

# BRYN

## *A Thousand Year Old Vampire Tale*

Authored by **Graham Wills** based on a framework created by **Tim Hutchings**

### 1020 ~ ITALY

I am **Brynjar**, a **norseman** who enlisted in the Varangian Guard and moved to hot climes of southern Europe; I fight the foes of the Byzantine empire for gold and glory with my brothers in arms. My strongest memories are these:

- ❖ Lying drunk on my cot in the dark of the night, I sing the old songs quietly; **Skard** and the others join me, and we cry for the country we have left.
- ❖ In the arms of **Angelia**, I tease her that the only item of clothing she still wears is her **hair ribbon**; she takes it off and ties it around my wrist.
- ❖ **Bartuccio** follows me into the woods and I slip in the mud as I elude him; I hide the Bulgar gold with a wet and soiled shirt.
- ❖ I tell **Zinon** that even if I lived a thousand years, I would never give up soldiering; he pours me a drink from a flask that smells of sulphur and roses; It burns my throat as I pass out hearing him whisper “we’ll see”. Now **I cannot drink, or eat**, and the sight of others doing so makes me nauseous and weak.

<sup>1</sup> Skard tries to feed me a bowl of pasta; “that Greek has poisoned you”, he says, but the food makes me vomit. All I crave is the sulphur and the roses, pulsing through his veins. In frustration he punches my chest and my anger responds with a blow that makes him bleed. The smells engulfs me and I cannot resist drinking his life to fill my need.

<sup>7</sup> Zinon obsesses me, but I cannot find him; I take to loitering in piazzas, observing those passing by in an attempt to find him. One day a passing soldier gives me a strange, quizzical look and I realize that I am acting more like Zinon than I am like myself.

<sup>10</sup> The stars pinwheel about me as the seasons trip over themselves; I leave the army as the years go by and I do not age; Angelia marries another, grows old and dies; Bartuccio dies of a fever; I make no friends, no enemies, no memories — I sleep, I eat, I observe, but I do not *live* as a century passes.

<sup>14</sup> I follow a man I think is Zinon, but it is a different immortal; one who can make others do as he wills; **he makes puppets of my few friends**, attacking me outside the cathedral. My chainmail shirt protects me from their blows, but is destroyed as I kill the mortals and flee northwards from Italy, a criminal, branded a murderer and a lunatic.

<sup>10\*</sup> A German scholar, Simon of Bamberg finds a ring forged by a creature of legend that gives him power to command others; before he can build an invincible army, I steal it from him, but he turns invisible and eludes me as I seek to end his life. **If I renounce love, it will give me almost limitless power**, but I cannot do this ... yet. I thread the ring through Angelia's ribbon and it hangs around my neck, over my heart.

<sup>11</sup> In a small village in northern Germany, I join the choir and as I sing to God, **I feel a sense of peace** I have not felt for a hundred years. As I renounce the life of a soldier I remember Zinon's whisper, and I smile.

## 1155 ~ GERMANY

<sup>12</sup> The small village is no longer small and **I am careless**; rumors grow about my lack of aging and the local priest confronts me, backed with a band of strong peasants armed with farm implements. He will only trust me if I eat a holy wafer, but I cannot keep it down and when I vomit it up, they beat me and drag me off to jail to be executed the next day. But the jailor is an unscrupulous man who fears neither god nor demon, and he bargains with me; I win my freedom and in return I sneak into his wife's lover's house and murder the lover and his wife and their three children.

<sup>15</sup> The end of the century sees me in France, where I find a newly-created vampire, **Jeanne**. We spend a few years together, but I keep comparing her to my Angelia, to whom she does not compare. She will not leave me alone and one night I kiss Jeanne's pretty but vacant face, as I sing her to sleep, before binding her in coffin of ebony and stowing her on the *Madame Marie*, bound for faraway lands. We killed so many together that now when I sleep, ghosts drift around my bed and whisper in my ears of how they died.

<sup>18</sup> In the **monastery of St. Verán** in the alps, I try to control my hunger by mortifying the flesh, but I cannot and one by one the monks succumb. The last dying monk rips the ribbon from around my neck and it and the ring hung on it separate and fall over the cliff-edge; I can only save one and **I let my last link to mortal life flutter gently into the void**. After I feed on the monks I stay in the silent monastery for weeks, licking dried blood from the walls and wishing I had let the ring fall and kept the ribbon.

<sup>16</sup> Seven priests approach the monastery; they are armed and burn with holy zeal, but approach with caution that speaks of knowledge of vampires; I observe their approach, and see that one of them is greener than the others; rushing at him causes that one to draw back, and I make my escape.

<sup>12\*</sup> I will not be hunted again; No longer aimless, I spend generations building **a secret society of magicians** who, though weak, unknowingly work to keep me safe from those who know about me. The *Ordo Latentium Magicae* meets at Candlemass to indoctrinate twenty new members; I give them each a taste of my blood and let them feel the power as I bind them to my service. They believe me to be a great magus with untold power — and perhaps they are right!

<sup>13</sup> I drink lightly from neck of **the several-times-great-granddaughter of Simon of Bamberg**; she has no idea that the ring around her master's neck is rightfully hers, that I have spent my long-buried trove of treasure to lure the descendants of Simon of Bamberg into my power; I have stolen his ring, and now his family!

<sup>16\*</sup> All my plotting is in ruins; after hundreds of years the vampire hunters have found me; **when I feed it makes church bells chime** — something I did not know — and they use this knowledge to trace me, to destroy my home and **drive me into the cold icy wastes** of the north where they cannot follow. In the blizzards of winter I learn how to become one with the snow and drift through the sky as a flurry of ice.

<sup>22</sup> Returning to the Angelia's village I find a mother who I think bears a resemblance to her. I steal her infant child and bring her to England to be raised; I spend all my resources and sell the illuminated bible to shape her to be like my long-lost love; I cannot live without a companion for my heart. Over the next decade and a half I have so many pure and beautiful memories: **Angela's** infant body in the cot as we ride to the boat; her first meal; her first words; her first day at school; her first recital; her first dance; her first ...

## I578 ~ ENGLAND

<sup>26</sup> Angela's sixteen year-old voice is pure and rich and as I teach her the aria; I smell roses and sulphur pulsing in her white, white neck; I mean only to stroke it; then only to nick it; then only to drink lightly, but **as I see her life fleeing, there is only one way I can save her.**

<sup>29</sup> Angela cannot hide in society in England and soon we pack our bags and flee — but Europe is becoming too dangerous and **we flee to Egypt** and the Ottoman Empire, where even if I do not speak the language, my enemies will not expect me to be. We take the name and styling of the Italian *Orsini* family. Surrounded by heat and people in Cairo, I wonder have

I made a mistake coming her, but Angela — or *Angelia Orsini* as I must now call her — smiles as she says that they all look delicious.

<sup>28</sup> A European I meet in the street looks astonished to see me, but I do not recognize him. As he talks to me his voice lulls me to sleep and when I awake he is holding my ring, which he says I burgled from him; I try to attack him, but **he commands me** to walk south until I fall into the sea and drown, and I obey

<sup>29\*</sup> I cannot stand out from the crowd; I must be inconspicuous and beneath notice or the magician will find and destroy me; **I return to a life of soldiery** and learn to fire artillery as a member of the *tayfa-i efreciye* unit of the Ottoman Empire. I cannot even risk trying to find Angela who I have not seen since Egypt.

<sup>25</sup> It is no longer possible simply to pick victims at random in this modern world; I have to focus on those who will not be missed and so often find myself dining on prostitutes; **one of them steals one of my diaries** before I can kill her. I strain to recall what was in it — but fail.

<sup>22\*</sup> After my diary was stolen, I hide my other diary in a secluded cave in the woods, but today I find the box open and the diary missing; a German was seen walking the woods the day before — I will find **Herr Spiegler** and kill him.

<sup>23</sup> I have seen a thousand hearts beat their last, held a thousand people in my arms as I feel the workings of their bodies at death, and have studied my own breathing and mechanics for centuries as I dwelt alone; **I know anatomy** far beyond what the people of this age understand.

<sup>24</sup> A man has been asking disquieting questions about me; I engineer an unlucky accident for “Albert Smith” and re-join the army as *Bastien Chevrolet*

<sup>26\*</sup> **Angela has found me**; it was she who was searching for me, not my enemies! She has embraced her new existence and I join her exuberant hunting — in one night we feast on a whole caravan of Romany; she gives me a gift; the immortal head of Simon, the magician who stole my ring. **Angela and I laugh** as we prick the head of Simon with hot needles and force him to tell us his secrets .

<sup>31</sup> The years pass and I grow weary of this century and life — Angela buries me away safely in a cave in the earth and promises to visit every decade until I feel ready to rejoin the world. Yesterday I breathed in the scent of the earth, today I breathe it out, repeating this slow meditation as I forget what I was and become centered in who I am; Angela asks if I am ready, and I tell her not now, but soon. **A century passes until I feel rejuvenated.**

# 1698 ~ ΒΙΕΠΠΑ

<sup>35</sup> **I no longer hate Simon** and I do my best to make him comfortable. I take him to the opera and museums and give him a servant who turns book pages for him and moves him so he can see across the city from his tower. At his request I rescue his last descendent from poverty and fund their university degree as I also teach him the secrets of anatomy I have learned. I feel pride in the attentiveness and enthusiasm of this young man, who is now like a son to me.

<sup>34</sup> Angela is jealous of young Simon, saying that I love him more than her. In a fit of rage I tell her to leave and, under old Simon's direction, brew a potion that makes me forget. Consumed by rage at Angela's unsubtle threats to hurt young Simon, I drink the potion that will erase her from my mind and feel the acidic fumes burn my throat as **I forget the smiles, the laughter, the kisses, the dances, and ... everything.**

<sup>32</sup> I see a sixteen-year old girl with dark hair who reminds of someone, but I cannot remember who; **I lure her into the woods and trap her** in the place where I slept for a hundred years. I cook food for her, and bring books and clothes, but I do not know why she fascinates me. I bake bread for the girl in the cave, bread that smells of heaven, but I cannot eat. She pleads for her freedom, but for reasons I cannot understand, I must have her near me.

<sup>38</sup> After two days, the pasha is finally alone; I drop onto him from the balcony and twist his head around before taking his broach back to the girl in the cave. **I want everything to be perfect for her;** I bake her perfect food; I hunt through the countryside, tearing heads from bodies without spattering the fine dresses I bring to her; I no longer remember why or how I came to this part of the world; all I care about is making her happy.

<sup>42</sup> I am about to feed on a man, when he brings out a clock — a **clock in his pocket;** beating so close to his heart the clicks and whirrs it makes beat waves of sulphur and roses at me and I am mesmerized, unable to move. He calls his neighbors for help and it is only when I am able to move, minutes after, that I can pretend to be a representative of the authorities, inspecting houses for a fleeing criminal and talk my way to an escape.

<sup>39</sup> Age has damaged my diary; I try to make out the words, but I cannot. Who am I? Where did I come from? Why did I fight for the Byzantines? Is there anyone alive who could tell me? As I realize that I cannot make out my name or my country of origin in the diary anymore, tears pour down my cheeks — **I have no anchor anymore;** no base; no self.

<sup>36</sup> I cannot let my memories expire unremembered; I study my memories for days and commit them to my diary — I must have been a doctor in the long past, who learned the

secret of immortality from my studies and, with my daughter Angela we went to Cairo to cure the city of the plague. It was there that the evil magician cursed me with the blood hunger that now consumes my thoughts; I must find a cure. In the back of mind is a small voice that tells me that **I am lying to myself**, but I ignore it and, over time, it subsides.

<sup>36\*</sup> Simon — I thought of him as a son, but is he faithful to me? Or is he the magician that I wrote of in my diary, spying on me. I chain him to a pillar and char his flesh with hot irons for hours, trying to force him to give up his secrets, but **he is stubborn and dies** before giving them up.

<sup>45</sup> My angel in the cave tells me I am growing old; I laugh at her but when I look in the mirror, she is right — **my skin has become yellow and leathery**, like old parchment

<sup>49</sup> If animals like you, people trust you. The angel in the cave is old now, but the pets I bring her still provide joy, and when I meet a stranger in the woods, my frolicking dogs calm their fears and make them friends.

## 1808 ~ PARIS

<sup>55</sup> After the angel dies of old age, I am solitary for some decades, but one evening a young girl slips into my cave and confronts me; she says she is **Angela** and that I made her a vampire. After a while I remember being angry with her over her distrust of Simon — but she was right! When I tell her how Simon was secretly the magician who cursed us she seemed about to disagree, but then simply smiled and said it was good to see me. She brings me to her apartments in Paris and urges me to rejoin the world. **I write a novel about a viking called Bryan** and his adventures in the ancient world, and to my surprise, it is a success.

<sup>51</sup> My urban life in Paris makes the forests of Austria feel like a dream; my memories of that time are fading ... I cannot recall why or when I learned how to bake.

<sup>53</sup> The **descendants of Herr Spiegler** recognize my style of writing from the diary he stole from me and come for me one night, but I have hunted for longer than them and one by one, the Paris night chills their corpses.

<sup>54</sup> The gendarme looks sharply at me as I walk away from the mutilated body, but years of resting in silence has taught me how to **fade into the background**, and his gaze moves on..

<sup>61</sup> I dance at a ball to celebrate the new emperor, Napoleon III and meet a dark-haired woman who looks a little like Angela, but also like someone whom I have long forgotten. It is only next week, as I study painting to impress her, that I realize I am in love with **Amélie duTour**. With enough money, even an artists as famous as Delacroix will teach a diligent student, and I study diligently to win my Amélie.

<sup>58</sup> In the modern world travel is so much faster. I travel to Vienna by rail and coach and visit the house I used to live in before I threw Angela out. My hunter's ears hear crying deep in the earth and I dig out an impossible thing; a still-living decapitated head that calls itself Simon, that laughs and screams and asks me why I left him in the dark — a question to which I do not know the answer.

<sup>64</sup> I love trains; they take people from their homes and bring them to me alone and vulnerable; If ever I am hungry, I can pretend to be a *chauffeur de taxi* and pick up a traveling stranger from the *Gare du Nord*.

<sup>66</sup> I forget all I knew of animal husbandry

## 1888 ~ PARIS

<sup>65</sup> A broker in occult antiques makes me an offer I am unable to refuse; **Simon's head will go to live with a new owner**, and I have acquired ownership of **a publishing company** in Paris, and set of **five Rodin sculptures**.

<sup>66</sup> As a wealthy owner of a thriving publishing company, I have no more need to drive taxis; I discard that identity and draw my prey from the ranks of ambitious young novelists instead.

<sup>71</sup> **Zinon is dead**; a group of Mortals calling themselves "the Heirs of Spiegel" leapt upon him while he was reading in the Bibliothèque Nationale and stabbed him with staves made of ash and Rowan, and he collapsed into dust and was no more. It was reported in *Le Petit Parisian*, but of course no-one believed it. I find myself crying uncontrollably for this mysterious immortal, almost as if he were my father.

<sup>70</sup> **All my friends avoid me**; they have all read that foul article that describes me as old, as depraved — one who lusts after young women and does unimaginable things with them. They remember the times my make-up betrayed me, the women last seen in my company, and the times I refused drink, or gagged when someone near me crunched a petit four. I am not invited to parties. I am not greeted in the street. Amélie duTour returns my letter, unopened. I write a response in the form of story, and sell two statues to pay for its publication all over Paris, but in the public's eye it simply confirms that **I am old, that I am strange, and to be shunned**.

<sup>71</sup> The occult broker to whom I sold the head of Simon stands before me, showing me a copy of an ancient diary, describing a vampire's life and memories. It was written in the 1580's in England and M. Crognier believes I am the author. It talks about Zinon in much detail and I realize how the Heirs of Spiegel tracked him down. M. Crognier lets me know that I can rely on him for any unusual needs I might have.

<sup>72</sup> My last true thought is thankfulness that I have fallen face-up. Dying with my vision obliterated and mouth filled with Parisian mud would be ... distressing. Instead, as the **Heirs of Spiegler continue to plunge stakes into my body**, I can see the stars pinwheel over my head, as they have so many times before. Stray thoughts echo through my mind; a song in a strange Nordic tongue, a velvet ribbon, an angel with brown hair and three faces; the sound of church bells. And then my skin catches fire, my bones crumble and there is nothing but spark of light to which I am falling ...

## 2020 ~ EPILOGUE

Simon flicks the remote with his tongue and switches to CNN as Angela walks in. "I have them", she says and shows the magician the small jar of ashes. "The collector wasn't hard to bargain with, as it turns out. The lure of an original Rodin was easily enough to persuade him." She goes over to an alcove in the south wall, and places the jar on a small pedestal, flanked by two old and tattered diaries. On the shelf below sit an assortment of oddities; a piece of broken chain-mail, a deed to a long-defunct publishing company, a novel in French concerning the adventures of a Norse mercenary in the Byzantine empire, and an insignificant looking ring.

As Simon watches, she picks up the ring and throws it causally from hand to hand, before stopping and looking at the news scenes on the TV. "Are you now ready, my dear, to put that ring on?" he asks "now that you have closed the book, so to speak, on Bryn? Look at the world — it needs something to change it; it needs someone to lead it. Put it on; renounce love; rule the world!"

Angela stands silent for a moment, then places the ring back on the shelf. "No, my friend, this night is not the right time to take that step". Then she smiles, flashing a glimpse of long white incisors, "but tomorrow will be a new day"

## APPENDIX: NOTES ON THE PROCESS

I started this game by taking the “1000 year old” part literally, and looked up events from 1020 in Google. This led to the Byzantine empire and the phrase: “The Varangian Guard was known for being primarily composed of recruits from northern Europe, including Norsemen from Scandinavia”. Thus was Bryn born.

¶ 10 was a surprise to read “.. a century passes ..” And suddenly my fiancé was dead simply of old age. This immediately brought home the themes of loss that permeated my game. Shortly after I revisited ¶10 again and gained a powerful item. I decided to base it on the The Ring of the Nibelung (from Wagner’s opera which I was going to see in Chicago, but it was cancelled due to COVID). I liked the idea that you could have huge power if you renounced love — it seemed very fitting for a vampire story, but I had no idea where it would go. Also, it fit the theme of loss; you would have to deliberately choose to lose the ability to love.

¶18 was the paragraph I agonized most over. I had to lose a resource and had exactly two that made sense: The last tangible link I had to Angelia, or the Ring. When I decided to lose Angelia’s ribbon — which I had originally thought I would keep at all costs — it felt like a classic tragic hero’s terrible decision that will doom them.

Jeanne (¶15) appears in the story in just this one paragraph. Yet I find myself wondering about her story. All Bryn knows of her was that she was a new and needy vampire he tired of and so he sent her out of his life. How did this effect her? What did she go on to do? I’m strongly tempted to write her story and see what happens. I feel ashamed of Bryn’s casual dismissal of her and want to set things right!

I start building story related to Simon of Bamburg; several paragraphs offer natural tie-ins. Bryn is becoming crueller now; entrapping Simon’s descendent just for fun, and then actively stealing a child to raise her as a copy of his lost love — but it also feels sad; Bryn can’t just find love; he has to try and make it. He seems emotionally incapable of moving on. It’s not that the paragraphs force themes on you, but they enable and facilitate them. If it feels like a solidly “vampiric theme”, then I am pretty convinced that the paragraph system will help you bring that out in your story.

Oh boy, did ¶26 upset me. Angela was the only mortal I knew so I was forced to make her a vampire. I think this is a great example of how the game system works so well. I, the author, had absolutely no plan to do this. Bryn, the character, was adamantly opposed to the idea. But not only does the game mechanic force it to happen, but it absolutely fits the vampiric story. Both the character (Bryn) and the author (Graham) are brought out of their safe,

comfortable (and probably boring) plans and forced to deal with disaster. This paragraph brought me so much closer to Bryn as I felt his anger and frustration at what fate had made happen!

¶28 required the return of a long-dead mortal. The return of people/things/memories is a common mechanism in the paragraphs and in my story it always was highly impactful. When I brought back Simon for this paragraph, I also realized I had forgotten nearly everything about him. This was a key moment in my understanding of the game — loss of memories is not just a loss of emotional connection, but it means your character was going to screw up decisions and reactions simply because you don't remember.

¶26 (2<sup>nd</sup> visit) is, for me, the pivotal point in Bryn's story. Angela returns, but now she is the active one — she has taken Bryn's bloodthirstiness and made it her own. She doesn't answer to Bryn, and he is just so tired and confused he is happy to let her take control of his life. I gave her added importance by having her track down and kill Simon of Bamburg off-camera.

For ¶34 the loss of a precious memory was very obvious — my early memories of Angela were very strongly the most sincere, simple and pure — they had to go! Nearly always the game system gives you a choice of what to lose, and although it's tempting to be nice to your character, the dramatic choice is likely the better one, even if it hurts!

¶32 is another paragraph that urges me to emphasize existing themes; Bryn tries yet again to re-create his original love. But his heart I not really in it; I decide not to give this girl even a name as she is really no more than an expression of his desire and inability to move on. As it happens, this actually happens, but the joy of the system is that a different paragraph could have vastly changed her importance — you never know when you create. Character who is sign to be minor and who is going to be major.

¶36 (visited twice) again showed the power of the game system; I added a relatively benign false memory the first time I read this paragraph, but the second visit made Bryn torture to death the son-substitute he loved because his memories were wrong. Yes, I could have authored something less gruesome, but it fit so well, and the image of Bryn totally betrayed by his false and missing memories made this scene powerful; the game engine's use of restricted memories as a driver of plot reached and apex in this section!

From then on, Bryn's story starts winding down. ¶53 brings back the descendent of a mortal, and my story needs a new antagonist, so they do nicely. Several subsequent paragraphs build on that. Bryn tries yet again to fall in love, but all the paragraphs are leading me to loss — I lose Simon, Zinon, the respect of society. Since I haven't read all the paragraphs, I'm not sure if this is a deliberate plan by Tim to have the end emphasize loss, but it works for Bryn's

story. When I read the final, very simple, end to Bryn's life, it feels like it fits. I'm not even sure he resisted the end much.

Adding an epilogue is not a suggestion made in the book, but it's something I usually do at the conclusion for a roleplaying game campaign, and when I read through the story I realized that Angela would have been quite upset over Bryn's death and I wanted to give her some closure. So even though Bryn didn't make it to 1000, his story did as Angela and Simon, the ones who truly loved him and miss him, add the final coda to his story.

# APPENDIX: BRYAN IN 1020

## MEMORIES

I am **Brynjar**, a Norseman who enlisted in the Varangian Guard and moved to hot climes of southern Europe; I fight the foes of the Byzantine empire for gold and glory with my brothers in arms



**Lying drunk** on my cot in the dark of the night, I sing the old songs quietly; Skard and the others join me, and we cry for the country we have left



**In the arms of Angelia**, I tease her that the only item of clothing she still wears is her hair ribbon; she takes it off and ties it around my wrist



**Bartuccio follows me** into the woods and I slip in the mud as I elude him; I hide the Bulgar gold with a wet and soiled shirt



I tell **Zinon** that even if I lived a thousand years, I would never give up soldiering; he pours me a drink from a flask that smells of sulphur and roses; It burns my throat as I pass out hearing him whisper "we'll see"

## SKILLS

**Cleaves** enemies with a two-handed axe

**Sings** in a clear, strong baritone

**Carves** wood in the Norse style

## RESOURCES

A **velvet ribbon** from Angelia; I tie it into my chest piece

A **secret trove** of war spoils, buried in the woods

A **chainmail shirt** ornamented with rubies and dragons

## CHARACTERS

**Skard**, my fighting-partner and best friend in the whole world

**Angelia**, the Italian merchant's daughter I intend to marry

**Signore Bartuccio**; I insulted him in public and he swears he will take his revenge

**Zinon**, A Greek philosopher and immortal

## MARKS

I **cannot drink, or eat**, and the sight of others doing so makes me nauseous and weak.

# APPENDIX: БРҮП ИП 1698

## MEMORIES

**Angela's** infant body in the cot as we ride to the boat; her first meal; her first words; her first day at school; her first recital; her first dance; her first ...

Angela's sixteen year-old voice is pure and rich and as I teach her the aria; I mean only to stroke her neck, then only to drink lightly, but **I cannot stop!**

**Angela and I laughing** as we prick the head of Simon with hot needles and force him to tell us his secrets .



**Surrounded by heat and people in Cairo**, I wonder have I made a mistake coming her, but Angela — or *Angelia Orsini* as I must now call her — smiles as she says that they all look *delicious*.

I have been **walking for nearly a year** when I fall, emaciated and burnt, into the southern seas. As the magician commanded, I try to drown, but I cannot and float, exhausted and starving, to the surface.



Now **I remake myself as Albert Smith**, an Englishman who enlisted in the *tayfa-i efreciye* and moved to central Europe; I fight the foes of the Ottoman empire for gold and glory.

I have nothing now; Herr Speigler has stolen my other diary and **I am left with nothing but hate** for these mortals who destroy my peace.

A man has been asking disquieting questions about me; I engineer an unlucky accident for "Albert Smith" and re-join the army as **Bastien Chevrolet**



I send flowers to a lonely woman who has just moved into town; she will make a pleasant change after **a constant diet of thieves and prostitutes**.

I **study the man's body** as it expires in my arms, feeling the blood pump slower, sensing the impulses in his nerves slow, learning how his body works even as I kill him.



Yesterday I breathed in the scent of the earth, today I breathe it out, repeating this slow meditation as **I forget what I was and become centered in who I am**; Angela asks if I am ready, and I tell her *not now, but soon*.

## SKILLS

✓ **Sings** in a clear, strong baritone

**Carves** wood in the Norse style

✓ **Bloodthirsty** — strength but not control

✓ I Keenly **Observe** the mortals surrounding me

✓ **Burglary**; no doors or windows keep me out

When it is cold, I **can become a flurry of ice**

I have learned to **copy another's** mannerisms and style of talk, and never look out of place

**Anatomy**; I have learned how bodies work

## CHARACTERS

**Zinon**, A Greek philosopher and immortal

**The puppeteer**, an immortal who tolerates no others of his kind

**Jeanne**, a vampire with whom I had a brief liaison in France at the end of the twelfth century

**Angela**, whom I stole from her mother in Italy and raised in England as a replica of Angelia. I accidentally made her a vampire in 1578

## MARKS

I **cannot drink, or eat**, and the sight of others doing so makes me nauseous and weak.

**Ghosts** float around my body and whisper of how I killed them whenever I sleep.

When I feed, **church bells chime**

## RESOURCES

The **immortal head of Simon of Bamberg**; a reluctant advisor and magician who fruitlessly begs for death.

### DIARY: MY EARLIEST MEMORIES

I am Brynjar, a Norseman who enlisted in the Varangian Guard and moved to hot climes of southern Europe; I fight the foes of the Byzantine empire for gold and glory with my brothers in arms

The stars pinwheel about me as the seasons trip over themselves; I make no friends, no enemies, no memories — I sleep, I eat, I observe, but I do not live as a century passes

Having lost almost everything to the hunters; I cast my body into the arctic blizzard and feel it dissolve as I fly through the sky as cloud of ice.

## APPENDIX: BRYN AT HIS DEATH IN 1895

Consumed by rage at Angela's unsubtle threats to hurt young Simon, I drink the potion that will erase her from my mind and feel the acidic fumes burn my throat as **I forget the smiles, the laughter, the kisses, the dances, and ... everything.**

As I realize that I cannot make out my name or my country of origin in the diary anymore, **tears pour down my cheeks** — I have no anchor anymore; no base; no self.



I study my memories for days — **I must have been a doctor in the long past, who learned the secret of immortality** from my studies and, with my daughter Angela we went to Cairo to cure the city of the plague. It was there that the evil magician cursed me with the blood hunger

Simon cannot be mortal; he is the magician, spying on me; I **chain him to a pillar and char his flesh with hot irons**, but he is stubborn and dies before giving up his secrets.

**I find the immortal head** buried deep in the earth of my old Viennese house; it cries and screams as it asks why I abandoned him — I do not know the answer.



Putting on heavy makeup to disguise my skin, I **attend the party that celebrates my third book**; I bring a young female enthusiast back to my house for a late night snack.

The gendarme looks sharply at me as I walk away from the mutilated body, but years of resting in silence has taught me **how to fade into the scenery**, and his gaze moves on.

When I am hungry and in a rush, I pretend to be a *chauffeur de taxi* and **pick up a traveller** from the *Gare du Nord*.



With enough money, even an artists as famous as Delacroix will teach a diligent student; when he asks me why the urgency I realize that the answer is that I am in love with **Amélie duTour**, and I want to impress her.

**All my friends avoid me**; they have read the article that describes me as old, depraved — one who lusts after young women and does unimaginable things with them. They remember the times my make-up betrayed me, and the times I refused drink, or gagged when someone near me crunched a petit four. I am not invited to parties. I am not greeted in the street. Amélie returns my letter, unopened.



My fingers trace Rodin's sculpture with a slight sadness; **I will miss Simon**, but I needed a secure income, and the art is a joy!

In *Le Petit Parisian*, I read of Zinon's death at the hands of a mortal mob *Le Petit Parisian*. I find myself crying uncontrollably for this mysterious immortal, almost as if he were my father.

I am reading a diary that apparently once I wrote in England, centuries ago. it describes Zinon in detail, and I realize how the mortals were able to track him down.

## SKILLS

**Carves** wood in the Norse style

When it is cold, **I can become a flurry of ice**

**I Know What's Real**; The forces opposing me cannot hide from me, or pretend to be friends.

I can make myself **inconspicuous** with an effort of will and a minute of acting.

I **paint** passably well.

I read the papers daily, am strongly **aware of important current events**

## CHARACTERS

**The puppeteer**, an immortal who tolerates no others of his kind

**Jeanne**, a vampire with whom I had a brief liaison in France at the end of the twelfth century

**Angela**, whom I stole from her mother in Italy and raised in England as a replica of Angelia. I accidentally made her a vampire in 1578

**Amélie duTour**, dark-haired and beautiful beyond compare

## MARKS

**I cannot drink, or eat**, and the sight of others doing so makes me nauseous and weak.

**Ghosts** float around my body and whisper of how I killed them whenever I sleep.

When I feed, **church bells chime**

If worn close to circulating blood, the beating **sound of a pocket watch mesmerizes me**.

My **skin is yellow and leathery**, like centuries-old parchment

## RESOURCES

Ownership of *La Plume*, a thriving publishing company.

A set of five Rodin sculptures

A ready **source of occult items**

### DIARY: MY EARLIEST MEMORIES

I am ????? , a ????? who enlisted in the ????? and moved to hot climes of southern Europe; I fight the foes of the Byzantine empire for gold and glory with my brothers in arms

The stars pinwheel about me as the seasons trip over themselves; I make no friends, no enemies, no memories — I sleep, I eat, I observe, but I do not live as a century passes

Having lost almost everything, I cast my body into the arctic blizzard and feel it dissolve as I fly through the sky as cloud of ice.

### DIARY: IN EGYPT

Surrounded by heat and people in Cairo, I wonder have I made a mistake coming here, but Angela — or Angelia Orsini as I must now call her — says that they all look delicious.

I have been walking for nearly a year when I fall, emaciated and burnt, into the southern seas. As the magician commanded, I try to drown, but I cannot and float, exhausted and starving, to the surface.