

Vampire: the Masquerade

Sin City Chronicle

Case of the Missing Waitress

By: M. Brantley

Chapter 1

The brood rises on the first night of the full moon. Katsu a local Toreador of some status is troubled by the recent disappearance the waitresses Annie who works at her club in the Venetian Hotel and Casino. Normally a kine missing work unexplainably for three days would only merit their dismissal but there is something that draws Katsu to Annie. Is it her beauty, her humanity, or her glow of life? Whatever it is she reminds Katsu of what it was to be human and for that reason she took Annie in and has tried to protect her from becoming jaded by the lifestyle one becomes accustomed too in Las Vegas.

Katsu traveled to the home of Annie, a small one bedroom apartment about twenty minutes from the Casino. There she found the door opened and smelled trouble. Katsu quickly got on the phone and called a Gangrel named Jack who had done some investigation work for her in the past and she felt could be trusted to aid here as well. After telling Jack where to meet her Katsu waited. Jack arrived and they went inside to investigate. He was soon able to discern that a struggle had taken place in the apartment and that Annie was nowhere to be found. After a search of the main rooms they entered the apartment's sole bathroom to find strange markings and runes painted in blood over the bathtub. This revelation meant that other help would be needed...but not the police.

Katsu quickly got on the phone again this time to contact Amelia a Ventrue high roller who was a regular at Katsu's nightclub and a reputed occultist to see what aid she could give. Amelia asked for some photos of the runes and soon decided that more expertise would be needed. Amelia then contacted John a Brujah who owns a local occult book store. While he sells the touristy "good luck charms," the man has a serious back room that is often frequented by the local Tremere. She went to him to show him the photos in person where he was able to discern that the runes where in fact thaumaturgical in nature. John, however, had never seen this ritual before and knew not what they were meant for. He did know of someone who might.

John contacted one of the shops regular customers a Tremere warlock who goes by the name Saviroon. He observed the photos over email and decided that he needed to see them first hand. Saviroon soon arrived at the apartment and went to work. He recognized the runes as components to a ritual but was it the blood of Annie or someone or something else? He needed to run a few tests and to do that he would need some specialized items. He called back John and assessed him ad Amelia of the situation and then asked if he had what was needed for the test. John and Amelia collected the needed items and set off to join up with the rest of the brood.

Now possessing the needed components Saviroon set to work performing his tests. Meanwhile the rest of the brood questioned some of the neighbors about the missing waitress while the rest kept their heads low in the girl's apartment. Then a thud came from the bathroom as if someone or something fell. They rushed in to find Saviroon sprawled on the floor. While investigating his condition he began to come around and informed them that the ritual was connected with sleep and a full moon sacrifice. The brood then found that the runes had split and showed two distinct forms of blood were present that of Annie's and the other of a kindred.

Saviroon also had received visions of where Annie might be. They were sketchy at best but the only lead they had thus far. He was able to see that she was in a casino that was under construction with many of the game tables in place but covered up. The décor of this place was that of a desert scene. Katsu being familiar with her competition suggested a new casino under construction on the strip. The brood quickly jumped into action and headed there in separate cars. Upon arrival Jack and Saviroon gained entry only to find that there were not game tables inside and the décor was more of a tropical beach. They exited back to the troop but not before Saviroon knocked over a pallet of pipes with enough noise to wake the dead. Katsu admitted she was wrong and asked for a description of the place again. Then it came to her the Aladdin. It was perfect the casino was closed and undergoing reconstruction, meaning the gaming tables were still there, and it had a desert theme associated with the Aladdin legend.

They traveled again down the strip to the site of the Aladdin and found entry much easier this time. Once inside Saviroon had more visions of the events, he saw shadows as of ghosts, then he saw a group of Frat boys coming to party inside the abandoned building. The brood began to search the casino finally coming to one of the kitchens and finding a set of runes over one of the freight elevators. The brood found a set of stairs to go around the runes and headed down into the depths of the casino. Here they came across another set of runes this time Amelia and Katsu discovered them and inadvertently touched them which made the runes glow then disappear. The brood waited a few minutes but nothing else seemed to happen so they moved on. Now in a large storage area the brood found no sign of Annie but did come across another kindred unconscious in a storeroom.

The man was tall with long white hair dressed in a three piece suit. When they woke him they were able to determine that he calls himself Slain. The brood was wary of him as he seemed to know Katsu and was able to make her tell him that they were in fact all kindred by his simple command. Amelia too found herself the target of his apparent dominate powers as she told him quite a bit about herself. The atmosphere grew tense as the party prepared for an attack or ambush of some sort. Jack grew out his claws which are one of the gifts of the Gangrel and began to absently clean them. Slain looked at him and advised "I would put those away before someone gets hurt." Amelia having had enough of this strangers self righteous attitude decided it was time to teach him some humility in the form of her favorite twin retractable batons. She pulled them out with the speed and agility of her kind and moved in only to find her weapons blasted out her hands and away from Slain with the flick of his fingers in her direction. To the brood it seemed as if he was swatting at a fly to her it felt as if her precious weapons had been hit by sledgehammers. Amelia found herself the one to learn the lesson in humility and the rest of the brood, her included, learned that there was indeed much more to this mysterious stranger.

The mood again calmed and the brood soon questioned him about the missing waitress Annie. They soon learned that Slain, while obviously a powerful elder, had no memory of the event leading up to him being found on the storeroom floor. He recalls he was headed somewhere her referred to as the Manor but other than that his recollection of the past month or so is a complete void. Slain agrees to help the brood find the missing girl if they can help him find out who he is.

How long had Slain laid dormant on that storeroom floor? What is this place called the Manor? How does Slain tie into the disappearance of Annie? All this and more will be answered in the next chapter of "The Case of the Missing Waitress."

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Chapter 2

The brood, now accompanied by Slain, set off to find Annie and Slain's memories. The group headed towards the elevator only to find the group segregated by some sort of force field, most likely magical in nature. Amelia and John were forced to remain in the basement while Jack, Saviroon, and Katsu were left in the elevator. Saviroon, being knowledgeable in Thaumaturgy, suggested they look for a way to dispel the runes which had trapped their companions. Slain suggested they search the Manor. Katsu then remembered that the Cumberland Group, who owns the Aladdin, had constructed a multi-million dollar mansion on the back of the Aladdin property for VIP guests and called it "The Manor."

The brood minus two headed to the casino floor to look for quickest route to "The Manor." They quickly located a map of the new complex and headed out towards the rear of the casino to the pool area. As they tried to make their way carefully around the lush foliage of the pool Jack thought he spotted something moving in the bushes and pointed it out to the brood. Just then Katsu stumbled knocking over a trashcan drawing the group's attention to the commotion. When they again turned their attention to the bushes there was nothing there. They rounded the pool to find a wrought iron gate barring their way. The four made easy work climbing over it and dropping onto the gravel walkway leading up to "The Manor."

As the four crossed over the walkway and on to the large rounded drive-way Saviroon thought he spotted movement off in the darkness. He pointed it out to the group Jack turned to see if he could catch sight of it with his "Gleam of Red Eyes," only to find the gravel slip beneath his feet. The action drew the group's attention and when they looked back to the place Saviroon had mentioned no one was there. Saviroon was sure that he had seen someone dressed in paramilitary clothing crouching in the shadows with a submachine gun...or had he? The party cautiously moved on and found their way to the front door of "The Manor." Slain produced a key from his suit pocket stating "I got this." The door opened as they entered "The Manor" some of them for the first time.

"The Manor" is a lush two story complex suited to the upper-class VIP clients the Aladdin sought as its target market. The entryway was elaborate and over the top as most Vegas venues are. The group moved into investigate quietly not knowing who or what was inside. They came to the closest door and opened it to find an elegant sitting room. A quick investigation revealed nothing of interest in the room itself. They moved on through a few more ordinary rooms like these until they came upon a finally

carved set of wooden double doors down the east wing. Opening these doors revealed a large well stocked library.

The group's eyes were soon drawn to a table stacked with many books most of which looked like rare antiques. Jack took up a position at the door while Saviroon moved into to explore the tomes and see if they could reveal anything about the runes holding their friends prisoner in the casino basement. Saviroon's search was slow as he poured over tome after tome. Slain moved over to Jack and said "Why don't you check out the rest of the room since you seem so apt at investigating things while I stand watch at the door?" Jack agreed moving into the room Katsu soon followed Jack seeking to learn more about investigating herself. The Trio searched for quite some time Saviroon through the books while Jack and Katsu went over the rows upon rows of shelves looking for anything that might help them.

Just when they thought the library was a dead end Saviroon came up with a well worn journal and began to read. Soon he called Jack and Katsu over and related the tale it told to them. It seems that whoever had written this journal was the one who had come across the college frat boys which Saviroon had seen in his earlier visions. This person was seeking a sacrifice to complete a *Ritual of Manifestation* and soon found the key was, or so they thought, the use of a virgin. This is where Annie came in as she was dating one of the now dead frat boys and was in fact a virgin. From what Saviroon was able to discern this ritual would call forth an elemental spirit that the caster could control. These spirits were the nemesis of the werewolves and many a pack had died putting one down. They knew now that they were in for trouble but having come this far they had to see their quest to the end. They prepared to move on further into the house when they noticed that the doorway was empty and Slain was nowhere to be found.

The three remaining group members crossed the hall looking for Slain or anyone else in "The Manor," when they felt an unnatural chill come over them and then depart almost as soon as it had come. It felt as though someone or something very, very cold had walked through them. They continued on into the next room not wanting to wait and see who or what caused that. They came into a potting room of sorts full of gardening benches and tools with a door across the room. Finding nothing of interest they moved to these doors and soon found themselves in a lush greenroom full of plants and flowers with glass ceilings and walls all around. Moving through the small jungle they came to a set of glass doors which lead to the rear of "The Manor." That is when Jack saw something or someone moving quickly through the shadows across the yard.

Jack motioned for the rest of the group to stay put and like a dart flew after whoever or whatever it was. Jack could see however that it appeared to be Saviroon's mystery paramilitary man. They ran pace for pace against each other covering the backyard in a matter of seconds. Soon a tall hedged wall loomed up in front of them. Then, unexpectedly, the stranger speed up blurring with motion as he cleared the wall faster than Jack could trace him. Jack almost slamming into the hedge wall came to a stop only to hear "BEEP!" The next thing Jack knew there was a blinding flash, made all the worse by his supernatural sight, and a loud "BANG!" Jack fell into a heap next to the remains of the concussion grenade, a last present from the mysterious stranger.

Saviroon and Katsu hear the noise and flash from the grenade and ran to see what had happened. They found Jack dazed lying on the grass and were soon able to bring him around. Jack filled them in on what had happened confirming that Saviroon was right about what he had seen earlier out front. They moved back into the green house cautiously.

Soon the three found themselves in the kitchen of "The Manor." Jack searched for a sturdy knife amongst the gourmet tools available. Thus equipped they searched the room coming across a spiral staircase which reached up to the second floor and down to a basement. The trio, figuring that all their recent problems began in a basement, decided that going down would be the best way to go.

As they moved into the tiny basement they found themselves in a small basement housing a loud furnace burning hot and filling the room with stuffy orange light. The back way was dominated by a series of shelves holding miscellaneous tools and maintenance parts. The room was home to a small table with four chairs. The party set out to search the room and found a small trapdoor in one end of the room as well as a set of sturdy iron bulkhead doors under the stairs. They decided to investigate the smaller of the trapdoors first.

As the door was opened they found a short flight of stairs which lead into a small hallway. A light, triggered by the opened door, came to life illuminating the hallway. They ventured down the steps prepared for trouble. At the end of the hall they came to a door which was locked. Jack tried to force the door injuring his arm. Little will deter Jack when he put his mind to it as he slammed the injured arm again and again into the door till it finally splintered under his force of will more than strength. When the group entered they found a small wine cellar housing many bottles of wine and a few scattered kegs but little else.

The trio headed back to the main basement level. They were on the verge of returning to the main structure of "The Manor" when Katsu heard faintly over the roar of the furnace a female cry out. The group headed over to the bulkhead doors figuring this was the source of the scream. They pulled the doors open and saw that they too revealed a stairway leading to a longer hall, this time with no light.

They cautiously descended the stairs and crept to the iron door at the end. To their mutual surprise the door was unlocked and easily swung open into the adjoining room. They were soon washed over by the glow of candles and subdued light mingled with the scent of exotic incenses. Chanting could be heard from the room as Jack stepped in followed by the others.

The rectangle room was covered in a series of Persian rugs on both ends. While the center of the room was bare concrete floor dominated by a large circle of summoning in the center drawn in blood and covered in sea salt. Standing over the circle was Slain chanting from a scroll with a glazed over look in his eyes not registering the newcomers his gaze locked on what lie inside the circle.

The group's eyes soon turned towards the circle as well for laying there was what they had sought all this time. Annie lay bound hand and foot naked within the circle. Her beauty washed over Katsu as she gazed upon the young tender flesh of Annie's naked form. All of her details erotically defined by the flickering glow of the candles. Saviroon dashed to the circle sweeping aside part of the border that

contained the spell just as Annie's chest began to heave as her eyes rolled into her head. Annie moaned as if reaching a climax when the sound of popping bones and tearing flesh could be heard. Katsu was ripped out of her trance as the body of Annie was ripped to shreds by the emerging spirit known as a Nexus Crawler emerged.

The crawler was hideous to behold its large bulbous eyes white on white as if from some blind fish. Its slavering jaw snapping open and shut revealing its long dagger like teeth and its long probing tongue. Foul smelling ichors like saliva dripped and oozed from its great maw. The rest of its body was covered in what appeared to be a chitinous exoskeleton with eight legs much like a scorpion. Its head thrashed back and forth searching for its first meal. The mere sight of this hideous unearthly monstrosity was enough to drive those who looked upon it into frenzy. Katsu was affected the most as her rage welled up in her with the single desire to rip the flesh from Slain for taking Annie from her. Then the lights went out save for the candles.

Jack seized the opportunity to rush Slain as Katsu pulled a gun that Jack had slipped her back at Annie's apartment and leveled it on the creature not wanting to hit Jack mistakenly. Saviroon on the other hand drew upon the innate art of the Tremere and summoned forth a ball of fire which he hurled at the crawler. The crawler lurched as the slug from Katsu's gun combined with Saviroon's unearthly fire tore into it. Slain looked upon the newcomers commanding his creature to slay them all while turning his attention to the oncoming Jack.

The Crawler turned its seemingly blind eyes towards Saviroon and unleashed one of its vile abilities to warp reality. Soon Saviroon found all of his sensory organs were gone his head now resembling a Mr. Potato head having lost all its parts. He reeled at the feeling of complete and utter disorientation. Katsu fired into the beast again.

Jack soon closed the distance between Slain and himself his feral claws unsheathing from his fingertips ready to disembowel the traitor before him. Then in a replay of Amelia's charge on Slain in the casino Jack felt the force of Slain's power of telekinesis this time though Jack was its target. It felt no unlike being hit by a wrecking ball going full force as Slain's power drove home into Jack's chest. He found himself flying across the room and slamming into the back wall. Surprisingly he took no damage other than to his ego.

Slain now clear Katsu turned her gun on him and let loose clipping him in the shoulder. Meanwhile Saviroon not to be deterred by the predicament he was in drew forth his sword cane and rushed at the crawler...or what he thought was the beast. Saviroon landed a smashing blow into the back wall and realized without the use of his sight or sound this was going to be a harder fight than he thought.

Jack picked himself up as the crawler looked down upon him focusing its powers on the sore Gangrel. It warped reality again and filled Jack's lungs with carbon monoxide a trick that would have killed a human but had no effect on Jack's undead anatomy. Jack returned the favor by slashing at the beast's legs and introducing it to the pain of a vampire's rage. Saviroon too had found the crawler and was doing damage of his own with his trusty sword cane.

Katsu seeing things going badly decided that with Annie dead it was time for them to cut their losses and run. She turned and headed for the stairs leading up to the basement only to be confronted by three men dressed in paramilitary gear rushing her. Before she could react she realized that they were paying her no heed as they rushed into Slain's ceremony room. She headed on to the stairs only to be met by two more of the mystery men as she came out into the basement. These two paid her no heed as they too rushed to the ongoing battle.

The five mystery paramilitary men came charging into the room quickly assessing the situation. Slain, seeing Katsu cut out, and the arrival of a new force activated his supernatural abilities and raced faster than the wind to meet Katsu in the upper portion of "The Manor." Meanwhile Jack watched as the mystery men surrounded the crawler and began to shift forms three taking on the terrifying crinos form of the werewolves, whilst the other two took the hispo form of a unusually large wolf. The crawler began to scurry on the floor while streams of silver began to ripple out from under its legs turning the very floor to silver. This action obviously pained the garou as they made haste to the nearby rugs.

Jack seeing all of this assessed the situation and called upon his clans knowledge of the werewolves. He knew that they would make good allies against the crawler seeing it as a more serious threat but if and when they destroyed the beast they would quickly turn on his brood and eradicate them. Jack quickly grabbed Saviroon and threw him on his shoulder. While the sensory deprived Tremere fought back not knowing who or what had him Jack proved to be the stronger as he headed to the door.

Katsu made her way up the stairs back to the kitchen knowing escape was only a few yards away only to find Slain standing at the top waiting for her. Slain's eyes burned with fury as he locked gazes with Katsu commanding her to drop her gun. Katsu found that her hand released her grip on the weapon against her will but did not despair for she was a weapon herself. She drew on her Ki deep within and unleashed a deadly kick honed by years of martial arts training. Slain was taken by surprise and was visibly pained as her foot slammed into the side of his head.

Jack came to the top of the stairs just as Slain was stumbling back from the blow he had just taken from Katsu. Thinking quick and using his heightened strength he launched Saviroon off his shoulder and into disoriented Slain. Slain and Saviroon collided both going down into a heap on the floor. Saviroon still disoriented began to punch who or what he just hit laying a solid blow into Slain. The angered elder retaliated forcing Saviroon up slamming him into the ceiling with his powers of telekinesis while rolling to the side to avoid being hit by the Tremere again as he fell.

Getting to his feet Slain was visibly injured as Jack and Katsu moved in. Jack soon found himself thrown into the stairwell by the elder's powers as Katsu again landed a severe blow. Regaining his footing Jack launched himself out of the stairway and into Slain unleashing a flurry of blows with his claws into the elder Slain. After a short exchange the elder fell into a pile of ash.

Turning Jack and Katsu found Saviroon kneeling on the floor ripping the flesh from his face as his organs began to regrow under this now useless flesh. Jack scooped up the tattered and ripped clothes that were all that were left of Slain. Katsu grabbed Saviroon and they dashed towards the door. They called Amelia and John to find out what their situation was only to discover that shortly before the runes flared

and died releasing them. The duo was now on their way to their vehicles'. Katsu asked Amelia to come get them and the entire brood meet outside "The Manor."

As the brood speed away they heard an explosion and saw fire rip through "The Manor" behind them. Katsu suggested that they head back to her casino to regroup and go over the night's events. Once in the safety of a vacant penthouse at the Venetian they began to go through what happened and the belongings of the dead elder Slain. Jack pocketed a Rolex watch as well as the contents of Slain's wallet. Saviroon on the other hand found an ancient looking scroll written in what he assumed was Sanskrit as well as a small silver medallion of the Tremere clan crest with a series of runes etched on the back.

The brood after some review headed to the roof of the Venetian and watched as the Aladdin burned. For safety sake the brood agreed to meet at a different location away from everyone's havens to insure that the werewolves were not able to track them or find their havens.

The next day the Las Vegas Sun printed an article about the mysterious fire the destroyed the Vegas landmark Aladdin hotel and casino. The brood met and all was well as they found some understanding outside of the normal clan stereotypes and perhaps some small amount of friendship.

The End...