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T H E S T O R Y O F R Y A N

PAJARILLO
ROCKEY

TT

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Blood Legacy

The Story of Ryan

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Last Issue

In the past, a young peasant boy grows to manhood in a violent, blood-thirsty world. In the present, a mysterious woman is found in the morgue who slowly begins returning to life. The stories merge and these characters, separated by six centuries, are found to be one and the same: Ryan Alexander.

Susan Ryerson, a young genetic researcher, is drawn into Ryan's world, learning of her past life with Victor, the man who gave her immortality, and learning of events such as

Ryan's terrible revenge against those who killed her parents. Ryan tells of the battle of Agincourt, wherein she and Victor, single-handedly turned the tide of battle with their preternatural skills and predatory nature. Susan learns of the Others, such as Marilyn and Abigail, the creatures who are also Ryan's Kind, and only then begins to understand the dark and erotic world that Ryan lives in. Against her better judgement, Susan Ryerson continues to seek the secrets of Ryan's immortality. And she begins to suspect that Ryan has not told her everything...



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**THE PRESENT. DOCTOR SUSAN RYERSON
GAZES AT HER HOST PENSIVELY.**

**THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT THIS WOMAN.
SOMETHING THAT WAS MESMERIZING TO THE
AVERAGE PERSON.**

WHAT?

Oh,
NOTHING.

CAW!!!

IT'S JUST A
KITE, KEIKO. HE
WON'T HURT
YOU.

JUST A
"KITE"...

**THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT
THE WOMAN'S WORDS. SHE
HAD NEVER HEARD "KITE" USED
IN THAT SENSE, AT LEAST NOT
IN SPOKEN LANGUAGE. SHE
THOUGHT ABOUT RYAN'S
VOICE, THE WAY SHE SPOKE
SO SMOOTHLY, MELODICALLY,
LIKE POLISHED STAINED GLASS.
A YOUNG VOICE WITH AN OLD
INFLECTION.**

**AND SUSAN RYERSON
CAME TO A STARTING
CONCLUSION.**

YOU
REALLY
ARE 700
YEARS
OLD.

YES, I
THINK I'VE
TOLD YOU THAT
A NUMBER OF
TIMES.

**BUT THIS IS THE FIRST
TIME THAT SUSAN RYERSON
HAS TRULY GRASPED THE
MEANING OF THAT REALITY.**


THEY ALL
MISSED. ALL THE
WRITERS THE FILMMAKERS,
ALL THE PEOPLE WHO
TRIED TO ENVISION WHAT
YOU WOULD BE LIKE.
THEY ALL MISSED
IT.

IT'S NOT
THE OBVIOUS
THINGS, AND OF
COURSE, IT WOULDN'T
BE. NOT THE MELODRAMATIC
HOPES AND DREAMS THAT
MORTALS PROJECTED ONTO
IMMORTALS, NOR HUMAN
WEAKNESSES MANIFESTED
AND MAGNIFIED OVER
TIME.

IT'S THE
SUBTLE THINGS --
A WAY OF SPEAKING, FROM
A VOICE SHAPED BY HUNDREDS
OF LANGUAGES, A WAY OF
MOVING, FROM MUSCLES AND
JOINTS UNTOUCHED BY THE
RAVAGES OF TIME, YET
BLESSED WITH CENTURIES
OF NEURO-MUSCULAR
DEVELOPMENT.

IT'S A
SENSE OF TIME
FUNDAMENTALLY
DIFFERENT FROM HUMAN
BEINGS; NOT ONE TIED TO
70 OR 80 YEARS ON THIS
PLANET, BUT TO AN
UNLIMITED
NUMBER.





IT WOULD BE A TOTAL LACK OF FEAR, NOT THE BRAVADO DEMONSTRATED BY SO MANY IMMORTAL CARICATURES, BUT A GENUINE LACK OF FEAR.

BECAUSE RYAN HAD NOTHING TO FEAR.

YOU'RE NEVER IN A HURRY, ARE YOU?

WHY SHOULD I BE?

YOU MUST FIND "DRACULA" PRETTY AMUSING.

IT'S A MORALITY PLAY, TIED TO THE PLACE AND TIME IN WHICH IT WAS WRITTEN.

I'M ALWAYS STRUCK BY HUMAN PORTRAITS OF IMMORTALITY. I HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON WITH THESE PEOPLE. WHY DO THEY ALWAYS LONG FOR THEIR MORTALITY? AND WHY DO THEY ALWAYS WHINE SO?

SO I TAKE IT YOU DON'T "LONG FOR YOUR HUMANITY" LIKE SO MANY OF THESE TORTURED CHARACTERS?

THE QUESTION WAS MEANT TO BE LIGHT-HEARTED...

BUT IT PIERCES RYAN TO THE CORE.

HER RESPONSE IS SLOW IN COMING.

I WAS NEVER HUMAN.

THE REPLY STARTLES THE YOUNG DOCTOR THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE CONSIDERING WHAT RYAN HAS TOLD HER, AND SHE HAS THE FEELING ONCE AGAIN, RYAN IS LEAVING OUT SIGNIFICANT PARTS OF HER LIFE.

RYAN WAITS FOR THE QUESTION THAT SHE KNOWS IS COMING.

RYAN, WHAT HAPPENED TO VICTOR?

HE'S DEAD. I KILLED HIM.

AND IN AN INSTANT, EVERYTHING RYAN HAD TOLD HER HAD JUST BEEN CONTRADICTED IN TWO, SIMPLE STATEMENTS.

SEVERAL
HOURS
LATER.

TIME IS FIRE IN
WHICH WE BURN,
BUT IT DOES NOT
BURN ME.

NOR DOES IT
PROVIDE ME
ANY HEAT OR
ANY LIGHT.

AND AS THEY HAVE FOR SO MANY
CENTURIES, RYAN'S MEMORIES
BEGIN TO STALK HER.

AS THE BOND BETWEEN HER
AND VICTOR GREW, SO DID HER
ACCESS TO HIS MIND. SHE WAS
ANGERED WHEN SHE LEARNED
THAT VICTOR HAD BEEN THE
INSTRUMENT OF HER PARENT'S
DESTRUCTION.* SHE HAD
ALWAYS ASSUMED THAT DEREK
HAD ACTED ALONE.

*Blood Legacy -- Issue #2

VICTOR HAD NOT UNDERSTOOD HER ANGER. SHE HAD FELT
NO GREAT LOVE FOR HER PARENTS, AND HE HAD GIVEN HER
MUCH MORE THAN THE BLACKSMITH AND HIS WIFE HAD.
EVEN AT HER YOUNG AGE, RYAN WAS ACCUSTOMED TO
DEATH AND DESTRUCTION.

FOR YEARS, RYAN HERSELF WAS UNCERTAIN WHY SHE HAD
REACTED SO VIOLENTLY TO THE KNOWLEDGE THAT VICTOR
WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF HER PARENTS. SHE
DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE RAGE THAT CIRCULATED THROUGH
HER BODY LIKE THE BLOOD OF A STRANGER.

A STRANGER THAT NEITHER SHE
NOR VICTOR HAD EVER SHARED WITH.

AND IN THIS MODERN AGE, THE ANCIENT CHILD'S BITTERNESS
IS REPLACED BY A SADNESS SO PROFOUND IT WOULD KILL
A NORMAL HUMAN BEING.

EVEN FROM A GREAT DISTANCE,
MANY OF THE OTHERS WOULD
FEEL AN ANGLE THAT NONE
WOULD UNDERSTAND.

ONLY A DARK-HAIRED WOMAN, ONE OF THE
GREATEST OF THEIR KIND, FULLY UNDERSTOOD
AND GAZED THOUGHTFULLY INTO THE DARKNESS.

SEVERAL WEEKS LATER.

YOU LOOK A LITTLE TIRED. HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

I'M FINE, WHY?

NO REASON, I JUST THOUGHT I'D ASK.

ACTUALLY --

WHAT?

I HAVE A HEADACHE.

WHEEE!

AND I HAVE NOT HAD A HEADACHE IN OVER 200 YEARS.

NOT EVEN WHEN YOU WERE RECOVERING FROM YOUR INJURIES?

NO, I'M PROBABLY JUST ADAPTING TO SOMETHING MY OTHER SENSES ARE UNAWARE OF.

SO WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU THE NIGHT YOU WOUND UP IN THE MORGUE.

I HAD CONTACT WITH SOME OF THE OTHERS.

CONTACT? IS THAT WHAT YOU WOULD CALL IT.

WE ARE PREDATORS, REMEMBER. THE REUNION WAS NOT PARTICULARLY JOYOUS. BESIDES, MOST OF MY WOUNDS WERE SELF-INFLICTED.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SELF-INFLICTED?

SURELY, I'VE TOLD YOU ENOUGH OF MYSELF FOR YOU TO REALIZE THERE'S NO ONE OUT THERE WHO COULD DO THAT TO ME.

I HAVE BEEN CURIOUS, BUT I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND.

WHEN I CAME INTO CONTACT WITH THE OTHERS, I DON'T THINK THEY REALIZED WHO I WAS, BUT I WASN'T TAKING ANY CHANCES. NOT ONLY DID I DESTROY ALL OF THEM, BUT I FAKED MY OWN DESTRUCTION'S WELL.

THIS IS SO UNUSUAL FOR ME.

YOUR HEADACHE?

IT SEEMS IN FULL FORCE.

SUDDENLY, RYAN STOPS, HER SENSES STRAINING THE DARKNESS AROUND THEM. SHE APPEARS TO BE LISTENING TO SOMETHING ONLY SHE CAN HEAR, AND THERE IS DAWNING RECOGNITION ON HER FACE, INTERMIXED WITH FEAR.

HER NEXT WORDS DO NOTHING TO ALLAY SUSAN'S FEARS.

STAY CLOSE.

ONE BY ONE, THE FIGURES STEEP FROM THE SHADOWS
IN EVERY DIRECTION, SURROUNDING THEM.

ALL POSSESS AN UNNATURAL BEAUTY AND A LITTLE
GRACE SUSAN HAD COME TO ASSOCIATE WITH RYAN.
SUSAN REALIZED WITH GREAT TREPIDATION THAT
THESE PEOPLE ARE RYAN'S KIND.

THEY ARE THE
OTHERS.

NONE DARED COME TOO NEAR BUT ONE,
A DARK-SKINNED WOMAN SO BEAUTIFUL
THERE SEEMED TO BE A RADIANCE ABOUT
HER. SUSAN KNEW WHO SHE WAS BEFORE
RYAN SPOKE HER NAME.

MARILYN

HELLO,
LITTLE
ONE.



MARILYN, AND
WHAT DO I OWE THIS
PLEASURE?

AS MUCH AS I ALWAYS
"ENJOY" YOUR COMPANY, I'M
AFRAID THIS IS STRICTLY BUSINESS.

WHAT
KIND OF
BUSINESS?

I HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO BRING YOU BEFORE THE GRAND COUNCIL.

IT WAS CONVENED OUT OF NECESSITY, AFTER THE DEATH OF OUR LEADER.

I WAS UNAWARE OF THE EXISTENCE OF A "GRAND COUNCIL."

THE GRAND COUNCIL REQUESTS YOUR PRESENCE TO ANSWER FOR THE DEATH OF YOUR MENTOR, VICTOR ALEXANDER.

IF RYAN IS MOVED BY THE ACCUSATION OR THE IMPLIED THREAT, IT WAS NOT EVIDENT, NOR WAS THEIR ANY SIGN OF REPENTANCE. SHE LOWERS HER VOICE TO A SEDUCTIVE WHISPER, HEARD BY ALL BUT MEANT FOR MARILYN ALONE.

SINCE WHEN IS MURDER A CRIME AMONGST OUR KIND?

YOU WILL NOT BE TRIED FOR THE CRIME OF MURDER, BUT FOR REGICIDE. THAT AND YOUR FAILURE TO TAKE HIS PLACE.

THE OTHERS ARE QUITE AWARE OF THE WAR THE OLD ONES ARE WAGING. IT IS MESMERIZING, GIVING THEM A GLIMPSE OF POWER FEW DREAMED EVEN EXISTED.

EVEN SUSAN RYERSON, SENSES THE POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE TWO, A STRUGGLE AS MUCH ABOUT SEDUCTION AS IT WAS ABOUT STRENGTH.

AND DO YOU INTEND TO TAKE ME BY FORCE?

NO, MY DEAR. AS ENJOYABLE AS THAT MIGHT BE, I DON'T BELIEVE IT WILL BE NECESSARY. ALTHOUGH I'M QUITE CONVINCED OF YOUR INVULNERABILITY, I DON'T THINK YOUR HUMAN COMPANIONS WOULD SURVIVE THE STRUGGLE..

VERY WELL. I WILL COME WITH YOU. BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW THIS. IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO DOCTOR RYERSON OR HER SON, I WILL DESTROY EVERYONE HERE.

INCLUDING YOU.

AND FOR ONCE, THERE IS NO SARCASTIC RETORT FROM MARILYN.

7 TWENTY-FOUR
HOURS LATER.

RYAN IS COMPOSED, AWARE OF THE PRESENCE
OF THE OTHERS, BUT IMMUNE TO IT.

EDWARD HAS APPEARED AT HIS MASTER'S
SIDE, NO LONGER A SUBSERVIENT SERVANT, BUT
A WARRIOR STANDING AT THE SIDE OF HIS KING.

HE HAS BEEN PREPARING FOR
THIS BATTLE FOR CENTURIES.

IT IS
TIME.

IT IS LESS A COURTROOM THAN
A GREAT SUBTERRANEAN HALL.

AS RYAN WALKS THE LENGTH OF
THE GREAT HALL, SHE ALLOWS
HER EYES TO BRIEFLY SKIM THE
CROWD AS IF THEY ARE NO
CONSEQUENCE TO HER.

AND INDEED THEY
ARE NOT.

ALL EYES TURN TOWARD THE FIGURES IN
THE DOORWAY, BUT THEIR ATTENTION IS
FOCUSED ON ONLY ONE. ELECTRICITY
DANCES THROUGH EVERY OCCUPANT
PRESENT, AND SUGAN RYERSON HAS THE
UNCOMFORTABLE REALIZATION THAT SHE
IS THE ONLY HUMAN PRESENT.

SHE CAN FEEL THEIR SHOCK
AT HER PRESENCE, FEEL THEM
REACH OUT TO HER AND THEN
WITHDRAW IN TERROR. SHE
COULD FEEL THEIR DESIRE
INTERMIXED WITH THEIR
TERROR, THEIR LONGING
INTERMIXED WITH AN ANCIENT
FEAR.



AND AS SHE APPROACHES THE
END OF HER LEISURELY STROLL...

SHE IS NOT SURPRISED TO SEE THE IDENTITY OF
THE ONE WHO WILL SIT IN JUDGEMENT OF HER.

HELLO, MY
DEAR.

WOULD YOU
PLEASE STATE
YOUR NAME
FOR THE
RECORD?

MY
NAME IS
RHIAN.

YOUR
FULL NAME,
MY DEAR.

MY NAME IS RHIANNON
ALEXANDER.

"RHIANNON," THE
GODDESS OF THE DEAD.
HOW APPROPRIATE.

BUT I
BELIEVE YOU ARE
NOW CALLED "RYAN."

THAT IS
CORRECT.

YOU HAVE
BEEN BROUGHT
HERE TODAY
TO BE TRIED BY A
JURY OF YOUR
PEERS --

THEN I
MOVE FOR A
MISTRIAL.

ON WHAT
GROUND'S
COUNSEL?

I
HAVE NO
PEERS.

THIS IS INCONSEQUENTIAL.

BUT NOT
UNTRUE.

NO, NOT
UNTRUE. BUT
IT IS STILL
IMMATERIAL,
MOTION
DENIED.

YOU STAND ACCUSED
OF KILLING YOUR
MENTOR, VICTOR ALEXANDER.
THE PROSECUTION MAY
BEGIN THEIR
CASE.

I WOULD
LIKE TO CALL
TO THE STAND
MY FIRST
WITNESS --



DOCTOR
SUSAN
RYERSON.

DOCTOR
RYERSON, CAN
YOU DESCRIBE THE
CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER
WHICH YOU FIRST CAME
TO MEET RYAN
ALEXANDER?

RYAN CAME TO
THE HOSPITAL AS A
PATIENT. NO, THAT'S
NOT ENTIRELY CORRECT.
SHE CAME TO THE HOSPITAL
AS A CORPSE, WHO I
DETERMINED WAS NOT
DEAD BUT RATHER
COMATOSE.

SHE HAD NO
VITAL SIGNS, NO
BLOOD PRESSURE, NO HEART-
BEAT, AND NO RESPIRATIONS.
SHE HAD SUSTAINED SEVERAL
"MORTAL" INJURIES, INCLUDING
FRACTURES TO BOTH HER SKULL AND
FEMUR. EVEN SO, SHE EXHIBITED
AN EXTRAORDINARY AMOUNT
OF BRAINWAVE ACTIVITY, WHICH
IS WHY I PUT HER IN
INTENSIVE CARE.

HER HEALING
WAS REMARKABLE.
HER BLOOD DISPLAYED
PROPERTIES OF HIGHTENED
IMMUNITY, PREDATORY BLOOD
CELLS, AND EXTRAORDINARY
ADAPTIVE SYSTEM...



YOUR HONOR, I OBJECT
TO THIS LINE OF QUESTIONING
BASED UPON RELEVANCE, OR
RATHER LACK OF RELEVANCE,
TO THE CASE AT
HAND.

WELL,
COUNSELOR?

YOUR HONOR, I'M SIMPLY
LAYING A FOUNDATION FOR
MY FUTURE ARGUMENT,
WHICH WILL REVEAL ITSELF
AS I CONTINUE.

DEFENSE
COUNCIL, I SEE LITTLE
OBJECTION COMING FROM
YOUR CLIENT, WHICH LEADS
ME TO BELIEVE THAT SHE
HERSELF UNDERSTANDS
THE RELEVANCE OF THIS
LINE OF
QUESTIONING.

I HAVE A FEELING
I KNOW WHERE THIS
IS GOING.

I'M GOING
TO ALLOW HIM TO
CONTINUE.

TWO
HUNDRED YEARS
OF PREPARATION, AND
APPARENTLY MY CLIENT
HASN'T TOLD ME
EVERYTHING.



DOCTOR
RYERSON, WOULD
YOU PLEASE EXAMINE
THIS?

THIS IS AN
MRI OF ANOTHER
OF OUR KIND, ONE
WHO MET WITH AN
UNFORTUNATE
END.

WHAT?

NOW UNLESS
I'M READING
YOUR EXPRESSION
INCORRECTLY, YOU
APPEAR SURPRISED,
DOCTOR RYERSON.
WHY IS THAT?

WELL, THIS ANATOMY IS VERY SIMILAR TO
THAT OF A HUMAN BEING'S, WITH A FEW
MODIFICATIONS. RYAN'S ON THE OTHER HAND,
WAS RADICALLY DIFFERENT. I ASSUMED THAT
HER ANATOMY WAS STANDARD FOR ALL OF
YOUR KIND, BUT OBVIOUSLY RYAN
IS... UNIQUE.

UNIQUE.

I HAVE
NO MORE
QUESTIONS FOR THIS
WITNESS, YOUR
HONOR.

I HAVE NO
QUESTIONS FOR
THIS WITNESS,
YOUR HONOR.

AND HOW
MUCH AM I
PAYING YOU FOR
SUCH BRILLIANT
CROSS-
EXAMINATION?

NOT
ENOUGH. ARE
YOU SURE THERE
ISN'T SOMETHING
YOU NEED TO TELL
ME?

IT WILL
COME OUT
SOON ENOUGH.
THE DAMAGE HAS
ALREADY
BEGUN.

I WOULD
LIKE TO CALL TO
THE STAND MARILYN
IN FORTESQUE.

MADAM,
WOULD YOU PLEASE
DESCRIBE THE
CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER
WHICH YOU FIRST
CAME TO KNOW THE
DEFENDANT?

WHY, YES,
I REMEMBER IT
AS IF IT WERE
YESTERDAY. I THOUGHT
SHE WAS EXQUISITE.
SO YOUNG, AND YET
SO POWERFUL, AND
OF COURSE, SO
IMPOSSIBLE.

WHY
IMPOSSIBLE?

VICTOR
SHOULD NOT HAVE
BEEN ABLE TO CHANGE
HER. HE WAS TOO OLD
AND TOO POWERFUL. IN
OUR HIERARCHY, THE
MORE WE AGE, THE
GREATER OUR STRENGTH.
UNTIL WE MOVE
BEYOND DEATH.

BUT AS WE
AGE, OUR BLOOD
BECOMES TOXIC TO
HUMANS. SO ALTHOUGH
THE OLD ONES WOULD CREATE
THE MOST POWERFUL OF OUR
KIND, THEY ARE COMPLETELY
BARREN. THE TASK OF
PROCREATION IS LEFT
TO THOSE WHO SURVIVE
THEIR INFANCY, BUT WHO
ARE NOT YET OLD
ONES.


IN SHORT,
THE YOUNG CANNOT
REPRODUCE BECAUSE
THEIR BLOOD IS NOT
POWERFUL ENOUGH, AND
THE VERY OLD CANNOT
BECAUSE THEIR BLOOD
IS TOO STRONG.

THEN HOW COULD VICTOR
HAVE POSSIBLY CREATED
MY CLIENT?

THAT IS
WHAT WE ALL
WANT TO
KNOW.

THAT WAS
A MARVELOUS
MOVIE. THANK
YOU.

EDWARD FEELS LITTLE REGRET, HOWEVER, THERE IS
OBVIOUSLY MUCH SHE HAS NOT TOLD HIM, AND
MUCH BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THIS TRIAL.



MADAME de FONTESQUE, CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE NIGHT THAT VICTOR WAS KILLED.

BUT OF COURSE. I HAVE RECOUNTED THEM FOR THE COUNCIL ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

VICTOR AND RYAN WERE ALWAYS CLOSE, AS IF TWO PARTS OF THE SAME WHOLE. BUT I BEGAN TO SENSE SOMETHING BETWEEN THEM, A TYPE OF TENSION. VICTOR ONLY SPOKE OF IT INDIRECTLY.

AND WHAT DID HE SAY?

HE SAID THAT THERE WERE THINGS RYAN DID NOT KNOW, AND HE FEARED THE DAY SHE DISCOVERED THEM.

AND DID YOU EVER FIND OUT WHAT VICTOR REFERRED TO?

NO.

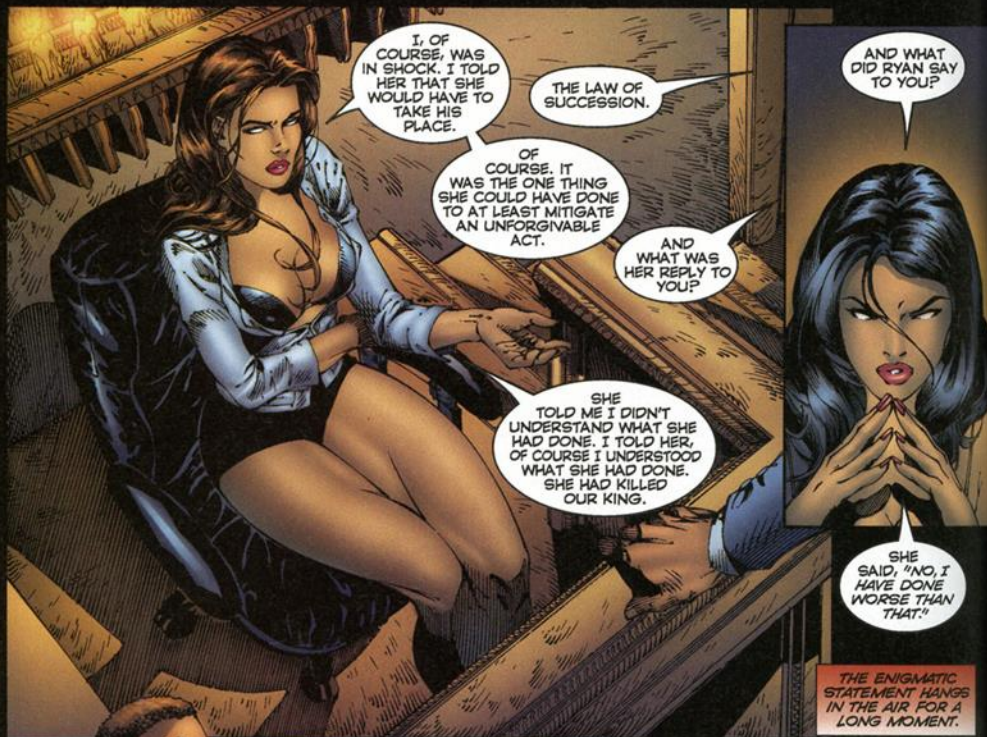
THE NIGHT THAT VICTOR WAS KILLED, I WAS HUNDREDS OF MILES AWAY. I NORMALLY TRAVELED BY WHATEVER CONVENIENCE WAS AVAILABLE, BUT THAT NIGHT I RAN, KNOWING THAT I COULD COVER THE DISTANCE QUICKER ON FOOT.

AS I RAN UP THE WALK, I SAW A FIGURE STANDING IN THE OPEN GATE, DRENCHED IN BLOOD. I ASKED RYAN WHAT HAD HAPPENED, AND SHE SAID, "YOU KNOW WHAT I HAVE DONE."

I TOLD HER, "IT'S NOT POSSIBLE, YOU COULD NOT HAVE KILLED VICTOR."

AND WHAT DID SHE SAY?

SHE SAID THAT MANY THINGS WERE IMPOSSIBLE, AND NOW SHE HAD DONE THEM ALL.



I WOULD NOW LIKE TO CALL TO THE STAND --

RHIANNON ALEXANDER.



A HUSH FALLS OVER THE ROOM AS THE CENTRAL PLAYER IN THIS TRAGIC STORY STALKS TO THE STAND.



CAN YOU
TELL THE COURT
APPROXIMATELY
WHEN YOU WERE
BORN?

I WAS
BORN IN THE
YEAR OF OUR
LORD, 1325.

I WAS 19
WHEN I WAS
CHANGED.

AND
WAS VICTOR
CRUEL TO
YOU?

NO,
VICTOR GAVE
ME EVERYTHING,
EXCEPT HIS
MEMORIES.

AND
WHEN DID
YOU FIRST BEGIN
SEEING HIS
MEMORIES?

FROM
THE MOMENT
HIS BLOOD FIRST
TOUCHED ME
LIPS.

THIS BRINGS MUCH MURMURING
TO THE CROWD. THIS WAS A GIFT THAT
NONE ACQUIRED IMMEDIATELY, AND THAT
SOME WOULD NEVER ACQUIRE AT ALL.



AS I GREW OLDER, I REALIZED
THAT VICTOR WAS HIDING SOME-
THING FROM ME.

WHAT?

I
WILL NOT
SAY.

SO, RYAN ALEXANDER,
HOW DID YOU KILL YOUR
MENTOR?

IF THE QUESTION IS
MEANT TO CATCH RYAN
OFF-GUARD, IT FAILS.

I
BLED MYSELF
UNTIL MY BODY WAS
NEARLY EMPTY, AND
THEN I FED UPON HIM
UNTIL HIS HEART
STOPPED.

IT WAS THE
FIRST TIME I HAD
EVER ACCOMPLISHED
SUCH A FEAT.

SURELY
THAT WASN'T ENOUGH
TO DESTROY SOMEONE
AS POWERFUL AS VICTOR.
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN NO
MORE THAN A MOMENTARY
SETBACK FOR
HIM.



YOU'RE
QUITE
RIGHT...

WHICH
IS WHY I
CUT HIM INTO
PIECES AND
ATE HIM.

THE REACTIONS ARE AS
SWIFT AS THEY ARE VARIED.
DISBELIEF AND HORROR
DOMINATE.

ABIGAIL IS NEARLY
STARTLED INTO
LAUGHTER.

WHILE MARILYN IS
RATHER STARTLED
AT THE INGENUITY
OF IT.

YOU CUT HIM
INTO PIECES AND
ATE HIM?

IT WAS
ALL I COULD
THINK OF AT
THE TIME.

I HAVE A
HARD TIME
THINKING OF ANY-
THING THAT WOULD
MAKE SUCH AN ACT
JUSTIFIABLE.

THAT IS BECAUSE YOU
HAVE NOT SEEN WHAT I
HAVE SEEN.

ABIGAIL IS THE
FIRST TO CAPITALIZE
ON THE SLIP.

AND
WHAT WOULD
THAT BE,
RYAN?



AS POWERFUL
AS RYAN IS...



SHE MUST FIGHT
TO KEEP MARILYN
AND ABIGAIL
FROM HER MIND.



SO YOU KILLED HIM,
YOU KILLED HIM IN A
HORRIBLE MANNER.
AND THEN YOU
CONFESS TO
MARILYN.

BUT IT IS NOT A FULL CONFESSION.
MARILYN ACCUSES YOU OF
REGICIDE, AND YOU REPLY, "I
HAVE DONE WORSE THAN
THAT."

WHAT COULD
BE WORSE THAN THAT,
RYAN? WHAT COULD BE
WORSE THAN REGICIDE?
WHAT COULD BE WORSE
THAN KILLING THE MAN
WHO GAVE YOU
IMMORTALITY?

I WILL
SPEAK NO
MORE.

THEN
YOU MAY STEP
DOWN.



A MOMENT
OF SILENCE
PASSES.

I WEARY
OF THIS CHARADE,
ABIGAIL. SO WHAT
NOW? YOU FIND ME
GUILTY? AND WHAT
THEN? ARE YOU
GOING TO HAVE ME
KILLED?

YOU WERE
EVER THE IMPATIENT
ONE. NO, I TOLD YOU
MANY CENTURIES AGO
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU
CAN BE
KILLED.

WHAT
THEN? WHAT IS MY
PUNISHMENT?

WE FELT
PERHAPS AN
"IN-CUSTODY"
SITUATION WOULD
BE APPROPRIATE. THE
CUSTODY OF
THE ONLY ONE WHO
HAS ANY HOPE OF
CONTROLLING
YOU.

BUT FIRST
WE MUST CALL
OUR FINAL
WITNESS.



THE STABBING PAIN RETURNS TO RYAN, BUT THEN A STRANGE LOOK PAUSES OVER HER FEATURES.

SHE APPEARS TO HEAR SOMETHING FAR OFF IN THE DISTANCE, SOMETHING NO ONE ELSE CAN HEAR.

AND THE COLOR DRAINS FROM HER FACE AS COMPREHENSION AND SHOCK SETTLE IN.

SHE TURNS TO SEE THE FIGURE SHE KNOWS IN STANDING IN THE DOORWAY, AND FLINCHES AS IF PHYSICALLY STRUCK.

FEW GRASP HER LOOK OF STUNNED DISBELIEF.

UNTIL THEY THEMSELVES TURN AROUND.

FEW HAVE EVER MET THE TALL, DARK-HAIRED MAN WHO STEPS FROM THE SHADOWS.

BUT EVERYONE RECOGNIZES HIM INSTANTLY.

EVEN SUSAN RYERSON KNOWS THIS ANCIENT ONE, AND THE NAME THAT SILENTLY ESCAPES FROM RYAN'S LIPS CONFIRMS IT.

VICTOR!



AS VICTOR STRIDES DOWN THE GREAT HALL, THE FULL FORCE OF HIS POWER BECOMES EVIDENT TO THOSE PRESENT. THOSE WHO KNEW HIM IN NAME ONLY SUDDENLY REALIZE HOW LITTLE THEY KNEW.

RYAN COULD NOT MOVE, COULD NOT SPEAK, COULD ONLY STARE WORDLESSLY AT HER MENTOR.

THERE IS THE SLIGHTEST TRACE OF AMUSEMENT IN HIS EYES, BUT A DANGEROUS GLINT AS WELL.

HELLO, MY DEAR, I'VE MISSED YOU.

RYAN FELT THE HUNDREDS OF EYES FROM THE COURTROOM UPON HER, FELT THEM HUNGRILY WATCHING FOR HER REACTION.

SHE KNEW SHE HAD BEEN MANIPULATED BY FORCES WANTING TO SEE HER HUMBLLED, AND KNEW SHE HAD BUT A SINGLE CARD TO PLAY IN A GAME SHE HAD SEEMINGLY ALREADY LOST.


HELLO...

FATHER.

WHAT DID SHE MEAN BY THAT?


I ASSURE YOU THAT SHE DOES NOT MEAN IT IN A METAPHORICAL SENSE.

I CAN SEE WE ARE GOING TO GET RIGHT TO THE POINT. I SHOULD PROBABLY TAKE THE STAND.



JUST WHAT
EXACTLY DID SHE
MEAN BY THAT,
VICTOR?

RHIANNON
ALEXANDER IS
MY CHILD IN EVERY
WAY. I AM RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE CHANGE, AND
I AM ALSO HER
FATHER.



THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! NONE
OF US ARE CAPABLE OF
REPRODUCING OUTSIDE
THE CHANGE.

MANY THINGS
ARE IMPOSSIBLE. AND
NOW I HAVE DONE THEM ALL.



AND HER MOTHER?
HER MOTHER WAS
HUMAN?

YES,
ELENA WAS
HUMAN.



SO THAT
WAS HER
NAME.

I SAID
YOU WERE
PERFECT IN EVERY WAY.
YOU WERE NEVER
HUMAN.

YOUR
MOTHER WAS
SPIRITED AND
INTELLIGENT AND
BEAUTIFUL BEYOND BELIEF,
AND I CHOOSE HER
OUT OF THOUSANDS
WHO WERE
WILLING.

BUT SHE
WAS NOT
WILLING.

NO,
SHE WAS
NOT
WILLING.

SO YOU
KIDNAPPED HER,
THEN YOU TOOK HER
BY FORCE, AND THEN
YOU IMPRISONED HER
UNTIL SHE GAVE
BIRTH TO ME.



AND THEN
YOU KILLED
HER.



MY KILLING HER WAS AN
ACT OF MERCY SHE WOULD
HAVE DIED ANYWAY FROM
THE STRAIN OF GIVING
BIRTH TO YOU.



BUT YOU KNEW THAT
BEFOREHAND, DIDN'T
YOU?

YES I
DID.

AND HOW DID
RYAN DISCOVER
THAT YOU WERE
HER FATHER.

I MADE A
"MISCALCULATION."

A
MISCALCULATION!
YOU SHOULD HAVE
TOLD ME! I NEVER
SHOULD HAVE
FOUND OUT THAT
WAY!



WHAT
WAY?

I HAVE
MY MOTHER'S
BLOOD, TOO.

IT IS A MOMENT BEFORE THE
GIRL'S WORDS SINK IN. IT
IS MARILYN WHO FIRST
DRAWS THE CORRECT
CONCLUSION.

AND HER
MEMORIES.

AND HER
MEMORIES.

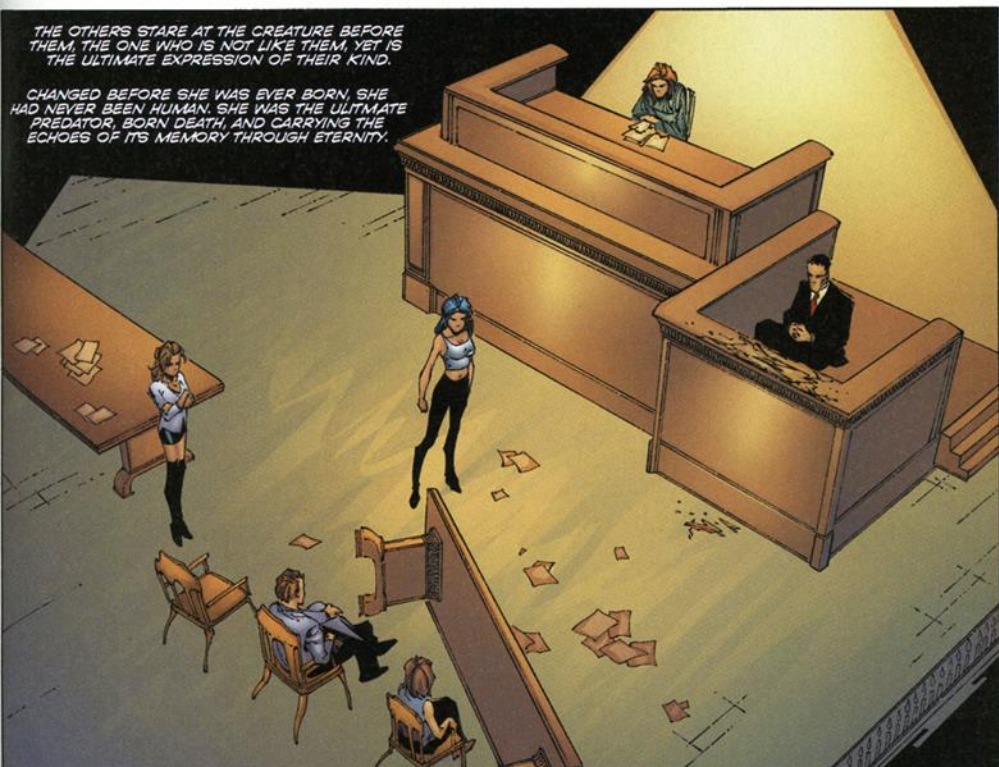
I COULD
NOT KNOW THAT
YOU WOULD SEE
HER DEATH.

I DID MORE
THAN SEE HER DEATH.
I SAW EVERYTHING SHE
SAW, FELT EVERYTHING
THAT SHE FELT, AND LIVED
EVERY MOMENT OF HER
LIFE RIGHT UP UNTO
THE MOMENT YOU
TOOK IT.

AND
I SAW IT
THROUGH HER
EYES, JUST AS
IF IT WERE
ME.

THE OTHERS STARE AT THE CREATURE BEFORE THEM, THE ONE WHO IS NOT LIKE THEM, YET IS THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF THEIR KIND.

CHANGED BEFORE SHE WAS EVER BORN, SHE HAD NEVER BEEN HUMAN. SHE WAS THE ULTIMATE PREDATOR, BORN DEATH, AND CARRYING THE ECHOES OF ITS MEMORY THROUGH ETERNITY.



IT IS EDWARD WHO FINALLY BREAKS THE SILENCE.

YOUR HONOR, I WOULD LIKE TO MOVE FOR A DISMISSAL.

IT'S NOT QUITE THAT SIMPLE, EDWARD. SHE DID MAKE THE ATTEMPT.



SO TELL ME, DEAR FATHER, HOW DID YOU SURVIVE THE "ATTEMPT?"

MARILYN WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN MY RECOVERY. IT SEEMS YOU DID NOT QUITE FINISH THE JOB.



I WAS FULL.



ABIGAIL IS AGAIN STARTLED INTO LAUGHTER, AND AS SHE OBSERVES VICTOR'S MOUTH TWITCH AS WELL, SHE REALIZES HOW TRULY COMPLEX THEIR RELATIONSHIP IS.

ALTHOUGH VICTOR WAS OBVIOUSLY ANGRY, PART OF HIM SEEMED TO VIEW IT AS LITTLE MORE THAN AN ADOLESCENT TEMPER TANTRUM.



AS IS MY PREROGATIVE, I HEREBY DISSOLVE THE GRAND COUNCIL UNTIL WHICH TIME IT IS NEEDED AGAIN.



PILOQUE.
VICTOR'S
ESTATE.

YOU HAVE
SERVED MY
DAUGHTER
WELL,
EDWARD.

I LIVE
TO SERVE HER,
MY LORD. AS I
LIVE TO SERVE
YOU.

AND YOU
DOCTOR RYERSON,
HAVE PROVEN AN EXCELLENT
COMPANION. I WISH YOU
TO CONSIDER MY
GIFT.

THANK YOU.
BUT FROM MY UNDER-
STANDING, THE CHANGE IS NOT
TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY, AND MY
SURVIVAL IS NOT GUARANTEED.

I AM CERTAIN YOU WILL
COME TO THE RIGHT DECISION.

WHERE'S
RYAN?

I AM SUPPOSED TO
MEET HER SHORTLY.
SHE HAS CHALLENGED
ME TO A DUEL.

YOU TWO
ARE ACTUALLY
GOING TO
FIGHT?

WHY, OF
COURSE, DEAR
DOCTOR. IT'S NOT AS
IF SHE CAN KILL ME.

A
SHORT TIME
LATER.

YOU
SEEM A BIT
LESS ANGRY
AT ME, MY
DEAR.

PERHAPS.
BUT I WILL
NOT YIELD TO
YOU.

VICTOR SMILES,
REMEMBERING A
DEFIANT LITTLE PEASANT
BOY NEARLY SEVEN
CENTURIES EARLIER.

YOU
ALREADY
HAVE.

TO
FIRST BLOOD,
THEN.

VICTOR SMILES AT THE MULTIPLICITY OF
MEANINGS IN THAT SHORT SENTENCE.

AND WITH A
FIERCE JOY, THE
TWO ENGAGE.

THE END!