

written by jane jensen

Blood of the SacredTM
GABRIELKNIGHT
Blood of the Damned

• P R O L O G U E •

illustrations by ron spears



James and Patricia Stewart,
Prince and Princess of Albany
Cypress Grove Manor
10 Rue de Cypres
Paris, France
33 1 555-578

Dear Mr. Knight:

Please accept our invitation to a weekend at Cypress Grove Man
for you and a companion. My wife and I would very much like
make your acquaintance. Our house secretary will be contactin
to make travel arrangements.

James Stewart, Prince of Albany





"And they'd want to meet you of course. This is really exciting. You're like royalty!"

"Kay. Whatever. I'll just call this secretary guy—see if I can get more info."

"I'm not royalty. And neither is this guy if he's in exile. We're not going."



"Just a second."

"Mr. Knight, so good of you to accept our hospitality."

"Grace!"

"Call me Gabriel. And, uh, this is Gracie."

"Grace. Nakimura."

Charmed."



The weekend proceeds less than smashing....

"No. Really. You all go."



"...Polo is most enjoyable, I assure you. The best sport on earth! No one will mind if you are not an expert horseman."



"Novelist, is it? Would I know you?"

"Um...I seriously doubt it.**"

"Have you read any of Mr. Knight's work, James?"

"I'm afraid I haven't had the pleasure"

"Then how do you know someone like...?"

"Alfred. You know James and Pat find the occasional American amusing."

"Really? You'd never see that in America."

"Never see what, Mr. Knight?"

"It's one of those endearing quirks of theirs."

"An Englishman being invited because they are amusing."

**The Voodoo Murders and The Brutal Beast are probably not up Lord Edger's alley.



"You were right. We shouldn't have come. None of them have even heard of the Ritters."

"Hey this is a first edition of The Dubliners. Signed. Cool."

"Oh, now you don't want to talk about it."



"You called the fiddler. So dance."



"Miss Nakimura? Mr. Knight? Might we speak with you alone?"



"We're related to the Wittelsbach dynasty. The lost Wagner opera came to our attention ..."

"You need a Schattenjäger?"

"...and the peculiar focus of your family trade. Mesmi suggested I contact you"

"I'm afraid so. The Stewarts are a very old family. For a long time we have been plagued by a kind of... anemia"

"Like the Romanovs?"



"Yes and no. Stewart heirs have unusual 'episodes'. They awake in the morning exhausted and pale."

"Upon examination it is evident that they are suffering from severe anemia. Gradually they recover but it happens again— sometimes within months, sometimes not for years."

"Sounds like a medical problem."

"Does it?"



"Oh, my God."



"There's no trace of an assailant?"



"No. Over the centuries we have tried everything. Guards. Dogs. Locked rooms..."



"...Guards and dogs fall asleep. Locks are broken. Nothing stops it."

"You want us to protect you?"

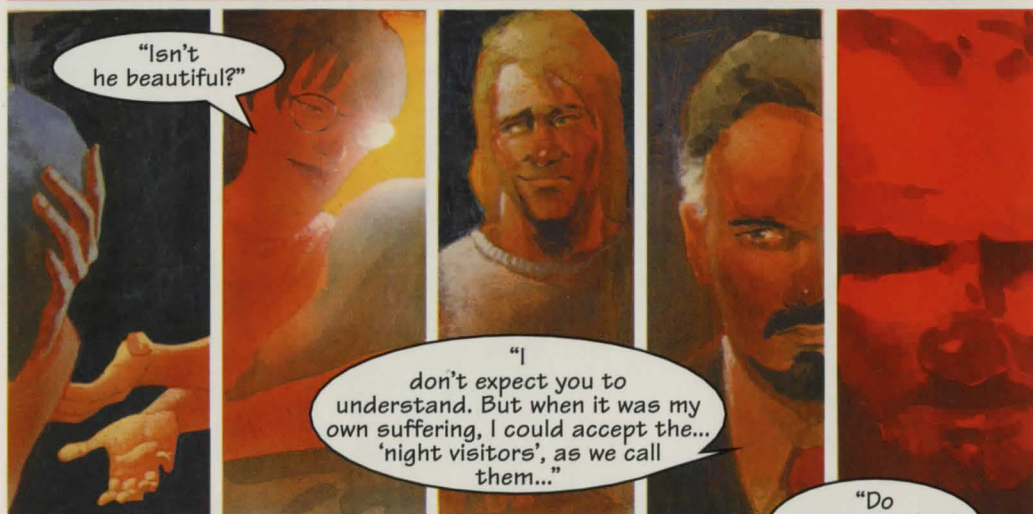


"Not me. There is someone I want you to meet."





"Thank you, Mesmi. This is my son, Charles. My first child."



"Isn't he beautiful?"

"I don't expect you to understand. But when it was my own suffering, I could accept the... 'night visitors', as we call them..."

"Do
you really think
you could?"



“...but
now that it's Charlie. I
simply cannot bear the
thought...”

"We're to protect the baby from these 'night visitors'?"

"We'll
do our best.
Absolutely."



That night...

"The thing that worries me is gettin' 'em to show up."

"We could be sittin' up nights for months. Don't ya think Grace?...Grace?"



"Make that 'I'. I could be stayin' up nights for months."

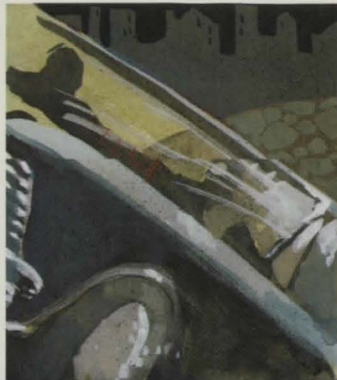
"Uh...Grace?"



Before the Schattenjäger can even move the figure is gone— and so is the baby.



A pursuit begins in the warm Paris night...



At times, when his headlights penetrate the car, he sees two figures—two men.



But the chase ends at a train station, the car is empty!



"Two men...a baby. Did you..."

"Sir..."



"Did anyone..."



"Number 4."





"How cute... mind if I have a look?"



"Sorry."



"scuse me.."



"Oh, hey...uh...."



"...I think I left my bag in here somewhere."







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