

A Vampire Visit  
A Magiford Short Story  
By K. M. Shea

*“Hello, Killian. I have delightful news: I’m coming to visit you.”*

Killian stopped walking, pulled his cellphone away from his ear, and stared at the screen for a moment, which displayed the number pad and the voicemail ID.

*I must have misheard that. There’s no way he’s coming here.*

Killian replayed the voicemail message, once again hearing the dark, smug voice that Killian couldn’t even pretend to mistake for anyone else. *“Hello, Killian. I have delightful news: I’m coming to visit you.”*

Celestina—Killian’s First Knight and second-in-command—hovered at his elbow. “Is everything alright, Your Eminence?”

Killian closed his voicemail. “Considine is coming for a visit.”

Celestina planted a hand over her heart, her fingernails ornamented with blue flowers—she’d gone out with Hazel the previous day for a manicure. “Elder Maledictus?”

“Yes.” Killian started walking—this time going much faster.

Celestina jogged to keep up, her dark hair bouncing as a worried expression slipped across her face. “He’s coming *here*?”

“Unfortunately,” Killian grimly said. “Call Josh. We’ll have to reorganize everyone, and move the main branch of the Family to House Medeis.”

“Do you want to move operations, or just the Family?” Celestina asked.

“Operations if we have time, but I don’t think we do. Given his past patterns we have a day, maybe two,” Killian said. “The most important thing is that we *must* keep him from meeting Hazel.”

Celestina nodded. “Will you tell your siblings?”

Killian frowned.

Celestina raised her eyebrows. “You really ought to. They do try to warn each other of his arrival.”

“That’s because they fear him—as they should,” Killian grumbled.

Celestina shrugged. “If you don’t tell them they’ll just bother you later with texts, turning themselves figuratively inside out to suss out where Elder Maledictus has gone.”

“You are mostly likely correct.” Killian stopped outside his office door. “Fine. I’ll text them. You get going with the move.”

Celestina bowed. “Understood. Good luck, Your Eminence.” She stalked down the hallway, disappearing around a corner.

A sigh that was half dread and half irritation leaked out of Killian as he slipped into his office. “Better get it over with.” He opened up his messages, reluctantly scrolling to a group text message that he’d turned off all alarms and notifications for—his siblings were prone to annoying dramatics and he made it his policy not to witness them.

His right eyebrow twitched in irritation, and he tapped out a text to his siblings, sending it immediately.

*“Considine called. He’s visiting me next. Don’t call me.”*

Killian sent the message, and almost immediately his phone rang, caller ID rattling out that it was one of the older Dracos offspring, Baldwin.

Killian tapped the ignore button, then sent out another text.

*“I said **don’t** call me.”*

Mercifully, his phone was silent, and then the text replies started rolling in.

*“May the heavens have mercy on your doomed soul. Good luck.”* That was from Sachiko.

*“Oh, my. But you do seem more similar to him than our sire, so perhaps you’ll get by unscathed?”* That was Margarida, the idealistic youngest daughter of the Dracos line.

She’d been the recipient of Considine’s special brand of “care” multiple times since the powerful vampire had become the de facto leader of the Dracos Family after the death of their sire. (Considine would never claim the title as he respected Killian’s siblings even less than Killian did, but Killian suspected that belonging to the Dracos line granted them more grace than any other vampire as Considine had been Ambrose Dracos’s best friend for hundreds of years before any of the Dracos children were turned.)

*“Good Riddance.”*

*“Better your house than ours.”*

*“Good! And I’ll say it since no one else has: it’s about time. You deserve some of his attention—you are his favorite.”*

That message came from Baldwin—who was overly sensitive having recently housed Considine in the past few years.

“I’m his favorite, because the lot of you are emotional idiots—the likes of which I have no patience for,” Killian muttered, ignoring the still incoming messages and tossing his cellphone on his desk. “No wonder Considine is forever rattling your cages—all of you combined aren’t as emotionally stable as the Paragon, and he’s insane.”

Killian pinched the bridge of his nose as he sat down, already feeling the headache his siblings were sure to inspire.

Considine was a problem, yes, but not on of the scale his siblings seemed to think he was. Then again, Killian had never suffered the attentions of his dead sire’s best friend, as Considine was mostly offended by incompetence—something that, while Killian prided himself on having little of, his siblings possessed in spades.

Still, it was best to prepare.

Killian couldn’t even pretend to guess what Considine was thinking—the old vampire was too sly and intelligent for that.

Who knew what he’d do when he arrived in Magiford.

*Considine’s story begins in “The Lies of Vampires and Slayers,” coming December 2023!*