

## Never B PeaCe

By Jeffrey "Boosie" Bolden

The taste of her lips was still apparent to the young Aztec warrior as he stood on the roof of the dilapidated project building. He envisioned the stout, young woman with short jet black hair and deep, dark eyes standing on her tip-toes and he remembered that was one of the few instances where he knew love under the bright moonlight. He remembered how soft her body was under her clothes, and a tear rarely cried had fallen on his face. He shook out of his daydream and his eyes lowered in determination. His mission was evident now, and failure had become something that could not be foreseen.

The year was 2059, and in the Greater Los Angeles, gangs had mutated into more than a social disease. It had grown into a physical one. Bloods, Crips, Brown Pride, and other miscellaneous gangs had mutated physically as their souls had grown even more corrupted under evil influences. Gangs of the past were no more. Now Bloods had become blood-thirsty and powerful vampires with red eyes that had the ability to seer souls. Crips had the ability to turn at will into snarling, vicious lycans with powerful jaws that could crush even the greatest metals and a skin that glowed with a blue tint. The Aztec Warrior was a different breed of dangerous. Even though they didn't undergo extreme changes that the other meta-gangs went through, Aztec Warriors had the ability to become a hundred times stronger and faster than they previously were, and that caused the ones chosen to become Aztec Warriors seem like superheroes of the gang-infested realm of Greater Los Angeles.

The young man seemed to be falling as the cool Los Angeles wind rushed past him, but his relaxed disposition told a different tale. His arms didn't flail in the air like a falling infant bird. Instead his limbs were stable like the ones of an expert sky stalker. When the ground finally met his legs, his body rose quickly as though he was unaffected by the forty foot plunge he just took, and when he raised his face to the sky he had just left, the moonlight revealed his beautiful wolf like facial features. His brooding eyes had revealed to be Sole. He was Aztek Warrios, but he was more. He was VK, Vampire Killer, a man whose life was dedicated to the eradication of the monstrous gang.

When he looked around, he was immediately met by his sworn enemy. He saw two sets of red eyes peering from an alleyway that was as dark as the devil's shadow. Sole cut his eyes nonchalantly at the enemy. He stood for a moment, anticipating the attack from behind. He was

far from scared. He had faced this kind before. He had bested this kind before. Nothing was to be different about the battle that was to ensue.

Sole pulled his massive brand out of its scabbard and lightly held it next to him, baiting the vampires out of the alleyway. They hissed when they saw the huge blade for they knew exactly what it was. Their red eyes examined the blade and saw the small stream of light that followed the edge of the blade, and they knew the sword to be a Sun Sword, a sword that exploits one of the few vampire weaknesses. It was then they knew who the man wielding the dangerous weapon was.

Sole laughed as he felt the fear grip his enemies' hearts. He knew the Bloods reacted different than humans when scared and he relished at the thought of the upcoming battle. He smiled and hoped the angst inside of them would make them stronger so he could take greater pleasure in torturing then killing them. Sole was a man with great hatred, and his thirst for blood would only be quenched when every vampire was destroyed.

The Bloods burst out into the moonlight with their claws out, ready to attack. Their screams sent chills through the foundations of the surrounding buildings as they lunged toward Sole, but his confidence never wavered. The first vampire did not even see the Aztek Warrior's face before the Sun Sword sliced through his torso. Now the blood on the sword was illuminated in front of the energy that flowed through the sword. Sole turned around and smiled with a twinkle in his deep brown eyes. The vampire took a couple of steps back before he flashed Sole his own vicious smile, revealing a set of fangs that could puncture armadillo skin easily. "So the great Sole has finally graced my presence, huh blood?" His airy voice disgusted Sole as the vampire licked his lips hungrily. "You know you in the wrong part of town don't you, blood?"

Sole laughed at the misplaced arrogance of the vampire. With a smile, he replied, "No sir, I think you are in the wrong plane of existence. Want me to put you where you rightfully belong?"

The subliminal death threat that served as a dangerous undertone to Sole's statement caused the vampire to shudder, but the vampire quickly regained composure. The vampire lunged toward Sole with the same ugly, angry determination that cost his friend his life.

Elsewhere there lurked another set of red eyes watching the action, hungrily waiting for her chance to attack the notorious vampire killer from behind. Unbeknownst to the third vampire who watched from a fire escape illuminated by the moonlight, another pair of red eyes lurked behind her. While the third vampire pounded her petite fists in the air, a cold chill fell upon her. She didn't shudder like she should have. The adrenaline rushing through her veins gave her an

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unearthly warmth. She didn't listen to the instincts she was blessed with. The cold chill turned into a cold touch as the other vampire's small hand gently ran underneath her chin. She was caught under the vampire charm took over her for but a second before her neck was snapped. The other vampire stepped out of the shadows and revealed his baby dark face and long jet black hair. He smiled and threw the other vampire from the fire escape and threw a thumbs up to Sole. He threw right back before the woman hit the sidewalk with a loud thud.

Sole looked back into the pair red eyes he had already had a standoff against and for once, he saw something he never thought he'd see in a vampire's face: fear. The vampire quivered as he stared at the woman vampire writhing in pain. Then his face twisted in anger when his heightened sense of sight picked up the vampire who had thrown his friend from the fire escape. The anger rose from the depths of the vampire's dark soul as his voice expelled pain and hatred. "Traitor!!" The vampire attempted to jump to the fire escape, but he met certain death when Sole's blade ran through his body expertly. The vampire's body was now a mangled excuse of a Blood.

The other vampire jumped from the fire escape and landed gracefully next to the female vampire that twitched in pain on the cement. While the sight of the vampire suffering brought joy to Sole's dark heart, it brought pain to the other vampire, who could only shake his head and close his eyes. He knew what would happen next.

Sole plunged his Sun Sword so forcefully into the heart of the Blood that the impact created a crater underneath her and then she was deceased.

The only surviving vampire opened his eyes to reveal the beautiful brown they actually were and he smiled his precious smile, thankful that the final act was over. He asked mockingly, "Just another day at the office, huh Sole?" Sole extracted his sword from the vampire's breast plate and glared into the other vampire's eyes with his own evil eyes.

Then the corners of his mouth rose and with a wicked smile, he replied, "No. Eradicating your kind off of the planet isn't business...Living is business....Breathing is business.....killing every one of your kind on this God forsaken planet is a pleasure."

And with a demonic laugh, Sole extended his hand in a form of greeting. The vampire took his hand with sideways eyes and replied quickly, as though Sole had made a mistake. "Now Sole, you out of all people should know that the Bloods are no longer my people."

The cold tone that took over his ears made Sole cringe. He wondered how someone could speak so coldly about one's family, especially in the clan controlled climate of the Greater Los Angeles. "I know Skyy, but sometimes it's just hard to believe you know."

Skyy's face read disbelief. "Do you actually believe that I would betray you?"

The question pierced Sole's cold heart. He, himself, knew how important friendship was to the young vampire, and knowing that the vampire was completely and utterly alone, Sole felt bad for implying the question of Skyy's character. "No, I mean, but....they're your family."

Skyy had the sadness in Sole's voice and he took two steps closer to his friend and placed his hand on Sole's shoulder. "Friend." Skyy smiled brightly before finishing. "The Bloods haven't been family to me for a very long time. Family doesn't exile you because your views are different from theirs. Family is supposed to love regardless, but my 'so-called' family still haunts me. Family?" He scoffed at the very mention of the word. "The only family I have is the wind. The shadows and you, Sole. The Bloods are a mere memory and obstacle to my dreams."

Even though Sole would not admit it, it had touched him that the vampire had thought of him as family. Sole looked deep into Skyy's dark brown eyes and when he saw the sincerity swimming in the brown pools that were Skyy's eyes, he smiled, closed his eyes, shook his head, and placed his hand on his hip. "You never cease to amaze me, Skyy."

Skyy smiled and laughed, "What you mean, Sole?"

Sole looked over the horizon and saw the red and blue flashing lights that were universal for police. Sole knew it was time to go. He knew the mangled bodies of the vampire weren't going nowhere, and he didn't want to be there when police arrived. He moved quickly, "Nothing, come on Skyy. We got to make it. The boys are coming. We'll meet up at the spot."

Skyy nodded and Sole ran with the speed of a whirling wind. When Sole turned around to see if Skyy had ran in the opposite direction but when he turned to where Skyy once stood, all he saw was a pair of red eyes disappearing into the night and Sole knew he would be at the rendezvous before he would. Sole decided he disappear into the night as well.

Elsewhere on top of an old run down casino off of Artesia Boulevard, Skyy stood at the top of the roof with the cold dusk wind settling in his hair. His red eyes glowed in the dark as his senses heightened. His ears were alert, ready to hint him of any impending danger. His larger than average ears twitched under his long hair, alerting him of the presence of another, but the slight hairs in his nose recognized the scent of a friend. "Hello, friend." Skyy said with no emotion as a million thoughts swirled in his head.

Sole shook his head, smiled, and replied, "A vampire can always sense when a kindred spirit is around, and you are the only person who triggers that sense."

Sole returned Skyy's smile only to find Skyy's smile more somber in thought. "How long

you been up here, Skyy?" Sole asked curiously.

Skyy turned his head toward the sky, looked deeply into the bright moon, and replied, "Not too long, but long enough for my thoughts to stir. "Skyy turned his head back to Sole, and looked deeply into Sole's eyes with his own introspective set of browns.

Sole sensing that something was bothering his friend, he asked, "What's on your mind, Skyy?" Skyy bowed his head in silence as he searched for a way to express his thoughts adequately. He did not want to be misunderstood.

Sole stepped slowly to his friend's side, and when he stood side by side with his friend, Skyy rose his head to the sky and in a moment of introspection, he asked, "Don't you see it?"

His soft voice fell lightly on Sole's ears, but his words were still so meaningful that they couldn't be ignored. Laughing, he answered, "I don't have a heightened sense of sight like you, old friend."

Skyy laughed, feeling much older and wiser than he actually was. "You don't need heightened senses to see the destruction that is taking place all around us. Can't you see what's happening to us?"

The beautiful girl that plagued Sole's thoughts earlier had entered his thoughts again. He turned his face away to hide the look of pain in his eyes. "You know I know."

Skyy's voice had found its conviction. "But do you really see it?" His voice resounded in Sole's ear. "Long ago, when the clans were first founded, they were mere gangs. A mere answer to the oppressive nature of a tyrannical race of white justice, but now the oppressed has become the oppressors. Now the victims have become the bullies, and now the clans have grown more powerful than ever before. Do you know the clans of old did not even have supernatural powers?"

Sole's face was as still as a pristine lake of quicksand before Skyy had revealed that fact to him, giving a clue to Sole's non-shock. "But the clans were powerful, even back then, arming themselves with military grade weapons and constantly lifting weights to make themselves stronger and for what? My grandfather was shocked as a youth when he saw his friend killed when they were just sitting off of RoseCrans. Imagine what he would say if he could see the times we were living in now."

"But we were born into this....."

Skyy scoffed, "Oh believe me I know. My father is the leader of the Blood clan in the Greater Los Angeles, and my auntie was the first to manifest the Power of Blood. If anyone knows about being born in this cesspool of a life, it is me, but I was born different than the rest

of my clan. Unlike them, I dreamed of peace when I slept, but that went against the well-being of the Bloods. My people keep their powers by feeding on the pain of others. The fact that I even have these powers because I've caused my past family pain disgusts me. All of the clans save your more noble race of warriors all basically feed off of the pain of others. The Crips, even though a more nobler creature, are still nothing more than savagery in motion. Every inch of their blue-tint skin and powerful muscles were meant to cause harm. Amazing how such creatures could've evolved huh Sole? You think Tookie had this vision of what his people would grow into? You think Tookie would've formed the neighborhood gang had he known?"

Sole shook his head. "We never had a chance, huh Skyy?"

Skyy's smile was filled with hope and eyes shone in the inspiration. "There's always a chance for change, friend."

Sole was complacent. His heart was skeptical. He did not believe there was a chance for humanity in the world he lived in, the Greater Los Angeles. He thought that the world had no chance in preventing what would be the greatest plague to ever form in America. He remembered the photos of gang members' past and he knew of the photos that the clans had produced and he thought that gangs would only evolve to something more devastating and evil. "I don't know if there's a chance, Skyy, I can't even lie. I don't think there are many more chances for a person like me, not after losing her." He shook his head, shook from the very essence of his core.

Skyy only smiled when he asked, "Do you think love stopped after Destiny?"

Sole opened his eyes wide with a look of madness on his face. he looked as though he wanted to kill the young, wise vampire, but he knew the question to not be an insult, so he relaxed his face and the color came back to his white knuckles that gripped the handle of his blade. He closed his eyes and begun to reminisce about the love he had held in his arms many times before. He remembered her soft touch, her velvet walk, the way her dark eyes had connected with his, and he thought about how much he missed those late nights with her silky voice filling his ears. He shook his head, hoping to shake the memories out of his ears. He spoke very softly, very unlike his normal tone of voice. "It did for me. Once I lost her, I lost my love for everything, and revenge had consumed every part of my being. I never wanted to kill so badly in my entire life. I felt like the whole Blood Nation owed me, and I knew then that I wouldn't stop until every ounce of vampire blood dripped from my sword. If I didn't, I would feel like I failed her, Skyy. I know Destiny would want to see me get the ones who killed her."

Skyy smiled a smile that let Sole know that he had just proved Skyy's point for him. "Do

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you see the never-ending cycle, Sole? Can't you see what's happening? The clans are only getting bigger, and we grow stronger everyday because we feed off of each others' misery. Our clans kill indiscriminately, rape, pillage, any manner of pain to stay in power, but tell me Sole, would you give up your Power or would you keep the Power only to destroy the Vampire nation?"

Sole thought long and hard before he answered. He sighed and the cold air filled his lungs, piercing the tissue that lined his lungs. "Skyy, as much as I want to help with your mission for a peace, I can't join, not on your playing level, Skyy. You are an angel, a messenger of peace who was born to a mass of demons. God has chosen you to do something great. You have a calling. Me...." Sole shook his head and wrapped his face with a wool, black scarf. With a muffled voice, he continued, "I was complete with her in my arms. I didn't need anything or anyone as long as I had her." A tear fell silently from Sole's face and landed on the flickering sign of the old casino. Skyy wanted Sole to stop. He felt his pain giving power to his people. He felt his father and his aunt laughing, smiling with surging power at Sole's misery. But then Skyy noticed Sole's dark brown eyes grow darker with rage. He had transformed into his Aztec Warrior form, and began to breathe heavily. He took off his scarf to reveal a set of angry teeth equipped with fangs that were deadlier than every predator that roamed the earth.

Skyy turned around and laughed loudly at Sole. Skyy felt a slight surge of power as Sole scowled at him. Skyy knew that Sole would want an answer to why he was laughing so he decided to clarify his thoughts to his old friend. "You are just another cog in the machine of destruction."

Sole retracted his powers immediately after he said it and looked at Skyy with questioning eyes. For the first time in his short life, Sole had felt remorse for his occupation as a Vampire Killer, but when Skyy turned around and smiled at him, he had felt as the sun rays had pierced through the dark clouds of his soul. It was then that Sole knew Skyy to be the last hope for humanity. "But there's hope for you yet, Sole."

Sole jerked his head back, surprised, "What you mean, Skyy?"

"You're not a bad person Sole, just misguided, just like a lot of misguided youth around here."

Sole still had a perplexed look on his face. He wanted Skyy to explain his situation because he felt that maybe this explanation would alleviate the pain in his heart. "How am I misguided, friend?"

Skyy looked deeply into Sole's eyes and replied, "You were raised to believe that your

family is greater than the other families when its not. No man is great. We were all placed on this earth to coincide and love another. You knew that at one time. Destiny taught you that." The mention of her name caused Sole's body to completely stop. "She was one of the few who were born uncursed. She was was born to a family that didn't gangbang, to a family who lived far enough from our world to not be a part of it, yet she still was drawn to it because she was drawn to you." Sole had always blamed himself for Destiny's death, but to hear it put into words verbally made him feel as responsible for her death as Skyy's father was. "She knew what she was risking when she came into your life. Don't blame yourself. She made that decision to be with you on her own, and in her own passive way, she sought the same dream that I do."

"What dream is that, Skyy?"

Skyy looked up into the sky and replied, "Peace. Peace among the clans and maybe with peace, we could reverse the curse God placed on us."

Sole laughed as the morning sun began to rise. "Always the dreamer huh Skyy?" He laughed again. "That's why I love you, Skyy. You're the only vampire I know with a soul."

Skyy smiled. "No I'm not, it's just I'm the only one who realized it." Skyy looked at the horizon with realizing eyes. He shook his head, disappointed at the untimely appearance of the sun. "I have to go, but before I leave, I have to ask you this question."

Sole cocked his head to the right and let his long hair flow on his shoulder. "What's that, Skyy?"

Skyy's eyes always found a place inside of Sole's pupils as he asked the question. "What comes to your mind when you think of peace?"

Sole returned Skyy's starry stare with a dark gaze of his own. "There can never be peace."

Skyy laughed. "Well I guess I'll continue to dream."