

## The lamb and the wolf

‘Everybody!’ the party’s hostess called over the din of conversation and music. ‘This is Katie, our new neighbour. Katie, this is everybody!’

Katie smoothed down her blue, satin cocktail dress with one hand, as she looked around the room at her neighbours. Katie let them think she was weak and vulnerable, with her elfin looks and petite stature, as it worked to her advantage. She was not here to socialise. She was on the hunt.

She spotted her prey talking to a woman on the other side of the room. She turned and searched the walls for a mirror. Over the fireplace hung a mirror with gold scrollwork surrounds and bevelled glass. Katie was uninterested in the mirror’s design, only what it would show her. Or not show her, as the case would be.

In the mirror, she noted the woman conversing with thin air. The man had no reflection! Katie found who she was seeking. She turned from the mirror to look at the man, but he was gone. Damn! He must have spotted her.

Katie excused herself and quickly walked to the front door, abandoning the party without attracting attention. As she exited the house she saw her mark enter the fenced park across the street. She jogged after him, into the shadowy trees.

She kept her distance, tailing him as silently as she could. Ahead of her, he was enveloped by the shadow between two lamp posts. As Katie closed in she realised he had not re-emerged into the light. He’d disappeared! She spun around, probing the darkness, but he was nowhere to be seen.

‘Why are you following me?’ whispered a deep voice beside her ear. Katie stiffened as felt him press against her back.

‘You’re a vampire,’ Katie said, and slowly turned around to face him. He was non-descript, fifty-ish, with grey, receding hair. He wore a green jumper over a

blue shirt, with grey slacks. He looked like a high school teacher; definitely not the classic image of a vampire.

‘I heard your pulse speed up when you looked into that mirror,’ he said.

‘Nice set-up you have here,’ Katie said, nodding back towards the party.

‘It works,’ he said with a shrug. ‘Easy pickings. They’re not too smart.’

‘I like the look,’ Katie said, and waved her hand at his outfit.

‘Shhh,’ he said with a mocking smile. ‘It’s my disguise. Who would suspect me looking like this?’

‘I did,’ Katie pointed out. ‘So, you’re a wolf in sheep’s clothing?’

‘Exactly’ he said, and moved closer. ‘Now what’s a little lamb like you doing following a big, bad wolf like me?’

‘Checking you’re really a vampire,’ Katie said.

‘Why?’ he asked.

‘To do this!’ Quick as a flash, Katie pulled her hand from under her dress and plunged a wooden stake into the vampire’s heart. He gaped in shock and confusion.

‘You’re not the only one wearing a disguise,’ Katie said, and smiled as he burst into flames.