



Vampire Nation

A True Slayer's Awakening

by

MM



DPebooks

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This work is dedicated to the ones that thought
they got away...

Table of Contents

- Title Page
- Dedication
- A note from the Author
- Chapter 1
 - Part I – Charles and Molly
 - Part II – Molly
- Chapter 2
- Chapter 3
 - Part I – *Sanctuary*
 - Part II – Russ
 - Part III – Regina
- Chapter 4
 - Part I – Molly
 - Part II – Charles and Rhea
 - Part III – Molly
 - Part IV – Charles and Rhea
- Chapter 5
 - Part I – Regina
 - Part II – Charles
 - Part III - Regina
- Chapter 6
 - Part I – Charles
 - Part II – Regina
- Chapter 7
 - Part I – Charles
 - Part II - Regina
- Chapter 8
 - Part I – Charles
 - Part II – Regina
- Chapter 9
 - Part I – Charles
 - Part II – Mystery Men
- Chapter 10
 - Part I – Charles
 - Part II – Regina
- Chapter 11
 - Part I – Charles
 - Part II – Regina

- Chapter 12
 - Part I – Charles
 - Part II – Molly
- Chapter 13
 - Part I – Charles
 - Part II – Regina
- Chapter 14
 - Part I – Charles and Molly
 - Part II – Regina
 - Part III – John and Kevin
- Chapter 15
 - Part I – Charles and Molly
 - Part II – Regina and Daniel
- Chapter 16
 - Part I – P&E.P.I.I.inc.
 - Part II – Daniel and Regina
- Chapter 17
 - Part I – Charles
 - Part II – Molly
 - Part III – Regina
- Chapter 18
 - Part I – Molly and Charles
 - Part II – Daniel and Cyndi
 - Part III – John and Kevin
- Chapter 19
 - Part I – Molly and Charles
 - Part II – John and Kevin
 - Part III – *Sanctuary*
- Chapter 20
 - Part I – Team PEPE
 - Part II – Daniel and Regina
- Chapter 21
 - Part I – Team PEPE, Legal 101
 - Part II – *Sanctuary*, Death of a Shipmate
 - Part III – Team PEPE, Secret Code
- Chapter 22
 - Part I – Regina and Niff
 - Part II – The meeting

Chapter 23

Part I – The Library

Part II – Charles and Kevin, Blackout

Part III – Library. John, Molly, Regina & Edward

Chapter 24

Part I – Nap time.

Part II – Molly & Regina talk

Part III - A Slayer awakens

Chapter 25

Part I – Cyndi's scullery

Part II – Kiss of truth

Part III – Split

Chapter 26

Part I – Charles & Regina

Chapter 27

Part I – Jerrod and Jean

Part II – Long range message

Part III – Jerrod and Jean revisited

Chapter 28

– Regina & Crew

Chapter 29

- Charles

Chapter 30

- Darkness

Slayers Trunk

Copyright statement

Contact the Author

Graphics

About the Author

Note from the Author

For those of you following my story of Charles Wolfgang Edwards, True Slayer, thank you.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my readership for their continued feedback. It is because of your feedback that I became enlightened to something that I single-mindedly missed in my first novel. When writing the original work, I viewed the character Regina as a secondary character at best. After publishing the book, more than a few of you pointed out that Regina was not really a secondary character but a very special underutilized main character. I received more than a little correspondence about how I left the character named Regina in limbo. After revisiting the work and taking your points into consideration, I have no doubt that you are, of course, correct. I introduced her and her set of wonderfully unique circumstances only to drop the thread like a bad habit. In the second novel, I have rectified this oversight. Regina steps to the front and center in the storyline.

Again, I would like to thank all those readers who took the time to send me feedback, ask me questions via email and point out the fact that I left a wonderful character unexplored. Kudos!

My first novel, *Birthright... Slayer*, covered the period between Charles' senior year of high school through his initiation into being a freelance Slayer. We find out the reason behind his desire to inter the undead. We also begin to see that his ability as a Slayer far supersedes any other to date. Charles is not an undead superhero, he is not part vampire, nor is he part were-creature. He does not date vampires or were-babes nor does he cohabit with them. Charles Wolfgang Edwards is a True Slayer. Wolfie does not like the undead, their allies or friends. Any friend of the undead is an enemy. Simply put, the boundary between undead and living is very black and white. If you are undead, you die. If

you are a human servant, you die. If you are sympathetic to the vampire, you die. If you are just some poor sod walking the streets in ignorant bliss, you continue to walk in ignorant bliss as long as you do not fall into any of the first three categories.

This book is a continuation of The Slayer's birth and entry into the world of the Vampire Nation. I hope that you enjoy this work as much as you enjoyed Birthright... Slayer.

While reading this work you may notice a unique use of the comma. My editor calls it the misuse of the comma and I call it *my style*. An example of the correct style is, "You are liquid death, Wolfgang, I was in no danger while you were with me." My style of writing using this same sentence is, "You are liquid death Wolfgang, I was in no danger while you were with me." I see absolutely no need to offset 'You are liquid death' with a comma. It is one complete thought that you as the reader understand. If you think about it for a moment, your mind has skipped over that useless comma in countless novels because there is no need for it to be present. For years when reading my eyes have tripped over that comma in an attempt to ascertain if I was supposed to pause there or not. When writing this work I eliminated the comma in that application as well as several others. Fair warning.

All too often writers of today become bogged down in the traditional and proper rules of grammar when attempting to self-publish. Countless hours are spent editing the work rather than enjoying the work. One rule that is hard and fast in the publishing community is that a novel must be professionally edited. Considering the last three books I have purchased, all first edition hardbacks of well known authors, have had at least two mistakes in the first three chapters of the book, I am wondering if this rule only applies to the first timers. Moreover, I muse if this is just a tactic for the big publishing company's to thin the ranks by scaring off writers that will take sales away from their top ranked favorites.

Regardless, the need for professional editing is a fallacy that is as dead as a staked, beheaded, and charbroiled vampire.

I encourage all writers to take full advantage of self-publishing. Through technological advances, as well as new software, desktop publishing is affordable, easy and fun. There is no reason why any manuscript should go electronically unpublished. Various formats exist that afford today's author the ability to match his style with the format that will best suit the writer as well as the reader. While you have been waiting for that magical letter to appear from all those publishers you have submitted your package to... seize the day and publish the work yourself online. You will find the experience enlightening, rewarding and most of all profitable.

Vampire Nation

A True Slayer's Awakening

Chapter 1

Part I

Charles sat on the back porch of his newly built home. Molly was in the kitchen making them each a cup of tea. As he looked out over the landscape his eyes moved slowly up the side of the mountain that his property backed up to. His mind wandered back in time to the overly jumbled events of the past year. The parents he once knew were gone, the result of a random ghoulish attack. His family property had been turned over to the state as a park. The responding officers burned the boyhood home he had known to the ground. The dedication of the land had been a whim on his part. He could not imagine rebuilding and living on the small parcel of land. It had not been an option for him.

His aunt and uncle had taken him in. Uncle Joe had given him a job with the sheriff's department that kept him too busy to think about what really happened. He and Molly had lived in the basement apartment of their home for only a short time. The apartment was adequate but lacked the space needed to house the computer equipment that Molly required to work for her father and for herself. His equipment had been slow in arriving but it seemed to come in waves that all too quickly filled what little free space they had to capacity.

Somewhere in the fray he managed to gain a title and become independently wealthy in the process. The ironic thing was that he lost his parents but gained family virtually in the same week. He had not been all that close to his aunt Yvonne and uncle Joe prior to the death of his parents, but after his mother and father died their relationship seemed to solidify into an incredibly solid base of support. His aunt had introduced him to Sir Bradford Cartan. Brad was a cousin who at first became a mentor and whom he now considered not only a friend, but also family.

Charles had recognized his talent and calling as a slayer. That proficiency, the uncanny ability to hunt down and kill the undead had afforded him copious

amount of credit. The bounty and rewards he had collected allowed him and Molly to build their dream home. They also built their own private underground complex that served as office for Parker and Edwards Paranormal Investigations International Incorporated. Their office was complete with waterfall and fishpond. The foyer was a complete surprise to Charles the first time he had seen it. Molly and Bradford had secretly designed and built the front entrance to have an 18 foot waterfall that splashed into a very life like stone pond that was surrounded by enough live plants that one would believe it to be an aviary rather than the entrance to the world of paranormal investigations.

The underground complex was more than Charles or Molly could have ever hoped for. Bradford had taken liberties in the construction plans that included expanding footage and adding another entire floor below the planned office complex. The office was bigger than either Molly or Charles thought necessary. However once the mainframe arrived and was placed in the “extra” room they began to see how the floor space was going to be utilized.

The first level of the underground facility held the foyer, main office, conference room, ready room and the computer equipment room. The size of the main office was large enough to hold all of the computer equipment they needed with plenty of extra space to spare. The conference room was small by comparison. It however would only be used to contact others in the business of the paranormal. Or in the rare occurrence that B.C. industries, his cousins' enterprise, that seemed to be an intelligence organization on everything paranormal, contacted them. The room was set up for two-way communications on all levels. Visual, audio automated and/or monitor-to-monitor were all options that could be used either singularly or in unison. It was even equipped with a HAM radio, just in case of some emergency where all other coms went down. The ready room was a locker room and weapons vault for Charles. It held all of his gear in an open and orderly fashion that allowed him to prepare for a paranormal situation in minutes.

The second level was split into three large pieces. The mechanical room housed all of the electric, HVAC, telecommunications and fiber optic equipment,

emergency generator, security panels and back up CPUs used to run the newly built complex. The second space was a huge training room. It housed a virtual training area as well as gym that surpassed even the most up to date equipment being used by the police departments and military. The space and its equipment had been a gift from his cousin Bradford. Charles could not have imagined the cost of such equipment let alone paid for it. The scenarios in the virtual training room were incredibly real and amazingly tough. Charles was used to walking through the department's virtual training programs and "aced" them all. Bradford's training programs had laid him to waste on more than a few occasions.

The third space was a one hundred foot indoor shooting range. State of the art ventilation and lighting almost made Charles weep with joy the moment he entered the space. The range was pristine on all accounts. From its automated range officer to its automatic scoring system it was a marvel. The range officer program had the ability to continually monitor bullet speed, bullet strike velocity and trajectory paths.

The entire complex, above ground as well as underground had a butler program that would update either he or Molly, by verbal response of any new arrivals to the home, where their partner was in the house or just about any other thing you desired to know about the home or grounds down to the condition of the stores in the pantry.

Charles sat on the porch and glanced at the house. Its synthlog construction was amazing. The logs would last forever in the elements. The home had been built with as much glass as they could manage to put into the construction without affecting the structural integrity of the house. At first both he and Molly were a bit intimidated by all of the windows. They had just moved from a basement apartment with no windows. It took them a little while to get used to the idea that the windows tinted down for privacy if they choose. The windows also helped him to realize that Molly had a bit of exhibitionist in her. She had little problem wandering the two levels of the glass house naked. It had taken him much longer to become at ease with his surroundings. He would go naked but

the body holster was always strapped onto his torso. Molly used to tease him about it, now however she understood why he was inseparable from the hardware that had saved her life more than once.

Molly walked out of the back door holding two cups of tea. A breeze caught her sheer robe and it fluttered open. Charles was still amazed that a woman of such beauty would continue to grace his life. Silently he pondered her love for him. He often wondered if it was really a love for him or the love of the danger that clung to him like a shroud that attracted her. The fact that separately they were now financially independently wealthy ensured that she was not in it for the cold hard credit so many women sought. She placed the cups on the table and sat down in the chair next to his. Molly closed her eyes and let her head slowly fall back. The sun fell across her face and chest. Its warmth tingled her flesh and it rose in bumps all across her arms. Charles looked at the woman who was his lover and his business partner. He believed that he could not have done the things he had done thus far in his career without her. Molly was a friend, a lover and a motivation beyond words for him.

He picked up his cup and sipped the steaming liquid. Molly was in one of her quiet moods this morning. She would be silent most of the day he guessed. At first it had unnerved him when she got like this. Being the insecure clod that he was he would find himself dissecting an entire days events trying to figure where he had fucked up and pissed her off. They had been living together for a while now and he finally came to the correct conclusion that she liked to just “be.” That was her name for the mood. He was in a mood himself, and she knew it.

Being The Orange County Paranormal Administrator had its ups and downs. After his appointment to the seat he had worked like a zealot to build the best team in the country. He had succeeded and continued to push the team harder and harder. The feds looked at his program and began implementing most of its features across the country. The team had grown from its original three to its present count of seven. He included the team police border collie, spook. The dog’s ability to find the undead was uncanny. The team respected him not as an administrator but as the eighth and most deadly member of the

team. His orders were not questioned, and nor were the crazed training exercises he delighted in putting the team through. Charles had built a squad out of a few mismatched deputies and four new-hire police officers. They were a team and operated like a well-oiled machine. And that machine had just dropped a piston. A black rage slowly crept into his skull and he allowed it to flow into his body.

The large teacup left a trail of tan liquid spraying in an arc as he threw it into the air. He did not consciously remember pulling his handgun from the holster. As the sights leveled on the flying cup he began to shoot, first at the whole cup then at the pieces as they fall to the ground. Charles stood facing the mountain as the a few shards of porcelain found safety in the grass. His pistol was empty. The slide was back and the clip lying at his feet. He dropped the weapon to his side and threw back his head and yelled.

The scream that came forth from his body was more powerful than Molly ever thought possible. She had expected something, but not this. Molly watched as the man she loved walked to the railing and stopped. When he turned to face her his body language and the rage in his eyes shocked her. He was insane, Charles had just dropped out of the world of rational and was now a creature fueled by his own rage. All he could manage to say through teeth clenched so tight his neck muscles bulged was "two boys." Molly had never seen Charles like this. She knew that the circumstances and death of Shawn had affected him but how deeply she had not dared to guess until this moment. Again Charles looked to the sky and screamed so loud that it left her ears ringing. He then dropped to his knees and covered his face with his hands. Molly had no idea as to what to do so she sat on the edge of her chair and shook.

Charles had answered the call at seven in the morning. Dispatch had contacted him saying the event was paranormal in nature but refused to give any specifics. He had scrambled the team with orders to converge on scene. Going in blind had made him upset that morning. Dispatch had stonewalled him from the onset and when he accessed the department's computer from his transport all the information it had was that an officer was down and the circumstances were

believed to be paranormal in nature. The deputies who had never seen him in full battle gear were granted the pleasure that morning. He arrived on scene dressed to kill. Not knowing what to expect he wore his typical slaying equipment. The officers stood in awe when he exited his transport. Only three deputies were on site when he arrived and all three had seen what he was about to see. At first he did not even recognize Shawn. When he did, it had almost killed him. How he managed to bark the orders to secure the area was still beyond him. His next call had been directly to his one and only federal contact, Dana Sue Hall. He told her what he was looking at and asked her for a federal forensics team to be sent immediately.

As he signed off with Dana he realized that his team was standing behind him. As he turned to them he realized that they had already recognized Shawn. He had waved them back down the slope and mumbled into the mic. His voice thick with emotion he had Brad transport the responding officers back to the department immediately so a news blackout could be maintained. The three responding officers would be cloistered for as long as needed in order to keep the event out of the news. The rest of the team was to secure the entire area and let only the federal forensics team up. State and local cops were not allowed to get close to the area unless they were part of roadblocks or perimeter security.

It was after the initial shock had worn off did Charles begin to take a good look around. No one individual had done this to Shawn, a group of people had. The grass was trampled down in a wide area around her body. And the body, it would have taken the strength of more than one vampire to crucify and hang Shawn upside down. She was small but incredibly strong for her size. Charles took some small satisfaction knowing that she had not made it easy for them to take her. Shawn had been beaten, stripped, hung upside down and drained of her blood. The bite marks on her body were too numerous to count. Charles pulled a small digital camera out of his harness and without looking through the lens snapped pictures of the scene. He returned the camera to its pouch and continued to concentrate on the scene. Charles could not move. If he entered the scene any further critical evidence could be compromised. He noted that her

clothing had been thrown in all directions and the small pool of blood under her swinging body was already teeming with insects. It was then that he saw her badge. It was pinned directly into the flesh of her breast. She and the badge were covered in blood. Gashes and cuts on her body made it hard to tell what he was looking at times. He finally told Shawn aloud that her kids were going to be taken care of and that he would personally see to it that vampires would die for this. He had been careful to say vampires, not specifically those that did this to her, but vampires in general would die for this act. He never had the chance to see the bodies of his parents for the last time. Shawn's mutilated body was a sight that he allowed to burn into his memory for future reference. If for some reason he ever felt a twinge of compassion for a member of the undead, he would think of this scene and they would all die.

Charles stood for two hours staring at the crime scene until the federal agents arrived via helicopter. The aircraft landed on the road below the clearing in which he now stood. It was Dana who was the first up the hill. She was not part of the forensics team but he had her cleared for entry. The team followed in their sterile white suits and suitcases of equipment. In the two hours that Charles searched the scene he had come to several obvious conclusions. Those that had done this had done it before. The hardware that was used to secure the body to the crucifix were not your run of the mill rope. Teflon multistrand fiber had been used to tie her arms and legs to the wood. Thin but incredibly strong. The crucifix itself was made prior to the event. Live trees had been pulled out of the soil. Their roots were still attached to them. Someone had taken a laser cutter and removed each and every branch from the leg-sized trunks. As the cross twisted and turned in the morning breeze he could see that the logs had been notched out so as to fit together snugly. Teflon fiber and what looked like lag bolts were used to hold the two trees together. The act had to be premeditated. Too much work had gone into the construction of the cross. The second conclusion he came to was almost along the same lines as the first. The cross had been hung purposefully and with thought. As he scanned the trees around the area he noticed that the oak used to hold the cord that kept the cross in the air was

unique. It was the largest tree in the area and the only one with a grass clearing under it. The cord had been tied off far up into the branches of the tree. Someone had made and placed the cross here long before they brought Shawn to this place. As he continued to stare a story began to unfold in front of him. There had been a struggle, one while they tried to subdue their victim and tie her to the inverted crucifix. Then they toyed with her while she still lived. The cords that held her hands and feet had cut down to the bone. She had fought the bonds until the very end. Something told him that there were four shitheads who had done this to his teammate. He was not sure why but he felt it in the back of his mind. Four. The creatures had killed her, fed on her blood and had sex in the bloody matted grass below her body. The final oddity Charles noticed was that one of the four had walked around to the closest trees and smeared blood on the bark of them. Charles tried to make out a symbol or a word but could find nothing.

Dana Sue had been the one to pull him away from the scene and lead him down the hill. The federal agents now held the scene and Charles let them have it. He and Dana sat in his transport and slowly drove to the department. It was Dana who had to remind him to leave his gear in the transport unless he planned on wearing it for show and tell.

The investigation began immediately on the abduction and murder of deputy Shawn McDermit. Her children had been located; they had been staying at her mother's house for the night while she had gone out dancing. Charles, along with Federal Agent Hall, delivered the news to Shawn's mother and her two boys. Shawn's mother's reaction had baffled him. The women walked up to him and hugged him. In his ear she whispered that she was sorry for him, that he had lost so much and now had lost Shawn. Somehow the women managed to hold it together while he and Dana were in the house. The boys were somber and stayed close to each other. Charles explained that a department spokesperson would be by to explain death benefits and that Shawn's children would now become what was known as wards of the department. Their sole parent had died in the line of duty, she had been wearing her badge at the time

of her death. As twisted as it sounded even to his ears, it was the truth. The boys would continue to receive their mother's paycheck and additional support from the Orange County Sheriffs department until they were nineteen years of age.

On the ride back to the department after the session he realized that he had not dreamed of the death of Shawn. Either in the past or while it occurred. He had dreamed of every detail of his parent's death at the exact moment that it happened. But he had not had a clue that Shawn was in any danger. That began to bother him and baffle him all at the same time.

After her funeral Charles realized that the team had been rocked to the core by her death. The department psychiatrist had logged in quite a few hours talking to the team members individually and as a group. Death on a paranormal call was expected. Death on a backup call was expected. But to be singled out while off duty and killed the way she had been was too much. Charles was not surprised at the two resignations he received. Both his team captain and one of his deputies had filled for a short release of their contracts. He had called them both into his office separately. Robert just wanted to retire early and get on with his life. Kelly had been so traumatized by the event that she began to get migraine headaches. Somehow Charles managed to talk them both into taking a month long vacation and then return to duty fresh and ready for action.

It was the resignations and his sudden understanding of the situation that led Charles to a brilliant flash of the obvious. His team was burned out and in need of a break. He had not one, but two vacations since the beginning. His team had not so much as a long weekend. It was then that he approached his uncle with an idea and a new plan of action. He would implement a forced vacation schedule that would give two officers a month off at a time. This would rotate until all members of the team had a full month vacation. Since the team members had signed contracts and this was a forced amendment it had to be negotiated with each deputy. Charles called the team together and made his proposal. They gladly accepted the new schedule and looked forward to the down time.

It was then that Administrator Edwards began to look for deputies to recruit out of the patrol force to replace Shawn and fill four newly constructed swing positions. The new positions would be created in such a way that a deputy would serve as a part time spook squad member and part time patrol force member. Both the administrator and the Sheriff realized the squad could not continue at the current pace. They could not work the hours, train and expect to be in top-notch form when the shit hit the fan. Charles felt that the position would be a hard sell to other members of the department so he made sure that the new positions held a boost in pay and that the swing deputies would get an extra two weeks of paid vacation a year. Much to both his uncle's and his surprise almost every officer in the department applied for the four open positions. Three quarters of those applied for the single full-time position.

Dana must have put some heat on the federal forensics team. No sooner had he finished the paperwork applying for the new swing positions and forwarded the applications from the candidates to the team did he begin to receive preliminary findings on the site. The feds usually messed around for weeks tweaking and refining data before releasing their findings. But in less than two days, Charles found out what he had expected. Shawn died due to blood loss. The wounds she sustained were superficial at best. The vampires had bled her to death. The rest of the reports continued to trickle in over the next several days.

Best guess estimates said that four separate individuals had been involved in the crime. Two male and two female were confirmed at the crime scene by the bite marks and the footprints. No dental records were on file that matched the marks left on the body. The bureau had just begun to compile dental records. They had only a fraction of what they needed to trace a human turned monster.

The autopsy indicated that she had been legally drunk at the time of her death. Synthohol and a favored drug known as menthol were found in her system. The synthetic alcohol did not surprise Charles. But the presence of the normally untraceable synthetic designer drug did. There was something that just

did not sit right about the drug being in her system. It did not make sense to him why she would have used it. But he stored the information away and said nothing to the team. Perhaps she was just out for a night of fun. He had placed a lot of stress on the team. It might have been a way for her to unwind and relax for the evening. Charles could only speculate.

The site, as Charles had guessed, was found to be pre-constructed one day in advance of the crime. The sap was analyzed in the trees that were used in the construction of the crucifix. They had been pulled out of the earth almost 28 hours prior to the arrival of the federal techs. The materials used in the construction were expensive. Professionals to the damn core Charles thought.

The report came down that there, in fact, had been an orgy on the forest floor below the body. Bodily fluid and skin cells found in and around the area were conclusive evidence of the foray. The report also stated that Shawn had not been raped in any way. As perverted and warped as the entire scene was Charles was actually surprised at the reports 100% chance that she had not been defiled by the undead. Feds usually said something like 99.8% chance or some wacko shit like that. Charles thought to himself, this time they had put 100% in bold type.

The funeral day was to prove sad and quiet. A complete news blackout had been maintained up until this point. The feds and the state authorities had agreed to silence all parties involved. The feds blanketed the area with investigators and they had come up with limited information on the night's events. Charles learned as much as they had when he spoke with Shawn's mother. The politicians wanted to keep the entire situation under lock and key. If it got out that a police officer who was a member of a paranormal team had been hunted down and killed, it would start a wide spread panic of the general populous. The people would no doubt call for something to be done. But what? Charles thought about the reactions of his own highly motivated team. Two had requested their contract terminated immediately. That meant teams all over the country would lose members instantly if they thought they were being hunted down by the undead. Charles was glad that the team and Shawn's family had been afforded a quiet

personal service. The zoo that surrounded his parent's death was too much for anyone to handle. It would have probably traumatized Shawn's boys for life. Like the death of their mother had not already affected them, Charles thought.

The information that Charles got next floored him. The first tip was a priority-coded message that he received from Dana Sue. The fact that the message came to his home address was odd in itself. Then the fact that it was priority and coded only confirmed the nature of the message. The note stated she felt that Officer McDermit had not been a lone incident involving the undead. She noted that several areas of the country had news blackouts, and that the labs had been busy. Charles was slow at times but this was too much information for him to miss.

So there had been others. Before he had time to reflect on the subject Molly found him sitting in the highest level of the house staring out over the landscape. She was flushed from sprinting the stairs. All she could do was point to the stairs and pant, "B.C. Priority."

Charles had reached the conference room in short order with Molly on his heels. The B.C. Industries crest flashed on the huge screen at the end of the room. Charles slid into his leather high back chair and started punching in secure codes. The screen winked off, and then fluttered back on. The image was blurred and the voice synthesized into an electronic mechanical voice. They had never seen Bradford in any way except as this. Charles swiveled his chair to face the screen and took a deep breath. "Greetings cousin Bradford." Molly stepped up on his right side and stood beside the chair. She gently placed her hand on his shoulder but remained silent. Bradford's blurred image spoke. "Greetings Sir Charles, I am sorry to disturb your day of rest but I have come to a not so welcome conclusion." Charles closed his eyes. He knew what this man was about to say and did not want to believe it. Bradford must have seen his reaction because he stopped talking and waited. When Charles opened his eyes he also spoke. "The fucking vamps have declared war on the paranormal units all across the country." It was his cousin's turn to sit back and take a moment of silence. When he did speak the electronic alteration of his voice hid all emotion. "You are

either incredibly connected or your dreams are prophetic in nature my friend.” Charles had to grin at that. His dreams had been more bizarre and disjointed than ever and they told him little of this situation. Shawn’s death, more importantly the manner of her death and Dana’s recent email, had told him all he needed to know. His instincts told him the rest. Two very sudden thoughts hit Charles at once. His left hand shot out and his fingers found Roberts home and pager address. He tapped the message priority ping. A signal would be sent in advance of his message. It automatically requested video conferencing but text would work in a pinch. Charles waited to see if he would receive a return ping meaning that Robert was able to get to a cam site. A ping hit his speakers immediately and Robert’s face filled the screen almost immediately afterwards. “Ya, boss?” Charles could tell by the audio dubbing that he was in a transport. The wide view of the cam also told him that the transport was full of Robert’s grandchildren and family. Charles put a fake smile on his face and hit the video send key so that Robert could see his face. “Robert, sorry to disturb my friend. I was wondering if you get the gang together in short order for a wee bit of alpha training?” Charles held his smile and waited for his captain’s response. He could see the term alpha register in Robert’s eyes. It was a code word that he and the team had decided would say it all. It was a priority call to arms but at a low-key response. No lights and sirens or squealing rubber. Just a quiet fast response. Charles could see his captain motion to the passenger to take control of the vehicles operation. He had his handheld in front of him in the same instant. “All the members sir?” Charles had not forgotten that alpha meant all team members, the code had been set up prior to the mandatory vacation schedule so Robert was looking for clarification. Both Robert and Kelly were on mandatory vacation as of three days ago. Charles smiled a sad smile and allowed his eyes to fall on the keyboard. “Alpha training Captain, just a short time Robert. I am sorry.” Robert had the ability to shift gears so incredibly fast Charles thought. Robert’s response was almost comical. “On my way sir. Be there in about half an hour.” The screen winked out. That meant that Robert was well on his way to some vacation spot and he had just caught him. Charles realized that Bradford was still

on the screen when Molly touched his shoulder. "One sec babe." Charles hit the automatic team contact list and typed in "mandatory alpha training, now," into the text box and hit the send key. It was then he stood and looked at the screen. He took a deep breath and spoke, his voice was just the right tone and noticeably quieter. Molly knew Charles was mad as hell. "You fucking asshole, how long have you known? How many Cartan? How many have died?" Molly held her ground and stared at the blurred image in the screen. She was not sure what was going on just yet. Charles stood rigid and square to the screen. Bradford responded, "Five over the last two months." Charles's voice dropped another octave and Molly could tell that his throat was constricting. "One is a fucking fluke, two is a possibility but three is a god-damned pattern! Jesus fucking Christ Cartan what the hell are you hiding something like this from me for? The undead are at war with you, me and every blue and you don't think it important? Who's fucking side are you on any-god-damned-way?" At this point Charles was beyond hot. Molly was waiting for him to shoot the screen any second. She could understand his rage. Vampires had been hunting down and killing paranormal team members and Bradford just forgot to mention it. Molly raised an eyebrow and awaited Bradford's answer. The image seemed to freeze for just a second but then he spoke. "Charles, my apologies. I understand that it seems like I failed you but..." Charles cut him off, "seems like? Five dead team members? Seems like!" Bradford's electronic voice never changed, it was unnerving to Molly. "My intelligence is set up on several levels. The one level I have the greatest problem attaining verifiable information is the rogue vampire level. The small groups that do not have council affiliations or specific clan ties." Charles held his tongue and listened. "It is this 'group' for the lack of a better term that has begun its hunt of the officers. Please understand that I have been trying to puzzle this out for over a month. There seems to be only one pattern and even that is sketchy." Charles crossed his arms and took a calming breath. Bradford continued "The rogue clicks, as they fancy themselves nowadays, are doing it for sport and prestige. There is no bounty or other reason that I can ascertain at this time." Bradford's image blurred more, as he seemed to reach for something on the desk in front of

him. "There are only two other areas that have been hit, Pittsburgh and Atlanta. Two deaths in each location. Atlanta has all but lost their team. Your deputies death was the third separate area and was not a likely spot according to the probably analysis I did. You are located in the country. The probability was in a west coast city." Bradford stopped as if to invite questions so Charles took him up on the invitation. "What is the single pattern you have found?" Charles waited and Bradford visibly wiggled in his chair, "The vampires seem to stay in the same area and continue to hunt the same team. Both cities have three small teams. Both deaths in each city were in the same unit. It looks as though part of the game is to kill an entire team." Charles was still pissed but he could see how difficult something like this, if it were just a rogue vampire game, would be for anyone to track, analyze or figure out. He took a deep breath and pointed one finger at the screen. "Cousin, if we are to be in this fight together, from now on I insist that you send me at least an email on such events no matter how 'little' hard data you have on such events." It was a statement and not a request. Charles shook his head and continued, "Shawn died because there was a communication breakdown within this very organization Bradford. If it had been Molly, you would be a dead man now." Charles punched the end transmit key on the tabletop. He looked at Molly and the rage faded. She looked at him with those unknowing eyes, those eyes that wanted to say something but just did not know what. He turned to her and hugged her. After a long time he whispered in her ear. "From now on the house alarm is on full and you go naked but armed to the teeth OK?" She did not answer, she just nodded her head yes into his shoulder. "I have to go and explain this mess to the team. I will probably not be back for awhile." Charles kissed her and did not want to leave her arms but he had to. When he left the room he went to his ready room, grabbed two extra clips of ammo and headed for his transport.

His transport was a dream come true. Comfortable and wired for every possible function an administrator could ask for. He checked the duty roster of the team. Brad and Thomas were already at the facility. Robert, Rhea and Kelly were in route to the office. He would be there in very short order. His arrival time

would beat all three of the others by half. His transport hummed as he flew down the highway passing every vehicle on the road. Charles checked to see where his uncle was. Joe was in his office at the department. Charles sent him a priority message requesting his presence in the squad meeting room as soon as possible. Charles wanted to let as few people as he absolutely had to know what the current situation was. The press would have a field day with this information even if it were just confirmed speculation at this point. The sheriff should know what he was going to propose to do at this point. Not only was he short on team members due to mandatory vacation but what he was about to propose even made him shake his head.

He met his uncle in the department parking lot. They walked in silence up the flight of stairs and into the meeting room. Brad and Thomas had been in the open bay down stairs giving the transports equipment checks when they entered the building. Charles's nod kept them on the lower level while he briefed the Sheriff. After they entered the room his uncle sat in one of the chairs and set his cup of coffee on the table and looked at his nephew. Charles sat across the table and began. "Sheriff, I need team members and I need them now. All gaps in the shift must be filled immediately." Both of his uncles' eyebrows rose as he took a sip of his coffee. Charles continued. "Five, probably more, paranormal officers have been killed over the past two months. The undead have declared war on us. The only speculated pattern is that they seem to pick a single team and try to wipe it out completely." His uncle's cup seemed to catch on something in mid air between his mouth and the table. The Sheriff's eyes locked on his and held. "My team has been targeted for extermination and that will not happen sir. Not while I am administrator of paranormal counter-activities anyway." Joe's cup finally found the table, "Five? Nothing has come across the wire. A news block that huge??" Charles had grappled with the same questions. "I cannot explain it or even rationalize it at this point sir. All I am asking for is full backing so that I do not have to watch any more of my team die the way Shawn did." Joe shook his head and stood. "Of course you have my complete authority, not that you need it, to do what ever you feel is best for the safety of this department and community.

Please excuse me, I have to begin to place two new contracts for bid?" Charles had to respect his uncle, the only person he knew that could be politically correct and yet...not. "I will be using five swing officers immediately at this time Sheriff." Joe nodded, picked up his mug and left the room. Charles hit the intercom and asked the team to come to the conference room. The only member that had not arrived yet was the team captain. Kelly had made it and she was dressed to kill. Charles smiled as he saw her outfit. She wore a metallic mesh outer vest with a maroon shirt underneath. Her high spiked boots must have been hell to walk in. Charles mused as the team filed into the room. He made small talk until Robert came into the room in a rush. He closed the door and made apologies until Charles cut him off. "Folks, what I am about to say makes no sense to a rational person. But I know that you are not rational, you joined the squad." Only Brad and Thomas laughed. Kelly looked as though she was going to cry and Rhea looked forever bored. Robert was taking notes. "The vampires have declared war on all paranormal team members across the country." Brad and Thomas stopped laughing and Kelly looked ill. Rhea actually looked interested for once in her life and Robert never stopped writing. "Five officers have already been exterminated. Our team has been targeted by a rogue clik for extermination. That is the reason I called this meeting." Charles folded his hands and closed his eyes. "Robert, stop writing and look at me. Kelly breathe." Charles opened his eyes a moment later after he heard Kelly forcefully exhale and take in an unsteady breath. He found that all eyes were on him. "I have hired five swing officers who will start today." Thomas was the first to speak. "Sir, we have not gone through all of the applicants yet." The officer let the statement trail off. Charles understood the dilemma. "I have a suggestion that you can vote on as a team. We need team members now. What I suggest to you is that we go down the training score list and match it to the candidate list and pick the five highest performing officers. What we need at this point are the best at killing the undead. We can worry about psych evaluations later. They may be briefed about this matter and find that don't want to be hunted and just walk away." Charles stopped in his tracks. He had never thought of the possibility of any of the team

just packing up and disappearing. The people present looked around the room at each other and then back to Charles. Surprisingly Kelly spoke, her voice was shaky but strong. "After all the shit you put us through what the hell can they do to us?" Her attempt at levity caught the whole room off guard and even Charles had to laugh.

After the team voted to bring the five highest scoring virtual training officers on board Charles pushed forward. "I highly suggest that we implement the buddy system until further notice. I understand that it is going to be a pain in the ass but I have no other idea how to keep your backs covered while you are off duty. Does anyone have any other thoughts?" The room was silent so Charles continued. "Robert and Kelly, I know you are on vacation. And I do not want to mess up your plans but may I strongly suggest that you spend time together?" Robert smiled. It was a genuine smile as he looked at Kelly. "You are welcome to join the family and me Kel'. We are just leaving to visit my folks in Atlanta." Charles choked on the water he was drinking. Robert stopped speaking and stared at him. Charles shook his head. "Please Robert, not Atlanta or Pittsburgh. Those are the cities that the other teams are under attack." Robert's expression said it all. He could not believe what he was hearing. "You shittin' me Boss??" It was almost a plea rather than a question. "Sorry Bob, I hear the West coast is beautiful this time of year."

By the time the team got it all straight Robert and Kelly were off to a far away place to be determined only by them for security reasons. Brad was in charge of contacting and scheduling in the new swing officers and the buddy system was to be in effect until further notice. The new officers were going to be briefed along with the team this evening after a schedule had been drafted up. All team members were authorized to carry any weapon they choose anywhere and at anytime. Charles would update their clearance to reflect that authorization.

The meeting broke up and Charles headed for his cube. While he walked to the other building he mused about moving his office into the spook house. He felt it odd that he had to walk away from the team's building in order to work. Then like a bolt of lightning he had a completely random thought. The

investigation into Shawn's death had been conducted completely by the bureau. He stopped walking and it hit him like a brick. How stupid! The locals would not open up to a bunch of feds. This was a very closed county after the deaths of his parents. Charles gritted his teeth and took a deep breath. What a fool he had been, the feds would have been stonewalled at every turn. The locals probably figured they had pulled rank on him and in their own way had supported him by their silence. He picked up his pace and walked into dispatch. As administrator he had a few things to get done before he could go out and play detective.

Just as he was finishing up his priority work Rhea entered his office. She had changed into her civilian clothes and sat down in the guest chair in his cube. Charles swung his chair around and greeted her. "How can I help you Deputy?" Charles smiled and genuinely wondered what she wanted. Rhea was not one to stop by and just chat. She looked a little nervous as she spoke. "Guess you're stuck with me." She smiled an almost devilish grin and sat back in the chair. Charles raised an eyebrow and asked. "Had you planned on going somewhere?" Rhea laughed out loud. "We drew lots and I was matched up with you. You get to baby-sit me." She got a very serious look on her face after her comment. Charles realized that the look on his face could be mistaken for a thousand emotions. Charles missed it completely. His words had been that all members of the team were to be paired up and inseparable. As administrator, Charles rarely thought of himself as 'team' so he overlooked the simple fact that the team would assign him a partner. He tried to soften his expression and smiled. Chuckling to himself he nodded to Rhea. "I am sorry Rhea. My mind was elsewhere and I just had no idea as to what you were referring to at the moment." Rhea looked relieved, "I thought maybe you were not happy with having me as a partner." Charles blinked. "Why the hell would you think that?" He had to laugh but Rhea seemed all too serious in her answer. "Because I suck in the simulation booth and I am not as gung ho as you want." Charles blinked again. He stood up and closed the glass door and turned to face one of his original team members. It took him a moment to get it all together in his mind. Then he walked to the corner of his desk and sat down. "Rhea, please do not think that." Rhea looked at him and

shrugged her shoulders. "It's no secret that you are not pleased with my performance, and that is why you put me in comms and virtual." Charles nodded and slowly exhaled. It was at this very moment that he realized that he did not communicate nearly enough with his team. Rhea sat patiently and waited for his reply. Charles ran his hand over his head several times and began. "Rhea, you are a team plank owner. You were a cop long before me. I am the new kid on the block here." He pushed his butt further back onto the desk and leaned forward putting his elbows on the top of his thighs. "The reason why you are in comms and virtual is because you have a special talent and for no other reason. You and Brad work well as a workgroup and together you have created a system that the feds now want!" Rhea cocked her head and said softly, "yeah but I suck at VR sim." Charles shook his head, "Rhea, I agree that you are not the best at training but on call you perform better than most of the other officers. I don't give a rat's ass about the training scores. What counts is what goes on in the field. At the funeral home you performed above expectation." Charles could see the doubt in her face so he continued. "I have a confession to make Rhea. As administrator I have pushed this team way too hard for too long. What I wanted to prove was that I could build the best team and not fail my uncle or the community. Regretfully, I must admit that this whole operation is a result of my personal desire not to fail!" It was Rhea's turn to shake her head. "How can you say that? You are a natural leader, a natural at virtual training and the best dispatch talker this department has ever seen." Charles was taken aback by her compliments and was momentarily stunned into silence. Rhea continued, "We knew you were going to be named paranormal administrator even before the first ghouls rising. Without you in the command chair this team would be a joke!" Charles looked at the woman's face and she was completely serious. He was having a very hard time understanding what he was hearing. They knew he was going to be administrator before his parents were killed? Charles looked at her in amazement and began, "Rhea the only reason I have done what I have done is for selfish reasons. Not to mention the fact that what I fear most is failure. You are one of the best on the team not only because you are a solid gun but because you have

the ability to assist the team in other areas.” Rhea sat silent for a moment and Charles reflected on what had just popped out of his mouth. It was Rhea who spoke first. Her voice became soft and low, “Charles, I don’t think you can fail when it comes to the undead. It is just not possible. You are an incredible natural. And as administrator you drive us no harder than you drive yourself. It would be different if you just sat up here and barked orders but you are in the graveyards with us night after night. I am not the only one who feels that I just do not measure up to your abilities.” Charles bulked. Not the only one? Were the team members trying to base their abilities against that of a slayer? He had never thought about how they would respond to his abilities. There was no way he could disclose his true identity. Nor could he hide his natural talents now, it would be too obvious that he was sandbagging. In the middle of a bad situation, he felt in the middle of it again. First it had been Bradford’s lack of information that had caused him grief and now he was just finding that his team had a complex because he could out shoot and out kill them. Rhea had taken his long silence to mean that it was her turn to speak and she did. “Remember the winery? You alone were a walking bloodbath. The Federal Special Forces Team was just a clean up crew for someone with your abilities.” Charles picked up the thread, “I was scared and alone, you can do a lot when you have to Rhea.” Rhea left the subject drop. She had driven her point home with utmost accuracy. Charles smiled, “Rhea, I have no problems with you or your performance. And you obviously have none with mine. So let’s call it even and take a ride. I have some investigating to do, would you like to assist?” Rhea smirked, “Investigating?” Was all she could ask as Charles hopped off the desk and began to switch all the online software off or place it on hold so that he could take a ride to the local neighborhood watering hole.

Part II

Molly was on edge. Not because there were any problems with Parker and Edwards Paranormal Investigations International Incorporated. (P&E.P.I.I. inc.) or PEPE for short. Her lover was a ball of stress. She was able to deal with him

on most levels. It was not hard to understand the way he felt. He was an open book to her, what he did not tell her verbally showed as plain as if he had spoken the feelings himself. That was the one aspect of the relationship she treasured, no secrets. Charles spoke to her above everything and held nothing back. After the teacup shooting she had become worried. When he told Bradford that he was a dead man if anything happened to her, she became very troubled.

After Charles left the house she had reconnected with his cousin to see what, if any damage had been done. It was her turn to be amazed. Bradford formally apologized to her for having failed them! She was so astounded that she could hardly begin to understand the situation. Bradford continued to say that Charles was in the right and that he had no doubt that his cousin could make the threat a reality. Molly further questioned Bradford and spoke to him of Charles' current stress level. They spoke at length and came to the conclusion that the road Charles had chosen to take was going to be the absolute most treacherous when it came to stress factor. The balancing act of administrator and slayer would only get worse as time and kills mounted. The fact that the county had just become a target for a rogue vampire clan to attack made things all that much worse. The weight of the undead world rested squarely on the shoulders of the only true slayer Bradford knew, his cousin Charles.

After the conversation with Bradford Molly felt a little better but not overly excited about the future. Charles needed an outlet, a way of forgetting about the undead for just a moment or two. She took it upon herself to figure out just how she could do that.

This is the first chapter of the novel, *Vampire Nation*. I hope you have enjoyed it. If you would like to read the entire ebook, you may purchase it at:

www.DPebooks.com

Slayer's Trunk

About The Author:



MM lives in the foothills, somewhere in Virginia. His first horror ebook, a novel titled Birthright... Slayer has been a wonderful achievement. In his first published novel, *MM* lifts the curtain on a nightmare world that contains danger, excitement, and the possibility of eternal love or death. In his second work, Vampire Nation, he continues the adventures of a True Slayer and his mission to rid the world of the undead.

He continues to write and self publish his works as a hobby. *MM* enjoys archery, fishing and the outdoors as well as window-shopping at midnight, it is after all, the best time to hunt...

For more information on the author and his works make sure to visit his [Author's website!](#)

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