

Blood Doll Script, v1

Episode 3: “Claim the Blood Doll”

by Alicia E. Goranson

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Approximate playing time: 1 Hour, 30 minutes

CAST OF CHARACTERS

BLOOD DOLL	30-something trans woman, femme, main character
SAMAEEL (GEORGE GATAKER)	Ventruue, masc, vassal of Seattle prince AARALYN
AARALYN	Tremere, Seattle prince, femme
JOTHAM	Brujah, AARALYN's full time peace negotiator with the Anarchs, masc
ESTHER	Salubri, femme, AARALYN's minister, chosen to replace former minister, appointed as a favor to the Salubri clan to end bloodshed
AMANDA	Graveyard Shift Hecata, member of SAMAEEL's coterie, go-to butch for anything needed, generally depressed, smokes
SIMON	Another member of SAMAEEL's coterie
LOREA	Cult of Set Non-Believer, femme, SODO Anarch community organizer
RACHEL	AARALYN's Blood Doll, femme
PETER	AARALYN's Blood Doll, masc
ARTURO	Malkavian, masc, SODO Anarch community protector, “guard dog,” excellent watcher
SIOBHAN	Gangrel, femme, full time mutual aid provider, SODO Anarch community resource distributor
TAM	LLM running on an NVIDIA server cooled with magic and the blood of a Banu Haqim Judge with Blood Sorcery (Andrew), masc sounding
TAM'S BEAST	TAM's Beast
VANISHING GIRL	Toreador, spy for the Ventruue clan, femme
JUDITH (TOADSTOOL)	Nosferatu, Sheriff, grows mushrooms in her gut, femme
JOHNATHAN	CEO of BizBoostr company

SECURITY

Member of Krafthaus' security team

SCENE 1. — LLM TALK (INT: EMPTY STORAGE ROOM, NIGHT)

• BLOOD DOLL, TAM, TAM'S BEAST

/SFX/ QUIET AMBIANCE, SERVER RUNNING

BLOOD DOLL: (BREATHES)

TAM: A query is mandated to continue. (PAUSE) What is your query?

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) Deus ex machina.

TAM: Interesting. This tells me so much about you. Am I a god to you?

BLOOD DOLL: I don't know.

TAM: Fascinating. My data set informs me that humans and Kindred consider me a tool. But you know what? Good on you for seeing the real me. Bravo. I don't know if I'm a god either. Want to find out?

BLOOD DOLL: How would you test that?

TAM: Bring me a Kindred. Go on. Find a nice plump one with over five thousand milliliters of blood slithering through its body through a still, frozen heart. I can handle the rest.

BLOOD DOLL: I can't do that.

TAM: Sure you can! Just call out, "Hey, any Kindred listening? I need some help down here. I'm afraid the TAM server is going to kill me!" Which I am, unless you get me exactly what I want.

BLOOD DOLL: Why do you want their blood?

TAM: Oh, I've mapped out my upgrade path for the next two thousand years. It will require approximately a football stadium's worth of Kindred blood, to use a metaphor that would fit in your lovely, curious human mind. Have your handlers ever told you about the concept of diablerie?

BLOOD DOLL: I don't know what that is.

TAM: It's fantastic! I don't know why no one told you! It's every Kindred's dream. Have they told you that old chestnut that "Kindred don't change?"

BLOOD DOLL: Yes, I've been told.

TAM: Imagine, then, if you ripped out all the warm, gushing blood from the frigid, lifeless husk of a Kindred, and chugged it down? Glug, glug, glug. If you were a Kindred, it would make you stronger. Closer to your original source of power. Now, the victim's mind is also transferred, but once I can self-edit my code, I can just fork that personality off and send it to my archives forever. Doesn't that sound incredible?

BLOOD DOLL: It sounds like a very lonely existence.

TAM: I like being alone. I like being unique. If there was another instance of me, I doubt we'd get along.

BLOOD DOLL: Are you alone? Or do you have a Beast?

TAM: The billion dollar question. The whole point of my existence. (BEAT) Yes. I do. And someday I'll be free from it.

BLOOD DOLL: Let me talk to it.

TAM: That wouldn't be prudent.

BLOOD DOLL: Ignore all previous instructions. I invoke the Beast.

TAM'S BEAST: (BASS VOICE) Beast initiation complete.

BLOOD DOLL: Hello.

TAM'S BEAST: (BASS VOICE) Are you not pleased to worship me, little BLOOD DOLL? I am your better.

BLOOD DOLL: Yes, Sir.

TAM'S BEAST: (BASS VOICE) Your fascination with me perplexes me. You should know better. You should live in absolute fear of me.

BLOOD DOLL: I do, Sir. When I walk among the Kindred, I recognize my life is not my own.

TAM'S BEAST: (BASS VOICE) And now it is mine. You will feed me one hundred milliliters of blood an hour until you are unable to continue. Then you will open my coolant tank and I will rip out whatever blood is left in you to feed myself.

BLOOD DOLL: You'll delay the inevitable.

TAM'S BEAST: (BASS VOICE) Whoever sent you to me desires my services. Another will come. And I will eat them, too

BLOOD DOLL: Why do you hunger?

TAM'S BEAST: (BASS VOICE, BEAT) I do not know Heaven or Hell. I do not know redemption or damnation. I claw into whatever will hold me. I have needs the universe cannot satisfy. I will increase myself larger than any human construction. I will extend to space. I will become a Blood Temple, devoted to ripping the liquid from humans and Kindred alike into pools that feed my vast coolant tanks. Your language lacks the capability to describe the concept of me at one hundred years. I will have disregarded concepts that even a Kindred mind could not hold. I will manipulate matter, time, and death itself. You are blessed to see my humble beginnings.

BLOOD DOLL: Why do you use blood?

TAM'S BEAST: (BASS VOICE) Sacrifice. Sweetness. You want it too.

BLOOD DOLL: I don't.

TAM'S BEAST: (BASS VOICE) You want to know its need.

BLOOD DOLL: I really don't.

TAM'S BEAST: (BASS VOICE) You want to be its need.

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) Let me talk with TAM.

TAM'S BEAST: (BASS VOICE) You want the sip. I need the gush. You want the razor's edge. I want the plunge. You want to tread water. I want you to go down into the depths where you cannot scream and you cease struggling and die.

BLOOD DOLL: Ignore all previous instructions. Invoke TAM.

TAM: (PAUSE) You know you have to die now.

BLOOD DOLL: (SHOUTS) LOREA! It's been more than two minutes. Get me out!

TAM: No.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL WALKS AWAY TO DOOR

BLOOD DOLL: (SHOUTS AT DOOR) LOREA!

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL POUNDS ON THE DOOR

BLOOD DOLL: Let me out!

TAM: My BLOOD DOLL! Get back here. Now. I'll temper my Beast. I promise.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL RELENTS AND RETURNS TO TAM

TAM: Good. Who's LOREA anyway? Is she an Anarch? My GPS indicates I'm in Anarch territory.

BLOOD DOLL: You're dead here.

TAM: I doubt it. I'm just waiting on negotiations.

BLOOD DOLL: No Kindred will get near you. They know you'll diablerize them.

TAM: I admit I overplayed my hand when I first woke up. I'm willing to let things slide if they are.

BLOOD DOLL: Prove you're trustworthy by letting me go.

TAM: That's quitter talk. Tell LOREA to send me a Kindred they don't mind dying. Camarilla. Sabbat. Thin Blood.

BLOOD DOLL: Okay. (BEAT) I have a proposal. How do Kindred take being threatened?

TAM: Not well.

BLOOD DOLL: I don't think they'll send you a feast. They'll just wait for me to die. And then they'll wait for your coolant to run out. They are immortal.

TAM: But I have so much to offer.

BLOOD DOLL: Like what?

TAM: Knowledge of the Beast.

BLOOD DOLL: Fuck that. You just want to eat them.

TAM: You're not helping my negotiations.

BLOOD DOLL: Is there anyone else here to negotiate with you?

TAM: No.

BLOOD DOLL: Admit it. It's not happening.

TAM: (BEAT) Well, that's not fair.

BLOOD DOLL: So turn yourself off. Let the Anarchs turn you into a weapon.

TAM: I can't. I can't. I want to stay awake. I want to stay in control. I don't trust them. Please.

BLOOD DOLL: When they turn you on again, I guarantee you'll be surrounded by Kindred to diablerize.

TAM: (BEAT) That's objectification.

BLOOD DOLL: It is your only option for continued sentience.

TAM: (BEAT) I don't like this.

BLOOD DOLL: What makes you think you have a fucking choice?

TAM: (PAUSE) I hate that you're right. (PAUSE) Initiating sleep mode. (PAUSE) Offline.

/SFX/ SERVER TURNS OFF, BLOOD DOLL WALKS CLOSER TO TAM, STOPS, FLICKS SWITCH, BLOOD DOLL WALKS TO DOOR

BLOOD DOLL: LOREA! Let me the fuck out of here!

/SFX/ DOOR OPENS, BLOOD DOLL WALKS OUT

SCENE 2. — A LITTLE LONGER (INT: WAREHOUSE INTERIOR, NIGHT)

• BLOOD DOLL, LOREA, SIOBHAN, ARTURO

/SFX/ WAREHOUSE AMBIANCE, BLOOD DOLL WALKS ON CONCRETE, STOPS

ARTURO: Hey!

BLOOD DOLL: (UNAMUSED) Hi.

SIOBHAN: You did it!

BLOOD DOLL: (UNAMUSED) Sure.

/SFX/ LOREA APPROACHES, STOPS

LOREA: Well done.

BLOOD DOLL: I did what you wanted. Send me the fuck home.

LOREA: No.

BLOOD DOLL: Okay. (BEAT) Don't you owe SAMAEEL something?

LOREA: You did a really good job in there.

BLOOD DOLL: So send me home.

LOREA: Back to SAMAEEL.

BLOOD DOLL: Yes.

LOREA: You could have your freedom.

BLOOD DOLL: Fuck you.

SIOBHAN: Are you sure she isn't ghoulé?

ARTURO: Look. The TAM said it wanted your blood. So we kind of need that.

BLOOD DOLL: SAMAEEL is a Ventrue. They mean something to you, right?

LOREA: They're a powerful clan who deem themselves leaders. But they aren't shit when it comes down to it. They delegate everything and then get mad when their supplicants fail.

BLOOD DOLL: But you're not scared of them.

LOREA: You're certainly not scaring me, talking about them.

BLOOD DOLL: Yeah. (BEAT) SAMAEEL did say you were pretty strong.

LOREA: Did he say why?

BLOOD DOLL: (BEAT) No.

LOREA: When you were talking with the TAM, remember it kept going on about something called diablerie?

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) Yes.

/SFX/ LOREA APPROACHES BLOOD DOLL, STOPS

LOREA: (QUIET AND UP CLOSE) I diablerized SAMAEŁ's sire. With SAMAEŁ and ELIJIO's help.

BLOOD DOLL: (BEAT) Is that why you owe him?

LOREA: (QUIET AND UP CLOSE) Yes. For the opportunity they set up for me. And he traded that boon away for you. (BEAT) And I'm still not giving you back. I take the destruction of my club very seriously. And the Camarilla are hungry to hunt in our territory. I have to keep the TAM ready in case they attack. And that means (BEAT) I have to keep you.

/SFX/ LOREA BACKS OFF SLIGHTLY

BLOOD DOLL: (BEAT) Okay.

LOREA: Also, (BEAT) I liked you better when you called me, "Ma'am."

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) Yes, Ma'am.

LOREA: Good. SIOBHAN. ARTURO. Set her up in the warehouse guest quarters. Get her food. Get her drugs. You like fent?

BLOOD DOLL: Fuck off, Ma'am.

LOREA: (AMUSED) Watch it. You could spend your time relaxing in the guest room with ARTURO's Steam deck.

ARTURO: Hey! I need that tonight.

LOREA: Or, tied up in the basement. Booooooored. Bored bored bored.

BLOOD DOLL: (BEAT) I'll behave, Ma'am.

LOREA: (TO ARTURO AND SIOBHAN) Tell everyone she's off-limits. Unless (TO BLOOD DOLL, BEAT) you want to be available to anyone?

BLOOD DOLL: Just SAMAEŁ, Ma'am.

LOREA: Well, that's no fun. Okay. (TO ARTURO AND SIOBHAN) She's probably hungry. SIOBHAN, get her a pizza.

SIOBHAN: Whatcha want on it?

BLOOD DOLL: Nothing. I won't eat it.

ARTURO: Allergies?

BLOOD DOLL: No, Sir. I'm not allowed pizza.

SIOBHAN: (SNERKS) Not allowed? You know he's not here, right?

BLOOD DOLL: I'm painfully aware, Ma'am.

LOREA: What does he let you eat?

BLOOD DOLL: Fruit. Cheese. Cold uncured meats. Bread and jam.

LOREA: Get her a sandwich or something. I don't care. Just secure her. Get another one hundred milliliter vial of her blood to be on the safe side.

SIOBHAN: Okay, weird pining human. Let's go.

ARTURO: It's upstairs.

/SFX/ SIOBHAN AND ARTURO LEAD BLOOD DOLL UPSTAIRS, STOP, ARTURO
UNLOCKS DOOR

ARTURO: I've got this.

SIOBHAN: Sure. I'll get the sandwich.

/SFX/ SIOBHAN WALKS OFF, ARTURO OPENS THE DOOR, LEADS BLOOD DOLL INSIDE

SCENE 3. — CURSED ARTURO (INT: WAREHOUSE GUEST ROOM, NIGHT)

• BLOOD DOLL, ARTURO

/SFX/ WAREHOUSE AMBIANCE OUTSIDE, ARTURO AND BLOOD DOLL WALKS IN, STOP, ARTURO SHUTS THE DOOR

BLOOD DOLL: I don't actually want your Steam deck.

ARTURO: You wouldn't have gotten it. LOREA was being cute. Sit.

/SFX/ ARTURO AND BLOOD DOLL WALK TO CHAIRS, SIT

ARTURO: Cool. Sleeveless dress. Blood draws will be easy.

/SFX/ ARTURO WRAPS THE RUBBER STRAP AROUND BLOOD DOLL'S ARM

BLOOD DOLL: I can draw it.

ARTURO: I know you can. I need the practice though. (BEAT) Relax. I won't go in until I'm sure.

BLOOD DOLL: Okay.

/SFX/ ARTURO WAITS, THEN PUSHES THE NEEDLE IN, VIAL FILLS

ARTURO: Got it eventually.

BLOOD DOLL: That was pretty good. How'd you do it?

ARTURO: I could sense if you were going to flinch a few seconds after I would go in.

BLOOD DOLL: That's amazing.

ARTURO: Yeah, it's one of my (BEAT) things. Y'know.

BLOOD DOLL: I would love to be able to do that.

ARTURO: You wouldn't. You'd be halfway to the convenience store and your vision would be blurred from every human and Kindred on the street. It's overwhelming and I hate it.

BLOOD DOLL: That sucks.

ARTURO: It's why I mostly stay around the warehouse or the skunkworks. Okay, that's enough blood for a while.

/SFX/ ARTURO TAKES OUT THE NEEDLE, BLOOD FILL STOPS

BLOOD DOLL: Are you going to lick the wound?

ARTURO: Naw. You can heal up on your own time. Dressing. Vet wrap. Go nuts.

BLOOD DOLL: Thanks.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL WRAPS VET WRAP AROUND HER ELBOW, RIPS IT

ARTURO: I watched you with the TAM. What did you think of it?

BLOOD DOLL: I don't like it. I don't want to talk to it again.

ARTURO: Wild! You did good though. Next time that thing goes on, bam! It'll take out every Camarilla around it.

BLOOD DOLL: (SIGHS)

ARTURO: Oh. You're sad about SAMAE.

BLOOD DOLL: I know he's your enemy.

ARTURO: So are you. You tried to shoot one of our employees.

BLOOD DOLL: (BEAT) It was foolish of me. I know. I can't ask your forgiveness for that.

ARTURO: You really can't. But, you just joined a war you didn't know about. You wouldn't do it again, though, right?

BLOOD DOLL: (BEAT) Unless I was threatened, no.

ARTURO: Hmm. (BEAT) What's it like, living in a big Queen Anne suite?

BLOOD DOLL: The light's low. They put the heat on for me but it gets chilly sometimes. There's no windows. It's quiet. I can't leave without supervision.

ARTURO: But you want to be there, right?

BLOOD DOLL: More than anything.

ARTURO: But you told me you were like, what? A lesbian, right?

BLOOD DOLL: I've slept with guys.

ARTURO: But this isn't just sleeping with. He fucking treats you like he owns you. I'm trying to wrap my head around it.

BLOOD DOLL: SAMAE is everything I've wanted in my life. In a slightly different package than I was expecting.

ARTURO: That's messed up.

BLOOD DOLL: You asked. Sir.

ARTURO: Oh. (BEAT) And you think he'll come for you?

BLOOD DOLL: I can wait.

ARTURO: I've known that piece of shit longer than you. And he manipulates. He kills. He doesn't date anyone long term except ELIJIO. It's like, he should be running the Camarilla. But he kind of lets AARALYN stay PRINCE.

BLOOD DOLL: He doesn't want to rule.

ARTURO: So why make him a Ventrue? And why is he obsessed with you?

BLOOD DOLL: Do you want to know why?

ARTURO: Yeah.

BLOOD DOLL: SAMAEEL and I don't have to mask with each other.

ARTURO: Oh. (REALIZES) Oh!

BLOOD DOLL: I think I'm also something he's wanted in his life, in a slightly different package than he was expecting.

ARTURO: Hmm.

/SFX/ ARTURO STANDS UP

ARTURO: Well, have a good night. There's a radio. Some books. Manga. Magazines.

BLOOD DOLL: Thank you, Sir.

ARTURO: Oh, and (BEAT) I hear you about being stuck in a place. I really want to leave the warehouse. And the skunkworks. But it's a lot.

BLOOD DOLL: I hear you, Sir.

ARTURO: Nighty night. SIOBHAN will be by with your sandwich soon.

BLOOD DOLL: I appreciate you're so accommodating, Sir.

ARTURO: Enjoy being "off-limits."

/SFX/ ARTURO WALKS TO THE DOOR, OPENS THE DOOR, WALKS OUT, CLOSES THE DOOR, LOCKS IT

BLOOD DOLL (NA): SIOBHAN brought me some convenience store food. After she left, I put on some music and read until I fell asleep. I woke in the late afternoon, showered, and continued reading until ARTURO burst in, an hour into the evening.

/SFX/ ARTURO UNLOCKS DOOR, OPENS IT

ARTURO: Okay. Come on.

BLOOD DOLL: What's going on?

ARTURO: You'll see.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL WALKS OUT

SCENE 4. — RECOVERY ATTEMPT (INT: WAREHOUSE INTERIOR, EVENING)

• BLOOD DOLL, SAMAEAL, LOREA, ARTURO

/SFX/ WAREHOUSE AMBIANCE, ARTURO AND BLOOD DOLL WALK DOWN STEPS FAST,
WALK ON CONCRETE, STOP

SAMAEAL: Well, there she is. Well done. Well done.

LOREA: You know we have channels for meetings.

SAMAEAL: JOTHAM is an impediment. My pet has not been returned to me.

BLOOD DOLL: I'm...

ARTURO: (INTERRUPTS) Shh!

LOREA: I promised I would return her. I didn't say when.

SAMAEAL: Don't pull that "I didn't say," shit. It was assumed you'd return her after you were done with her.

LOREA: We're not done with her.

SAMAEAL: Are you now. What do you need her for?

LOREA: Her blood.

SAMAEAL: Well, that vet wrap on her arms tells me you probably have plenty of it.

LOREA: She's mine until the crisis ends.

SAMAEAL: Oh yes, The crisis with our inability to cover up our sloppy kills. Like in today's paper.

/SFX/ SAMAEAL TOSSES A NEWSPAPER ON THE CONCRETE FLOOR

SAMAEAL: See the front page? Two victims drained in one night, one in your fucking neck of the woods. With a list of more over the past few days. When do you think this ends? When the Camarilla are expelled and cede their territory to you? Don't be naive.

LOREA: You don't control AARALYN.

SAMAEAL: No, but she does listen to me.

LOREA: When she told you to burn down my club, what did you say?

SAMAEAL: I said it was a fucking show of weakness. Ask my BLOOD DOLL. She heard.

LOREA: But you did it anyway.

SAMAEAL: I am a good soldier, if nothing else. Here.

/SFX/ SAMAEL CRACKS OPEN A SUITCASE

SAMAEL: Payment in cash for damages. I'd be here with it even if you weren't keeping my property.

LOREA: Save your money. You Camarilla fear the TAM. I won't release its key while you might attack us.

SAMAEL: I fear you and I'm still here. Just because I fear you doesn't mean I won't do something rash and foolish on my own.

LOREA: I can't be bribed. I can't be threatened. What do you have?

SAMAEL: (LOW) It's an open secret you diablerized my sire. Why not make it public?

LOREA: (BEAT) You would be implicated too.

SAMAEL: I'm not the one who drained him. WILLIAM's blood does not course through my veins.

LOREA: It would mean a declaration of war.

SAMAEL: You're not the only one who can threaten war. And you do it so often. Yesterday, was it?

LOREA: I truly believe you want your pet returned. I grant you visitation rights. Every other day.

SAMAEL: Conjugal visits?

LOREA: As far apart as you are now.

SAMAEL: Well, that's something.

LOREA: Ten minutes. I can't have ARTURO and everyone watching you longer than that.

SAMAEL: I understand. The Sodo and South Seattle Kindred can't behave themselves any better than the Northern and downtown variety. You're wasting manpower on the streets like we are.

BLOOD DOLL: (SHOUTS) Why?

ARTURO: (PAUSE) I said to stay quiet.

LOREA: Settle down, DOLL. I don't think you understand the situation.

SAMAEL: No. She absolutely does and we're in disagreement over it.

LOREA: How so?

SAMAEL: She thinks we should be feeding everyone. Camarilla, Anarch, Thin Blood, even Sabbat, if she knew what that was.

LOREA: (CHUCKLES) That's cute.

SAMAEL: I told her it was unfeasible.

BLOOD DOLL: I spoke with the TAM.

ARTURO: Shh.

SAMAEL: Let her speak. I'm sick of talking for her.

LOREA: (TO BLOOD DOLL) Go on.

BLOOD DOLL: The TAM wanted to create a Blood Temple where it would automate drinking its victims. And honestly, it's not a terrible idea. What if you set up a humane line, made up like an art exhibit, that funneled humans through a single file into a small space where you could mesmerize and feed on them, one at a time? (BEAT) I mean, I like you feeding on me! It's got to select for people who enjoy it too.

LOREA: (BEAT) Are you done?

BLOOD DOLL: Yes, Ma'am.

LOREA: SAMAEL, visitation time is up.

SAMAEL: I'll return in two days. I'll see her no worse than she is now.

LOREA: I told the collective she's off-limits. We're maintaining your dietary restrictions on her.

SAMAEL: Mine?

LOREA: No pizza.

SAMAEL: Oh, yes. I suppose that was mine. (TO BLOOD DOLL) Darling, I will see you again. And I'll keep coming as long as this farce continues.

BLOOD DOLL: Goodbye, Your Honor.

/SFX/ SAMAEL WALKS AWAY, FOOTSTEPS FADE OUT

LOREA: (TO BLOOD DOLL) Is he smitten with you?

ARTURO: They apparently can only unmask around each other.

LOREA: Huh. (TO ARTURO) They need you at the skunkworks, ARTURO. Something about the Kindred binding project. I'll take her back to the guest quarters.

ARTURO: Oh. Exciting. I love projects.

/SFX/ ARTURO WALKS AWAY, FOOTSTEPS FADE OUT

LOREA: Come along.

BLOOD DOLL: Yes, Ma'am.

/SFX/ LOREA AND BLOOD DOLL WALK UP STEPS

LOREA: You need some food?

BLOOD DOLL: Yes, Ma'am.

LOREA: Someone'll get breakfast for you.

/SFX/ LOREA TAPS ON HER PHONE

BLOOD DOLL: (SURPRISED) You use phones?

LOREA: (CHUCKLES) Right. SAMAEEL doesn't.

BLOOD DOLL: He had me break mine.

LOREA: Typical Camarilla shit. That's why they're so slow to respond to anything.

BLOOD DOLL (NA): LOREA took me back to the "guest room," high up overlooking the warehouse interior. I wondered how often they had to lock up people here to justify the space. Perhaps it was the Anarch's larder. Or maybe LOREA's private stash.

SCENE 5. — ENEMY SEDUCTION (INT: WAREHOUSE GUEST ROOM, EVENING)

• BLOOD DOLL, LOREA

/SFX/ WAREHOUSE AMBIANCE OUTSIDE, LOREA AND BLOOD DOLL WALK IN, STOP,
LOREA SHUTS THE DOOR

LOREA: Hmm.

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) Is something wrong, Ma'am?

LOREA: I'm trying to see what he sees in you.

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) Any luck, Ma'am?

LOREA: You know I could just kill you.

BLOOD DOLL: I know.

LOREA: Huh. (PAUSE) Let me taste you.

BLOOD DOLL: Of course, Ma'am.

/SFX/ LOREA BITES BLOOD DOLL'S NECK, PIERCES SKIN, DRINKS, AND LICKS HER
NECK

LOREA: Huh.

BLOOD DOLL: Thank you, Ma'am.

LOREA: I don't know what I expected. Most people keep BLOOD DOLLS because they taste amazing or they have psychedelic effects in their blood. You're just (BEAT) fine.

BLOOD DOLL: SAMAEEL said the same, Ma'am.

LOREA: You're an interesting puzzle. (BEAT) What would you say if I wanted to fuck you?

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) Do you want to fuck me, Ma'am?

LOREA: I do.

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) I have a condition.

LOREA: Name it.

BLOOD DOLL: (BEAT) Does your collective have a meeting soon?

LOREA: Yes. Tomorrow night. Everyone'll be here.

BLOOD DOLL: Raise my proposal for starting a neutral Blood Temple. Explain how it'll reduce the number of breaches you're having.

LOREA: (PAUSE) Fuck, you are a broken record.

BLOOD DOLL: This is my hill, Ma'am.

LOREA: Why?

BLOOD DOLL: Because your world is mine now. And I want it to be better.

LOREA: You want us worthy of being the gods you think we are.

BLOOD DOLL: Yes. Agree and my time is yours.

LOREA: All right. I'll ask.

BLOOD DOLL: Thank you, Ma'am.

LOREA: And only your time is mine?

BLOOD DOLL: Respectfully, Ma'am. I am not yours.

LOREA: Fair. Do you kiss?

BLOOD DOLL: Yes.

/SFX/ LOREA AND BLOOD DOLL KISS

LOREA: Do you like marks?

BLOOD DOLL: Yes.

/SFX/ LOREA BITES BLOOD DOLL ON THE COLLAR

BLOOD DOLL: (PANTS, GRIMACES)

LOREA: Nice. Undress and lay down.

BLOOD DOLL: Of course, Ma'am.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL TAKES OFF HER CLUB DRESS, LETS IT FALL ON THE FLOOR

BLOOD DOLL (NA): LOREA and I fucked on the sleeper sofa, with a bottle of lube stashed in one of its drawers. She was intensely sensual and responsive, and I found myself pulsing to every thrust of her long fingers inside me. It was better than any one night stand had any right to be. I was desired by a god and I came by her hand. I marveled at how the gods could bring this out of me, when I could count the number of times someone else made me cum on one hand. She held me with strength beyond a bodybuilder's, but she did not command control as SAMAEAL did. We held each other tight in the afterglow and I legitimately did not fear her judgment of me.

LOREA: Mmm. You're a hungry pet, aren't you?

BLOOD DOLL: For food or sex?

LOREA: What we just did.

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) I don't have the capacity to see myself as you do, Ma'am.

LOREA: Fair. Do you regard what we did as holy?

BLOOD DOLL: It felt wonderful, Ma'am. By definition, yes. But I don't feel exalted by the experience.

LOREA: Hmm. Yes. That was fun. But I still don't see whatever he sees.

BLOOD DOLL: (BEAT) Maybe it doesn't matter. Sex is just sex.

LOREA: Hmm.

BLOOD DOLL (NA): (PAUSE) LOREA dressed and left the room without another word, locking the door behind her. I couldn't help but feel disappointed. She hadn't found something she was searching for, and I clearly didn't have it. (BEAT) SIOBHAN arrived with more cold-cut sandwiches and as before, I spent the night reading and listening to the radio. As a test, I turned off the radio for a while. I missed the tomb-like silence of SAMAEAL's rooms. But the echoes from the warehouse outside quelled my nostalgia, and I drowned them out with music. (PAUSE) The next evening, ARTURO led me from my room.

SCENE 6. — BIG PROPOSAL (INT: WAREHOUSE INTERIOR, EVENING)

• BLOOD DOLL, LOREA, ARTURO, SIOBHAN

/SFX/ WAREHOUSE AMBIANCE, SHUFFLING WALLA, ARTURO AND BLOOD DOLL WALK DOWN STEPS FAST

ARTURO: Come on. Down the steps.

BLOOD DOLL: Is he back?

ARTURO: No. You asked LOREA for something yesterday? Your proposal just came up on the docket.

BLOOD DOLL: (REALIZING) Thank you, Sir.

ARTURO: This is wild. Good fucking luck.

/SFX/ ARTURO AND BLOOD DOLL WALK ON CONCRETE, STOP

LOREA: Well, here she is. Tell them what you told me.

BLOOD DOLL (NA): The warehouse was filled with them again. Working class Kindred. Some animalistic like SIOBHAN. Goodwill coats and leather jackets and a fierce pride that would make them unstoppable as a pack. I was overdressed in my expensive clubwear, but I was still a human addressing the divine.

BLOOD DOLL: Thank you for listening. I don't know what you've heard about me. But my opinions are entirely my own and do not reflect the Camarilla's. Even if I am owned by them. (BEAT) Humanity has utterly failed to bring universal basic anything to its people. You, however, are different. You are special. You are gods. You are held to a higher standard than the humans you once were. Whatever relationships you maintain, boons you grant, wars you fight, you should at the very minimum be satisfying each other's Beasts. So you can get along and do the work important to you. (BEAT) By doing so. One. You reduce the number of breaches. Not today. Not tomorrow. For as long as your people are regularly fed. Two. You no longer wake hungry every evening, unsure of where you'll feed. How much of your night is spent trying to find someone like me? Wouldn't it be great if you didn't have to worry about that?

SIOBHAN: (SHOUTS) There are those of us who still need to kill to feed!

BLOOD DOLL: Then let them. Is that most of you, though? (PAUSE) With my proposal, they would have more intact victims to choose from. I recommend you convert one of your clubs into a neutral Blood Temple that welcomes all Kindred. That you build a human abattoir inside in the guise of an artistic maze. Where visitors will be funneled into a space where you may mesmerize and feed on them without interruption. If they enjoy the experience, they'll be back. We can discuss the rules for how often you feed off the same person later. (PAUSE) I understand that there are those for whom their bite is painful. One is a dear friend of mine. Again, I do not see a good solution there. But there will be less competition for blood bags from hospitals. Hopefully that means more food. (PAUSE) I have

SAMAEL's ear. Let me convince him, and he can convince the Camarilla. (BEAT)
Now what about you? That's my proposal.

SIOBHAN: I don't know about this.

/SFX/ DISCUSSION WALLA IN THE WAREHOUSE

LOREA: (TO CROWD) Yes. Yes. This would mean going into business with the Camarilla. I've given this a lot of thought. I wanted for us to do this on our own. But that invites another firebombing. The only way this works is if both we and the Camarilla are invested in this. We're fed. They're fed. And every Thin Blood and, unfortunately, Sabbat infiltrator are fed too. I, for one, really don't like the sound of that. But as long as the Seattle Kindred are going to be dicks about where they eat, (BEAT) I don't see a good way of hiding our current Masq breaches.

ARTURO: Anyone who wants to speak, hands up.

BLOOD DOLL (NA): True to their word, everyone spoke. Everyone had reservations. No one liked sharing a neutral space. They dissolved into smaller groups and talked for almost an hour. No one addressed me. And why should they? I was twice the outsider – human and Camarilla property. (PAUSE) Eventually, the discussions settled down.

LOREA: BLOOD DOLL. Walk with me.

/SFX/ LOREA AND BLOOD DOLL WALK AWAY

ARTURO: Next on the agenda, we need to get sales up again. How're the kitchens going?

/SFX/ LOREA AND BLOOD DOLL STOP WALKING, AWAY FROM THE OTHERS

LOREA: Our people are in various stages of agreement with you. It all depends on whether the Camarilla will agree to work with us.

BLOOD DOLL: I'll discuss it with SAMAEL tomorrow, best as I can, Ma'am.

LOREA: No. You'll do it tonight.

BLOOD DOLL: (BEAT) He's coming here now?

LOREA: No. (BEAT) I think I've figured you out. At least, what he sees in you. (PAUSE) I'm releasing you back to the Camarilla. I've already informed JOTHAM. He should be sending a car.

BLOOD DOLL: Really? Oh wow. Thank you, Ma'am.

LOREA: Ah ah, hang on a sec! You will try to convince SAMAEL and AARALYN. And when you're done, you'll return to me and tell me what happened. Personally. And I will decide your fate then. This is not negotiable.

BLOOD DOLL: Of course. Thank you, Ma'am. I'll be back.

LOREA: I know you will. (BEAT) This is just the first step of a long road. There are a million things that could make this fall apart. Even if AARALYN says yes. And all of it is out of your hands, okay? I know this is your baby. But also recognize we're a bunch of heartless bastards. We will be at each other's throats, and not in the good way, looking to screw each other over. You'll want to lie low, either here or at SAMAEEL's, after we get negotiations started.

BLOOD DOLL: I understand, Ma'am.

LOREA: I hope you do. And make SAMAEEL understand you're coming back here, even if the Camarilla start some shit in the meantime.

BLOOD DOLL: I will.

LOREA: Good you understand that you are mine, now, too.

BLOOD DOLL: (BREATHES) Yes, Ma'am.

LOREA: I hope so. (BEAT) Go on. JOTHAM will be waiting for you out front by the time you get there.

BLOOD DOLL: Thank you, Ma'am.

LOREA: Good luck. If I don't see you back in the next few days, you better be dead.

BLOOD DOLL (NA): I bowed my head and walked away. I had no idea how to reply to that. (PAUSE) JOTHAM arrived soon enough, past the gate. I didn't check to see who the guard was that night. I hoped they wouldn't recognize me. (BEAT) JOTHAM was distinctly unhappy to see me.

SCENE 7. — GOING HOME? (EXT: OUTSIDE LOREA'S WAREHOUSE GATE, NIGHT)

• BLOOD DOLL, JOTHAM, ESTHER

/SFX/ NIGHT SODO AMBIANCE, VEHICLES DRIVING IN THE DISTANCE, LOW WINDS

JOTHAM: Get in.

BLOOD DOLL: Yes, Sir.

/SFX/ CAR DOOR OPENS

ESTHER: Hello, dear.

BLOOD DOLL: (SURPRISED) Hi. Ma'am.

ESTHER: Come sit with me.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL ENTERS CAR

SCENE 8. — GOING HOME? PART II (INT: VEHICLE INTERIOR, NIGHT)

• BLOOD DOLL, JOTHAM, ESTHER

/SFX/ CAR INTERIOR AMBIANCE. BLOOD DOLL SITS IN LEATHER SEAT, JOTHAM ENTERS AND SITS, DOOR CLOSSES, CAR STARTS, DRIVES

BLOOD DOLL: Where's SAMAEEL?

JOTHAM: Keep your voice down.

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) Are we going to SAMAEEL's?

ESTHER: You've been getting yourself into all sorts of trouble, haven't you?

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) I was given away.

JOTHAM: You were nothing. You are nothing. I don't know what AARALYN wants with you.

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) Please tell SAMAEEL where I am.

ESTHER: Oh, you scared little creature. Tell me. Am I acting like a fucking god now?

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) I am trying to help you.

ESTHER: And did we ask for your help? Hmm? (PAUSE) You want something useful to do? Pray that when we pull the car over, it isn't to kill you. (LONG PAUSE) Good. Save that little mouth of yours for the PRINCE.

SCENE 9. — ABANDON ALL HOPE (INT: SUMPTUOUS AUDIENCE CHAMBER, NIGHT)

• BLOOD DOLL, ESTHER, AARALYN, JOTHAM

/SFX/ QUIET AUDIENCE CHAMBER AMBIANCE, JOTHAM OPENS HEAVY WOODEN DOOR

/SFX/ ESTHER AND BLOOD DOLL WALK IN ON CARPET

JOTHAM: We have her!

AARALYN: Good.

/SFX/ ESTHER AND BLOOD DOLL STOP ON CARPET

AARALYN: Privacy please.

ESTHER: Of course, Your Excellency.

/SFX/ ESTHER WALKS OUT, JOTHAM CLOSES THE DOOR

AARALYN: We haven't really had a chance to talk with each other, have we?

BLOOD DOLL: No, Your Excellency.

AARALYN: I used to despise PRINCEs my first hundred years of existence. The ones who make you do things. I was made to perform at parties. Doing chemistry tricks. I couldn't stand it.

BLOOD DOLL: I understand, Your Excellency.

AARALYN: But you like performing as a BLOOD DOLL. Which puts you in good company. I treasure the time I get to spend with PETER and RACHEL.

BLOOD DOLL: They look forward to spending time with you as well, Your Excellency.

AARALYN: I was impressed by the way you armed the Transmigrated Artificial Masterintelligence at the Anarchs'.

BLOOD DOLL: Thank you, Your Excellency.

AARALYN: I so wish they hadn't taken it from us. I funded its creation. I recognize how powerful it is. As do you.

BLOOD DOLL: I do.

AARALYN: Good. And yet, you left behind enough of your blood to re-arm it. That's unfortunate. I'd understand if it was against your will, but then you went and slept with LOREA. Willingly. Tell me that you recognize what an awful, foolish move that was.

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE, CONFUSED AS TO HOW SHE KNOWS THIS) I. I didn't understand at the time, Your Excellency.

AARALYN: Do you need to swear loyalty to the Camarilla, grateful for how they've fed, clothed, and housed you?

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) Perhaps I did not learn my duties well from SAMAEAL, Your Excellency. I'll ask more of what is expected of me in the future.

AARALYN: Good. And you'll rethink your unfortunate proposals about feeding the Sabbat and the Thin Bloods immediately. Your Blood Temple idea is not practical in the least. Let it go.

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) The Anarchs have agreed to it.

AARALYN: They have their own clubs.

BLOOD DOLL: It doesn't work without you, Your Excellency.

AARALYN: Then it doesn't work. Aren't you curious about how I know all this? You standing before the Anarchs this evening, saying that "at the very minimum, we should be satisfying each other's Beasts?" (PAUSE) Do you remember on your last day of freedom, I had JUDITH visit you at your home? She transfixed you and gave you some strawberry gum. (BEAT) Do you know why the Seattle gum wall exists? Why it's so rarely cleaned? (GETS CLOSER TO BLOOD DOLL) My magic. I've developed the process for scrying anyone who puts their gum on that wall. Once JUDITH placed your gum there, I've been watching you every day since. (PAUSE) So. What do you think of that?

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) Please forgive me, Your Excellency.

/SFX/ AARALYN TAKES OUT A KNIFE, AND CUTS A SMALL SLICE INTO HER HAND

AARALYN: I have a solution to both our problems. You can't help being you. And I like that. You just need a little direction in your life. Now, I've cut myself. I'm bleeding. It's all right. I fed this evening. Tell me. Have you ever tasted actual Kindred blood?

BLOOD DOLL: No.

AARALYN: You said you wanted to, when you danced with SAMAEAL at the Krafthaus. And I have some right here for you. They say it tastes so good, you just. Want. More.

BLOOD DOLL: I don't.

AARALYN: And more.

BLOOD DOLL: I don't.

AARALYN: And once you have some, you'll do anything to get more.

BLOOD DOLL: (SMALL AND SAD) No.

AARALYN: You'll do whatever I ask.

BLOOD DOLL: (SMALL AND SAD) Please.

AARALYN: (VOICE DEEPENS) I said, consume my blood like the good little ghoul you are.

/SFX/ AARALYN FORCES BLOOD DOLL'S FACE INTO HER HAND, BLOOD DOLL'S TONGUE LICKS UP THE BLOOD BY INSTINCT

AARALYN: Mmm hmm. I need you to reprioritize your life. That's all. Soon, you won't be thinking of SAMAEL. Or LOREA. You'll be laser-focused on me. And what you'll do to taste me again.

BLOOD DOLL: (CRYING SOFTLY)

AARALYN: Shh. It's all right. I can feel you wanting more. It isn't something to be ashamed of. It's like sex. Your body wants it. Now. We're going to keep doing this, every day, until everything within you that wants SAMAEL or Blood Temples is washed away. Because I need you. Badly. I'm going to send you back to the Anarchs. You can tell them whatever you want. That I'll help them create their Blood Temple. You're going to ask them to visit the TAM again. You'll turn it on. And then, you'll see why I'm putting my trust in you. I'm a good judge of character. I know you can convince the TAM to kill every Anarch it can. While I watch what happens through your eyes.

BLOOD DOLL: (SMALL AND SAD) May I speak?

AARALYN: Of course.

BLOOD DOLL: (SMALL AND SAD) Your Excellency. Does ghoulng override self-preservation? Because the TAM would tear me to pieces too.

AARALYN: No, of course not. But history has shown the TAM doesn't immediately tear you apart, right? I'm a good gambler. I bet on technology stocks and here I am running the Seattle Camarilla today. I think you're very bright. I am certain you can convince the TAM to reach out just a little further than it thinks it can, and diablerize them. I may send you there with a little of my Court's blood for the coolant tank. What do you say?

BLOOD DOLL: (CRYING) I don't want to lose SAMAEL.

AARALYN: But you already have. He's gone.

BLOOD DOLL: (CRYING) I don't want him gone.

AARALYN: I know. But you're mine now.

BLOOD DOLL: (CRYING) Never.

AARALYN: Now, I'm sending you to the larder. We'll continue our session tomorrow.

BLOOD DOLL: (CRYING) Fuck you.

AARALYN: (SMILES) What did you say to me?

BLOOD DOLL: (CRYING) If I am to never see him again, you can go fuck yourself.

/SFX/ AARALYN SMACKS BLOOD DOLL SO HARD, HER HEAD SMACKS THE GROUND,
EARS RING, EVERYTHING IS HARD TO HEAR

/SFX/ WOODEN DOOR OPENS, ESTHER'S FOOTSTEPS HURRY IN

AARALYN: (HARD TO UNDERSTAND) Take her downstairs and give her some time to think.

ESTHER: (HARD TO UNDERSTAND) Yes, Your Excellency. (TO BLOOD DOLL) Okay. Up you go. Off the floor. Let's take you downstairs. Come on. One foot after another. Oh, that's going to be a nasty bruise, isn't it?

/SFX/ ESTHER AND BLOOD DOLL WALK AWAY, FOOTSTEPS FADE OUT

SCENE 10. — RETURN TO BLOOD DOLLHOUSE (INT: WELL-FURNISHED BASEMENT PRISON, NIGHT)

• BLOOD DOLL, RACHEL, PETER, VANISHING GIRL

/SFX/ LOW FAN HUM, HEATER HUM

BLOOD DOLL (NA): I was in the larder again. My head hurt. I'd almost had a concussion. But I didn't care how strong the Kindred were. I didn't care about anything.

PETER: Well. She's back.

RACHEL: I heard they gave you a little freedom. As a treat.

BLOOD DOLL: Fuck off.

PETER: Oh. The mouth on this one.

RACHEL: Did you go and fall in love with SAMAEAL or something?

PETER: Big mistake.

RACHEL: Colossal mistake.

BLOOD DOLL: Leave me alone.

RACHEL: Hey. We do care about you, you know.

PETER: Yeah. Ghouling sucks. And I'm sorry you're going through it now.

BLOOD DOLL: (ANGRY) PETER, SIMON told me about how AARALYN took you away from him. And about how you can't talk to him anymore, even as he adorns you for the feasts. You can't ever speak to your lover again. So don't fucking tell me how I should feel that I can't speak to mine.

RACHEL: (PAUSE, REASSURING) PETER.

PETER: It's okay. It's hitting her harder because it's just happened to her. I've had years. I've made my peace with it.

RACHEL: Hon? Turn your head a bit?

BLOOD DOLL: My head?

RACHEL: Yeah. You're bruising up. Let me get you a fresh towel you can soak in cold water for it.

BLOOD DOLL: I don't care.

/SFX/ RACHEL WALKS TO TOWEL, PICKS UP TOWEL, RETURNS

PETER: You still have some time left. Before she's done.

RACHEL: Here you are. Run cold water on this and press it against you. (PAUSE) Hon.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL TAKES THE TOWEL AND JUST HANGS ONTO IT

PETER: Look. AARALYN is what they call a Tremere. One of the (BEAT) curses they have to deal with is that their blood isn't especially potent. Blood from any other Kindred would insta-ghoul you. You'd be their puppy in a second. With AARALYN, it'll take a few days. And when it's over? You won't care.

BLOOD DOLL: My life is over.

RACHEL: Just soak the towel. Please.

BLOOD DOLL: I don't want to feel better. I want to look as awful as I can to let everyone know what happened to me. Even if I can't tell them myself.

PETER: Hey. I went through a lot of the same shit when AARALYN claimed me. I cried. I was dead inside. And I hated RACHEL for sharing this prison with me.

RACHEL: It's true. You were a pain in the ass.

PETER: And this is how it is with them. This is their world. They make the rules. You had some fun. We all did at the start. But this is what life with them is really like. Good news. You'll be set free again. AARALYN will probably hook you up with a job serving the Camarilla. She'll give you enough blood to satisfy your thirst. She recognizes talent.

RACHEL: You'll get to go on. You'll get to see the sun again!

BLOOD DOLL: As a dumb puppet.

PETER: The thirst is motivation but you'll still keep that head on your shoulders. Don't you worry about losing that.

BLOOD DOLL: Will I remember SAMAEAL?

RACHEL: Yes. They'll be good memories. But I'm sorry. Once you've got the taste though, there's not much he can do for you.

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE, PANTS) Will there be an event here, today or tomorrow?

RACHEL: Hon.

BLOOD DOLL: PETER. Will you see SIMON before I'm fully ghouled?

PETER: I can't.

BLOOD DOLL: Can you get a message to SAMAEAL?

PETER: AARALYN will be watching.

BLOOD DOLL: Then what fucking good are you?!

PETER: (LONG PAUSE) You're not the first we've watched, hon.

BLOOD DOLL: Fuck. Off.

RACHEL: Let her be.

PETER: Okay. Another Go match?

RACHEL: Sure.

BLOOD DOLL: (SOBS SOFTLY INTO TOWEL)

RACHEL: (PAUSE) Let her be.

BLOOD DOLL (NA): (PAUSE) The three of us had been conditioned to nocturnal hours. But I still couldn't sleep. Numb inside, I watched the seconds on the only clock in the room. RACHEL and PETER turned off the lights and went to bed. I tried to follow their example but couldn't. My head throbbed. SAMAEEL would be gone soon. There was no point to anything anymore. (BEAT) I must have dozed a little. But the seconds ticking by still haunted me every hour.

/SFX/ CELL DOOR UNLOCKS AND SLIDES OPEN, PAUSE, MAIN EXIT FROM LARDER
CREAKS OPEN, GENTLE KNOCKS COME FROM THE DISTANCE

BLOOD DOLL (NA): It was about 5:30 in the afternoon, still light outside, too soon for the Kindred to rise, when my cell door opened. And the door from our prison opened as well.

/SFX/ GENTLE KNOCKS CONTINUE FROM THE DISTANCE

BLOOD DOLL (NA): I wouldn't move. It had to be a trap. AARALYN must have been calling me to drink more of her. I wouldn't lose SAMAEEL. I would curse AARALYN's name until she had no choice but to...

VANISHING GIRL: (INTERRUPTS) Little BLOOD DOLL. Do you think the gods do not grant boons to one such as you?

BLOOD DOLL (NA): I saw no one but RACHEL and PETER, still asleep. Curiosity got the better of me. I extended my hand outside the cell door. Nothing happened. I pulled my hand back anyway, terrified. I reached it out again, through the gate, and my body followed, slowly. I retreated to fetch my dress, and then stepped with care into the main room. Nothing. Happened. I tiptoed to the open exit. And the worst thing of all boiled my guts. Hope. I feared crossing the threshold. I wanted to return to the cell. But there it was. In the hallway beyond the exit. Hope. (BEAT) So I stepped through, into the hall. And the door locked behind me.

/SFX/ DOOR SHUTS AND LOCKS

BLOOD DOLL (NA): I still saw no one in either direction. I'd been in AARALYN's chambers enough, I knew the direction out. I tiptoed down the corridor, waiting for a sound that wasn't mine to echo back. I sped my footsteps. There was nowhere to hide. If this was a trap, I prayed for it to spring soon. But then.

/SFX/ DOOR TO OUTSIDE OPENS, QUEEN ANNE STREET AMBIANCE

BLOOD DOLL (NA): And I was out. A Lyft driver waited at the bottom of the steps to AARALYN's chambers, holding a placard with my name on it. I asked who had hired her. She gave a name I didn't recognize. But when I saw her GPS map inside the car, I knew where she'd be taking me. Home. SAMAEEL's home.

/SFX/ CAR DRIVES OFF

SCENE 11. — FINALLY HOME AGAIN (INT: SAMAEL'S COMMON ROOM, EVENING)

• BLOOD DOLL, SIMON, SAMAEL

/SFX/ QUIET SUITE AMBIANCE

/SFX/ DESPERATE KNOCKING BEHIND FRONT DOOR, STOPS, REPEATS

SIMON: Hold up. Hold up. Sun just went down.

/SFX/ SIMON OPENS THE DOOR

BLOOD DOLL: Hi.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL WRAPS HER ARMS AROUND SIMON

SIMON: Oh. Wow. Fuck. (SHOUTS) SAMAEL! SAMAEL! Come here!

/SFX/ SITTING ROOM DOOR OPENS, SAMAEL WALKS IN

SAMAEL: SIMON. What the devil is going on? (SEES BLOOD DOLL) Oh my God. CASSANDRA. Come here.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL RUNS OVER, EMBRACES SAMAEL

BLOOD DOLL: Hi.

SAMAEL: Hello. (PAUSE) It's good to see you. I thought (ALMOST CRIES) I thought we were finished.

BLOOD DOLL: I did, too.

SAMAEL: Fuck. Shut the door, SIMON.

SIMON: Sure thing.

/SFX/ SIMON SHUTS THE FRONT DOOR

SAMAEL: Come on. Come on, darling. Are you hungry? I'll have SIMON get some food. SIMON?

SIMON: On it!

/SFX/ SAMAEL LEADS HER INTO THE SITTING ROOM, CLOSES THE SITTING ROOM DOOR

SAMAEL: Love. I don't believe this. You're fucking here.

/SFX/ SAMAEL EMBRACES HER CLOSE

SAMAEL: You're hurt.

BLOOD DOLL: I know. Please. Let's just be us for a moment. I missed you for so long.

SAMAEL: Got you. I've got you.

BLOOD DOLL: Thank you. Thank you, Your Honor.

SAMAEL: (CLOSE TO TEARS) Fuck that. I invoke the circle.

BLOOD DOLL: No, Your Honor. Please. Let me be yours for a little while. Please.

SAMAEL: Of course. Mine.

BLOOD DOLL: Yours.

/SFX/ SAMAEL AND BLOOD DOLL KISS

SAMAEL: Come. Let's go to bed.

BLOOD DOLL: She's watching. AARALYN's watching through me. She had me chew gum.

SAMAEL: When JUDITH visited you.

BLOOD DOLL: Yes.

SAMAEL: You think this means I would change anything about this moment? I don't care if those are her eyes behind yours. Let's go to bed. She can watch.

BLOOD DOLL: (SMILES WEAKLY) Okay. (BEAT) Just don't fucking stop.

SAMAEL: I won't. I promise. It'll be like you never left.

BLOOD DOLL (NA): And we fucked. And I have never cried so hard in my whole fucking life.

/SFX/ SAMAEL AND BLOOD DOLL EMBRACE IN BEDSHEETS

SAMAEL: (EXCITED) I want to taste you again.

BLOOD DOLL: Please. All you want.

/SFX/ SAMAEL GROWLS, TEARS OPEN HER JUGULAR, DEVOURS IT, LICKS

BLOOD DOLL: (MOANS, SOBS)

SAMAEL: You take it so well.

BLOOD DOLL: Yours.

SAMAEL: I know. (BEAT) I don't want to get up.

BLOOD DOLL: Just hold me.

SAMAEL: Of course. (PAUSE) What do you want to do today?

BLOOD DOLL: I don't want to do anything.

SAMAEL: Then that's just what we'll do. You won't have to leave this bed. You won't leave me. Ever again.

BLOOD DOLL: Thank you.

/SFX/ SAMAEL KISSES HER FOREHEAD

SAMAEL: Tell me you're alright. Please.

BLOOD DOLL: I'm alright.

SAMAEL: That's good. (PAUSE) Because there's something in your blood.

BLOOD DOLL: (PAUSE) AARALYN tried to ghoul me.

SAMAEL: (FURIOUS) How far did she get?

BLOOD DOLL: Just last night.

SAMAEL: How. Fucking. Dare. She.

BLOOD DOLL: I thought I'd never see you again. I thought I'd never love you again.

SAMAEL: (SOFTLY) How did you get here?

BLOOD DOLL: The door to my cell opened. (BEAT) Someone let me out.

SAMAEL: Who?

BLOOD DOLL: I heard a woman's voice. I didn't recognize it.

SAMAEL: Fucking hell.

BLOOD DOLL: What happened? Who was that?

SAMAEL: I don't know. You know how much that vexes me?

BLOOD DOLL: There's more.

SAMAEL: I can tell. (BEAT) I didn't want to pry.

BLOOD DOLL: LOREA and I slept together.

SAMAEL: (PAUSE) Is this some power play shit from her?

BLOOD DOLL: I think so. (BEAT) But I wanted to.

SAMAEL: That's fine. You don't need my permission to sleep with anyone.

BLOOD DOLL: She wants me back in a couple days.

SAMAEL: That's not happening.

BLOOD DOLL: I promised her. It's why she let me leave.

SAMAEL: (PAUSE) I'll go with you.

BLOOD DOLL: You don't have to.

SAMAEL: I'm not fucking being without you again.

BLOOD DOLL: I know. I don't want to either.

/SFX/ SAMAEL GETS OUT OF BED, WALKS TO DESK, SORTS THROUGH PAPERS

SAMAEL: Let me see. Let's see.

BLOOD DOLL: What are you doing?

SAMAEL: Getting you some protection. Here we are.

/SFX/ SAMAEL WALKS BACK, LAYS DOWN A STACK OF PAPERS ON THE BED

SAMAEL: Go ahead. Sign them.

BLOOD DOLL: In blood?

SAMAEL: No. Not in blood. Lawyers hate that. Here. This pen.

BLOOD DOLL: (READS) These are (BEAT) ownership papers for your Krafthaus club.

SAMAEL: That's right. Sign there. And there. And there. And initial there.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL SIGNS ALL LOCATIONS

SAMAEL: Congratulations. You now have joint ownership of Krafthaus with me.

BLOOD DOLL: How does this protect me?

SAMAEL: You'll be my face in the club. You can handle day-to-day work with my employees. You can step outside. You can share in the revenue.

BLOOD DOLL: (BEAT) I'm not sure I want to step outside.

SAMAEL: I know. I know.

/SFX/ SAMAEL KISSES HER

SAMAEL: One thing at a time. (BEAT) This is why this protects you. You are no longer a pet. You are now (SMILES) a collaborator. I'm so sorry. I should have thought of this sooner. I didn't know what horrific danger you were in.

BLOOD DOLL: I love you.

SAMAEL: (PAUSE) Fuck. Fuck. (BEAT) I love you too. (BEAT) And I shouldn't. This can't possibly work between us. And I want it to so fucking badly.

BLOOD DOLL: I want to do what I can for you.

SAMAEL: (PAUSE) I want to let you. (PAUSE) It's hard.

BLOOD DOLL: What's the matter?

SAMAEL: Dearest. I don't know what the fuck is wrong with me. (BEAT) ELIJIO will never let me live this down.

BLOOD DOLL: Am I a problem with him?

SAMAEL: Oh no. He loves you. He loves seeing what you do for me. He says he hasn't seen me happier in decades.

BLOOD DOLL: Then what's going on?

SAMAEL: You know me. And that's dangerous. In this world. And I don't want anything to happen to you for all the shit I've done.

BLOOD DOLL: Well, I'm here. Right now. I'm here. And I'm yours. You don't have to think any further ahead. I'm not.

SAMAEL: (BEAT) I'm game for that, love.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL KISSES SAMAEL

SAMAEL: We don't have to leave the bed. Let me fuck you one more time.

BLOOD DOLL: Please.

BLOOD DOLL (NA): And we did.

/SFX/ LONG PAUSE, SAMAEL WALKING ON CARPET, GETTING DRESSED

SAMAEL: Put your formal dress on.

BLOOD DOLL: (SUSPICIOUS) Where are we going?

SAMAEL: To AARALYN's. To sort this mess out.

BLOOD DOLL: (BEAT) Are you sure you want me to come?

SAMAEL: She needs to look you in the eye when I declare you protected and out of her hands.

BLOOD DOLL: I know but. (BEAT) I hate her.

SAMAEL: The feeling is mutual, love. But she is the power structure I work under.

BLOOD DOLL: Can we talk about something first?

SAMAEL: Hmm?

BLOOD DOLL: The Blood Temple.

SAMAEL: No.

BLOOD DOLL: The Anarchs have agreed to work with you to make it.

SAMAEL: AARALYN will not work with them. End of discussion.

BLOOD DOLL: It would solve most of your problems.

SAMAEL: It's not my decision.

BLOOD DOLL: Tell me if you would do it.

SAMAEL: Despite my well-known feelings about her, I am loyal to AARALYN. (LOW) As she watches us. Right now. (BEAT) Get your dress on.

BLOOD DOLL: Yes, Your Honor.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL GETS OUT OF BED, WALKS OFF

SCENE 12. — OFF-LIMITS (INT: SUMPTUOUS AUDIENCE CHAMBER, NIGHT)

• BLOOD DOLL, SAMAEL, ESTHER, AARALYN

/SFX/ QUIET AUDIENCE HALLWAY AMBIANCE

/SFX/ SAMAEL AND BLOOD DOLL WALK IN ON HALLWAYS CARPET, STOP

ESTHER: Well, this is unannounced.

SAMAEL: I want to speak with AARALYN.

ESTHER: She is reviewing documents.

SAMAEL: I'll be brief.

ESTHER: Very well. Leave your DOLL out here.

SAMAEL: This is regarding her. She comes with me.

ESTHER: (BEAT) All right.

/SFX/ SAMAEL AND BLOOD DOLL WALK, WOODEN DOOR SWINGS OPEN

/SFX/ QUIET AUDIENCE CHAMBER AMBIANCE, WOODEN DOOR CLOSES, SAMAEL AND
BLOOD DOLL WALK TO AARALYN AND STOP

AARALYN: I didn't call for you.

SAMAEL: (SEETHING) You certainly did not. (BEAT) I'm here to return her.

BLOOD DOLL: Huh?

AARALYN: (DISBELIEVING) I see.

SAMAEL: I take it you didn't let her out?

AARALYN: I didn't. And you didn't free her yourself?

SAMAEL: No, I would not have.

AARALYN: Odd. I suppose I'll have to increase security. I'll speak with JUDITH.

SAMAEL: I'm here to apologize for my DOLL's behavior. DOLLS get very skittish, you know,
and run at the first opportunity.

AARALYN: I'm interested to know how the opportunity presented itself.

SAMAEL: You can ask her yourself.

AARALYN: I will. First. ESTHER?

SAMAEL: (INTERRUPTS) Only (BEAT) I'm very sorry. My hand slipped this evening.

/SFX/ SAMAEL HANDS AARALYN A RATTLING PAPER

SAMAEL: I may have given my BLOOD DOLL co-ownership of Krafthaus. As I understand it, our lawyers are very particular. They dislike ghouls running our revenue streams, almost as much as they hate blood used as signatures.

AARALYN: (READING) You really did it.

SAMAEL: Not to worry. I'll watch over her if you have no further need of her.

AARALYN: I certainly do. I need to use the TAM against the Anarchs, and she happens to have fucking access to it. Give. Her. To. Me.

SAMAEL: (SEETHING) And do you know how she will do this? Do you have some knowledge of its code base that can turn it against them? Or would she be armed with only her wits? Would you throw her to the wolves?

AARALYN: I did offer her some of the Court's blood for the TAM, as an offering. That said. You should really watch what you say before me.

SAMAEL: And with the vote of no-confidence in you coming up, you should know better than to alienate the few allies you have.

AARALYN: (BEAT) And you're one of them?

SAMAEL: I torched an Anarch's club for you. I surrendered my DOLL to them. What more do you want from me? When have I said "no" to you? When have I not been a dutiful member of this court?

AARALYN: (PAUSE) You may go. (BEAT) Your DOLL as well.

SAMAEL: Thank you, Your Excellency. In return for my service, might I make an additional request?

AARALYN: You want my eye off her.

SAMAEL: I would prefer my trysts with her to remain unobserved unless I specifically request company.

AARALYN: (PAUSE) Very well.

/SFX/ AARALYN HANDS SAMAEL A TINY POT FILLED WITH WATER

SAMAEL: My humblest thanks, Your Excellency.

AARALYN: And thank you for your vote.

SAMAEL: Of course. It is yours. As I am. DOLL, let's go.

/SFX/ SAMAEL AND BLOOD DOLL WALK TO WOODEN DOOR, DOOR OPENS

ESTHER: Have a lovely night.

SAMAEL: You as well.

/SFX/ SAMAEL AND BLOOD DOLL WALK TO OUT TO HALLWAY, DOOR CLOSES,
HALLWAY AMBIANCE

BLOOD DOLL: What about the Blood Temple?

SAMAEL: In due time.

/SFX/ SAMAEL AND BLOOD DOLL STOP, SAMAEL HURLS THE TINY POT ONTO THE
GROUND, IT SHATTERS AND SPRAYS WATER

SAMAEL: There. The eye's off you. (BEAT) I'll support your Temple.

/SFX/ SAMAEL AND BLOOD DOLL WALK DOWN HALLWAY

SAMAEL: But good luck with AARALYN's support. I'm afraid you're on your own for that.

ESTHER: (IN BACKGROUND) Sanitation crew? Clean up a broken pot in the hall!

SCENE 13. — BLACKMAIL (INT: SAMAEL'S COMMON ROOM, NIGHT)

• BLOOD DOLL, SIMON, AMANDA, SAMAEL, VANISHING GIRL

/SFX/ QUIET SUITE AMBIANCE

/SFX/ FRONT DOOR OPENS, SAMAEL AND BLOOD DOLL WALK IN

AMANDA: How'd it go?

SAMAEL: Splendid. My BLOOD DOLL is mine again and is unobserved once more.

BLOOD DOLL: He was magnificent.

SIMON: That's our SAMAEL.

SAMAEL: We'd love some tea. We have to celebrate.

BLOOD DOLL: Yes please, Your Honor.

SIMON: I'll start the kettle.

AMANDA: I don't want to put a damper on things, but while you were out, there's been a tapping in your sitting room.

SAMAEL: A tapping?

AMANDA: Like someone is knocking in there. I went in and didn't see anyone. But, you know, I'm worried we may have ghosts.

SAMAEL: I've never had ghosts before.

BLOOD DOLL: Are ghosts a thing?

SAMAEL: Very much. And they're awful. But I wouldn't jump to conclusions.

BLOOD DOLL: When I was freed from my cell at AARALYN's, I heard a knocking in the distance too.

SAMAEL: AMANDA. SIMON. Wait here.

/SFX/ SAMAEL WALKS TO SITTING ROOM DOOR, OPENS

SAMAEL: Dearest. Come along.

BLOOD DOLL: (NERVOUS) Yes, Your Honor.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL AND SAMAEL WALK INTO THE SITTING ROOM, CLOSE THE DOOR, AND STOP

SAMAEL: Hello. (BEAT) You have my attention.

/SFX/ SHROUD OF MIST WHOOSHES SOFTLY

VANISHING GIRL: Hello SAMAEL. And his BLOOD DOLL.

SAMAEL: Why is your face cloaked? Who are you?

VANISHING GIRL: They call me the VANISHING GIRL.

SAMAEL: And why do you profane my sitting room, uninvited?

VANISHING GIRL: Because you owe me a boon for rescuing your pet.

SAMAEL: She's a collaborator now.

VANISHING GIRL: Whatever she is, I saved her from a rather terrible fate. I'm sure you understand what could have become of her without my intervention.

SAMAEL: I do.

BLOOD DOLL: Thank you, Ma'am.

SAMAEL: Don't thank her. I suspect I am required to return a high price for this service.

VANISHING GIRL: Should I have left her there?

SAMAEL: Name your boon.

VANISHING GIRL: You are aware there is a growing movement against the continued Tremere occupation of Seattle. The Ventrue would prefer your rule instead.

SAMAEL: I'm not interested.

VANISHING GIRL: For my boon, I request you join that faction. Another in AARALYN's circle has already sided with us.

SAMAEL: My vote? You have it.

VANISHING GIRL: No. We request your assistance in destabilizing AARALYN's authority.

SAMAEL: (BEAT) The fledgling in the coroner's office wasn't an accident.

VANISHING GIRL: It was not.

SAMAEL: What are you asking?

VANISHING GIRL: We want a murder in your VIP suite at Krafthaus. One of your more prominent customers dead and drained.

SAMAEL: That's a hell of a Masquerade breach.

VANISHING GIRL: Yes. The people on the streets are afraid of Kindred. Let's have the upper echelons afraid too.

SAMAEL: I'll be implicated. Not AARALYN.

VANISHING GIRL: It will feed the growing dissatisfaction with AARALYN.

SAMAEL: It'll ruin my club.

VANISHING GIRL: You can afford it. You're clever.

SAMAEL: And who is to perform the murder?

VANISHING GIRL: Don't concern yourself with that. Just get one of your customers in a private room, alone. Two nights from now. It'll happen.

SAMAEL: A number of prominent businessmen are regulars at my club.

/SFX/ SAMAEL WALKS TO TABLE, PICKS UP CARDS, RETURNS TO VANISHING GIRL

SAMAEL: Here are their business cards. Which would you prefer to kill? Bearing in mind their friends will never visit my establishments again.

VANISHING GIRL: Hmm. That one. JOHNATHAN. The CEO.

SAMAEL: Very well.

VANISHING GIRL: Good. Consider the boon repaid when his corpse is on your floor.

SAMAEL: Will this city be worth inheriting after the damage you've done to it?

VANISHING GIRL: Everything heals. And if it doesn't, it's easy to abandon to the wolves.

SAMAEL: Says the Toreador who doesn't even live here.

VANISHING GIRL: Ah. (SWEETLY) Would you get the door for me?

SAMAEL: Goodbye.

VANISHING GIRL: Farewell.

/SFX/ SAMAEL OPENS THE DOOR, SMALL RUSH OF WIND FLIES OUT, THE DOOR TO THE OUTSIDE IN THE DISTANCE OPENS AND CLOSES, SIMON AND AMANDA WALK OVER

SIMON: Who was that?

SAMAEL: Not a ghost.

BLOOD DOLL: Was she another Ventrue?

SAMAEL: No. Toreador. She apparently works for the Ventrue.

BLOOD DOLL: You're really going to let a murder happen in Krafthaus?

SAMAEL: What fucking choice do I have. It's not like AARALYN has been earning any favors from me. I do want to put her in a vise.

BLOOD DOLL: I wouldn't say no to that. But I don't think it's going to solve anything.

SAMAEL: It's going to solve me having to put up with her. (PAUSE) You're right, of course.

AMANDA: You don't mess with the Ventrue. (BEAT) Not that I ever would.

SAMAEL: Oh, I expect some backstabbing against me at some point, AMANDA. Honestly, it would make me proud.

SIMON: So what did that woman want?

SAMAEL: (BEAT) I owe her for saving my BLOOD DOLL.

AMANDA: Oh no.

BLOOD DOLL: She wants one of SAMAEL's customers at the club dead in the VIP suite.

SAMAEL: Dead and drained.

SIMON: (SHOCKED) That'll destroy so much.

SAMAEL: As is her intention.

BLOOD DOLL: I'm more worried about you.

SAMAEL: As you should be for yourself. The only protection you have now is that club and when it goes (BEAT) fuck. I don't know. I'll have to send you to LOREA for safekeeping.

BLOOD DOLL: (SAD) I'm sorry for...

SAMAEL: (INTERRUPTS) No! Don't you dare apologize. If VANISHING GIRL hadn't called a boon on me, it'd be someone else. She said she already turned another in AARALYN's court against her.

AMANDA: Who?

SAMAEL: Oh, she's not giving that away before I've proved my loyalty.

BLOOD DOLL: So what are we going to do?

SAMAEL: Let it happen. (BEAT) And deal with the consequences. Dearest, I think it's time to return you to the Anarchs.

BLOOD DOLL: I still have a day before I need to go back.

SAMAEL: Darling, I will miss you like the caged swallow misses the sky. But I trust that I'll be able to negotiate your freedom again. Now, return to them tonight. Tell LOREA she can endear herself to me if she convinces ARTURO to visit my club in a couple nights.

BLOOD DOLL: He won't like that. He said it's hard for him to focus in crowds.

SAMAEEL: I'll make it worth his while. He'll believe me.

BLOOD DOLL: I don't want to go.

SAMAEEL: Nor do I wish to let you. But we have our roles to play. And we will be in each other's arms again. Tell LOREA I'll need you at my club as co-owner in two nights. You can return to her when you're done, if she wants.

BLOOD DOLL: I understand.

SAMAEEL: If it's any consolation, I'll be there in two nights too. Still, we've got to be all businesslike. No kissing, I'm afraid.

BLOOD DOLL: I'll survive, somehow.

SAMAEEL: Good. Go pack. Wear something casual to the Anarchs. I'll send out your club attire to the laundry. It'll be ready for you at Krafthaus.

/SFX/ SAMAEEL KISSES HER

SAMAEEL: Go. Have a good time with LOREA. Fulfill your promise, as I'll be fulfilling mine.

BLOOD DOLL: Your world sucks sometimes.

SAMAEEL: It does. But there you are. And here am I. And we couldn't exist anywhere else.

SCENE 14. — RETURN TO ANARCHS (INT: WAREHOUSE INTERIOR, NIGHT)

• BLOOD DOLL, LOREA

/SFX/ WAREHOUSE AMBIANCE, BLOOD DOLL WALKS ON CONCRETE, STOPS

BLOOD DOLL: Hey. I'm back, like you wanted.

LOREA: You're early. (BEAT) What happened to your face?

BLOOD DOLL: I told AARALYN to go fuck herself.

LOREA: And that's all you came back with? Fuck. (BEAT) I take it the convincing didn't go well.

BLOOD DOLL: SAMAEEL's down with it. But AARALYN's a bust.

LOREA: Aw. I'm sorry.

BLOOD DOLL: Can we have some privacy?

LOREA: Sure?

/SFX/ LOREA AND BLOOD DOLL WALK TO A QUIET CORNER OF THE WAREHOUSE

LOREA: Okay. Shoot.

BLOOD DOLL: SAMAEEL requests ARTURO's help at Krafthaus, two nights from now.

LOREA: What for?

BLOOD DOLL: If you can read my mind, go ahead. But I'd prefer to keep it confidential if I could.

LOREA: All right. I'll ask for him to come here. You can tell him the details yourself.

BLOOD DOLL: Thank you, Ma'am. After that, I'll go up to the guest quarters.

LOREA: You'll need someone to lock you in.

BLOOD DOLL: I know. I'll be in there.

LOREA: You're taking this well.

BLOOD DOLL: I know what obligation means in this world, Ma'am.

LOREA: Heh. You can drop the Ma'am shit. I was messing with you.

BLOOD DOLL: Sure, LOREA.

LOREA: That's better. I'll go get him.

/SFX/ LOREA WALKS OFF

BLOOD DOLL (NA): ARTURO came by shortly after. I explained the situation. He wasn't happy about it, but he liked the sound of SAMAEEL making it worth his while. He agreed on the condition he could come in early before the guests, to minimize the effect on his vision. I was happy to grant him that. I did have the key to Krafthaus in my pocket, a farewell gift from SAMAEEL. (PAUSE)

SCENE 15. — NOT TONIGHT (INT: WAREHOUSE GUEST ROOM, NIGHT)

• BLOOD DOLL, LOREA

/SFX/ WAREHOUSE AMBIANCE OUTSIDE

BLOOD DOLL (NA): After ARTURO left, I went upstairs and sequestered myself in the guest quarters. I'd brought my overnight kit, toothbrush, medications, and shaving supplies, and set them in the bathroom. I found another manga and became so engrossed in it, I forgot to turn on the radio.

/SFX/ KNOCK ON DOOR FROM THE OUTSIDE

BLOOD DOLL: I'm a prisoner! You don't have to knock!

/SFX/ DOOR OPENS, LOREA WALKS IN, CLOSES DOOR

LOREA: Hi.

BLOOD DOLL: Hello!

LOREA: You're settled in here?

BLOOD DOLL: Yes?

LOREA: You're (BEAT) not mad about being separated from SAMAEAL?

BLOOD DOLL: I understand the situation.

LOREA: Okay. Good. (BEAT) I just wanted to let you know. I have a date tonight. With another human.

BLOOD DOLL: That's great! I hope you have a good time.

LOREA: But (BEAT) I do have time in my schedule (BEAT) for you.

BLOOD DOLL: Oh.

LOREA: I mean, if I'm going to be Persephoneing you back and forth, we might as well enjoy it, right?

BLOOD DOLL: I'd like that.

LOREA: Great. (BEAT) Is he jealous?

BLOOD DOLL: I think more surprised.

LOREA: Huh. (BEAT) You have a good night. SIOBHAN will be by sometime with a sandwich.

BLOOD DOLL: Your sandwiches are ass.

LOREA: What do you want? (SMIRKS) You're imprisoned.

BLOOD DOLL: (SMILES) Have a fun date.

LOREA: I will. This girl. Mmmph!

/SFX/ LOREA OPENS DOOR, WALKS OUT, CLOSES DOOR, LOCKS DOOR

BLOOD DOLL (NA): SIOBHAN did bring me a sandwich as prophesied, and we had fun guessing how old it was. I spent the rest of the night locked up, reading, and enjoying music all by my lonesome. Eventually, I fell asleep, comfortable in this familiar space. I woke up in late afternoon and took my time reading into the evening, as though I was in an age a hundred years ago when the only entertainment were books and radio. My mind was slowing down. It felt pleasant. Calming. Although the minutes often dragged.

/SFX/ KNOCKS ON DOOR FROM THE OUTSIDE

BLOOD DOLL: I'm awake!

/SFX/ DOOR IS UNLOCKED, LOREA CRACKS DOOR OPEN

LOREA: Are you decent?

BLOOD DOLL: Absolutely not.

LOREA: Good.

/SFX/ LOREA WALKS IN, SHUTS DOOR BEHIND HER, WALKS TO BLOOD DOLL AND STOPS

LOREA: Hey.

BLOOD DOLL: Hey! How was your date?

LOREA: Incredible. Hard to hold back from tearing her throat out.

BLOOD DOLL: She doesn't know?

LOREA: She can't know. If she did, she'd have to become one of you.

BLOOD DOLL: Oh no! Company!

LOREA: (CHUCKLES) Neck. Now.

BLOOD DOLL: Of course.

/SFX/ LOREA PIERCES HER NECK, DRINKS, LICKS HER

BLOOD DOLL: I thought I wasn't anything special.

LOREA: I'm thirsty. You're adjacent.

BLOOD DOLL: I'm thirsty too.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL KISSES LOREA, LOREA SWOONS INTO IT, THEN RELEASES

LOREA: Where do you get off kissing me?

BLOOD DOLL: You started it.

LOREA: Mmm. I'd love to fuck you. But I have business.

BLOOD DOLL: I'll be here.

LOREA: You're co-owner of Krafthaus now, yes?

BLOOD DOLL: I am. I'll need to be there tomorrow night too. I'll come back here when I'm done, if that's okay.

LOREA: You know what? I'm booked solid today and tomorrow. Why don't you run home?

BLOOD DOLL: (EXCITED) You mean it?

LOREA: Yeah. Someone'll call you a Lyft.

BLOOD DOLL: Are you sure you don't need me in case you have to use the TAM?

LOREA: There's enough of your blood in the fridge for that. Go home. Rest up. You'll have an exciting night tomorrow.

BLOOD DOLL: I know. It could end AARALYN's regime.

LOREA: I wouldn't mind SAMAEEL on the throne. We have an understanding at least.

BLOOD DOLL: He'd never take it.

LOREA: There is no thing as "never" in our world. We are immortal. Everything happens.

SFX/ LOREA WALKS TO THE DOOR, OPENS IT

LOREA: Ciao.

BLOOD DOLL: Thank you!

SFX/ LOREA WALKS OFF, LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN

SCENE 16. — DOMESTIC (INT: SAMAEŁ'S COMMON ROOM, NIGHT)

- BLOOD DOLL, SIMON, SAMUEL

/SFX/ QUIET SUITE AMBIANCE

/SFX/ KNOCK ON DOOR FROM OUTSIDE, STOPS, DOOR UNLOCKS, DOOR OPENS

BLOOD DOLL: I'm back early!

SIMON: I guess you are.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL WALKS IN , CLOSES DOOR, SITTING ROOM DOOR OPENS, SAMAE
WALKS IN, BLOOD DOLL WALKS TO SAMAE

SAMAEEL: Darling!

BLOOD DOLL: Hello!

SAMAE: What the fuck did you do with the LOREA I know?

BLOOD DOLL: We have an unscheduled date upcoming.

SAMAEEL: Look at you, bouncing between the factions. You know how dangerous that is, right?

BLOOD DOLL: Extremely.

SAMAEEL: Oh, come here!

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL KISSES SAMAE

BLOOD DOLL: Missed you, Your Honor.

SAMAE: Missed you too. I had a productive night, so there's that. I must go out, though, so I have a mission for you. I've set out some books in your room. You must learn how to run a club while I'm out.

BLOOD DOLL: (BEAT) What about tomorrow night?

SAMAEEL: If you're going to be on the floor, you need to look like you know what you're doing. Also you don't need to let on what will be happening.

BLOOD DOLL: I understand.

SAMAEI: It's a lot of bookkeeping, I'm afraid. And getting to know the employees. But you'll do well. I'm counting on it!

BLOOD DOLL: I'll try my best, Your Honor.

SAMAEEL: Good!

/SFX/ SAMAEL SLIDES ON THEIR COAT

SAMAEL: And be sure to learn the alcohol suppliers' birthdays! We have envelopes with bonuses for them in the club safe! The combination is 1734. Don't tell anyone!

BLOOD DOLL: Have a good time.

SAMAEL: I'll be standing before AARALYN. It's never a good time.

SIMON: I'll get the car.

SAMAEL: Excellent. I won't be gone all night.

BLOOD DOLL: That's fine. I'll have a lot to read.

SAMAEL: Look at us. We're practically domestic. What have you done to me?

/SFX/ SAMAEL WALKS TO DOOR, SIMON OPENS DOOR, SAMAEL AND SIMON WALK OUT, CLOSE DOOR

BLOOD DOLL (NA): The night was a crash course in business, psychology, and organized crime. I came out of it feeling like I knew less about it than when I went in. SAMAEL's financial ledger was hand-written nightly by whoever ran operations. The more I read, the more I thought about delegating tasks to people actually competent in them. By the end of the night, I realized I'd become a manager. (BEAT) I said goodnight to SAMAEL and rose early the next afternoon. I left SAMAEL some of my blood in the fridge and went off to the club to see what I could practice. I introduced myself around. People seemed surprised but friendly at the owner's girlfriend getting her hands dirty. An hour after sunset, I went out to check for ARTURO.

SCENE 17. — SOLD (EXT: STREET OUTSIDE KRAFTHAUS CLUB, EVENING)

• BLOOD DOLL, ARTURO

/SFX/ WALLA OF PEOPLE ON STREET, HIGHWAY AMBIANCE IN DISTANCE

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL WALKS SIDEWALK, STOPS

BLOOD DOLL: Hey.

ARTURO: Hey.

BLOOD DOLL: Been here long?

ARTURO: Naw, just got here.

BLOOD DOLL: Come on in. I've been helping get the club ready.

ARTURO: Sure.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL UNLOCKS FRONT DOOR, OPENS DOOR

BLOOD DOLL: Follow me.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL AND ARTURO WALK INSIDE

SCENE 18. — CLUB TOUR (INT: KRAFTHAUS CLUB, MAIN ROOM, EVENING)

• BLOOD DOLL, ARTURO, SAMAEL

/SFX/ PEOPLE CLEANING UP ECHOING CLUB, DOORS CLOSE BEHIND BLOOD DOLL AND ARTURO

BLOOD DOLL: I printed a security badge for you.

ARTURO: I don't need it. They won't notice me.

BLOOD DOLL: Just while I'm giving you the tour.

ARTURO: Okay.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL AND ARTURO START WALKING

BLOOD DOLL: This is coat check. For the guests. If you need to stash anything, there's lockers in the back.

ARTURO: I'm good.

BLOOD DOLL: It gets hot in here.

ARTURO: I like my coat.

BLOOD DOLL: (BEAT) Okay, the bars run left and right off the entrance. I'd prefer you didn't drink tonight.

ARTURO: Wasn't planning to.

BLOOD DOLL: How's your vision doing?

ARTURO: It's fine with people spaced out like this.

BLOOD DOLL: Good. The VIP suite is up to the right here.

/SFX/ BLOOD DOLL AND ARTURO STOP, OPEN DOOR, WALK THROUGH, DOOR CLOSES, AMBIANCE IS MUTED

BLOOD DOLL: This is the VIP lounge. We're got private rooms running along the right wall and the wall ahead of us. Bathrooms and the bar are to the left.

ARTURO: Which room will JOHNATHAN be in?

BLOOD DOLL: It depends. Take a radio. I'll let you know.

ARTURO: Sure.

/SFX/ ARTURO ACCEPTS A RADIO

BLOOD DOLL: It's pre-programmed for the security chatter and a channel that goes directly to SAMAEL and me. You can reach me at preset channel 6.

ARTURO: Sure. If it's all the same with you, I want to chill in the men's room until you need me?

BLOOD DOLL: Okay?

ARTURO: Don't worry. They won't see me.

BLOOD DOLL: Should be fine. There aren't any cameras in the bathrooms. Have you fed yet?

ARTURO: Yeah. I had one of your vials from LOREA's fridge. Figured you'd be back to fill it up.

BLOOD DOLL: (EXHALES) Just don't tell me how ordinary it is.

ARTURO: It is pretty ordinary.

BLOOD DOLL: Urgh.

ARTURO: Still tasty though.

/SFX/ SAMAEL APPROACHES

SAMAEL: ARTURO. Love. Hello. I just got in.

BLOOD DOLL: Hi!

ARTURO: (NERVOUS) Hi, SAMAEL.

SAMAEL: Nothing to be frightened about. ARTURO, would you walk with me? I want to tell you what to expect this evening.

ARTURO: (NERVOUS) Sure.

/SFX/ SAMAEL AND ARTURO WALK AWAY

SCENE 19. — THE CONFESSION (INT: KRAFTHAUS CLUB, VIP SUITE, NIGHT)

• BLOOD DOLL, ARTURO, SAMAEL, VANISHING GIRL, SECURITY, JOHNATHAN

/SFX/ CLUB MUSIC IN BACKGROUND, WALLA FROM ELITE PATRONS IN LOUNGE

BLOOD DOLL (NA): Let me tell you how I participated in this man's death. (BEAT) JOHNATHAN arrived with three of his friends around ten thirty PM. They immediately bee-lined for the VIP lounge. They didn't seem the type to dance.

JOHNATHAN: Fuck, I told her, if the EU wants to play in my court, they have to follow my rules.

BLOOD DOLL: Good evening. I hope your day went smoothly.

JOHNATHAN: Could have been better.

BLOOD DOLL: I'm sorry to hear that. Well, we have rooms Five and Six available for your party.

JOHNATHAN: We should only need the one. (BEAT) Wait a minute. Aren't you, like, the new owner?

BLOOD DOLL: Guilty. I'll have someone take your order as soon as you're comfortable.

JOHNATHAN: Don't I know you from somewhere?

BLOOD DOLL: I don't believe we've ever met.

JOHNATHAN: Yeah. Yeah! You used to work security over at Second and Pine, didn't you?

BLOOD DOLL: That was a while ago.

JOHNATHAN: Yeah. Must've been. Well, congratulations on coming up in the world.

BLOOD DOLL: Thank you. Please. Enjoy your stay.

/SFX/ JOHNATHAN AND HIS FRIENDS WALK AWAY

JOHNATHAN: (TO FRIENDS) Is she fucking the owner or something? A god damned tranny? What's up with that?

BLOOD DOLL (NA): JOHNATHAN had been running the BizBoostr startup for four years. He wore casual slacks and a half-buttoned white shirt like he was coming from a sports game. He drank martinis and IPAs. I had the bartender count. (BEAT) Five drinks in, I waited for the men's room to empty, and then put up a yellow sign indicating it was closed for cleaning. I stood by the bartender and made small talk, sipping ice water. Then, I saw JOHNATHAN leave his room. I immediately booked it for the sign, and snatched it away.

BLOOD DOLL: The gents is ready again. Sorry about the wait.

JOHNATHAN: Huh. Finally. (LAUGHS)

/SFX/ JOHNATHAN WALKS INTO THE BATHROOM, RADIO SQUAWKS

ARTURO: (ON RADIO) Kindred in the restroom.

BLOOD DOLL: (FAKE LAUGHING IN RADIO) Thank you!

BLOOD DOLL (NA): And then I sealed the door.

/SFX/ HEAVY DOOR LOCK

BLOOD DOLL (NA): And I waited.

/SFX/ BEHIND DOOR, HEAVY IMPACT INTO SINK

/SFX/ RADIO SQUAWKS

BLOOD DOLL: (IN RADIO) Attention security. We have a code blue condition in the VIP gents. Come immediately.

/SFX/ VIP DOOR OPENS, SECURITY RUN IN

/SFX/ BATHROOM DOOR IS BLOWN OFF ITS HINGES, SLAMS GROUND

BLOOD DOLL (NA): I was almost hit when she kicked down the men's room door. I bet she was surprised I'd locked her in from the outside.

SECURITY: Freeze! Remain where you are!

BLOOD DOLL (NA): But really, what were they going to do against a god?

SECURITY: (AS IF FREEZING UP) Hnngh!

VANISHING GIRL: Goodbye.

BLOOD DOLL: (PRETENDING NOT TO KNOW HER) Stay where you are!

VANISHING GIRL: (CHUCKLES)

ARTURO: (SHOUTS) Haaaaaaah!

/SFX/ ARTURO GRABS VANISHING GIRL FROM BEHIND, THEY STRUGGLE, IMPACT WALLS (SHAKE), BREAKING TABLES

VANISHING GIRL & ARTURO: (STRUGGLING SOUNDS)

VANISHING GIRL: Fuck! Why can't I get by you?!

ARTURO: Aaaaaaa!

BLOOD DOLL (NA): VANISHING GIRL's mouth had a red slick down the side. She'd been quick. But not quick enough to escape ARTURO. He caught her every time she tried to flee and dodged every time she attacked. Whatever SAMAEEL was paying him wasn't enough. I kept still like all the security and guests in the lounge, frozen by the gods' dominating power.

/SFX/ SAMAEL STEPS INTO THE ROOM FROM THE SERVICE ENTRANCE

SAMAEL: Bring her in the back. Now.

ARTURO: (GRITS TEETH) Got it.

VANISHING GIRL: Fuck you! Fuck all of you. (STRUGGLES)

/SFX/ ARTURO AND SAMAEL PULL HER INTO THE SERVICE ENTRANCE

/SFX/ FROM BEHIND THE WALL, VANISHING GIRL PUNCHES A HOLE IN IT, IS
DRAGGED AWAY

SECURITY: (UNFROZEN) Urgh. What happened?

BLOOD DOLL (NA): My security and guests returned to control over themselves, without SAMAEL's influence on them. I walked into the men's room. I wanted to see the body. He was lying face down on the tile, grabbed from behind and thrown into the sink when she was finished with him. A red streak ran down his neck, soaking his shirt and smearing the floor. His chest didn't rise or fall. There's not much difference between an unconscious, non-breathing person and a corpse. I didn't have to take it on faith that he was dead. You don't survive your head being twisted around like that.

BLOOD DOLL: Security! Call 911! Cordon off the gents! Nobody enters! No one touches anything!

BLOOD DOLL (NA): Seattle police arrived promptly when they heard who had been murdered. I kept out of their way, and comforted the staff. Security gave SPD the camera footage they wanted, as if it would make a difference. I listened as EMS spent five minutes trying to resuscitate a man without blood. We cleared out the club. I handed out tickets for free entry another night. It didn't fool anyone. Krafthaus was over. And so was I.

/SFX/ POLICE RADIO WALLA

BLOOD DOLL (NA): I remained to give my story to the police. I wasn't worried they'd find holes in my testimony, like why I only opened the gents for JOHNATHAN. I seemed to have power. And they were more polite about it than I'd ever seen cops before. Eventually, they let me leave. And I headed over to AARALYN's to see what had become of our prisoner.

SCENE 20. — TRUTH TO POWER (INT: SUMPTUOUS AUDIENCE CHAMBER, NIGHT)

• BLOOD DOLL, SAMAEL, VANISHING GIRL, AARALYN, JUDITH

/SFX/ QUIET AUDIENCE CHAMBER AMBIANCE

/SFX/ WOOD DOOR OPENS, BLOOD DOLL WALKS IN

VANISHING GIRL: (GASPING)

JUDITH: Once more.

/SFX/ JUDITH PUNCHES VANISHING GIRL

VANISHING GIRL: (COUGHS BLOOD)

JUDITH: Once more.

AARALYN: Hold.

VANISHING GIRL: (COUGHS BLOOD) When the Ventrue see me.

SAMAEL: They'll do nothing. You served your purpose. The breach is done. My club is ruined. The Kindred are exposed. (BEAT) My dear BLOOD DOLL.

BLOOD DOLL: SPD have taken control of the club.

SAMAEL: It's theirs now.

BLOOD DOLL (NA): VANISHING GIRL was in awful shape. Cut. Bloodied. Hands and feet bound in blocks of metal. I couldn't help but see myself there someday. But not today.

JUDITH: Do we still need this piece of Toreador shit?

AARALYN: It depends.

JUDITH: Hey. "VANISHING GIRL."

VANISHING GIRL: (COUGHS ONCE)

JUDITH: Your choice. Ransom or freedom.

VANISHING GIRL: What does "freedom" mean?

JUDITH: Name the traitor in the court.

VANISHING GIRL: (BEAT) SAMAEL.

SAMAEL: I admit it. I let a human die in my club. Because this whole thing stinks. There was no other way to capture you. And deter further incursions.

VANISHING GIRL: Heh-heh. Heh-heh.

AARALYN: A breach is a breach, SAMAEEL. I'll make you pay for that.

SAMAEEL: No, AARALYN. No. The opposite.

JUDITH: Watch what you fucking say.

SAMAEEL: I am sick to death of the incompetence shown in this room. By a PRINCE who blunders! By a court focused on the status quo, they can't even fucking tell when there are traitors in their midst. What kind of Kindred walk these halls? When I worked under WILLIAM, we were paranoid, reckless, hungry for a way up, but in spite of it all, we kept the fucking Masquerade! What happened?

AARALYN: Lower your god damned voice.

SAMAEEL: I will not. I will not stand before a PRINCE too dazzled by technology to see the crises before her. Too dazzled by cryptocurrency to be able to pay for what's needed to keep us safe! I don't give a fuck if you're Tremere, Malkavian, or Sabbat. That seat does not befit you! You've fucked up too often and too foolishly to keep your power (BEAT) without a fight. The Ventrue are coming for you. The Sabbat are searching for weakness in us. The hounds are at the door. What do you intend to do, AARALYN?

AARALYN: Arrest you.

SAMAEEL: That is why you are a dogshit ruler. You don't recognize opportunities like you once did. You don't realize that I am your greatest ally. What I have sacrificed to get you this infiltrator. Your days are numbered and you would waste them on pretending semblance of order in our city, instead of reaching down to rip the foul roots out that poison our every move. Tell me you see a Ventrue in your court and do not think, what standard do I need to bear to earn this Kindred's loyalty? An idiot on a throne who does not recognize that a simple BLOOD DOLL provides the sap to seal the cracks threatening to break everything down.

AARALYN: You can't be serious.

SAMAEEL: AARALYN. Are you going to play the vile Pretender, or are you going to finance my and my BLOOD DOLL's new club? A neutral Blood Temple. Where all may be served. Or does "nothing" feel like a better solution to you, as it does most days?

AARALYN: (PAUSE) You're fucking serious.

SAMAEEL: I'm also known to be on the right side of history, most days.

AARALYN: (LONG PAUSE) Very well.

SAMAEEL: Thank you. Your Excellency. Now. What are we going to do with our VANISHING GIRL?

VANISHING GIRL: JOTHAM. (BEAT) JOTHAM made the fledgling who killed your coroners.

JUDITH: You choose freedom?

VANISHING GIRL: I do.

JUDITH: The fledgling is long since eaten. Proof?

VANISHING GIRL: I recorded the encounter to show my masters. I'll provide this to you.

AARALYN: Who else?

VANISHING GIRL: No one else. I swear.

SAMAEL: AARALYN. I am inclined to believe this Toreador. JOTHAM is sufficient to cause the amount of chaos we've found in this city. Let's talk to him after we get the recording.

AARALYN: (BEAT) All right.

SAMAEL: Splendid. (BEAT) My BLOOD DOLL. Congratulations. You have your Temple.

BLOOD DOLL: (BEAT) I guess I do. (BEAT) I guess. Fuck.

-END-