



written by jane jensen

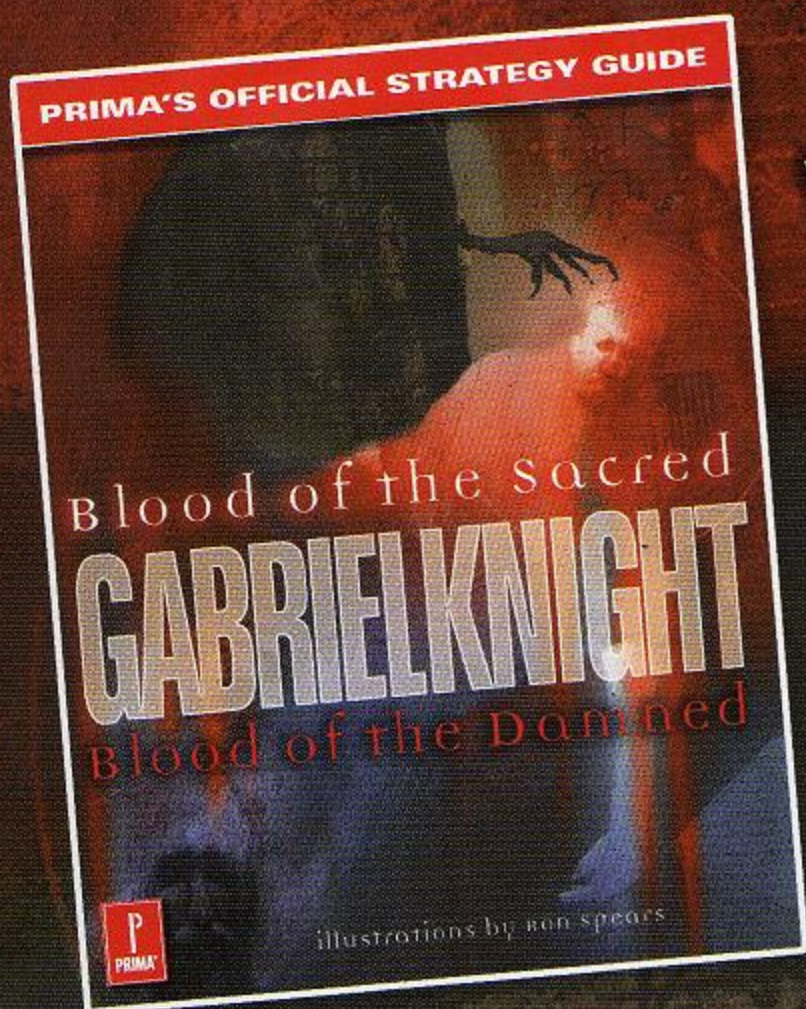
Blood of the Sacred

GABRIELKNIGHT™

Blood of the Damned

• P R O L O G U E •

illustrations by ron spears



**You are the
Master
Shadow
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Blood of the sacred
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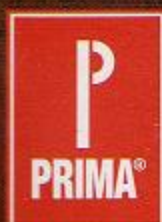
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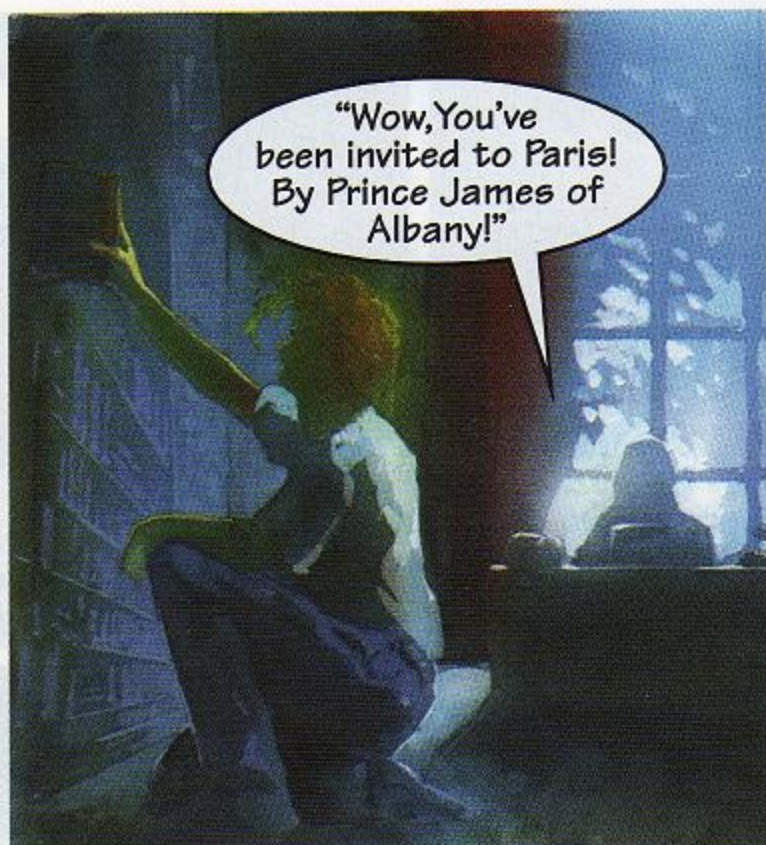


James and Patricia Stewart,
 Prince and Princess of Albany
 Cypress Grove Manor
 10 Rue de Cyprès
 Paris, France
 33 1 555-578

Dear Mr. Knight:

Please accept our invitation to a weekend at Cypress Grove Manor for you and a companion. My wife and I would very much like to make your acquaintance. Our house secretary will be contacting you to make travel arrangements.

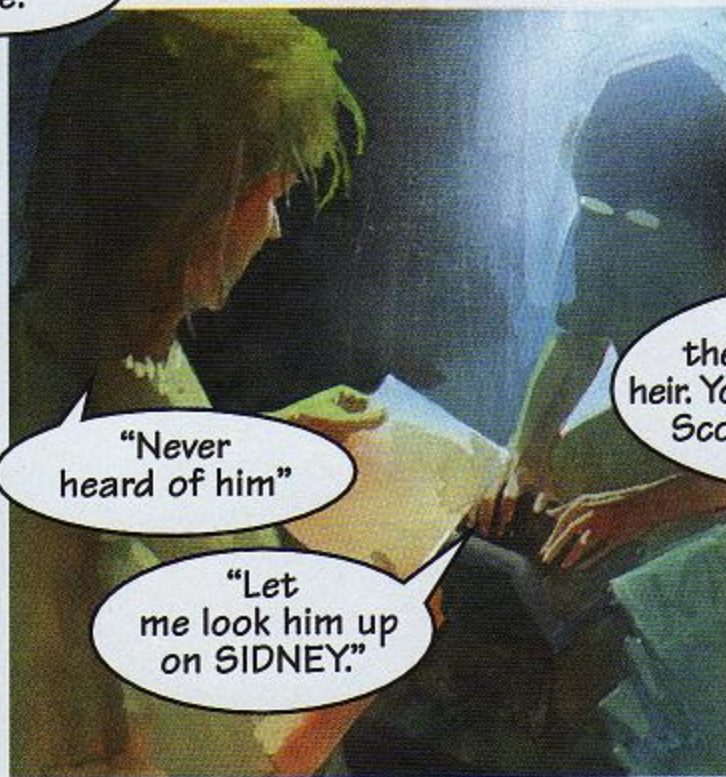
James Stewart, Prince of Albany



"Wow, You've been invited to Paris! By Prince James of Albany!"



"Lemme see."



"Never heard of him"

"Let me look him up on SIDNEY."



"He's the current Stewart heir. You know—the Kings of Scotland. Now they're in exile."



"...besides, I don't even know these people."



"How does she do it ladies and Gentlemen?"

"So we're going, right?"



"Uh...no."

"Why not? This is a chance to meet real, European society."

"That's exactly why not. Sa-nooze..."



"Hmm, they must have heard there was a new Ritter scion."

"I'm not a scion."



"Kay. Whatever. I'll just call this secretary guy—see if I can get more info."

"And they'd want to meet you of course. This is really exciting. You're like royalty"

"I'm not royalty. And neither is this guy if he's in exile. We're not going."



"Just a second."

"Mr. Knight, so good of you to accept our hospitality."

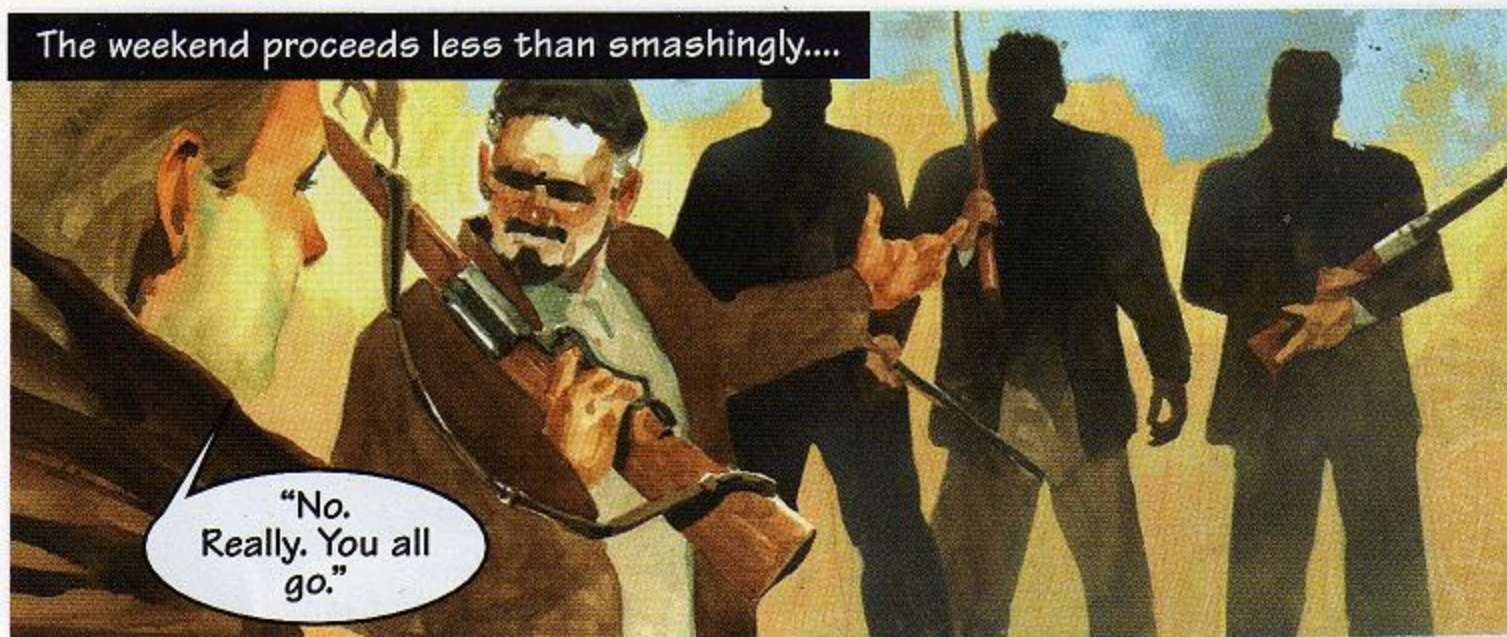
"Grace!"

"Call me Gabriel. And, uh, this is Gracie."

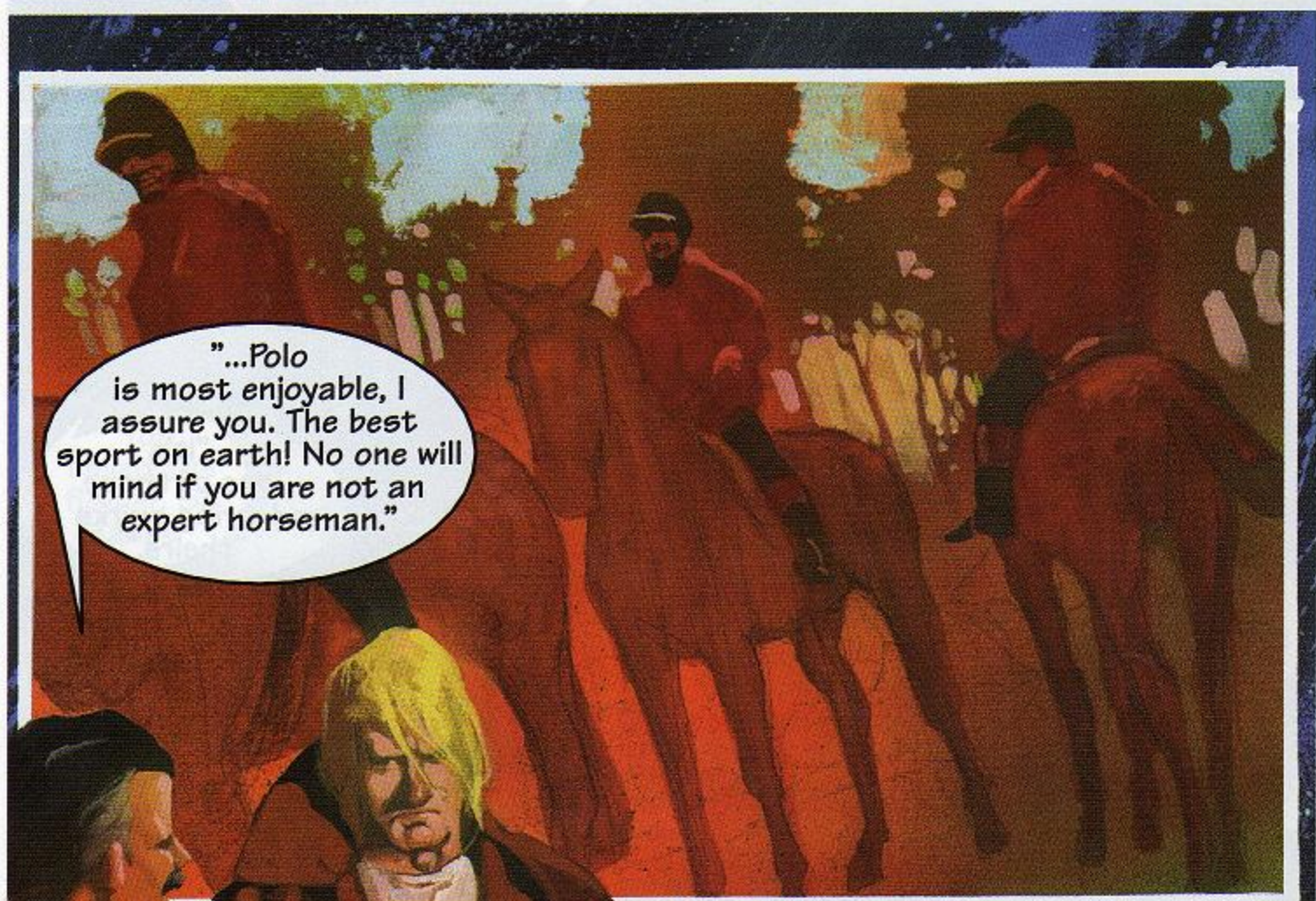
"Grace. Nakimura."

"Charmed."

The weekend proceeds less than smashingly....

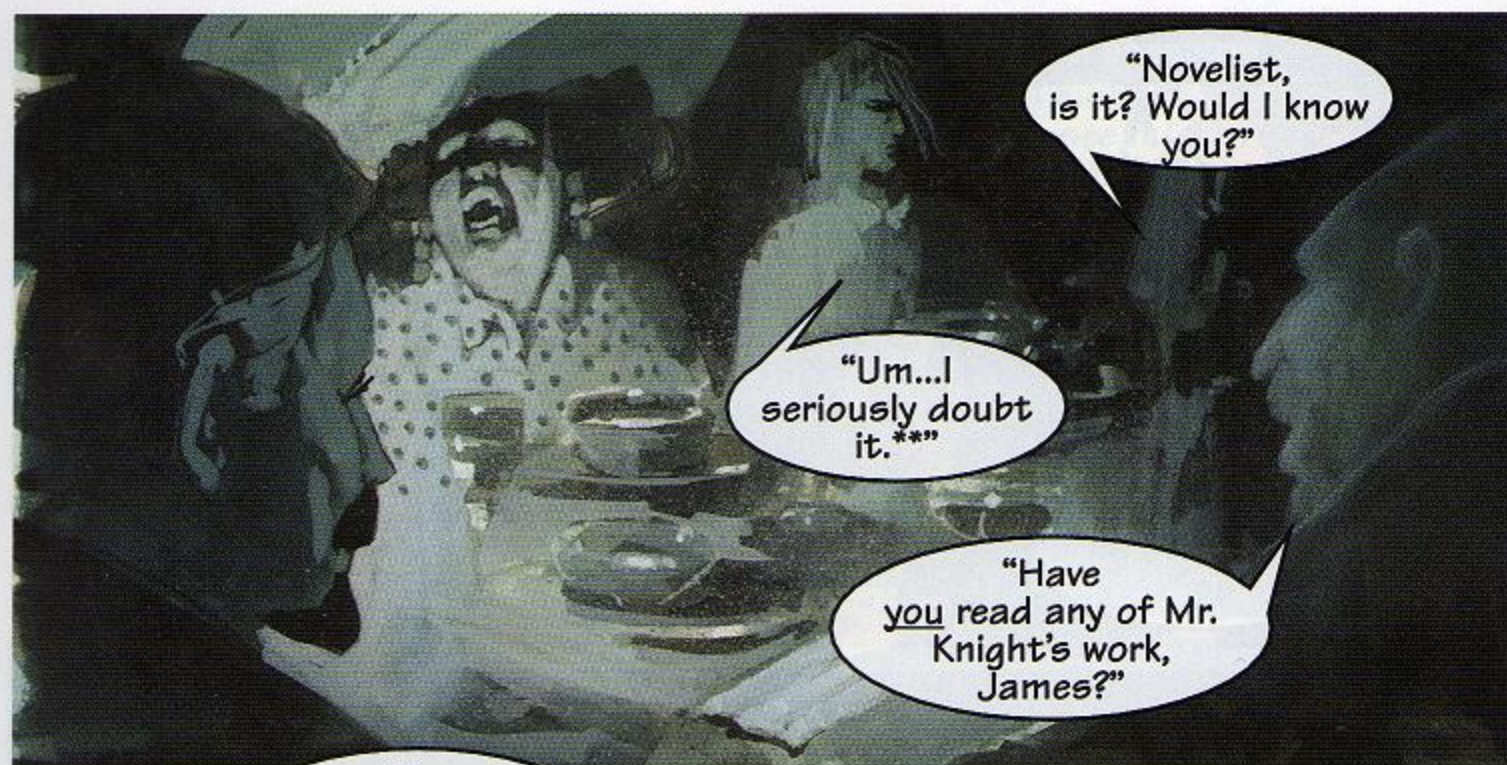


"No.
Really. You all
go."



"...Polo
is most enjoyable, I
assure you. The best
sport on earth! No one will
mind if you are not an
expert horseman."

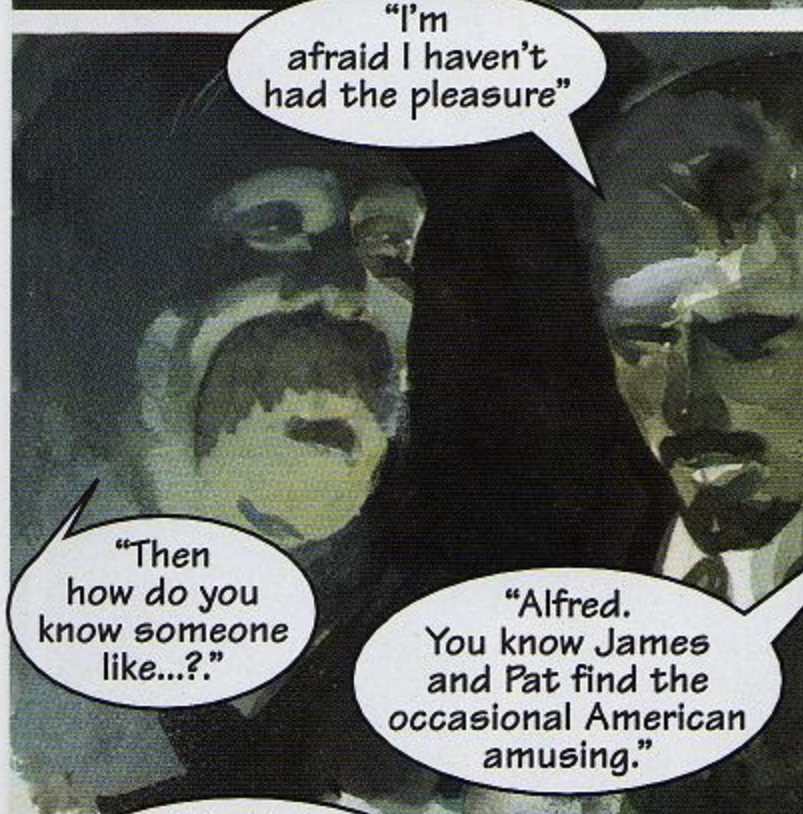




"Novelist, is it? Would I know you?"

"Um...I seriously doubt it.**"

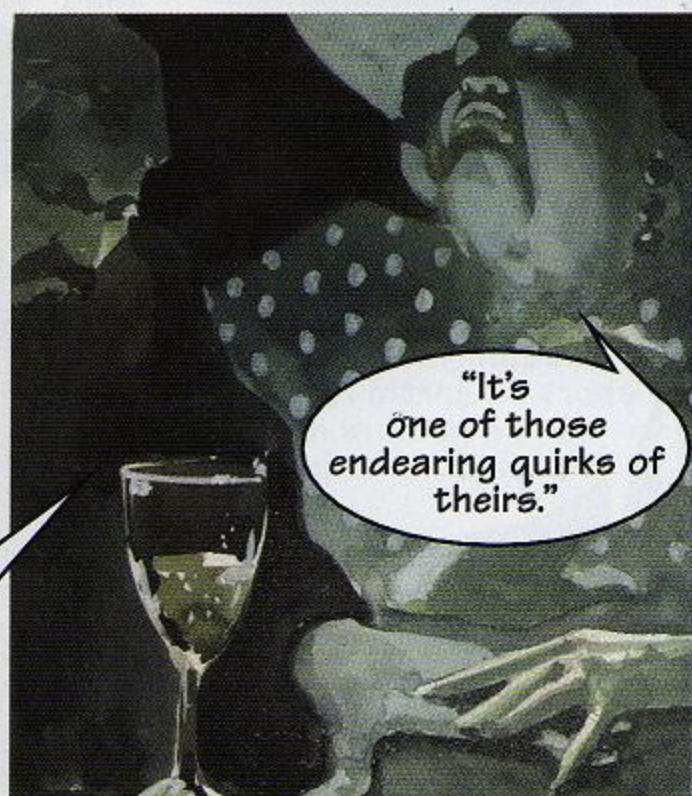
"Have you read any of Mr. Knight's work, James?"



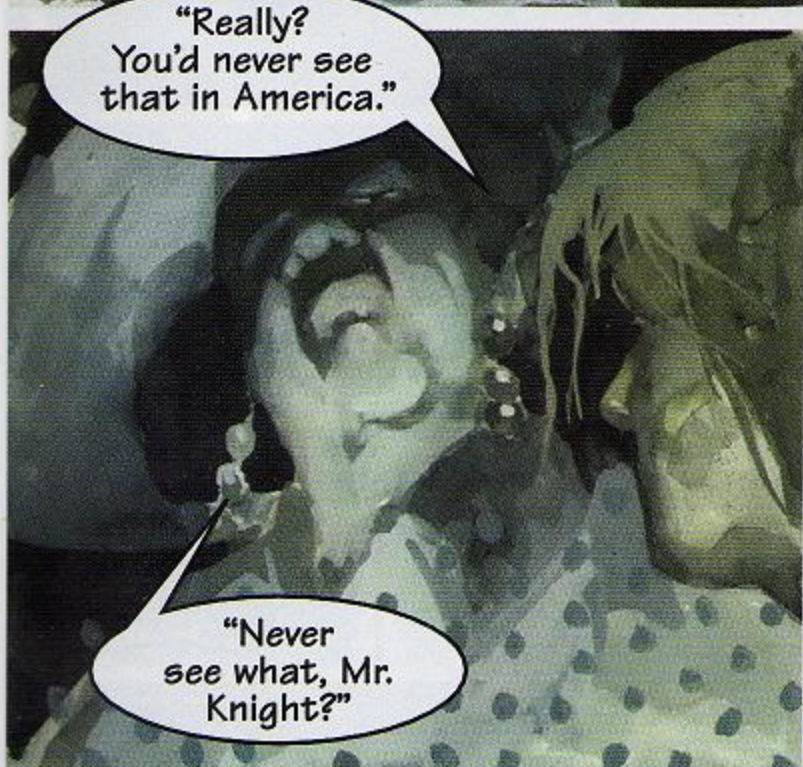
"I'm afraid I haven't had the pleasure"

"Then how do you know someone like...?"

"Alfred. You know James and Pat find the occasional American amusing."



"It's one of those endearing quirks of theirs."



"Really? You'd never see that in America."

"Never see what, Mr. Knight?"



"An Englishman being invited because they are amusing."

**The Voodoo Murders and The Brutal Beast are probably not up Lord Edger's alley.



"You were right. We shouldn't have come. None of them have even heard of the Ritters."

"Hey this is a first edition of The Dubliners. Signed. Cool."

"Oh, now you don't want to talk about it."



"You called the fiddler. So dance."



"Miss Nakimura? Mr. Knight? Might we speak with you alone?"



"We're related to the Wittelsbach dynasty. The lost Wagner opera came to our attention ...

...and the peculiar focus of your family trade. Mesmi suggested I contact you"

"You need a Schattenjäger?"



"I'm afraid so. The Stewarts are a very old family. For a long time we have been plagued by a kind of... anemia"

"Like the Romanovs?"

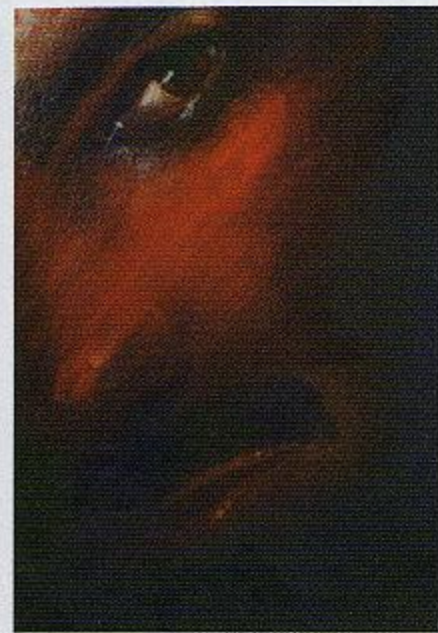


"Yes and no. Stewart heirs have unusual 'episodes'. They awake in the morning exhausted and pale."

"Upon examination it is evident that they are suffering from severe anemia. Gradually they recover but it happens again—sometimes within months, sometimes not for years."

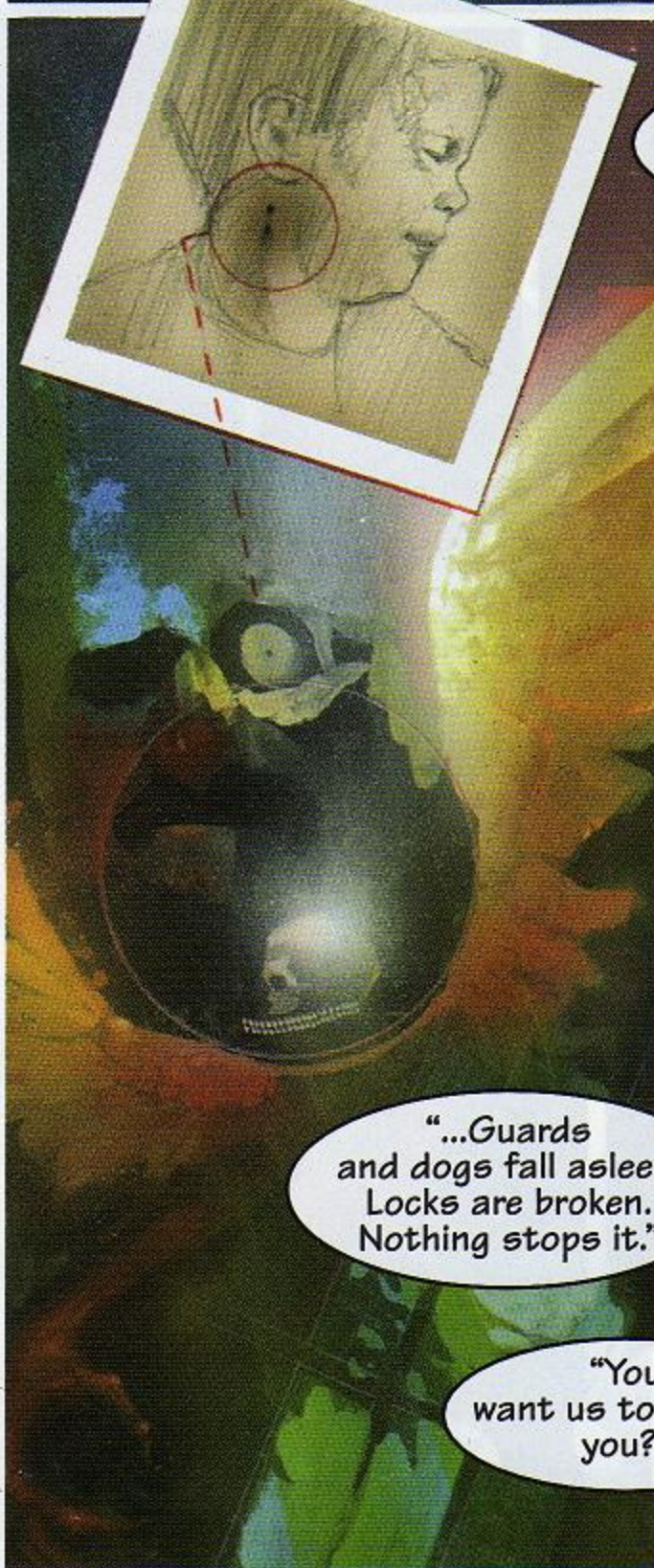
"Sounds like a medical problem."

"Does it?"





"Oh,
my God."



"There's
no trace of an
assailant?"



"No.
Over the centuries
we have tried everything.
Guards. Dogs. Locked
rooms..."

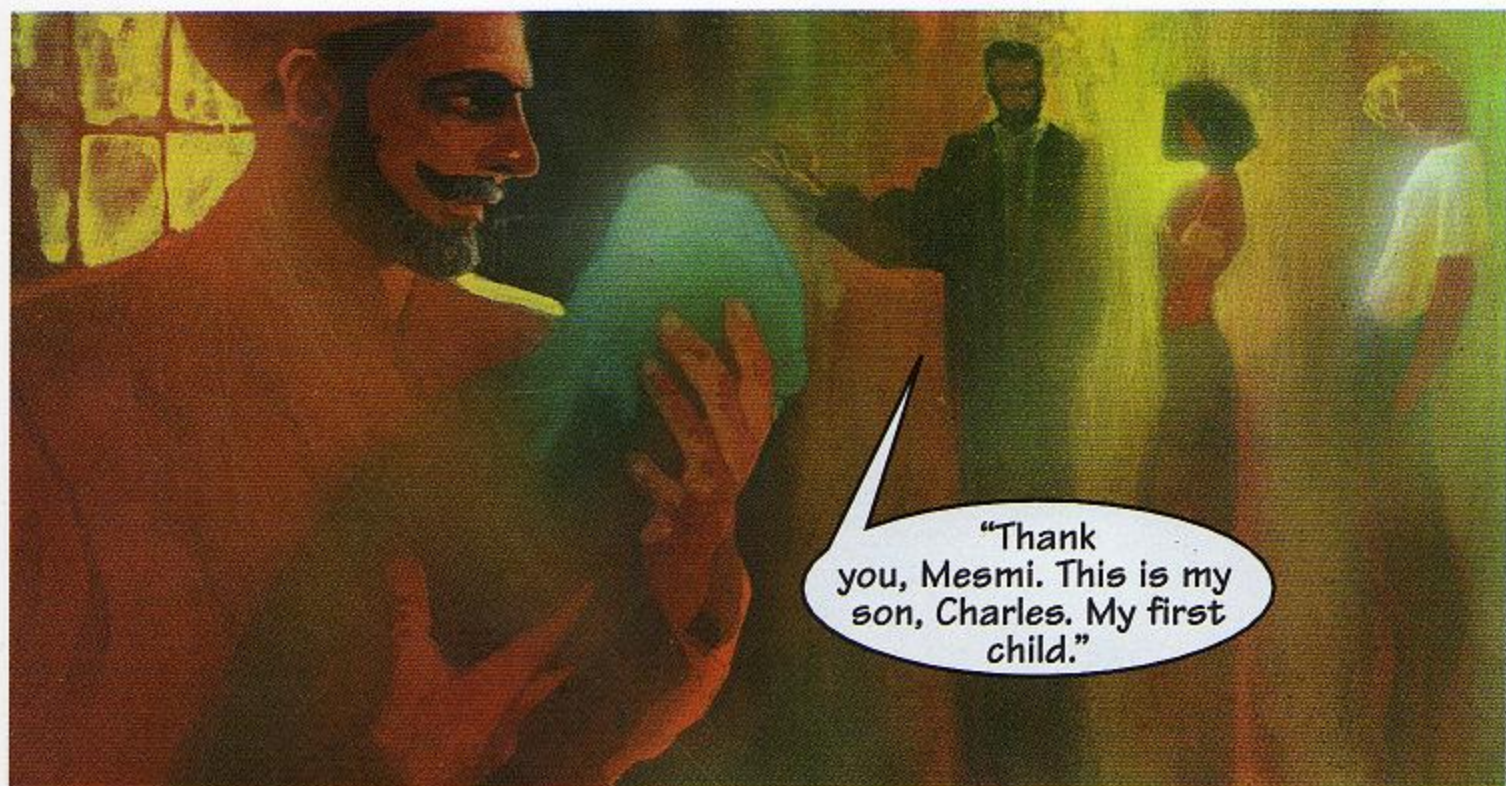
"...Guards
and dogs fall asleep.
Locks are broken.
Nothing stops it."



"You
want us to protect
you?"



"Not
me. There is
someone I want you
to meet."



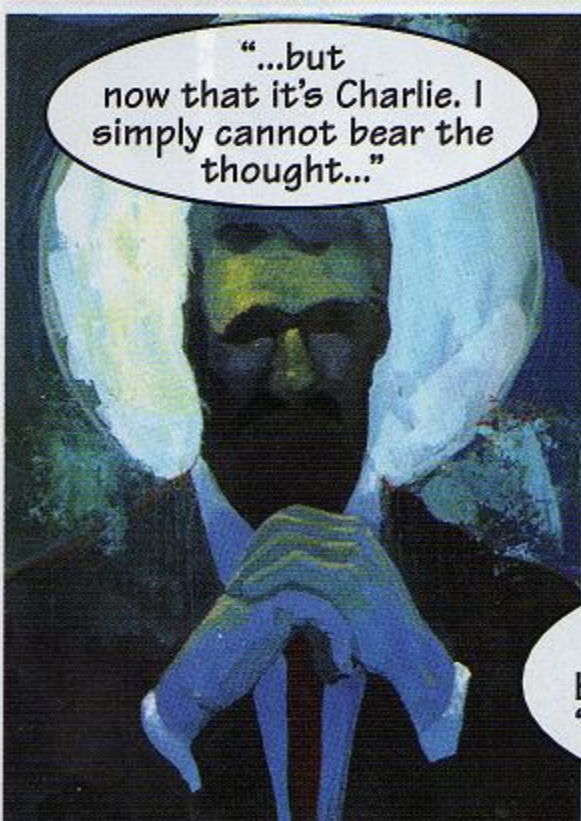
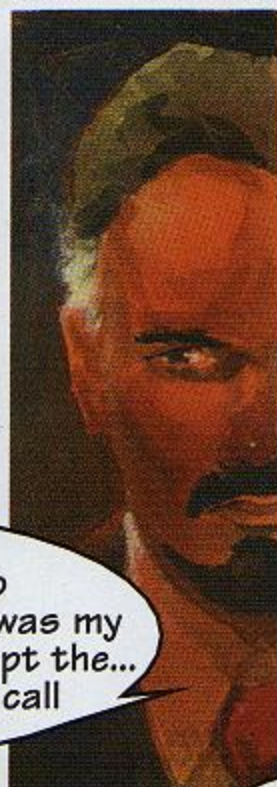
"Thank you, Mesmi. This is my son, Charles. My first child."



"Isn't he beautiful?"



"I don't expect you to understand. But when it was my own suffering, I could accept the... 'night visitors', as we call them..."



"...but now that it's Charlie. I simply cannot bear the thought..."



"We're to protect the baby from these 'night visitors'?"



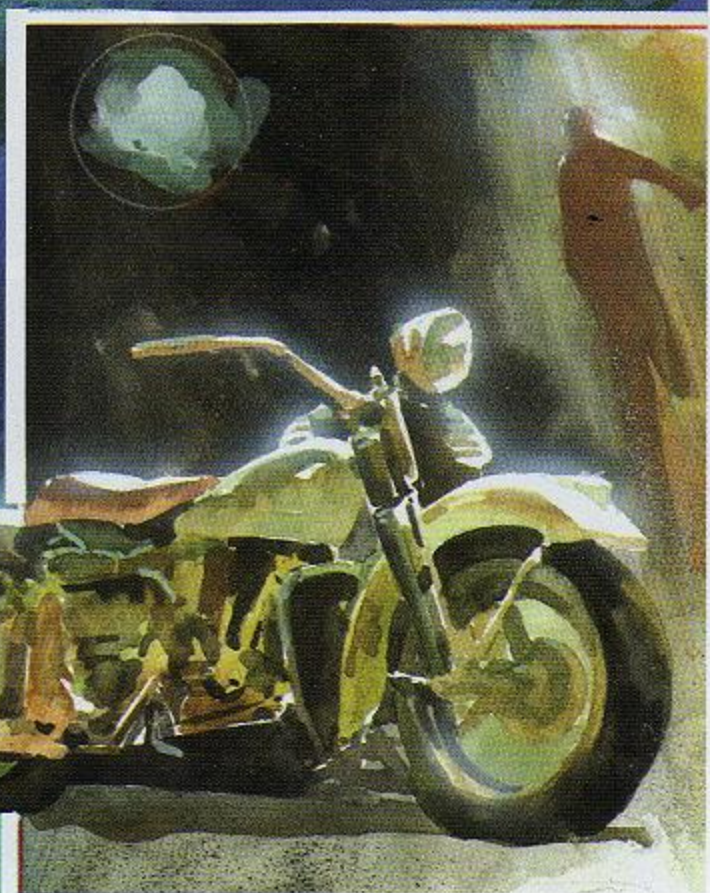
"Do you really think you could?"

"We'll do our best. Absolutely."



Before the Schattenjäger can even move the figure is gone— and so is the baby.





A pursuit begins in the warm Paris night...



At times, when his headlights penetrate the car, he sees two figures—two men.



But the chase ends at a train station, the car is empty!



"Sir..."



"Two men...a baby. Did you..."

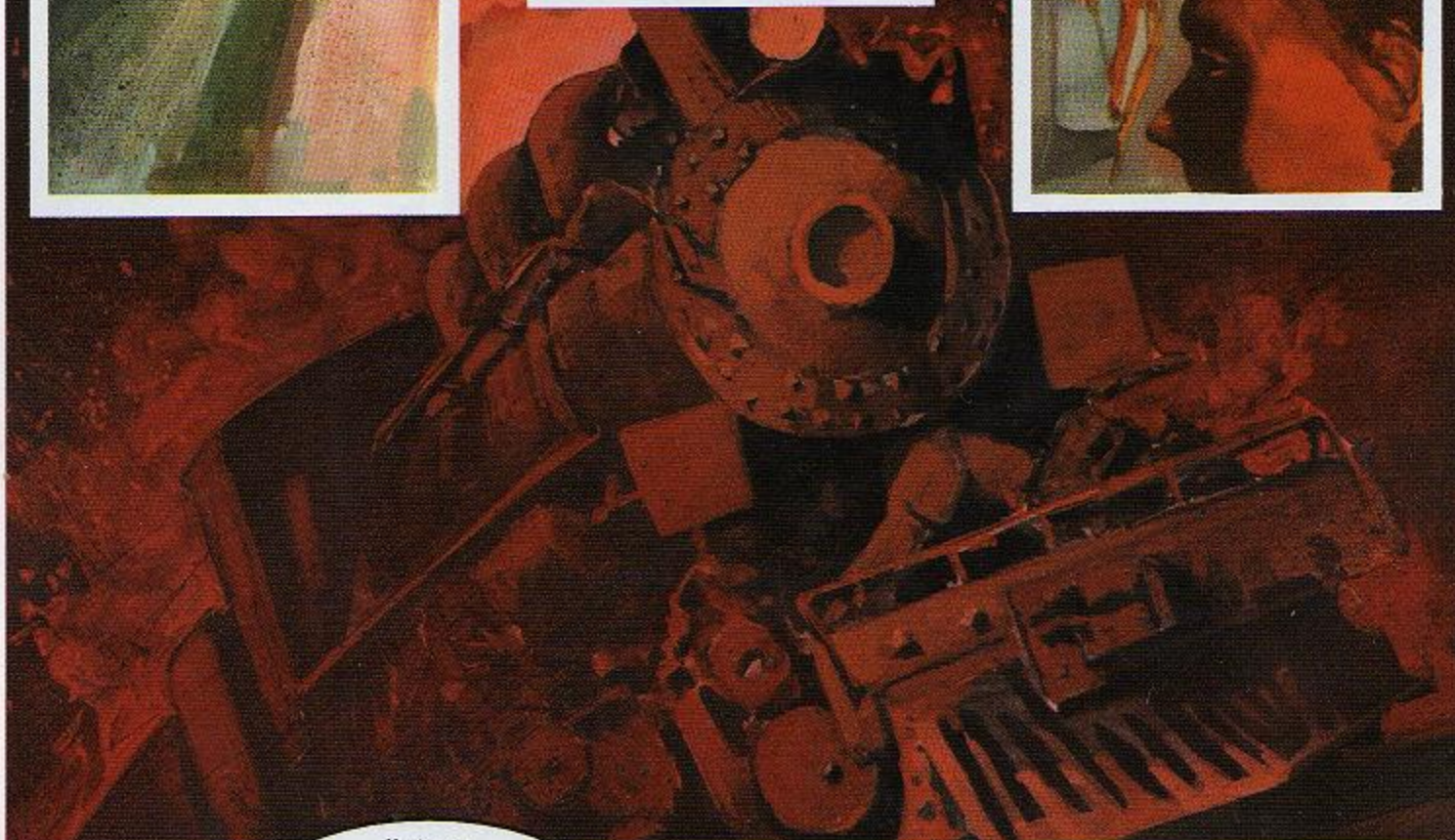


"Did anyone..."



"Number 4."





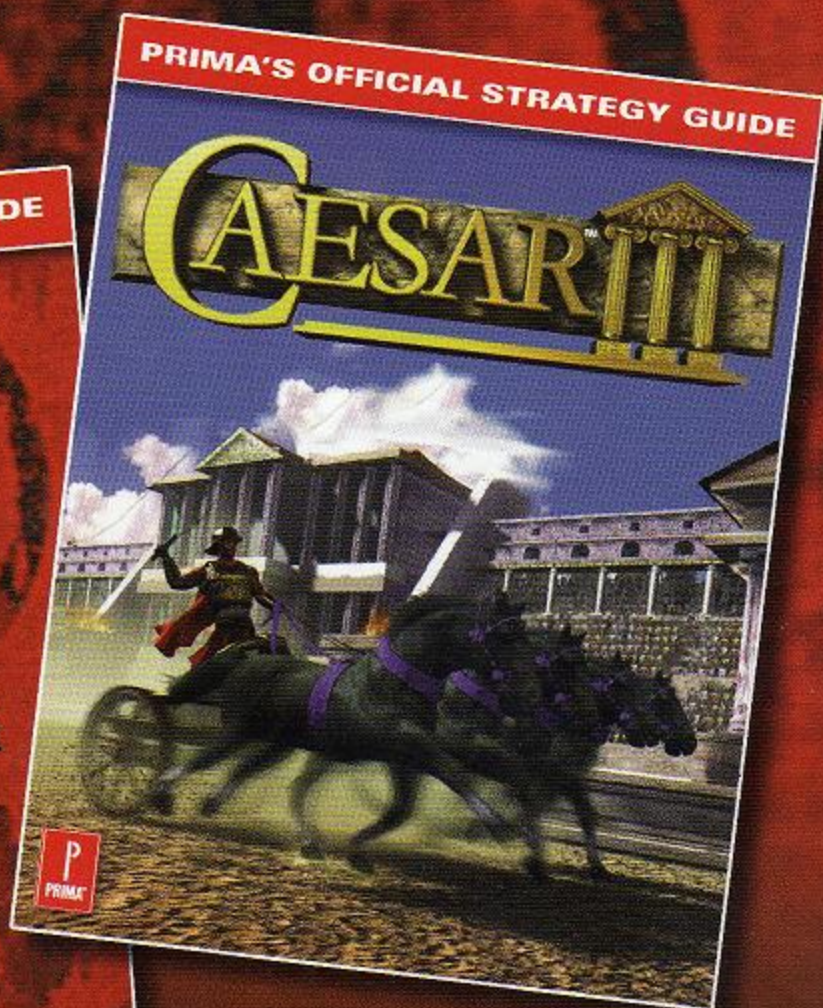
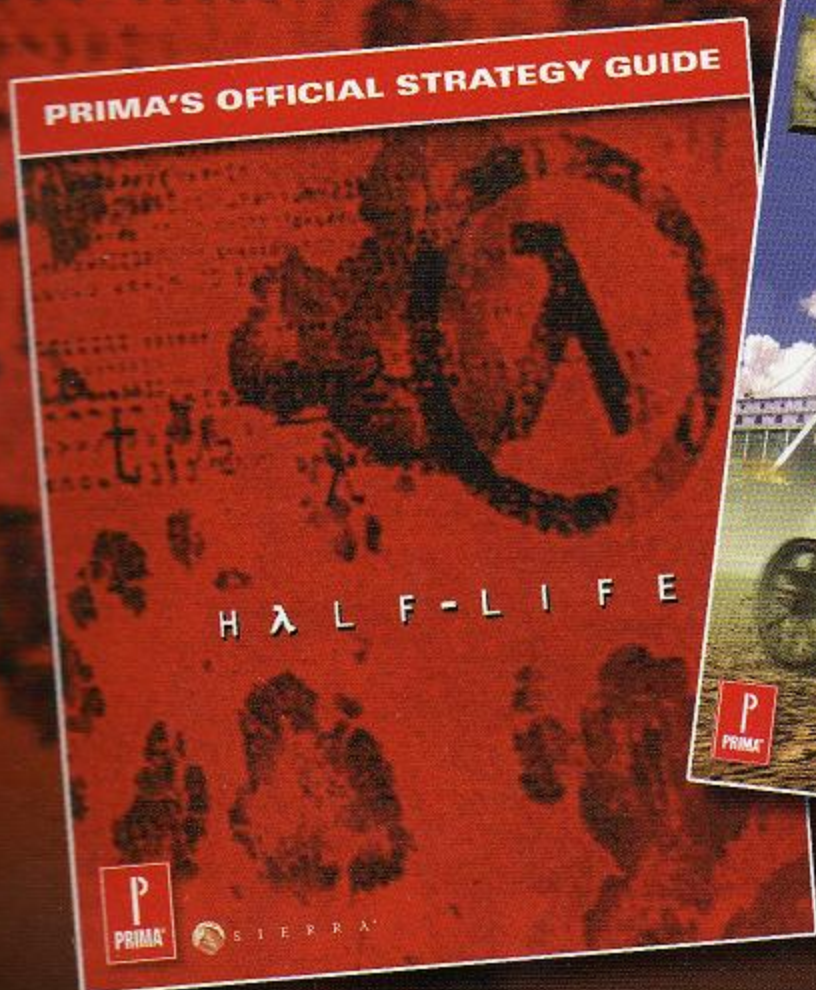
"How cute... mind if I have a look?"







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