

The Key of Christ

Nocturnum Season Four Episode 19 (Part One)

SYNOPSIS

The Cast lands in Paris, the year 2004...A point in time when their characters are fugitives from the law and currently fighting zombies in Salt Lake City (See *Season 2, Episode Six: Hunted*). After a brief discussion wondering if their 2004 selves are out there, or if they've actually been drawn completely out of time, they opt to be careful how much money they spend just in case, so as not to raise the alarms of their past selves. But needing a place to stay, they book a hotel. As they explore Paris, they encounter two people.

1. John and Klaus see The Dark Apostle during his "MIA" phase. John wants to put a bullet in the back of his head before he takes over the world. Klaus doesn't want to risk the repercussions being even worse, so they let him go.

2. Anita, on a research jaunt to the library, encounters Alan Collins III, her former beau who will in a year's time turn evil and threaten the world. The encounter is psychologically traumatic, to say the least. The Cast opt not to warn Alan about things to come, and let things play out, much to Anita's eternal angst. The Cast go to have coffee with Alan and convince him to keep his encounter with them here a secret. They do, however, ask to hit the Rosicrucian library, which he promises to hook them up with the next day.

Anita agrees to meet Alan for breakfast and the Cast head back to their hotel. Anita is intent on drinking herself into oblivion, but after a long talk with Cyan's ghost, she opts to leave the liquor alone, and enjoy these few precious moments she has back with her former beloved. She calls Alan, who agrees to take her on a late night tour of the city.

Klaus goes out to find the Pariahs and discovers that there have recently been a series of disappearances in the Paris catacombs, both of explorers and *catafflics*, the special police whose beat is the catacombs.

Anita researches the Key they're after and discovers it is the Key of Christ. She also, after finding dozens of coded references to *The Phantom of the Opera*, decides they need to start their search at the Paris Opera House.

Again, using Alan's Rosicrucian contacts, they score tickets (Box II) to that evening's performance of *The Marriage of Figaro*, and go to the opera.

While at the Opera, they spot Nectanebus, sitting in the audience with the red-headed half-demon who John shot in the Old West. He senses them but hasn't seen them, yet. They draw back into their box, and decide that they need to find the basement before he does. John throws a fit about not being dressed to traipse around in caverns, and leaves to go back to the hotel. As they argue, Matthew spots Semyaza, wearing a different body...but the eyes give him away. Unlike Nectanebus, Semyaza doesn't seem to be looking for the Cast but rather just enjoying the opera. He, too, has a companion, but the Cast can't see the companion clearly enough to make out anything other than "there's someone else with him."

John leaves for the hotel. The rest of the Cast head down to the basement, and manage to access the caverns beneath the opera house. As they make their way through the dark, they suddenly come upon a series of tunnels lit by candelabras. The tunnels lead them to a vast underground lake with a gondola docked at the shore. The other side of the lake appears to be nothing more than a big cavern.

However, they sense a persistent Essence matrix here somewhere.

Their hopes dashed that they didn't encounter some kind of magnificent underground mansion, they take the gondola to explore the other side of the shore. When they get there, Klaus decides to explore along the wall. He takes two steps and vanishes. Anita and Matthew charge after him.

Suddenly, they all find themselves standing in what appears to be a massive store room, with several anterooms and a balcony. It's filled with old cast-off props. And they hear, blaring from an organ, the overture to Weber's *Phantom of the Opera*.

After a few bars, a voice rings out through the cavern (turning, they see they haven't been transported anywhere

And then....he appears, on the balcony above: the Phantom of the Opera.

Anita says, "Are you really Erik?"

He responds. "You've actually read my biography. I'm impressed." He then proceeds to tell her she reminds him greatly of his beloved Christine.

They ask him if he can help them, and tell him they're looking for what amounts to a key to the Key.

He says he can, if Anita agrees to stay with him for the rest of her life.

Klaus uses his unique ability to See Truth on Erik, and discovers that he is human, he is, in fact, the actual Erik, the Phantom of the Opera, and is not Gifted, but surrounded by an Essence signature not his own. Klaus can't pinpoint the source. He also sees that Erik is completely insane, full of love, rage, hate, and remorse. Erik does, in fact, possess the item they need, and information to get them to the next stage on their quest, and his grip on reality is so tenuous he's having a hard time differentiating between Anita reminding him of Christine, and Anita being Christine.

They banter for awhile, when Matthew and Klaus see something falling from the sky. They both try and dodge, to no avail, as iron cages shoot down and trap the two of them.

Little does Erik realize that Klaus...is a Pariah. Klaus handily reshapes his way right through the iron bars. Erik says, "Impressive," and with a sweep of his cape, vanishes from the balcony. Klaus goes to free Matthew, as Erik's voice rings out: "Come, Christine. Dine with me."

Against Klaus and Matthew's protestations, Anita goes up the stairs.

Of course, once she sits down, Erik locks the two of them in there...and unleashes his advanced clockwork robots against Klaus and Matthew.

Anita hears the sounds of battle outside and Erik presses a button, revealing a metal scorpion before her, and a metal grasshopper before him. "Turn the scorpion," he says, "and you will be with me, forever...but your friends go free with the key they seek. Refuse, and I turn the grasshopper...and they die."

Anita gives him a steely gaze and says, "Now you're really starting to piss me off."

"Come, Christine," he responds. "You'll come to appreciate me in time. But which shall it be? Your friends are running out of time!"

Meanwhile, below, Matthew has finished off four of the robots, and Klaus, fighting four others, leaps to the ceiling, which he discovers is littered with booby traps. Sword-sized claws and inhuman come in handy; he starts launching booby traps at the robots. Matthew, meanwhile, makes for the stairs.

Anita uses A Taste of Death on Erik, who shrugs it off as though it were nothing and says, "Please don't try that again. I do so admire your spirit, though."

Utterly enraged, Anita, leaps over the table, and decks him with a right cross that sends him flying. Then she leaps on top of him, rips off his mask, and starts screaming, "You want to see crazy! I'll show crazy, you son of a bitch! Huh? What did I tell you? What!?"

Unmasked, he throws her off and skitters across the floor, where he lays in the fetal position, begging her forgiveness. He points a gnarled hand across the room to his dressing-table and says, "There. In the music box. What you seek is in Notre Dame."

She takes the key and walks out as he covers himself with his cloak. Before she passes Matthew, standing confused in the doorway, she says over her shoulder, "By the way...I forgive you," and throws his mask at him.

Matthew debates just killing Erik, but decides to let him live.

Outside, they encounter John, who has gotten back from the hotel and is currently trying to find a way to break into the Opera House basement from outside.

The Cast get changes of clothes from him, and head for Notre Dame Cathedral, where Anita and Matthew take time to pray, and Klaus washes himself off in the holy water font until Anita and Matthew tell him to knock it off. John, meanwhile, begins to case the place for a keyhole, which he eventually finds near the reliquary on the altar.

They insert the key and turn it...and the whole altar slides forward, revealing a staircase down to a strange sight. It's a sepulcher, but instead of a coffin, there's an urn, which generally goes against Catholic doctrine (Catholics forbid cremation).

There are two inscriptions in the sepulcher. The first is a plaque on the back wall, the second, a later inscription chiseled into the stone on the right hand wall. They read as follows:

PLAQUE:

Here in this urn rest the final remains of Joan of Arc, wrongly executed by my own hands on 30 May, 1431. I fear that I have damned myself by carrying out the wishes of the earthly Church in this matter, and I fear that I have further damned myself by disobeying and preserving her ashes, having flung the remains of a pig into the river in their stead. A vision was granted to me of a strange world in which men in strange garb and half-naked women travel in metal, horseless carriages, and great iron dragons sail the skies. From out of this world will come great warriors who will bear these remains to a font beneath the streets of Paris and, mixing it with the heart of a saint and the water within, shall fill Our Lord Jesus Christ's flask that it help bring about an end to a great evil that threaten the entire world. My God have mercy upon my soul, be I right or wrong in the sin I have committed here.

-Geoffrey Therage

CHISELED INSCRIPTION:

I have shared Messr. Therage's vision, and been led down here by the spirit of Mary of Magdala herself, who bade me ensure that an entrance to the Paris Catacombs was installed here, in this room, that those who come this way might make use of it to gain entrance when the Day of Reckoning arrives. Begin your Holy Quest at the altar within the Catacombs; seek the hidden panel therein. As pastor of this parish, I hereby absolve Therage of any sins that his soul may have carried into the afterlife; certainly what he has done here history has judged and will judge a great and heroic deed.

May the Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

-Monsignor Montagne de Valais, 30 May 1791

Klaus takes the ashes and the Cast discover a trigger mechanism on the pedestal. Matthew goes upstairs and removes the key from the altar, which slides shut, locking them in the sepulcher. When the Cast activates the trigger,

the stone that holds the later inscription swings open to reveal a secret entrance to the Paris Catacombs. John's amulet pulls him forward...

QUOTES AND GREAT MOMENTS

"I actively disbelieve the green vortex."—Eric (after Jason read the cut scene)

Klaus manages to find a payphone, and calls a hotel to make reservations for the group. Anita drinks two pots of coffee, and everyone gets cleaned up. Everyone except for Matthew then decides to go out (John and Klaus go looking for Cuban cigars and cigarettes, Drake and Katherine go exploring, and Anita goes to begin researching the Key).

"You see a familiar looking man. You're sure you've seen him before, you just can't place him."—Jason

"I follow him. I got my guns, right?"—Eric

"Yeah."—Jason

"I follow him."—Eric

Klaus and John find the Dark Apostle walking in an alleyway in Paris! Klaus cautions John, who is sorely tempted to kill him outright.

Anita manages to find the local Twilight Order chapel house.

"Oooh! This will be fun! I've never met French necromancers before!"—Anita

"Could I possibly access your library?"—Anita

"I suppose. Of course, the Rosicrucians have a much better one..."—Twilight Order agent

"Of course they do! That's a great idea! So, who do I need to talk to, to get in there?"—Anita

"We don't associate with the Rosicrucians! What are you, nuts?"--An agent

"Uh, yeah! But that's besides the point..."—Anita

Anita decides to try researching at the local library first before making friends with the Paris Rosicrucians. As she is sitting at a computer terminal, a hand falls on her shoulder and a very familiar voice says, "Anita?! What are you doing here?" Anita looks up to find Alan standing behind her, looking extremely surprised

"How did you get here? Not that I'm displeased to see you, but aren't you supposed to be in Salt Lake City?"--Alan

"Yes...yes I am. Now I'm here, aren't I? How I got here...that's a long, funny story that...uh...it's a secret. Hug?" *Holds out her arms*

Alan hugs her

Pulling back "Hey, wait a minute! What are *you* doing here? Aren't you supposed to be in Pittsburgh?"—Anita

"I told you when you called that I was leaving for Europe in a few days. Research trip, remember?"—Alan

"Of course you did. I'm forgetful." *Laughs* "Do you have any ibuprofen?"—Anita

"No, I'm afraid not, but we could certainly buy some. Are you quite well?"—Alan

"No, not at all. In fact, I think my head just might explode."—Anita

"So I'm trying to research this key...with supernatural powers, possible religious significance. You know anything about it?"—Anita

"Well, I know that the Order has done extensive research about the Keys of Solomon, and the possibility that there are those out there who have knowledge of them..."—Alan

"You mean like the Templars?"—Anita

"The Knights Templar, yes. If they actually exist..."—Alan

"They do."—Anita

"..."—Alan

"They are. Just trust me. You know I'm right. Would I lie to you?"--Anita

"Alright. Well then..."—Alan

"You haven't broken into any more houses, have you? I'm pretty sure that's illegal over here as well."—Alan

"Not since our little talk. I really do listen to what you have to say sometimes."—Anita

"Good."—Alan

"Grinning" "Besides, I'm looking for this key, right? Once I find it, hopefully I won't have to break in places anymore because it'll open...something."—Anita

"That is what keys do, they open things."—Alan

"Yes. In theory, anyway."—Anita

"Does this key have to do with the comet you mentioned?"—Alan

"Yes, of course it does...because that makes sense!"—Anita

"I'm still trying to determine if this library's any good. If not, I was going to bake some cookies and come knocking on the door of the Masonic temple."—Anita

"I can get you into the Rosicrucian library. But actually this is an excellent library...that's why I'm here."—Alan

"Of course it is...because you're really smart!"—Anita

John and Klaus bump into Alan and Anita, who are on their way to get coffee. Anita's paranoia goes through the roof as she watches for John's reaction. She manages to slide her hand to her holster and get a hand on her gun without Alan noticing, who has his arm around her.

"Are you going to introduce me to your friend?"—Klaus

"Uh, sure...Klaus, this is a very good friend of mine, Alan Collins. Alan, this is Niklaus Kaltenbach."—Anita

"Extending his hand" "Pleasure to meet you."—Alan

"Glowering" "I do not touch."—Klaus

"He's got touching issues. It's okay. You remember John, of course."—Anita

"Nods" "Alan."—John

"Anita, I need to have a word with you, in private. Now, please."—Klaus

"Anita looks directly at John"

"I'm not going to do anything. I promise. Go ahead."—John

"My lady and I were just going to get some coffee. Would you care to join?"—Alan

"Oh yes! That's a fantastic idea...that we come with you two for coffee."—John

[Re: introducing Klaus to Alan] "And you've just altered history."—Jason

"Oh shit! I didn't mean to do that! Why do I have the feeling that's going to be happening a lot this evening?"—Julie

"Alan...look, about you seeing us here and everything...it's classified. You can't tell anyone about it. You can't even tell us when you see us again."—John

"Alright..."—Alan

"Class-i-fied."—John

"I also need to have a word with you...privately..." *looks directly at Alan*—John

"Hides her face in her hands, embarrassed" "Oh, Jesus."—Anita

"Irritated" "This is past the normal level of strangeness I've come to expect from you."—Alan

"Singing in Hindi" "He might not have gone evil, yet. He might not have gone evil, yet..."—Klaus

"Who might not have gone evil, yet?"—Alan

"Surprised" "Uh...it's just something I've been working on translating. You can speak Hindi?"—Klaus

"Yes. I'm a professor of religious studies at Carnegie Mellon University."—Alan

"Klaus starts singing in Akkadian"

"I'm also a Rosicrucian..."—Alan

"Anita hides her face in her hands"

Anita makes plans to meet Alan the next morning for breakfast, and he can then get her into the Rosicrucian library. She asks Klaus to follow him back to the Masonic lodge to make sure he gets there safely, then returns to her hotel room and gets ready to seriously tie one on.

"Aunt Anita? Are we partying tonight?"—Katherine

"No."—Anita

"Picks up a bottle of Jack Daniels" "Looks like a party to me."—Katherine

"There's no party involved. I just feel like drinking. A lot."—Anita

Cyan visits Anita and validates how she must be feeling, while reminding her of the task at hand. During their talk Anita recognizes that she needs to make the best of the situation, and stops drinking, instead calling Alan to meet her for a late night walk. She apologizes for everyone's behavior and he explains that he understands the need for extreme caution given their situation. He shows her the sites all around Paris, including the famous Paris opera house (*Palais Garnier*, where the book *The Phantom of the Opera* is set), Notre Dame, the Eiffel Tower, the sister to the Statue of Liberty in New York, and the Louvre. As his cab pulls up at the hotel to take him back to the lodge much later, Anita kisses him goodnight, much to his surprise.

Klaus makes contact with a Pariah.

"We draw trouble."—Matthew

The next morning, Anita wakes early and goes to speak to John before meeting Alan. When John and Matthew make rude comments, she abruptly turns and leaves without saying a word.

After breakfast, Alan leaves Anita at the Rosicrucian library, apologetic that his own research requires his attention. Fortunately, she does not have difficulty finding the information she needs, and discovers multiple references to a relic dedicated to Jesus appearing in Paris in the late 18th century, and peppered with further references to an "Erik,"

Gaston Laroux (a journalist who wrote *'The Phantom of the Opera'*), ghosts and phantoms, and the Palais Garnier. Anita calls Alan, who is able to pull some strings and gets the group tickets to that evening's performance of *'The Marriage of Figaro'* at the Palais Garnier.

Anita takes Katherine to buy opera dresses and treats her to a day of beauty. Katherine is thrilled.

Matthew is quite enamored of the cleavage created by Anita's formalwear.

"I gotta go..."—Anita

"Me, too!"—Matthew

"It's another Anita moment, in the bathroom!"—John

"So Cyan decided his underworld nickname would be 'Pooky'."—Anita

"So...Pooky, huh?"—Matthew

"I was ready to shoot Cyan for calling me that...and I love her..."—John

Hiding in the shadows of their box, the cast spots Nectanebus and his crew in a lower box at the opera. Nectanebus appears to be looking around for someone or something..

"It's the devil. Trust me—I know."—Matthew

John refuses to join the rest of the cast, who want to explore the depths of the opera house after the intermission. He leaves to go back to the hotel and get his gear.

Matthew hums *'The Phantom of the Opera'* as the cast sneaks into the depths of the opera house.

The cast discovers Erik, the famed Phantom. He is clearly intrigued by Anita, and makes it clear that she reminds him of his beloved Christine. When Anita asks him if he will tell them where the key is, he tells her she must stay with him forever in exchange for him giving the others what they need to proceed. He then brings cages down on everyone else, and invites her to dine with him.

Klaus uses his powers and divines that while the Phantom is indeed human, his grip on reality is tenuous and he actually believes that Anita is Christine.

Robots attack the cast as Erik informs Anita that she must choose whether to remain with him forever, or sacrifice her friends. She warns him twice to reconsider, then uses her necromancy on him...to no avail.

"Turn the scorpion, and stay with me forever. Or I turn the grasshopper, and your friends die."—Erik

"Or I kick your ass, we take the key, and you stay down here, alone, forever."—Anita

"I admire your spirit."—Erik

Anita leaps across the table and punches the Phantom in the face. She then climbs on top of him, rips his mask off, and screams in his face, "You want crazy, you son of a bitch? I'll show you crazy!!" When Anita rips his mask off, he curls into a fetal ball, crying, and begging her forgiveness. After retrieving the iron key that the cast needs to get to the

actual Key (he tells her 'Notre Dame' when she picks it up out of a music box), she throws the mask at him, says "I forgive you," and walks out.

"You know, Anita, I never thought I'd meet someone more sexually dysfunctional than me."—Klaus

"Are you talking about me or Erik?"—Anita

"Every man enamored of Anita ends up crying and curled up in the fetal position."—Robert

The cast meets up with John and goes to Notre Dame. Anita crosses herself, goes into a pew, and prays. Matthew, after lighting two candles, joins her. Klaus cleans himself off with holy water until Anita notices and scolds him. John searches for the keyhole and discovers it. The cast discovers, in an underground vault beneath the altar, an urn containing the ashes of Joan of Arc, and two references to a prophecy/vision of great warriors from another place and time who will come to find the key to defeat a great evil in the world.