

Alex Priest

PAGE ONE (three panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Close up of Alex's hands. They're pulling on black, leather, fingerless gloves. An outline of a cross can be seen on the back of them – a silver cross has been stitched into the back of each glove. Their hands look delicate, with long tapered fingers. Their nails are short; they're a nail biter.

INSERT PANEL TWO

We're looking at Alex from behind. They're wearing all black. It looks almost like tactical gear. Their pants – black jeans – are tucked into black, leather boots. They're wearing a tactical belt that holds small vials of holy water. Their shirt, which looks almost more like a sweater, has the sleeves pulled back, leaving their wrists and forearms bare. There's a large scar on their left forearm where a vampire had bitten them then torn away at their arm. Alex is in the process of slinging a crossbow over their back, like a rucksack. Strapped to each thigh is a holster for two long blades. They're wearing earbuds, but we can only see the wire leading from their ears and the outline of an MP3 player, strapped to their upper arm with a workout band.

CAPTION: FRIDAY. 1:02 AM

INSERT PANEL THREE

POPOUT

Close up of the screen on the MP3 player.

SCREEN: (scrolling) If I Had You

INSERT PANEL FOUR

SPLASH

Alex is sitting astride their motorcycle. It's a small, sleek machine of Japanese origin, the sort that looks more like a dirt bike than an actual motorcycle. The bike used to be a flashy yellow color, but Alex has used plastidip to turn it black – giving the machine a flat black look. The vehicle has no lights – not even headlights. Alex doesn't bother with a helmet. Behind them, we see that it's sunset – and the moon is already visible behind a corner of a tall building. Their hands are gripping the handlebars of their bike – their knuckles would be white if we could see them. They have a look of passive determination on their face.

ALEX: (softly, to the music) I know it don't matter...

SFX: (bike idling) ...dmm dmm dmm dmm dmm dmm...

TITLE:

Alex Priest

“The Merger”

PAGE TWO (three panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Alex has parked their bike at a cemetery; a kickstand keeps it upright as they walk away from the bike. Unlike page one – where tall buildings could be seen in the background – there are no buildings here. There's a line of trees on the horizon, hiding the last of the dying sunlight. The moon is boldly in the sky already.

INSERT PANEL TWO

The panel follows Alex stepping between grave sites as they make their way toward a mausoleum. The grave stones are well kept and the grounds are maintained regularly. They're taking off the cross bow, drawing back the bolt as they're walking. The mausoleum has large, glassless windows carved into the stone. A light can be seen flickering inside.

INSERT PANEL THREE

Close up of the door to the mausoleum. It is an old oak door that has splintered open at the hinges. Alex's boot is visible, kicking open the door. Light streams out from the cracks in the door.
SFX: (door) CRAAAACKKK!!

PAGE THREE (one panel)

INSERT PANEL ONE

SPLASH

Looking into the mausoleum, we don't see the expected sarcophagus. Instead, the interior seems to have been decorated by a fraternity. Old, worn couches line the perimeter of the small room. In the center is a cheap coffee table. A young woman – maybe twenty years of age – is laying on the table, looking like nothing more than a broken doll. She has neat puncture marks – in sets of two – on her exposed thigh, arm and neck. Blood has pooled around her neck, matting her fake, blonde hair. There are three vampires on the scene – two males and one female. The men are dressed in jeans and novelty t-shirts – the sort one would pick up from a comic book store – that have been ruined by old blood stains. The men are lounging on the beat up couches, while the woman is crouching by their meal. Her eyes are intense, glowing up at Alex – whom is not pictured in the scene. Her features are twisted into a snarl. The males are smiling arrogantly.

MALE VAMP: We've got ourselves a hunter.

SFX: (female vamp) HSSSSSSS

PAGE FOUR (four panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

The third vampire – the silent male – launches himself from his place on the couch. His body is arched, like a cat pouncing on an unsuspecting mouse. His arms are stretched at his sides, his fingers long and clawed. His mouth is open in a growl, exposing his sharp, dangerous fangs.

VAMP: This one is mine!

INSERT PANEL TWO

Close up of Alex's crossbow. It's smaller than the traditional crossbow, fitting neatly in Alex's right hand. A bolt is loaded. The bolt lacks any head – that an arrow may have – it's solid wood.

SFX: (crossbow) CLICCK

INSERT PANEL THREE

The vampire lands on Alex, but they maintained their footing. His fangs are aimed at their neck, but their left hand shot up – catching the vampire about his throat. The crossbow is pressed against the vampire's chest – so he's nearly laying upon the weapon. The bolt can be seen clearly, protruding from the vampire's back.

INSERT PANEL FOUR

The vampire falls back, landing hard upon the stone floor. The crossbow bolt is lodged in his chest, piercing his heart. His features are frozen in an expression of horror – his mouth open in a silent scream. The vampire is more gaunt than before; he's beginning to decompose at an accelerated rate.

SFX: (vampire falling) THUD

PAGE FIVE (four panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Focus on the other male vampire. He's crouched on the far couch, holding a blue, glowing orb. His features are just as fierce as the female's, having just witnessed his comrade's death. The orb is emitting some form of energy

MALE VAMP: We're getting out of here.

SFX: (orb) wooamm wooamm wooamm

INSERT PANEL TWO

Close up of the vampire. He's focused on the orb. The glow from the orb has gotten brighter.

SFX: (orb) wooamm wooamm

INSERT PANEL THREE

Panel focuses on Alex. Their arm flies up, protecting their eyes from the intensifying glow of the orb. The light from the orb is so bright, we cannot see anything beyond Alex and the bright blue/white light.

SFX: (orb) wooammm

INSERT PANEL FOUR

The light from the orb is suddenly gone. Alex is looking about the mausoleum, looking for the pair of vampires. They're gone. All trace of the vampires has disappeared. The mausoleum looks dusty, uninhabited – like one would expect it to. Alex stands there, numb, stunned at what she'd witnessed. The orb can be seen – very barely – glowing softly under one of the couches.

ALEX:shit.

PAGE SIX (five panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Focus in on an office door. It's a clouded privacy glass so we cannot see through it, but we can see shapes on the other side of the door. There's a long rectangular desk in the center of the room and two people standing in front of it facing one another. There's a name on the office door, stenciled in gold lettering.

DOOR: LC&B

DOOR: Andrea Knight CEO

MUFFLED VOICE:...I know what I saw, Andie...

CAPTION: Friday. 10:08 AM

INSERT PANEL TWO

Inside the office. It's hardly decorated. The greatest evidence of the office even being used is the stacks of paper work on the simple, brown desk. The curtains in the office are drawn, casting the room in shadow. Alex is standing in front of the desk. They're dressed more casually now than before. Andrea – a slender, petite woman in her late thirties, leans against the desk. She's dressed smartly in a multiple piece skirt suit and heels so tall they make her of average height. Her arms are crossed over her ample bosom, looking defensive.

ANDREA: Vampires can't use magic-

ALEX: They didn't. They had an... orb of some sort.

INSERT PANEL THREE

Close up of Andrea. Her arms are still crossed over her chest. She has one hand on her forehead, her fingers steeped over her temple. Her eyes are closed – brows knitted. She's shaking her head.

ANDREA: This isn't good. But...

INSERT PANEL FOUR

The panel shifts to Alex. Their features are tight – frustrated. They're frowning – her thin lips looking fuller as if almost pouting.

ALEX: But...?

ANDREA: (not pictured) What you're saying... matches our reports.

INSERT PANEL SIX

Close up of Alex's face. Their brows are high; eyes wide. Their mouth is a perfect, thin 'o' of surprise. Their hair is almost brushed away from their face, as if they quickly raised their head in surprise, sweeping the hair back. Background of the panel conveys their surprise further.

ALEX: Reports??

PAGE SEVEN (two panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

SPLASH

Outside of a suburban home. The yard – from a distance – appears well maintained, but one can see weeds have taken hold of the corners of the yard and cracks of the walkway. The house appears clean – the paint looks fresh and the small porch surrounding the front door is clear of clutter or debris. The curtains are drawn, keeping the occupants safe from onlookers – and sunlight.

CAPTION: Friday. 11:45 AM

SFX: (alarm clock) BRRT BBRRT BBBRRT!!

INSERT PANEL TWO

Inside the house. Scene is of the bedroom. There are clothes on the floor, and the curtains are drawn like those in the front of the house. There's a pile of laundry on the bed. The alarm clock continues to sound from its position on a stand beside the bed. Beside – and almost under – the pile of laundry is a human shaped lump.

SFX: (alarm clock) BRRT BRRT!!

PAGE EIGHT (five panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Panel focuses on the pile of laundry on the bed. An arm emerges from the pile, reaching for the alarm clock, which continues to sound. The hand trembles, as if it's taking a great deal of effort to move.

SFX: (alarm clock) BRRRRRRRTTTTTT!!!!

INSERT PANEL TWO

Scene is of the wall opposite the bed. The alarm clock is thrown across the room. It lands against the opposite wall. The force of the blow, causes the corner of the curtain to flow backward, letting in only a sliver of light from outside.

SFX: (clock hitting the wall) Crackk

INSERT PANEL THREE

Focus on the floor beside the bed. The pile of clothes is pushed off the bed by someone not yet seen in the panel. We see the clothes falling onto the floor.

SFX: (Janelle) grunt

INSERT PANEL FOUR

Scene shows Janelle from behind. She's almost hunched over as she walks away from the bed. She's dressed in a matching set of pajamas that are pink and feature the faces of cartoon characters. We note, however, that her socks don't match. One hand is in her hair – scratching her head – as she walks away from the bed.

INSERT PANEL FIVE

Inside the bathroom. Scene shows Janelle's hand flipping on a light switch. The wall is a sterile white – tile can be seen on the floor, contrasting with the carpet of the bedroom.

PAGE NINE (four panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Janelle faces her reflection in the bathroom mirror. Her hair is a curly mess. Her eyes are narrowed, blinking into the bright light that is shining from just above the mirror. Janelle's reflection only reaches half way up the length of the mirror – illustrating how short she is.

JANELLE: (mumbling) Where are they...?

INSERT PANEL TWO

Janelle opens the medicine cabinet of the bathroom by swinging the mirror aside. The medicine cabinet is mostly empty with the exception of the most essential toiletries. There's a cup style toothbrush holder that holds a hot pink toothbrush. A tube of children's toothpaste is set beside the toothbrush. A pair of glasses is in the cup beside the toothbrush.

INSERT PANEL THREE

Scene pans out. Janelle is fully within the panel now. She's holding the glasses in one hand. The other rubs the lenses of the glasses clean with the bottom of her shirt. Her eyes are still squinting, blinking in the light.

Janelle: There they are.

INSERT PANEL FOUR

Janelle puts on her glasses. She looks at herself in the mirror, her eyes finally fully open. Her hands push her mass of hair away from her face.

SFX: (phone) boop boop boop

PAGE TEN (four panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Janelle moves back into her bedroom. She's looking at the pile of laundry on the floor. She's rubbing the back of her neck, exasperated.

SFX: (phone) boop boop boop

JANELLE: Now what?

INSERT PANEL TWO

Janelle gets down on her knees beside the pile of laundry. We see laundry flying over her shoulder as she searches through the mess.

INSERT PANEL THREE

POP OUT

Close up of Janelle's phone. The screen blinks alive showing that she has a text message from Duke.

SFX: (phone) boop boop boop

TEXT: You're late.

INSERT PANEL FOUR

Janelle sits on the floor beside the bed – leaning her back against the bed. She holds the phone in her lap. Her head is bowed – seemingly defeated.

JANELLE: (sighing) Again?

PAGE ELEVEN (five panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Scene shifts away from Janelle's home and back to the offices of LC&B. The scene is of a board room. There's long table that sits in the center of the room. Three people sit at it – Alex, Andrea and Duke.

ANDREA: Is she always this late?

DUKE: Not typically...

CAPTION: Friday 11:15am

INSERT PANEL TWO

Panel focuses in on the three sitting around one end of the long meeting table. Andrea sits across from Duke, with Alex sitting beside Andrea. Andrea has a file in front of her. She's playing with the corner of the file – a nervous habit. Alex sits with their arms crossed over their chest, looking bored. Duke is rubbing his brow, looking particularly put out.

ANDREA: We can work with someone else, Duke.

DUKE: (snorting) There isn't a better magic analyst in the country, Andrea.

DUKE: She'll be here.

INSERT PANEL THREE

Outside the board room. There's a desk outside the room. A bored looking middle aged man sits at the desk, fielding phone calls.

MAN: Sir... Sir. I understand your concern, but unless your mother-in-law is actually dead AND blood sucking, there's not much we can do for you.

SFX: (man) sighhh

INSERT PANEL FOUR

The man leans back in his chair. Over his shoulder, we can see the door has a placard with the company name printed on it. The man's eyes are closed, as if he's trying to focus or keep his cool.

MAN: No, sir. We are not in the business of *creating* vampires. Our services include the destruction and removal of vampires.

MAN: ... It sounds like you'll just have to invite your mother-in-law to dinner like your wife wants.

INSERT PANEL FIVE

POPOUT

Scene moves behind the man at the desk. We're looking at him from behind as he fields the phone call. Our attention is drawn to a clock on the wall that shows 11:30 as the current time.

MAN: ... That's not an option...?

PAGE TWELVE (five panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Outside of a nondescript office building. The sun is high overhead with few clouds in the sky. It's a wide view of the building – Janelle can just be made out, making her way through the front door.

CAPTION: 11:56 am

INSERT PANEL TWO

Janelle is seen walking – very quickly – down a hall toward the man sitting at the desk. She's dressed in a pantsuit, but she skipped a button on her blouse. Her hair is pulled back at the nape of her neck, causing her curly hair to flow behind her. A laptop bag is slung across her body, bouncing on her hip. The man is still looking very bored, but is now clearly exasperated with whomever he's speaking to on the phone.

MAN: Wait, wait, wait.

MAN: Did you actually *see* your mother-in-law drinking human blood, sir?

INSERT PANEL THREE

Janelle bursts into the conference room. Duke and Andrea look up at Janelle as she enters – Duke looking disappointed as Andrea is annoyed. Alex does not look up – instead, continues to look bored, leaning back in their chair.

JANELLE: I'm here!

JANELLE: I'm here, sorry I'm late.

INSERT PANEL FOUR

Focus on Andrea. She flips open the file she has before her, seemingly uninterested in anything else Janelle might have to say.

ANDREA: Well...

ANDREA: ...now that Janelle is finally here, we can get on to business.

INSERT PANEL FIVE

POPOUT

Close up of Alex. Their eyes brighten as something clearly spikes their interest. Alex finally looks up toward Janelle, looking equally hopeful and apprehensive.

PAGE THIRTEEN (two panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

SPLASH

Janelle stops, halfway through sitting down in her chair beside Duke. She's looking directly at Alex. Shock is clear on her features as she realizes who she will be working with. Her glasses slip down her nose, just a bit. Alex is looking up at Janelle – their eyes locking. Alex looks surprised, her jaw slack. Andrea and Duke seem to be faded in the background, though it's clear that the two are carrying on with their previous conversation.

INSERT PANEL TWO

Close up of Janelle. She pushes her glasses back into place, not looking away from Alex.

JANELLE: Alex...

PAGE FOURTEEN (six panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Flashback. Alex is sitting in a high backed office chair in their study. The walls are covered with bookcases, holding old looking books. Alex is dressed in jeans and a white t-shirt. They're tending to a fresh wound on their arm. There's a bloody wooden stake on the desk before them.

JANELLE: (not pictured) Alex?

INSERT PANEL TWO

Flashback. Alex stops what they're doing to quickly hide the stake in a drawer.

INSERT PANEL THREE

Flashback. Scene from over Alex's shoulder. Janelle is standing in the doorway. She's frowning, looking concerned. We cannot see Alex's face.

JANELLE: What happened to you?

INSERT PANEL FOUR

Flashback. Janelle steps toward Alex, reaching for them. Alex – at that same moment – stands from the chair, taking a step back and away from Janelle.

ALEX: It's nothing...

JANELLE: You're bleeding, Alex.

INSERT PANEL FIVE

POPOUT

Flashback. Close up of Alex. They look fierce – almost afraid and certainly in pain.

ALEX: I said it's nothing!

INSERT PANEL SIX

Flashback. Alex storms out the door. Janelle watches Alex leave, looking sad.

PAGE FIFTEEN (four panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Flashback. Alex stands on the porch, outside of the house. They are still holding the compress to their bleeding arm. They're holding a cell phone – a couple generations old – to their ear. They look agitated.

ALEX: (hushed) I was almost outed.

ALEX: (hushed) I can't keep up a front like this.

INSERT PANEL TWO

Flashback. Alex looks up at the night sky. There's no other light other than that from the moon. It almost illuminates their face. They're frowning, not liking whatever they're hearing from the other side of the phone.

ALEX: If I'm going to be attacked at home, I'd rather she know...

ALEX:You don't have to trust her. I trust her--

INSERT PANEL THREE

Flashback. Alex sighs, looking defeated. They lean against the house, looking completely resigned.

ALEX: (sighing) Understood.

ALEX: I'll report for duty in the evening.

INSERT PANEL FOUR

Flashback: Alex hangs up the phone, flipping it closed. They look through the window, into the house. Janelle is sitting on the couch, holding her head in her hands, clearly looking upset.

ALEX: (softly) I'm sorry.

PAGE SIXTEEN (three panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Back in the boardroom. Janelle finally takes her seat. She and Alex continue to stare at one another. Janelle is sighing, as everything finally comes together for her. Alex still looks surprised and bewildered as to why Janelle is there now.

JANELLE: (sighing) So this is why you left.

INSERT PANEL TWO

Scene pans out so Duke and Andrea are in the shot once more. The two handlers are actively discussing something, but neither Alex nor Janelle seem to be paying much attention. Janelle looks generally unimpressed. Alex looks completely unmoved.

ALEX: It was part of the job...

DUKE: (talking over Alex) ... then it's decided.

INSERT PANEL THREE

Focus on Janelle. Janelle looks taken aback.

JANELLE: What's been decided?

PAGE SEVENTEEN (six panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Focus in on Duke as he explains what he and Andrea had been discussing during the flashback.

DUKE: The bloodsuckers are using magic. So we need a team that can handle vampires and can handle magic.

DUKE: Janelle is the best magic analyst we have.

INSERT PANEL TWO

Duke turns to look at Andrea. He's casually pointing to Alex with his pen.

DUKE: You said she's the best hunter you have--

INSERT PANEL THREE

Pan out from the previous scene. The panel looks at Janelle, Alex and Andrea from Duke's point of view. Alex continues to sit, looking bored.

JANELLE: They.

ANDREA: They.

INSERT PANEL FOUR

POPOUT

Duke blinks, looking stunned for a moment. Alex finally looks up. Alex shrugs, saying nothing.

INSERT PANEL FOUR

Duke quickly recovers, smiling at Andrea. Andrea seems wholly unimpressed by him.

DUKE: They are the best hunter you have. It's a brilliant plan.

INSERT PANEL FIVE

Andrea stands from her seat, gathering her papers into the file before her.

ANDREA: Then the two of you will investigate the nest Alex discovered last night. We need to be prepared for our next encounter.

INSERT PANEL SIX

Focus on Alex and Janelle. The two look at one another. Neither looks particularly pleased with the arrangement.

PAGE EIGHTEEN (two panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

SPLASH

The scene is underground – or in an above ground cave. The scenery is characterized by rock formations, marking the cave as very, very old. A vampire is sitting on the ground, leaning with his back against a stalagmite. His manner paints him as intoxicated. A demon lies lifeless beside him – the demon's head in his lap. Two other vampires stand before the drunken vampire. One of the sober vampires can be recognized as one of the vampires from the opening scene.

DRUNK VAMP: (giggling) Can I interest you boys in some vitamin D?

CAPTION: Somewhere underground

INSERT PANEL TWO

Focus in on the three vampires. The intoxicated vampire holds up the dead demon's head by the horns. The vampire is grinning madly, blood dripping a line from his fangs down his chin. The two sober vampires look at one another, obviously worried.

DRUNK VAMP: (giggling) Taste the magic, boys.

SOBER VAMP ONE: The boss said d-blood was forbidden...

DEMON: (not pictured) You're right. I did.

PAGE NINETEEN (five panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Focus on the intoxicated vampire. A blue aura begins to glow about him. He notices the light, and watches the glow with unfocused eyes.

DRUNK VAMP: Woah...

INSERT PANEL TWO

A stalagmite grows rapidly from the formation that the drunk vamp is leaning against. The growth thrusts through the vampire's chest, piercing his heart. The stalagmite is the source of the blue glow – it continues to glow even as it is thrust through the vampire's chest. The drunken vampire arches his back in pain.

DRUNK VAMP: (screaming) AAAAGGHHH!!

SFX: (stone stake) SHUNKK!!

INSERT PANEL THREE

Scene pans out. The intoxicated vampire lies against the stalagmite as lifeless as the demon that remains in his lap. The two sober vampires look around for the source of the voice as the blue aura begins to fade.

DEMON: (not pictured) I don't know to make myself more clear.

INSERT PANEL FOUR

The two sober vampires look toward a demon that approaches them. The demon is not physically imposing, but he sports a pair of horns that are long and curled – they almost braid behind him. The intoxicated vampire begins to decompose on the stone stake. The blue aura has dissipated completely.

SOBER VAMP ONE: (surprised) Boss!

INSERT PANEL FIVE

Close up of the demon. He's snarling, exposing impressive looking fangs.

DEMON: I didn't unite us all so you bottom feeders could suck us dry!

DEMON: Where's the orb?

PAGE TWENTY (five panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Pan out. The two vampires look at one another nervously. The vampire from the first scene rubs the back of his neck. The demon looks annoyed.

SOBER VAMP TWO: There was a hunter...

DEMON: There will always be a hunter!

INSERT PANEL TWO

Close up of the demon. He bows his head, sighing.

DEMON: Here.

INSERT PANEL THREE

Focus in on the demon's clawed hand. It glows in that same blue aura. A dagger appears in his hand. Runes are carved into the steel of the blade.

INSERT PANEL FOUR

The demon tosses the blade to the first vampire.

DEMON: Use this. Get that orb back.

SOBER VAMPIRE ONE: As you command.

INSERT PANEL FIVE

The demon watches, arms crossed over his broad chest, as the two vampires run off to do his bidding.

DEMON: I'm going to move us up the food chain.

PAGE TWENTY-ONE (five panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Scene shifts to the graveyard from the first scene. Focus on the mausoleum that hosted the vampire nest. The door is left ajar – a light can be seen filtering out into the night from the door.

ALEX: (not pictured) I don't know what you're trying to prove...

CAPTION: 10:42pm

INSERT PANEL TWO

Inside the mausoleum. Alex leans against an overturned beat up looking couch, looking bored. Their arms are crossed over their chest, watching Janelle. Janelle is in an opposite corner, setting up some kind of sensor or monitoring device.

ALEX: There's nothing left here.

INSERT PANEL THREE

Janelle crouches beside another couch opposite Alex. She sets up another monitor, making sure it's in line with the previous one. She has a laptop set up on the coffee table behind her. We see a graph starting to appear on the screen.

JANELLE: There are no vampires.

JANELLE: But I should still be able to detect a magical signature.

INSERT PANEL FOUR

Janelle plops down on the beat up couch, with her laptop balanced on her knees. Her hands fly over the keys of her laptop. The scene shows the mausoleum over the shoulder of Janelle. We can see more graphs developing on the screen as Alex watches on – very obviously bored with the proceedings.

JANELLE: When demons use magic, it leaves traces behind in the atmosphere. Like lightning striking. The air is... burned. My sensors can detect that magic burn.

JANELLE: Then I can identify the kind of magic that was used and trace it back to whoever or whatever made it.

INSERT PANEL FIVE

Janelle looks up from her computer to look at Alex. Alex looks out the door of the mausoleum into the night.

JANELLE: ...and you stopped listening.

PAGE TWENTY-TWO (three panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Outside the mausoleum. A small, mixed group of vampires and demons come upon their old nest. The two vampires from the underground are there. One is holding the blade he was given. With them are two demons. The vampire from the first scene is cracking his knuckles.

DEMON: The boss was right. They did come back.

FIRST VAMP: Then let's get them. I'm ready for a little payback.

INSERT PANEL TWO

Inside the mausoleum. The first vampire charges ahead of the others. His hands are extended with claw like fingers – his teeth are bared. He's launching himself at Alex who is still leaning against the sarcophagus.

VAMPIRE: The hunter is mine!

INSERT PANEL THREE

SPLASH

The scene is a moment frozen in time. The vampire is launching himself at Alex. Alex hears the vampire's war cry and reaches for their crossbow. Straight-armed, Alex points the crossbow at the vampire and fires.

SFX: (crossbow) CLICKK

PAGE TWENTY-THREE (five panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

The vampire falls to the floor of the mausoleum. The bolt from Alex's crossbow is sunk deep in his chest. The vampire is already starting to decompose.

INSERT PANEL TWO

Janelle doesn't look up from her laptop. She's completely oblivious to what is happening around her.

JANELLE: Fascinating...

JANELLE: ...it says I'm sitting right on top of the source...

INSERT PANEL THREE

Alex loads another bolt into their crossbow. They look over at Janelle who is now on her knees beside the couch she was previously sitting on.

ALEX: We need to get out of here.

INSERT PANEL FOUR

Janelle is looking under the couch. There's a furniture cover or sheet over the couch which Janelle lifts to see under the couch. We cannot see what Janelle sees, but something glows a bright blue in the dark.

JANELLE: Oh my...

INSERT PANEL FIVE

Scene is from Janelle's point of view. Under the couch, is the blue magical orb from the opening scene.

JANELLE: (not pictured) I *was* sitting on top of it...

PAGE TWENTY-FOUR (five panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

The two demons from outside the mausoleum teleport inside in a flash of light. Their eyes glow with power. Alex shields their eyes from the light.

DEMON ONE: Get the orb!

INSERT PANEL TWO

Alex draws the blade from their thigh holster. Focus in on the action of their hand.

INSERT PANEL THREE

The second vampire rushes into the mausoleum. One of his hands is on Alex's shoulder, pushing them back. The other hand holds the dagger he was given earlier. The dagger is aimed at Alex's throat. Alex is falling onto their back, having pulled the blade from its holster.

VAMPIRE: Remember me?

INSERT PANEL FOUR

POPOUT

Alex's blade crosses the vampire's dagger. The two combatant's weapons are locked against one another as Alex and the vampire struggle. Focus in on the weapons.

SFX: (blades clashing) shinkk!

INSERT PANEL FIVE

Pan out from the previous panel. The vampire's other hand is clasped around Alex's throat. Alex's hand is gripping the vampire's wrist, trying to resist the urge to pass out from lack of oxygen.

PAGE TWENTY-FIVE (six panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

POPOUT

A gun is fired in the mausoleum. Panel focuses in on the handgun as it fires.

SFX: (gunfire) Bang!

INSERT PANEL TWO

The vampire that was on top of Alex collapses onto the floor. The vampire's head has been cracked nearly in half – brain matter and skull fragments litter the floor where he fell.

INSERT PANEL THREE

The two demons turn to look at the source of the gunshot. Janelle is sitting on the couch, holding the gun in both hands. She's looking honestly surprised – despite being the one who fired. The orb is glowing on the coffee table before her.

INSERT PANEL FOUR

The glowing orb rolls off the table. One of the demons reaches out, catching the orb before it hits the floor. Panel focuses in on the orb falling into the hand of the demon.

INSERT PANEL FIVE

Scene pans out. Janelle continues to sit, stunned. Alex is struggling to their feet, still holding a hand to their throat. Bruises are starting to form on their neck. The two demons look at one another. The demons are glowing with the same blue power that the orb has.

DEMON: We got what we came for. Let's get out of here.

INSERT PANEL SIX

The demons disappear in a flash of light. Alex and Janelle are left looking at one another.

JANELLE: ...do we have to tell Duke about this?

PAGE TWENTY-SIX (five panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Back at LC&B that same night. Alex and Janelle are sitting in Andrea's office with their handlers. Duke is standing by the window with his hands clasped behind his back, looking serious. Andrea stands, leaning against her desk, crossing her arms over her chest. Alex and Janelle sit in two chairs opposite her.

DUKE: So you let the monsters get away.

CAPTION: 12:03am

INSERT PANEL TWO

Focus in on Alex and Janelle. Alex is back to looking bored. They're crossing their arms, looking up at Andrea – almost completely ignoring Duke. Janelle looks at Duke pleadingly.

JANELLE: We were outnumbered.

JANELLE: Alex killed two of them!

DUKE: And the demons ran off with whatever they came for.

INSERT PANEL THREE

Andrea rubs her brow, looking frustrated and exhausted. She looks over at Duke.

ANDREA: So we're back where we started.

INSERT PANEL FOUR

Duke finally turns around to face the room. He's angry – his hands gesturing to his frustration as he speaks.

DUKE: No! Those monsters got the drop on us. They swooped in, got the magical artifact and ran off with little resistance from our side.

DUKE: We don't know how many monsters are involved. We don't know where they're hiding. We don't know what they're planning.

DUKE: We know no more than we did before we wasted time going back to that nest.

INSERT PANEL FIVE

Scene pans out to see the reactions of the other three characters in response to Duke's outburst. Andrea looks resigned – Alex is unchanged. Janelle is flinching, as if she'd been struck.

PAGE TWENTY-SEVEN (four panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Focus in on Andrea. She removes her glasses. She rubs her eyes with one hand, holding her glasses loosely in the other.

ANDREA: So we start fresh tomorrow. Next time we won't come back empty handed.

ALEX: (not pictured) Well...

INSERT PANEL TWO

Scene pans out to include the whole room. All eyes are on Alex, indicating that they were the one who spoke up in the previous panel.

INSERT PANEL THREE

Alex reaches into the holster on their thigh. Their hand grasps a hilt of a blade that looks much older than the one they had previously been brandishing.

ALEX: We're not *completely* empty handed...

INSERT PANEL FOUR

Alex produces the ancient dagger than the demon had given the vampire Alex had fought. All eyes are on the blade – which is the focus of the panel.

ALEX: ...we'll just track them from this.

PAGE TWENTY-EIGHT (four panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Underground demon hide out. The two demons from the mausoleum appear with the orb in hand. The demon with the braided horns sits on a throne of bones. One of the armrests can be recognized as the intoxicated vampire from earlier.

BRAIDED HORNS: Did you retrieve the orb?

CAPTION: Somewhere under the city

INSERT PANEL TWO

The two demons approach the braided horns, offering the orb.

DEMON ONE: It was too easy.

DEMON TWO: The humans are unorganized. That vampire almost slew the hunter.

INSERT PANEL THREE

Close up of the braided horns. His face is illuminated by the orb which he is now holding. He's smirking, obviously pleased by what he hears.

BRAIDED HORNS: That is very, very good news.

INSERT PANEL FOUR

The demon with the braided horns stands from his throne of bodies. The two other demons take a couple steps back – not wanting to be too close to him.

BRAIDED HORNS: The vampire hunter will be least prepared at dawn.

BRAIDED HORNS: Strike then.

END