hall series, under the name of Leann Richards, is available through smashwords at <http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/37299>.

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Look out for book 3 of The Vampire Across the Hall series out soon.

All books available at the ibookstore soon.