

I stood on Main Street wearing the ugly orange tunic me and the other members of the Scooby gang were forced to wear while helping to clean up after the mess of the recent “earthquake”. I was very pleased with myself that Raine and the others had believed they had forced me onto the cleanup crew as a volunteer. Truth be told, being flung over Raine’s shoulder so I was eye level with her butt wasn’t a very bad thing to happen to a guy. Course, Delia was the one I would rather be looking at, sigh... when was she going to realize she was a girl?

“I’m hungry.” I spoke aloud while leaning on my broom.

“After we finish this storefront we can go over to the police tent, they’re serving burgers for all the volunteers.” Raine pointed out as she straightened a trash bin. Trim started sweeping the sidewalk with renewed energy. “What are we waiting for, get moving people!”

No one noticed Trim’s sweeping seemed to keep him in front of three particular storefronts, or that he spent several minutes staring at each in turn and mumbling under his breath as workers nailed plywood sheets over the wide-open windows.



The Day After
By Brad Lord

Later that day;

“Trim! Wait a minute!” Delia called as she rushed out the door of the Double-R. The Scooby meeting had finally broken up and everyone had rushed off to do whatever floated his or her boats.

I turned around to see Delia looking wonderful as usual, her hair, pulled back in a ponytail was very... “What’s up, Deal?” I asked turning around to greet her.

“I wanted to talk to you for a few minutes.”

“Sure, I was just gonna see how they were doin’ at getting all those shop windows boarded up. Wouldn’t want stuff to go missin’.” I said with a wink and a sly look towards Main Street.

“I wanted to let you know that I’m going to see Maryann tomorrow morning. I want to tell her about the spell we cast. I thought we should tell her together. I want to find a way to cleanse myself of its effects. I thought maybe it was something we could do together.”

“I don’t know why you need to tell her. We just cast a spell. No big.”

“It was evil. Couldn’t you feel how it crawled across your skin?”

“It just felt powerful to me. I don’t need to be cleansed. We should just let her be so she can recover.

Delia frowned at me. “If *we* don’t tell her, Jacqueline will. We’re better off telling her ourselves and explaining the dire situation. Contrite behavior could help keep from killing us.”

“What the Frell does contrite mean?” I thought to myself. “Whatever. I’m not contrite; we did what needed to be done. We used powerful magicks to fight powerful magicks. We didn’t do anything wrong.”

“Apparently we don’t see it the same way.” Delia brushed her fingers through her brown hair, looking sexy as she pushed back a tendril that had escaped her ponytail. “I doubt your Grans is going to see it the same way either.”

“Jacqueline already took the book from me and I’m really sick of both of you hounding me about it.”

“Whatever.” Delia shook her head. “I’m going to tell her tomorrow morning at ten. You can be there then or not, your choice.” Spinning on her heel, Delia stormed down the sidewalk. Seeing Dare and Wylie speaking intently, she shifted directions again and crossed the street.

“What the hell is wrong with people?” I roared out drawing strange looks from both Dare and Wylie.

“Hey Trim what’s up?” Wylie asked as she sauntered over.

“Nuthin’ you can help me with ‘Miss Super Southern Belle Slayer on the Popularity A-List Girl!’” and did a little storming away myself.

After the Sun goes down:

“Great! The maintenance crews haven’t fixed the streetlights yet, everything is still dark. Hmmm...gotta do this quick, but one at a time.”

A shadowy bulk ran up to what was once the front window of one of the few clothes stores in town: “The Gap”.

The bulky shadow whispered a single word, “release”. About fifty pinpricks of blue light appeared around the edge of the plywood covering the shattered window space. At first, nothing else seemed to happen, then the shadow made a quiet grunt and the plywood began to move outwards away from the storefront, floating gently to a stop about 5 feet away, but still level with the window frame.

The bulk moved into the store, “Hmmm...nice leather jacket! It’s just my size too, and these sneakers will help me run from the jocks, Oooo! I need a new pair of jeans!” The items seemed to disappear into the bulk’s shadowy form.

“OK, that’s it for here. Times short gotta go.” Slipping through the space between frame and plywood, again the shadow whispered a word, almost as if speaking to the plywood itself, “return”.

The plywood sheet moved easily through the air and silently re-nailed itself to the storefront. This procedure repeated itself in front of the ‘Computers-R-Us’ Store and in front of ‘Hyper-Gate: The Fantasy and Sci-Fi Store’

“Ahhh... finally finished my Phantom Wars DVD Collection!” exclaimed the bulk. Beep, Beep, Beep, Beep... “Oops, times almost up, the security cameras will all be coming back online in just two minutes!”

The shadowy bulk moved off into the even deeper shadows of an ally way “I’d love to see the Cop’s faces when they try to fig’r this one out!”

“Eh... They’ll probably just think the stuff went missin’ dur’n the looting after the `quake. They just won’t know how *long* after it happened! HAH!”

The shadow stopped for a moment as if it listened to something.

“Ahhh... There go the security cameras, right on time!”

The shadow moved more quickly now, maneuvering through the back ways of the darkened town, pausing only a second or two as if it searched for something, or someone.

“The girls must still be patrolling the cemetery; I should be able to get home without...”

A scream in the night.

“Damn! Damn, damn, damn, damn, DAMN! Eh... It ain’t my trouble, one of the Slayers shoulda been *in* town.”

Another scream, this one cut off with a gurgle.

“Aww HELL! That’s close by! I guess this is a job for Trim the Magnificent!”

Around the corner into the grocery store’s loading area the bulk went.

It came upon a grizzly scene of blood and gore, one girl on the ground dead, another girl struggling with a vampire. A rock flies out of the dark, striking the vamp in the head.

“LET HER GO!” yells the shadow.

“Huh? What?” Exclaimed the vampire turning to face the shadow.

“Oww! That hurts!

“Pete? Peter Raphanello? *YOU’RE* a vampire!?”

“AHHHHHH!” screams the girl.

“Missy? Is that you?”

The shadow sounded both perplexed and amused.

Shoving the girl to the ground the vamp turned to face the shadow, “Whatta you want fatso? HUH? She’s too good lookin’ fer a nerd like you.” It sneered. “Go home to yer momma tubby, she needs a man!”

“Well that leaves you outta the running, Mr. ‘my face looks like it’s been hit by a truck!’ ” Did Deal just possess me?

“You’re not impressing me lard butt, leave now an’ I won’t pound on you.” The vamp turned back to the girl.

“AAAIIIIIIIEEEEEE!”

“But I always pay my debts maggots-for-brains.”

“What? You owe her something?”

“Her? No, I owe you somethin’”

“Me? What could you possibly owe me fat-ass?”

“I owe you *PAIN!*”

Lightning lanced out from the bulky form.

The vamp screamed, convulsing in pain before being incinerated.

The Shadow laughed, maniacally.

The Girl passed out, quietly.

“Hah! Take away *my* book will ya.”

The shadow moved over the fallen girl.

“Cripes Missy your heavy!” it complained. “I’ll hafta put... unhhh... her someplace... unhhh... lighted, where... unhhh... the cops can... unhhh... find her... arrggg... real quick.”

Laying the sleeping form delicately on a bench in front of the police station, the shadowy bulk moved off a little ways to watch and wait. Soon the girl was found by Farmingham’s finest.

“She’ll be all right now.” Muttered the shadow.