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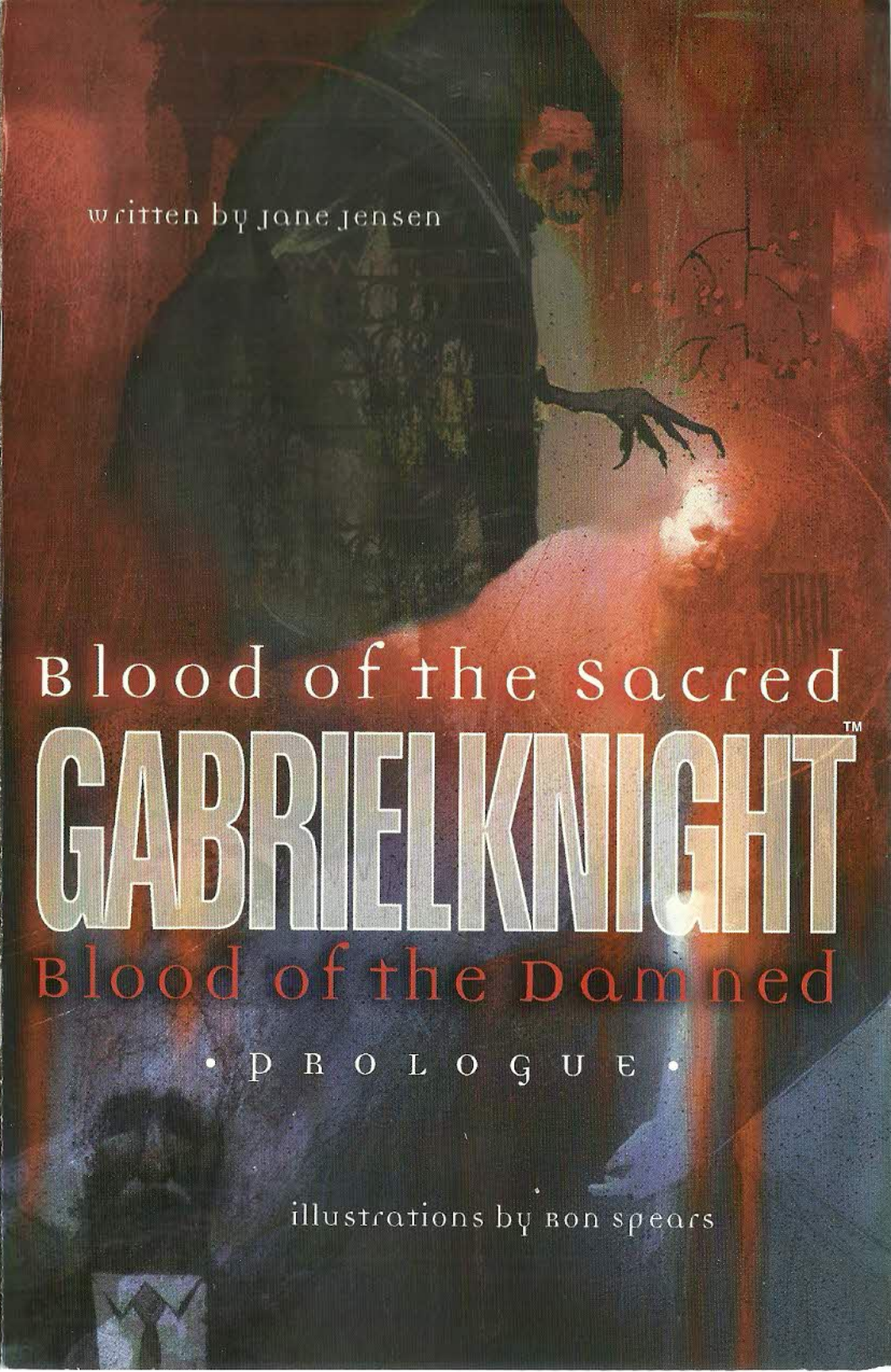
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written by jane jensen

Blood of the sacred
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 Cyprès
Paris, France
33 1 555-578

Dear Mr. Knight:

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

James Stewart, Prince of Albany



"Lemme see."



"Never heard of him"

"Let me look him up on SIDNEY."



"He's the current Stewart heir. You know—the Kings of Scotland. Now they're in exile."



"...besides, I don't even know these people."



"How does she do it ladies and Gentlemen?"

"So we're going, right?"



"Uh...no."

"Why not? This is a chance to meet real, European society."

"That's exactly why not. Sa-nooze..."



"Hmm, they must have heard there was a new Ritter scion."

"I'm not a scion."



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

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

"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."

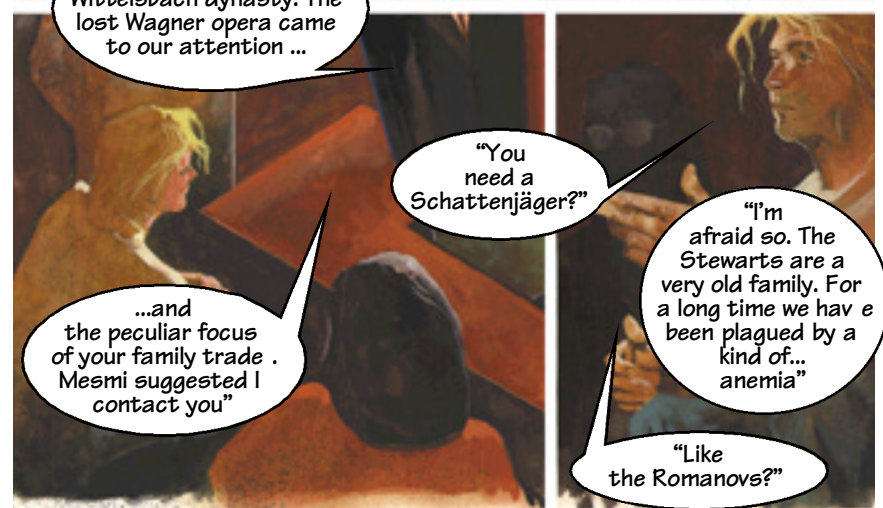


"...Polo is most enj oyable, I assure you. The best sport on earth! No one will mind if you are not an expert horseman."





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



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"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."

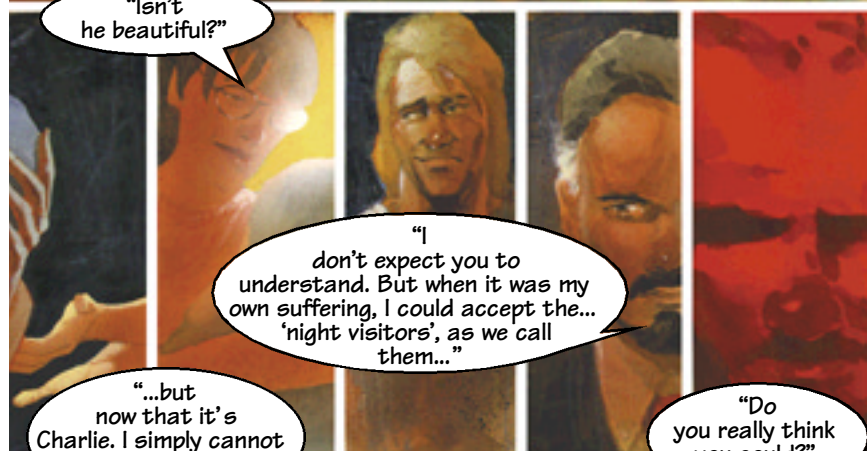
"You want us to protect you?"

"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..."

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

"Do you really think you could?"



"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."



THUNK!

"Uh...G race?"

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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!



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