***Blood Faith VII***

Porfirio, my love,

How long has it been since our last encounter? That night in Lutetia Parisiorum is still so fresh in my mind. I urge you to visit soon. But that must wait. Master Hæmming was right to warn you as he did. The Reclaimed are not to be trifled with. He would know. I add my voice to his in begging you not to pursue such a foolish course.

As you asked, I visited the Sheridan Le Fanu Library, but I could not gain access to the Reliquary; the Council has restricted it most forcibly. Still I was able to find certain of Master Hæmming’s notes among the dusty tomes. I copied down what I could. I would have sent you the whole of it, but for the certainty that I was watched and the notes would be missed. I will try again soon and send you what I may.

From what I have read, Master Hæmming spent some years investigating the Reclaimed for someone higher than he. He is so silent on the matter that I am left to think someone on the Council itself ordered the investigation. It is as he told you: all events surrounding the Reclaimed were sterilized with such efficiency that I can only dream of.

He recounts the tale of one village where a small child was Reclaimed without a master to guide it. By some queer stroke of fate, Master Hæmming was close enough to witness the matter. And the ceremony was so detailed in his notes…. Porfirio, I suspect that it was he who Reclaimed the child. The child sheered its own mother’s neck, when she took him into a joyful embrace. The villagers failed to act until a second of their number was under the child’s tearing hands. By then even their most fierce actions failed to stop the child.

And it is almost with glee that Master Hæmming notes that the Reclaimed could not be stopped even when limbs were torn from it and various implements thrust through it. It was only when the head was removed and the whole of the body consumed in flame that the Reclaimed ceased its struggle. But by then fully half the village sustained some mark from the creature. Illness akin to the Black Plague then descended on the village, which raged all the worse in those injured in the child’s rampage. Here it is that Hæmming—I can no more bare to call him Master—withdrew from the village to watch from a distance. What villagers attempted flight from the illness, he slew in the most noisome fashion possible that the rest might fear leaving more than staying.

You said that he wrote of shadows that linger too long, and places the eye refused to see. His notes reveal that this was his goal in this Reclaiming; not the study of the Reclaimed, but what came after. Whole pages have been torn from his notes, and I assume they hold the bulk of what he then saw. But I too have my tricks and Hæmming writes with a forceful hand.

I was able to discern a little of what he saw and his theories there to. Hæmming describes a manifestation, a figure appeared in the shadows, but vanished under his gaze. I could not gather what happened next save only that this figure proceeded to kill every living thing—plant and animal—that was within the village confines. The exact nature and description are on those missing pages and the notes that are whole pick up with an ominous phrase: “—village itself is ash.”

Hæmming then declared success of his research. This conflicts heavily with what he has told you. I fear some group, of which Hæmming is part, has conspired within the Council. Porfirio, I urge you to caution in this matter. Hæmming has existed for time beyond memory. And he has not survived by being foolish or incautious. Be heedful of him.

I despise the thought of returning to those notes, but my love for you drives me. I will return to the Library tomorrow and see what else I may learn. All should be well, as the Council meets tomorrow and most of our brethren will be in attendance.

I return to Lutetia Parisiorum at the end of the week. Come to me there, when next you can.

Your love,

Sibyl

P.S. Porfirio, the notes were gone when I returned to the library, though I hid them well. And I sense someone has intruded upon my home. Whatever it is you plan, I think you are watched. I leave for Lutetia Parisiorumnow, sooner than I planned. I had to give this to a washer woman on pain of her children’s lives to be sure it reached you uninterrupted. Be careful.