

Hunter's Blood

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When a young Hunter leaves his home in search of his place in the world, he may get more than he bargained for! What will he find, as his path crosses that of a certain dunpeal Hunter?

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1 - Prologue: Farewells

Hunters' Blood Prologue: Farewells An old man looks on as a youth of sixteen or seventeen puts a saddle on a cyborg horse, in preparation to leave. "Are you sure about this, Dirk? This is a bit sudden, even for you." The old man says, watching as the youth places the saddlebags onto the beast's back, then firmly secures them. "Yeah. I'm sure. This place just isn't the same without Mother.....it's too quiet." The youth replies, getting a chuckle from the old man as a response. "I agree. Your mother, my sister, was quite a pistol; I have no doubt that you are her son, all right....." the old man says, wistfully, as he gazed at the youth. "That may be true, Uncle Dan, but how do you explain the fact that I have remained looking so young, while you and Mother aged? I should be looking old myself by now!" Dirk says, as he motions to himself with a wave of his hand. 'Dan' sighed; he knew it would eventually come to this, and he'd dreaded it ever since the day Dirk had been born. "The truth is, Dirk.....Your father....he wasn't completely human...." Dan said, quietly. Dirk turned and gave his elderly uncle a look of consternation. "Wasn't completely human'? What do you mean by that? He wasn't a vampire, was he?" Dirk asked, his heart leaping into his throat, and his face paling, when he thought of that terrifying idea. Dan shook his head. "No. He wasn't a vampire....nor was he a mutant. Your father....was a dunpeal. The son of a full-vampire father and a human mother." Dan replied, watching as a look of disbelief came across Dirk's handsome features. "You mean.....I have vampire.....'Noble'.....blood in me? Why? What did Mother see in a man that had vampire blood in him?" Dirk asked, remembering how much his mother had seemed to hate vampires. "He'd saved her life. In fact, he took a sword to the stomach twice and even died once to save her.....and me. You see, there used to be a vampire known as Magnus Lee in these parts, and he was a threat to all who lived here. Then your father came along, defeated Lee after a long struggle, and rode off." Dan said, trying to make a long story short. "In other words, that would make me about one-quarter vampire, correct?" Dirk asked, getting a slight nod from Dan as a response. It was then that a look of resolve took up residence on Dirk's face, as well as one of determination. "All the more reason for me to leave. I've spent my whole life in and around Ransylva, building up my strength, and learning as much as I can by hunting werewolves. Maybe it is time I moved on. Who knows? Maybe I'll even find my father out there somewhere." Dirk mused, as he now eagerly looked to the horizon. "Maybe you will. But there is one more thing you must know, Dirk, before you leave from here.....and one last gift." Dan murmured, as he gently placed something about Dirk's neck. "Huh?" Dirk asked, as he looked down and saw what it was that his uncle had placed there. From a leather cord, hung a blue pendant: the stone in the pendant itself was a shade of blue that he'd never seen before. "Wow.....Where did this....?" Dirk trailed off, as he picked up and held the pendant closer to his face; a look of wonder gracing his features as he did so. "Your father gave that to me a long time ago, when we were in the vampire's castle to rescue your mother. He never came back for it, so I assumed he must have let me keep it to remember him by.....Now, I give it to you, Dirk, as it is your birthright." Dan said, with a sad smile. "Thank you, Uncle Dan. But what about the last thing you want me to know? What is it?" Dirk asked, curiously. "Your father's name.....It is the last thing I can impart to you.... He called himself D." Dan stated, noticing when Dirk cocked his head to one side in confusion. "'D'? Is that all you know about his name?" Dirk asked. "Alas, yes. But it is enough, I think. There couldn't be too many people with that name, could there?" Dan asked, in turn. Dirk shook his head. "No. I don't think so, either." Dirk said, as he then carefully hugged his elderly uncle. "I guess this is goodbye." Dirk murmured, as a few tears escaped his cool, gray eyes and silently made their way down his face. "I suppose so. Take care of yourself out there, Dirk." Dan replied, as tears flowed down his face as well. "I will. Farewell,

Uncle Dan." Dirk said, then whispered, "Goodbye, Mother." With a gentle kick, he got his horse moving."Farewell, Dirk. I hope you find your place in this world.....and maybe you can help him find his, as well. Right, Doris?" Dan whispered, when the youth had disappeared from sight. He smiled wistfully when a gentle breeze blew past him, and away with Dirk into the encroaching night. Even if she couldn't be there physically, Doris was there in the spirit; and she agreed with her younger brother wholeheartedly.

2 - Chapter One: Callings

Chapter One: Callings His quarry was close. He could hear the grunts and snarls of the werewolf close at hand. "Oh joy.....the 'thrill' of the hunt." A droll voice mutters, from the hand of the youth who gripped a bright sword tightly. "Shh, Marv. You're gonna blow my cover." Dirk hisses, not taking his keen grey eyes off of the beast. In years past, Dirk had wondered how it could be that he could see as clearly at night as he could during the day. "Now I know. It's because of the vampire blood I have running in my veins. That would also explain why I get so sleepy during the day...." Dirk mused, silently, leaping when the monster wolf became aware of him and slashed at him with its sharp claws. "Now, now! Bad dog! Now I'm gonna have to discipline you!" Dirk shouted, jokingly, as he held his sword between him and the werewolf. With practiced ease, Dirk moved around the beast, avoiding the talons all the while. Then the werewolf lunged, foaming mouth agape and trying to take him unawares.....but Dirk was too quick for it. "Gotcha!" Dirk cried, as he drove his sword into the back of the werewolf's neck, through it, and buried the sword up to the hilt. "Lovely. Now I'm going to smell like werewolf for the next couple of days." 'Marv' mumbles, as Dirk withdrew the sword from the dead monster's neck. "I'm starting to think I should've left you in that lake, Marv. You're startin' to get on my nerves." Dirk said, with a sigh. He'd found the talking sword on one of his forays away from the Lang Farm; after his grandfather's sword had been broken in battle. "Mother just about had a conniption when she found out I had broken Grandfather's sword.....If Uncle Dan hadn't interceded, I would have ended up sleeping in the barn for a month!" Dirk thought, smiling a little at the memory of his mother's angry expression, and his uncle's pleas to avoid 'banishment'. He was jolted from his thoughts when the whinnies of horses reached his ears, and then a black carriage roared past, almost running him over as it went. "Hey! Watch where you're going! This is a public road, for pity's sake!" Dirk shouted, a bit miffed at the thought of almost having been run over. It was then that a thin scream came from the carriage itself, and a thrill ran down Dirk's spine; that was a young girl he'd heard just now! "And a black carriage could only mean one thing....." Dirk thought, his mind racing as he whistled for his horse, sheathed his sword (which by now had been wiped clean with a cloth) and leaped onto the back of his steed before he could lose sight of it. "C'mon.....Give it all you've got, Burdock. We can't lose 'em." Dirk murmured, into his horse's ear, as he bent forward across the cyborg's neck. With a slight toss of its head as a response, the horse increased its speed; slowly closing the distance between it and the carriage. "Almost there.....just a little bit more.....Got it!" Dirk shouted, in triumph, as he gripped the door-latch and turned it. He let out a yelp when the vampire inside snarled at him and tried to block the door, but it was driven back by a satchel of garlic powder the young werewolf hunter carried on hand (just in case). When he had gained a little more ground, Dirk jumped into the carriage and looked to his right. There was the frightened young owner of the voice he'd heard just a few moments before. "I'll get you outta here. Grab my hand." Dirk said, as calmly as his racing heart could allow. With much trepidation, the terrified girl moved over to him and clung to him, her eyes not leaving the vampire for a moment. Dirk's eyes narrowed as he glared at the vampire (who glared fiendishly back at him with blood red eyes). "You've got a lot of nerve pickin' on girls, pal. Especially when they're so much younger than you." Dirk growled, his own tone of voice (and the audacity to speak those words) surprising him. "Feh, you know nothing, you little upstart. We, of the Nobility, have the right to choose which humans to feed from, and to toss them aside when we're done. There's no more difference between them and other livestock." The vampire sneered, yet not moving because of the garlic the youth still had in hand. "It's you who doesn't understand anything." Dirk growled, then turned to the girl. Her long, coppery-brown hair was tangled, and her clothing was

torn; but her bright blue eyes were clear. "Must've gotten to her just before the vampire could bite her.....I just hope my luck holds." Dirk thought, then held the girl close to him with one arm."Hang on to me, we're gonna jump!" Dirk told her, getting a wordless nod from the terrified girl. Seconds later, he'd done just that; releasing the garlic powder as he did so."Burdock, get us outta here!" Dirk shouted, as he landed on the cyborg horse's back, grabbed the reins, made sure the girl was secure before him in the saddle, then took off in the opposite direction."Whoever has been lookin' out for me so far, please let me get back to town, and get her to safety! Please!" Dirk thought, desperately, as he bent low over the girl; shielding her with his own body, in case an attack came from behind....Which he hoped wouldn't. Little did he realize that the entire impromptu rescue had just been witnessed.....

D yanked hard on the reins of his horse and skidded to an abrupt halt when his eyes beheld the unusual scene before him. In the blink of an eye, a youth had come from nowhere, raced alongside his target's carriage, opened the door, pulled the girl out, and was now charging back towards the town the girl had been kidnapped from. "D, what is it? What just happened?" Left asked, confused by his host's sudden stop."I think we have competition." D muttered, matter-of-factly, as he watched the younger man's form disappear into the darkness."Really? Who could've heard about this? From what the headman had told you, you were the first to arrive to ask about the job!" Left stated, remembering what the worried man had told D earlier that same evening."It doesn't matter. I may have been mistaken, anyway. The target is beginning to give chase." D said, as he watched the carriage turn around and take off after the youth."Well? What're you gonna do? You aren't gonna let the poor kid pay for his mistake, are you?" Left asked. D sighed."What do you think?" D replied, in exasperation, as he spurred his horse into motion again, wheeling about to take the shortcut back into town to meet the youth, and his pursuer. Little did D realize that, with this move, the wheels of fate were beginning to turn.....

"Oh crap!" Dirk shouted, as he tore through the town's abandoned streets with an almost demonic carriage on his heels."I thought you were a vampire hunter and that you knew what you were doing!" the girl's voice cried, her eyes wide with fear as the fearsome visage of the vampire appeared behind them on top of the carriage."I'm not! I think you were thinkin' of somebody else! I just happened to be in the right place at the right time, that's all! I'm a werewolf hunter, for cryin' out loud!" Dirk replied, ignoring 'Marv' when he muttered something about 'getting in deep this time', and concentrated on getting himself out of the sticky situation. Both he and girl let out cries of surprise when a figure materialized out of the gloom. "Whoa, Burdock! WHOA!!" Dirk shouted, pulling back on the reins as hard as he could to try and prevent a collision with the other rider. The cyborg horse complied, skidding to a halt just inches from the mystery rider. Unfortunately, Dirk and the girl just kept going; they ended up in the lap of the other rider and slung across his saddle."Eek!" the girl yelped, as she slid forward, was caught by the other rider and gently placed on her feet beside his horse. Dirk, on the other hand, stopped when he was half-on and half-off of the other man's mount."S-sorry, sir." Dirk stuttered, his cheeks now quite red with embarrassment at the blunder on his part. The other rider merely lifted him by his belt from the saddle and placed him with the girl on the ground; but Dirk could have sworn that he'd heard a slight snicker from the man in response."Just stick close. This ugly business with be over with, in short order." The other man said, as he dismounted, unsheathed his own sword, and stood at bay in front of the vampire."Things are about to get ugly." Dirk mused, as he watched the other man face off with the undead."Get the girl to safety. The church behind you should suffice." The other man murmured."Duh! Holy ground! Vampires can't stand such places! Why hadn't I thought of that?!" Dirk wondered, cursing his own stupidity as he rushed to get the girl into the church, leaving the other man's side for a moment.

"Well now, he has a good head on his shoulders. Anybody would've been paralyzed by fear." Left commented, when the youth had turned to the girl and motioned to the church without saying a word."Indeed. There is more to him than meets the eye..... and something disturbingly familiar." D mused, and Left noticed his unease."And that would be.....?" Left asked, trying to

egg his host on."None of your business." D silently retorted."Sheesh. Okay, okay, I get the point. I won't try to get any details on your personal life.....Spoilsport." Left grumbled, as D returned his full attention to the vampire in front of him."Stand aside, Dunpeal. This is none of your concern." The vampire growled, blood-tinted eyes narrowing when he saw his potential victim escape into the church, and as the youth that had aided her turned to watch the confrontation. D's eyes narrowed slightly."When vampires are concerned, it becomes my problem. Your kind should have gone extinct long ago." D replied, coolly. There was no response from the vampire, but, the battle-light was in its' eyes."I'll make you regret you were even born, Dunpeal!" the vampire roared, as he dove at D with a sword in hand. D prevented himself from turning when he heard a sharp, metallic 'clang!' come from behind him, yet stiffened in surprise when Left discovered what had just occurred."The kid just saved your life!" Left's mental voice yelped, sharing the image he'd just seen with his host (right-side up, of course). There stood the youth, his sword unsheathed and glaring dangerously into the shadows of the alley behind D; a broken silver spear lying in shards at his feet. Before D could ponder on the youth's actions any further, the attacking vampire brought him back to the here-and-now. He let out a pained grunt when the vampire's sword thrust its' way deep into one of his blind spots, and hissed when his opponent dragged the sword through his flesh a little ways before withdrawing it; leaving a large gash in his abdomen. As D fell to one knee, he heard the youth let out a fierce yell, then watched in utter shock as he launched himself at the vampire with sword.....and fangs....bared."Is he.....? Could he be....?" D wondered, shaking his head as his vision blurred, and as pain started to intensify. The last image his mind registered before darkness claimed him was when the youth sliced the head of the vampire off, and the head bounced away into the shadows before dissolving into ashes.....

done, kid. You gave in to your dark side, but, hey, so does my host sometimes." A voice said from nowhere, when Dirk's ire had faded, and he had returned to himself."What the heck did I just.....?" Dirk asked, turning in the direction the voice had come from and was alarmed to see that the other man was down. "Hey! Hang in there!" Dirk shouted, as he carefully turned the other man over onto his back. He winced when he saw the deep gash in the other man's abdomen, and how much blood had already been lost."This wound's been poisoned.....His blood isn't clotting as it should.....If this keeps up, he'll be dead before sunrise." Dirk murmured, his mind pushing aside any notion of panic and settling on the need the man had for immediate medical attention."Let me see the wound, Dirk. I may be able to purge it.....but I highly doubt it, since the one you're trying to help is a dunpeal." Marv said, in his usual droll and depressed tone."Shut it, Marv. I don't want to hear any more negative talk from you tonight. Just do what you can." Dirk ordered, irritated with his manic-depressive sword to say the least."All right." Marv replied, dully, as Dirk lowered the guard part of the sword to the gaping wound. No sooner was it three inches in front of the flesh a face mysteriously appeared on the metal guard, and eyed the wound gravely."Well? Is there anything you can do?" Dirk asked, his ears pricking slightly when he heard light footsteps ~ the girl, he realized ~ coming towards him."Let me see....." Marv muttered, as he pulled himself from Dirk's grasp and landed in the wound. The man flinched; his impassive, grey face taking on a slight wince in response."Is he all right?" the girl asked, speaking calmly for the first time in Dirk's presence."I don't know. Marv is trying to find out now if he can dilute the poison." Dirk replied, solemnly."What will you do if he can't?" the girl again asked, surprising Dirk when she didn't ask about how a sword could have a mind of its own. Dirk shrugged helplessly."Again, I don't know. I'm a werewolf hunter by trade, so I know how to concoct poisons that would leave werewolves in pain, and I can tell which poisons are at work if I'm familiar with the symptoms.....It would take a professional herbalist to mix an antidote together to save him, however. Whatever that vampire had used on him, it's something way beyond my league." Dirk admitted. The girl then gave him a grim smile."That is part of the reason I was kidnapped. My mother had trained me in all sorts of herbal lore, so I know of all different kinds of poisons and their cures. That vampire wanted to make sure he could control this

town's medicine supply by holding me hostage." The girl said, as she boldly kneeled down beside the wounded dunpeal and placed a hand to his sweaty brow. "A monopoly, in other words." the voice from before said again, thoughtfully. The girl and Dirk exchanged confused glances. "Was that you?" the girl asked. "Nope. Wasn't me. And it wasn't Marv, either." Dirk stated, then looked down at the dunpeal's left hand. It was moving peculiarly; almost as though it had a mind and will of its' own. It raised itself so that it was eye level with the two, then a face appeared in the palm. "Howdy!" the left hand greeted, smirking when he saw a deadpan expression appear on Dirk's face, and as a somewhat disbelieving look graced the girl's daintier features. "This poor sod has it bad." Dirk muttered, then added, "And I had thought I was the unlucky one!" "Oh, come now! Don't be like that! At least I don't have a negative attitude!" the left hand argued, sounding a bit insulted by Dirk's statement. Dirk's expression remained the same. "I only have your word against his. He would probably say a thing or two to the contrary, if he were conscious." Dirk said, matter-of-factly, as the girl allowed herself a slight chuckle, then got right down to business. "I think I know the poison, but what I need to make the antidote is back at the house. Can you lift him?" the girl asked. "I can try. Marv? Were you able to dilute it?" Dirk asked, as he returned his attention to his sword. The sword promptly removed itself from the wound for a moment, then shook itself in the way a human would shake his head. "Then we're gonna have to hurry. Burdock." Dirk called, getting an immediate response from his horse in that it walked right up to him and lowered its' front half. "Good boy." Dirk murmured, as he carefully lifted the injured dunpeal onto the cyborg's back, then mounted. With extreme care, the young hunter manipulated the other man so that he was sitting on the saddle, and Dirk was astride behind it (not the most comfortable position, granted, but it was all Dirk could do at this point). "What about me?" the girl asked, looking a bit miffed at having been forgotten. "Do you think you can ride his horse?" Dirk asked, in turn, as he nodded to the dunpeal's horse. The girl nodded. "Yes." The girl replied, as she mounted the pitch-black cyborg with grace, then started riding in the direction of her home. "I suppose we're staying with her then?" Marv asked (who, by now, was cleaned off and back in his sheath). "Until this guy starts feeling better." Dirk said. "Or until the master of the house kicks us out." Marv muttered. "Shut up, Marv." Dirk grumbled, as he followed the girl into the lamp-lit part of town, and through the gates of a grand mansion. "I hope this guy makes it. I have to do all I can to help, since I was the reason he got distracted in the midst of that fight." Dirk mused, silently, as they rode around to the back, where some servants waited anxiously for their young mistress' return.

3 - Chapter Two: Discoveries

Chapter Two: Discoveries

D groaned as consciousness slowly returned to him. At first, disorientation reigned in his pain-fogged mind; where was he? He could feel what felt like a soft feather mattress under him, and equally soft blankets were drawn up to his chest. "When was the last time I'd slept in a bed? I can't even recall....." D mused, as he experimentally flexed his hands, then tried to lever himself onto his elbows. "Take it slow, D. don't push yourself." Left said, surprising D with the note of concern that was in his voice. "How long have I been out?" D asked, softly, startled by how weak he sounded, as he allowed himself to relax back again; the pain in his side warning him to not move for the time being. "Almost a full week. That poison was potent.....almost too much for even somebody like you. It's a good thing that kid was there to bail ya out." Left murmured, smirking slightly when he felt his host's chagrin, and then arching an 'eyebrow' when confusion took its' place. "Kid?" D asked, not even bothering to mask his confusion on the matter. "You don't remember? The kid who rescued the victim of your quarry?" Left asked, in turn. It took D a few moments for his strangely fragmented memory to coalesce; and when it did, he had to keep himself from bolting upright. "That boy had been part-vampire himself!" D's mind shouted, as he glanced around the room warily, looking for his sword and weapons. To his relief, he spotted them on the far side of the room; the sword carefully leaned against the wall, and his weapon belts, cloak, and hat were on the chair beside it. As fate would have it, almost as soon as he'd located them, the person in question quietly entered the room, with the girl at his side. "Glad to see that you're awake, sir. I was afraid you wouldn't make it." the youth said, looking as relieved as he must have felt. "How long have I been here?" D asked, coolly; grey eyes scrutinizing their faces carefully. "I would've thought Lefty'd told you once you woke up. Don't tell me he was asleep on the job!" the youth said, in exasperation. "I was not! I told him!" Left argued, defensively, his shouting getting a flinch from D in the process. "You made yourself known to them?" D growled, with a deadpan expression now beginning to take up residence on his face. "Yeah.....but it's only because both of these kids have vampire blood in 'em." Left explained. The deafening silence that followed would have made a dropping pin sound like a hand grenade going off. "How much.....?" D finally asked, his voice so soft that both of the young people in front of him had a difficult time hearing him. "I beg your pardon?" the girl asked, finally breaking her silence in his presence. "How much vampire blood do you each have in you?" D again asked, his voice only a little bit louder than before. "I am one-quarter vampire, sir." The youth replied, quietly; with a hint of shame in his voice. "One-eighth, sir. My mother was one-quarter vampire as well." The girl said, also with shame in her voice. D only sighed and placed his right hand to his face. "Of all the cruel jokes fate has played on me.....this has to be one of the worst. If you don't mind telling me, what are your names?" D asked, as he brushed his hair away from his face, and looked at them again. "Dirk Lang is my name, sir." The youth replied, confidently. "Belladonna Collins, of the ill-fated Collins Clan; at your service." The girl chirped, jokingly, trying to lighten the mood in the room. D allowed himself a slight smile in response to the girl's attempt at humor. He'd heard of the Collins Clan during his long years of travelling alone, and it did indeed seem as though the family was cursed. "Pretty lighthearted for a descendent of that poor sod, eh, D?" Left asked, telepathically this time. D nodded slightly, then turned his attention to 'Dirk'. "You'd said your last name was 'Lang'.....Are you in any way related to the Langs of Ransylva?" D asked. This got a genuinely surprised look from Dirk as an answer. "Yes! In fact, I was born on the Lang Farm. My mother was Doris Lang." Dirk replied. If it had even been possible, D got even paler than he had been before. "She wasn't attacked by another vampire, was she?" D asked, with anger coloring his words, ever-so-slightly. Dirk shook his head. "Ever

since a vampire hunter named D wiped out the Lee Clan, vampires have steered clear of the area.....I guess you could say that they're afraid of him, and his reputation." Dirk said, trying his best to reassure D and put his worst fears to rest. To his relief, D relaxed somewhat, but some of the tension remained."If that is the case, how is it that you have vampire blood in you at all?" D questioned."The vampire hunter is my father." Dirk replied. Once again, silence fell over the trio; but this time it was stunned silence."Your.....father.....?" D whispered, almost too shocked to speak. Dirk nodded."Before I left the farm, my uncle told me my father's name, and gave me the pendant he had given him while in the depths of Count Lee's castle. It is really all I have to go on." Dirk stated, as he showed D the aforementioned pendant."Son of a gun! It is the pendant you'd left with that kid! How in the world could you have hidden something like that from me?!" Left asked, his question barely even being heard by the stunned brain of his host."Sir?" Dirk asked, when he saw D pale again; afraid for the other man's health, first and foremost."I'm sorry, Dirk. I truly am. Not only did I burden Doris, but I have also cursed you with the same wretched existence I have had to endure for so long. Please, forgive me." D murmured, sadly, as he lowered his gaze from the youth in shame."You're D? You're my father?" Dirk asked, his tone now one of shock and disbelief. D only nodded. For several long moments, Dirk stood where he was in stunned silence. This dunpeal he and Belladonna had worked so hard to save was, in fact, his father!"I can't believe it.....I simply can't believe it! This is him! This is my father! And he'd been right in front of me the entire time!" Dirk's mind yelped, as he stared, wide-eyed, at the dunpeal in front of him. Then he shook off his disbelief, moved forward, and placed a hand on the man's shoulder; smiling calmly when the other looked up."I always used to wonder why my mother called me her 'gift' when I was younger. Now I know..... I also know now why there was always sadness in her eyes when she thought I wasn't looking. She missed you terribly, and even called out for you on her deathbed.....I wish you could have been there while I was growing up, yet I understand your reasons for moving on. Mixed blood such as ours doesn't permit us to remain in one place for too long; we don't age, and, when angered, there's no guarantee that those around us will be safe." Dirk said, quietly, surprising D with his clarity of mind."But there is something you don't know about the vampire blood we both share,.....son.....Something that makes it so potent and deadly...." D whispered, averting his gaze again out of shame."What is it?" Dirk asked, as he sat down in the chair beside the bed, and gazed intently at his father's face."Dirk, you are the grandson of Dracula himself." Left said, before D could say anything. Dirk sat back in shock and surprise."Dracula.....? Y'mean to tell me that he'd actually existed? And that I am actually related to him by blood?" Dirk asked, as D nodded and gave him a grave look."This also means that, even though you are one-quarter vampire, you have the strength of a normal dunpeal thanks to that cursed blood." D murmured, with self-loathing in his voice as he said that."Whoa....." Dirk muttered. No wonder he'd transformed when D had been struck down by the vampire!"I'm a freak!" Dirk thought, then shook his head and looked boldly at his father."Be that as it may, Dad, I'm glad you are my father, and not that rotten Count Magnus Lee." Dirk said, once again getting a stunned look from D."Why?" D asked."Because you have a sense of honor he didn't. That's why." Dirk stated, matter-of-factly."Certainly can't deny that, kid. And it has gotten your father into some pretty sticky situations in the past. Like the time when.....mmp!!" Left started, then was cut off by D shoving the possessed hand under the pillow behind his head; revealing a rather irritated expression while he was at it. Dirk smirked, while Belladonna giggled at the muffled cursing that was now coming from underneath D's head."Kind of reminds me of what I have to go through when I'm on the road with Marv." Dirk murmured, still with a wry smirk on his face as he said that."Marv?" D asked, sounding a little curious (and, not to mention, grateful) about the change in subject."My sword. His full name is 'Marvin', but I call him 'Marv' for short. I think he was named after some robot in an old sci-fi series, but I can't be too sure." Dirk replied, with a shrug. This got an arched eyebrow from D, and then a small smirk."I think I know which series the name came from, and I am inclined to think that fate has a rather perverse sense

of humor." D muttered, still smirking when Left finally shut up."I think I'm inclined to agree with you, Dad, on more than one count." Dirk murmured, his expression deadpanning when the sword they'd been talking about started singing something about a 'nowhere man'.