

Vampire: The Masquerade: Blood Doll

Script, v2

Season 2, Episode 11: “Audition the Blood Doll”

by Alicia E. Goranson

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Approximate playing time: 1 Hour, 25 minutes

CAST OF CHARACTERS

CASSANDRA DAVRIL	30s trans woman, Ventrue, femme, main character
SAMAEEL (GEORGE GATAKER)	Ventrue, demimasc, former vassal of Seattle prince AARALYN, CASSANDRA’s sire, alter in CASSANDRA
RUTH	Naval biology scientist, 30s, trans femme
ROSE	Toreador sheriff of Camarilla
ELIJIO	Lasombra, SAMAEEL’s boyfriend, masc
JOSEPHINE	Thin blood, 15 th generation, advocate for Duskborn rights
LOREA	Cult of Set Non-Believer, femme, SODO Anarch community organizer, on the Weaponry Security Collective
HANK	Anarch, 30-40s, masc
MARA	Buddhist Tzimisce, femme, formerly incarcerated
STEPHANIE	30-something human trans woman, CASSANDRA’s ex-girlfriend
SIMON	Toreador, former member of SAMAEEL’s coterie
MELISSA	40-something human woman, wheelchair user, Blood Doll
MAPLE	30-something human woman, Blood Doll
AUTUMN	30-something human Dungeon Monitor, Blood Doll
LEXI	Bartender at a Georgetown antifascist bar
BROWNSHIRT	Government thug

SCENE 1. — NEW MISSION (INT: BOXING GYM, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, SAMAEL, ELIJIO

/SFX/ BOXING GYM AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA PUNCHES A PUNCHING BAG

CASSANDRA: (EXHAUSTED) Hrrgn!

SAMAEL (ECHO): Come on. Shift harder from your hips when you turn right!

/SFX/ CASSANDRA PUNCHES A PUNCHING BAG FURIOUSLY

SAMAEL (ECHO): There we are! Good finish with the right. Harder with the left.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA PUNCHES A PUNCHING BAG FURIOUSLY

SAMAEL (ECHO): There we go! Once more! Hard as you can left, then finish the cross with your right!

CASSANDRA: (EXHAUSTED) Hrrgn!

/SFX/ CASSANDRA PUNCHES A PUNCHING BAG, BAG SPLITS OPEN, ITS CHAIN BREAKS AND THE BAG HITS THE OPPOSITE WALL

CASSANDRA: Holy shit.

SAMAEL (ECHO): You're mastering your body. Soon your offense will be unstoppable.

CASSANDRA: I need a break.

SAMAEL (ECHO): A well-earned one. Bare-knuckle training tired me out too, back in the day.

/SFX/ ELIJIO WALKS IN, STOPS

ELIJIO: Hello, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: Hi. What the fuck does ROSE want now?

ELIJIO: Nothing. I was talking with her about you.

CASSANDRA: And what'd she say?

ELIJIO: Nothing but good things.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Pen, please, from your purse.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA OPENS HER PURSE, PICKS UP A PEN, PUTS PEN TO PAPER, PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) We had quite a lot to say to her last night.

ELIJIO: This has nothing to do with that. I just thought. You have a lot going on right now. So I have a mission for you.

CASSANDRA: From who?

ELIJIO: Me. It's quite covert. I already discussed it with ROSE. You're in the clear.

CASSANDRA: What is it?

ELIJIO: You'll have to come with me. If you would? They'll need some time to fix that bag you knocked off its chain.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I have a good feeling about this. Go!

CASSANDRA: All right. Let me get changed.

ELIJIO: Oh, you'll need some better clothes. We'll have to stop by a proper dress shop on the way.

CASSANDRA: I'm not carrying that kinda cash on me now.

ELIJIO: It's on me. SAMAEL?

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) I am in agreement with you, my love. I'm also very curious about the nature of this mission.

ELIJIO: You're going to love it. Both of you.

SCENE 2. — THE RETURN (EXT: STREET OUTSIDE KRAFTHAUS CLUB, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), ELIJIO, SAMAEL

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

CASSANDRA (NA): As promised, ELIJIO brought me to a fancy dress shop downtown, which had stayed open specifically for me. I was flattered by their service and the dresses they had picked out. I chose one radiant blue dress with threads of silver, and we departed after I'd changed into it. I was very interested in our next stop, but as we stepped out of ELIJIO's rented limousine, my heart sank.

/SFX/ MUTED CLUB TRACKS PLAYING

CASSANDRA: Why am I at Krafthaus?

SAMAEL (ECHO): (CONFLICTED) Oh, he's really doing this.

ELIJIO: Come on!

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND ELIJIO WALK INSIDE

SCENE 3. — KRAFTHAUS REVISITED (INT: KRAFTHAUS CLUB, MAIN ROOM, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, SAMAEL, ELIJIO

/SFX/ CLUB TRACKS PLAYING, WALLA OF PEOPLE CHATTING, DRINKING

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND ELIJIO WALK IN TOGETHER, STOP

CASSANDRA: Is something going on here? Who's running the place?

ELIJIO: Another of SOPHIA's court. There's a ghoul in the owner's office now.

CASSANDRA: They took down my dragon sculpture.

ELIJIO: Part of remodeling, I'm afraid. SOPHIA wanted to placate the old clientele.

CASSANDRA: And that's all there are here. What am I doing here?

ELIJIO: This is for you.

/SFX/ ELIJIO GIVES CASSANDRA A CARD

CASSANDRA: A membership card?

ELIJIO: A VIP membership card.

CASSANDRA: I don't like this place.

ELIJIO: Find someone here you like. Invite them to a private room. Dig in. I don't know why you weren't coming here already.

CASSANDRA: I can't show my face in here!

ELIJIO: Photographs aren't allowed in the club.

CASSANDRA: Someone might recognize me.

ELIJIO: Then you make them forget they've seen you.

CASSANDRA: In public? Surrounded by people watching me?

ELIJIO: SAMAEL used to do it all the time.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Yes, but this place was mine.

CASSANDRA: I'm not SAMAEL. And I haven't gotten someone to forget more than five minutes of memories.

ELIJIO: Look. This club is Camarilla privilege. Use it. (BEAT) Please. Stop eating in the fucking street.

CASSANDRA: What's wrong with eating in the street?

ELIJIO: It doesn't befit you. Or SAMAEL.

CASSANDRA: Fuck you.

ELIJIO: At least feed while you're here. For me. Please.

CASSANDRA: What the fuck is wrong with how I live my life?

ELIJIO: (BEAT) I'm sorry. But tell me that these rich assholes don't deserve to have the life sucked out of them. They show up regularly. Joyfully, even. I've drained most of the men in here over the years.

CASSANDRA: How fucking dare you set me up like this.

ELIJIO: You're worried about getting noticed in here? Street feeding risks getting you spotted. Which can get you killed. And at least you know what's in their blood in here!

CASSANDRA: I'm getting better at feeding, and where I eat is none of your fucking business.

ELIJIO: Why? Look around you. Sheep to the slaughter!

CASSANDRA: My life is not SAMAEL's.

ELIJIO: Well, it should be! You fucking live like a God damned Anarch. Like a louse-ridden Gangrel. That is not who you are! I've lived with you. I know you. This beggar-facade you wear spits in everything SAMAEL worked for! And you as well! You made this place!

CASSANDRA: I made Harbinger's. This is Krafthaus. And I can fucking hold my own now as one of you.

ELIJIO: What will it take? A Ventrue fledgling would kill for this membership! And you. What are you doing with your life? What are your ambitions? If you're still obsessed with Blood Dolls, this room is flooded with them!

CASSANDRA: My life is my own, ELIJIO. And I already have a Blood Doll. And I would rather spend a night with her than then another minute among these vapid, self-obsessed rich-ass pieces of shit. At least I know she wants it and that, to me, is everything.

ELIJIO: (BEAT) Your loss. Your membership will last all year. Feel free to return whenever you get sick of boozehounds and junkies.

CASSANDRA: Do you have anything to say before I ditch this shithole, SAMAEL?

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) None of us started with a silver spoon, my love. Let CASSANDRA earn hers. If she even wants one.

ELIJIO: (BEAT) Where are you even living?

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) In squalor but it's our squalor. And I won't have you ruining it for dear CASSANDRA.

ELIJIO: (BEAT) I am maddeningly jealous that you have SAMAEL to yourself, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: I know. I'm sorry.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) If I could be with you, I would be.

ELIJIO: (BEAT) Fine. Go.

CASSANDRA: Thank you for the dress.

ELIJIO: You look amazing in it. Remember that.

CASSANDRA: I know. Thank you for being honest with me. I still love you.

ELIJIO: And I love you. Why do you think I brought you here?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Goodbye.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS OUT OF THE CLUB

SAMAEL (ECHO): That poor man is going to drink someone nearly to death because of you.

CASSANDRA: He should have been prepared for my answer.

SAMAEL (ECHO): He should have known how stubborn you are.

CASSANDRA: I'm not stubborn. I'm relentless.

SCENE 4. — NEXT ROSE JOB (INT: QUIET SKYSCRAPER OFFICE HALL, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), SAMAEL, ROSE

/SFX/ QUIET OFFICE AMBIANCE WITH FANS

CASSANDRA (NA): After a ride back to my car, I drove home, furious about everything. When I reached my penthouse door, I found a letter from ROSE lying on the mat, hastily tossed. I opened it.

ROSE (ECHO): (WRITING) We couldn't find you at the gym. Get your ass to the address below. You wanted a better position? Let's see how you do in one. ROSE.

CASSANDRA (NA): Well. It didn't sound as if I had time to change. I hurried back downstairs, parked downtown, and walked to the base of a prominent skyscraper. I signed a false name on the registry, and I took the elevator up to the floor ROSE had indicated.

/SFX/ ELEVATOR DOOR OPENS, CASSANDRA STEPS OUT, STOPS

ROSE: Did I interrupt something?

CASSANDRA: No.

ROSE: That dress says otherwise.

CASSANDRA: I can change if you want.

ROSE: It doesn't matter. We have a problem. One of our business partners, a human, was killed in his hotel suite earlier tonight. We suspect the driver. We want a confession.

CASSANDRA: You want me to just tell the driver what to say?

ROSE: No. Whatever comes out of his mouth, I want it to be of his own free will.

CASSANDRA: You want an extraction.

ROSE: Don't worry about leaving blood on the floor. Although, it would be a shame if any got on your dress.

CASSANDRA: What if he's innocent?

ROSE: Consider this another opportunity for proper Camarilla work. SAMAEL excelled at this. It's an open and shut case. Either get a confession or make a case for innocence. But you don't leave the room empty-handed. Understand?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I do.

ROSE: He's behind the door to the right. SAMAEL, if you're listening, please instruct her well.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Whatever game this is, let's get it over with.

CASSANDRA: Let me in.

/SFX/ DOOR OPENS, CASSANDRA WALKS IN

SCENE 5. — THE RETURN OF SIMON (INT: QUIET OFFICE MEETING ROOM, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, SAMAEL, SIMON

/SFX/ QUIET OFFICE AMBIANCE WITH MUFFLED FANS, CASSANDRA WALKS IN, DOOR CLOSSES BEHIND HER, SHE STOPS

SAMAEL (ECHO): (SURPRISED) SIMON?

CASSANDRA: SIMON?

SIMON: (DISBELIEVING) CASSANDRA? Oh my god.

CASSANDRA: You know about me?

SIMON: Yes. And SAMAEL's in you?

CASSANDRA: Yes.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Pen. Paper. From your purse.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA OPENS HER PURSE, PICKS UP A PEN, PUTS PEN TO PAPER

CASSANDRA: What happened to you? Where've you been?

SIMON: (BEAT) I left Seattle as the war started. I didn't want to get caught up in it. I'm not a fucking soldier and ESTHER was conscripting everybody. I went bouncing between gigs in California for a while. And then I just ended up here again. I asked them if they needed drivers and of course they did.

CASSANDRA: AMANDA was worried sick about you. I thought you'd died.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) What happened tonight? Why did they pick you up?

SIMON: (SCARED) Oh. Hello SAMAEL.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING, ANGRY) Why?

SIMON: I was told to bring this corporate bigwig from Seatac to his hotel. So I drove him. It was fine. Nothing happened. He was on his phone the whole way on some property venture. That's all I heard. I left my car in the lot to find someone to eat. When I got back, the Camarilla liaison said he had been killed in his hotel room. They wouldn't let me leave and then they brought me here.

CASSANDRA: Why'd they think you did it?

SIMON: (SCARED) I don't know.

SAMAEL (ECHO): He's lying.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING, ANGRY) How dare you lie to me. What happened?

SIMON: (MORE SCARED) I. I was out hunting downtown when it happened. I swear.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Liar! (TO CASSANDRA) Check his collar. All the way around his neck.

CASSANDRA: (TO SIMON) I need to check your neck.

SIMON: (SCARED) Fine. Do it.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS OVER, STOPS, RUNS HIS FINGERS AROUND THE COLLAR OF SIMON'S SHIRT

SAMAEL (ECHO): No blood. Pen. Paper.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Did you change your clothes, SIMON? I've never known you to drink without getting even a speck on you. Why weren't you rushing back to work?

SIMON: I was! I swear!

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Why'd you even go for a drink? You know better than to get blood on your damned collar while you're working. Especially on a high profile job like this. Tell me where you got your drink.

SIMON: Four blocks away. In a through-away, out of sight off the camera.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Which camera? We'll want to check the footage.

SIMON: I. I don't remember. I was hurrying.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) It is your fucking job to know downtown Seattle like the back of your hand. (TO CASSANDRA) Check his belt.

CASSANDRA: SAMAEL.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Check how many notches lead from the buckle to the end.

CASSANDRA: Stop it. It's SIMON.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Familiarity is immaterial to the case.

CASSANDRA: You're assuming guilt.

SAMAEL (ECHO): You know SIMON. You worked with him for many months. Tell me this isn't the weakest excuse to come from his mouth.

CASSANDRA: I think you like this.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I know how this is done. Trust me.

CASSANDRA: No.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA OPENS HER PURSE AND PUTS THE PEN AND PAPER INTO IT

SAMAEL (ECHO): (FURIOUS) CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: I'm putting away your paper.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (FURIOUS) Let me speak.

CASSANDRA: I need to ask him questions that don't assume that he's fucking lying.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (FURIOUS) CASSANDRA. I am ordering you to return the pen and paper to your hands so I may finish this farce.

CASSANDRA: After I have had a chance to speak, Your Honor.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (FURIOUS) (PAUSE) Go ahead, then.

CASSANDRA: SIMON.

SIMON: They're ravenous in there, aren't they? They love this work.

CASSANDRA: SIMON! Settle down. Let's go over the timeline. When did you pull in?

SIMON: Eight sixteen P.M. It was on the dashboard.

CASSANDRA: And then?

SIMON: I let the passenger out. He walked into the hotel. I never saw him again.

CASSANDRA: And then?

SIMON: I parked in the valet lot. They said I should wait in case he wanted to go out again.

CASSANDRA: And if he needed the car while you were out hunting?

SIMON: He could fucking wait until I got back.

CASSANDRA: For a property deal with the Camarilla? (BEAT) No, he couldn't.

SAMAEL (ECHO): You see.

CASSANDRA: How long were you out hunting?

SIMON: (PAUSE) A half hour.

CASSANDRA: You were unavailable for a whole fucking half hour? That's not like you, SIMON. You are prompt.

SIMON: I got distracted! It's hard to find someone downtown.

CASSANDRA: Why the fuck would you eat someone downtown when you were on a job?

SIMON: I was hungry! We do stupid things when we're hungry!

SAMAEL (ECHO): That's readily apparent.

CASSANDRA: Like lie? SIMON, this is me. You know me.

SIMON: Do I? It's been over two years. And you joined the fucking power structure. What the fuck am I supposed to say to you?

CASSANDRA: The truth!

SIMON: (BEAT) What does that even mean? Whose truth?

SAMAEL (ECHO): He's deflecting. Smack him.

CASSANDRA: SIMON. What are you trying to accomplish with this? If you didn't have an airtight alibi, why are you opening your fucking mouth?

SAMAEL (ECHO): He's almost ready. Tell him that a confession will lessen his punishment.

CASSANDRA: SIMON, are you doing this for someone? Are you protecting someone? (BEAT) It's going to go bad for you. Tell me the truth, and it'll go less bad for you. (BEAT) Unless you want me to let ROSE back in.

SIMON: (PAUSE) It was for FELIX. That asshole was running FELIX's apartment complex into the ground while jacking up the rent. I thought I was sending a message.

CASSANDRA: You cost the Camarilla money.

SIMON: And I'll never be able to pay it back. I know.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) How'd you do it?

SIMON: (BEAT) I disguised myself after I left my car. It was really good. I didn't even recognize me on camera.

CASSANDRA: How'd you get in his room?

SIMON: I just knocked and said he'd left something in the car. He opened the door himself.

CASSANDRA: And then you killed him.

SIMON: (BEAT) Yeah.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) And you'll confirm all this to ROSE?

SIMON: (PAUSE) Yes.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Good.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA TURNS AROUND AND WALKS TO THE DOOR

SIMON: (BEAT) You like doing this?

/SFX/ CASSANDRA STOPS

SAMAE (ECHO): Don't grant him the dignity of an answer.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA PAUSES, THEN OPENS THE DOOR AND WALKS OUT

SCENE 6. — ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS (INT: QUIET SKYSCRAPER OFFICE HALL, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, SAMAEL, ROSE

/SFX/ QUIET OFFICE AMBIANCE WITH FANS, CASSANDRA WALKS OUT, STOPS, DOOR CLOSSES

CASSANDRA: He'll confess.

ROSE: I know. We recorded everything. His signature on the papers will be merely a formality. I'll get it myself.

CASSANDRA: Do you need me for anything else?

ROSE: You made a fool of SAMAEL in there.

CASSANDRA: I didn't agree with their methods.

ROSE: I did. They would have broken SIMON in half the time you did. Pen. Paper.

CASSANDRA: Fine.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA OPENS HER PURSE, PICKS UP A PEN, PUTS PEN TO PAPER, PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) What is it now?

ROSE: Do you require me to instruct her? She can't take pen and paper from me.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) CASSANDRA and I will discuss the matter together. She will be more cooperative in the future.

ROSE: CASSANDRA? Do you agree with them?

CASSANDRA: You dropped us into that room without giving us time to talk about what to expect. How dare you.

ROSE: There was nothing to discuss. They are the instructor. You are the pupil. Isn't that right, SAMAEL?

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) I do not submit to your games, ROSE. You will allow us discussion of any job before sending CASSANDRA into it.

ROSE: Do I need to tell SOPHIA that your pupil must discuss each lesson plan before she embarks on it? (BEAT) Would the great SAMAEL of legend have ever allowed that when they walked the Earth themselves? Or do Kindred change when they're diablerized?

CASSANDRA: Fuck you.

/SFX/ ROSE SMACKS CASSANDRA TO THE FLOOR

ROSE: Since your instructor is unable to properly punish you, let me take their place. Say, "Yes, Ma'am." (BEAT) You do need allies for the upcoming investigation, don't you?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Yes, Ma'am.

ROSE: Good. You were already on the razor's edge after the Fire Brigade branded me. I still want to use you. I just need to know you will play along with whatever I request of you.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Yes, Ma'am.

ROSE: Harbinger's was wonderful for us, back in the day. You made my job so much easier. Do you have it within yourself to work with me again, like that?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Yes, Ma'am.

ROSE: Now, you've performed adequately for me. The next time, you will submit to whatever SAMAEEL tells you. Won't you?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Yes, Ma'am.

ROSE: Excellent. (BEAT, LOW) You wouldn't want to get in trouble with SOPHIA, would you? Not when we're this close to ridding ourselves of her.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) What do you mean?

ROSE: You don't think she will continue to serve as PRINCE after the investigation team arrives, do you? I have such a list of her costly mistakes to present before them. And you can corroborate some of them. Now, is that a juicy enough carrot for you to behave for the next few months until the investigators arrive?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Yes, Ma'am.

ROSE: Even when my orders ask you to betray your dearest of principles?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) For now. Yes, Ma'am.

ROSE: You may stand.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA STANDS UP

ROSE: You're free to go. Don't disappoint me.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Don't kill SIMON.

ROSE: (SCOFFS) SIMON will be punished. And he will remember why. And he will have his betrayal on his record forever. (BEAT) And that will be the end of it. We don't expect him to repay what he's cost us. He will be feeding on the streets from now on, like you, except we've also removed his privileges from entering any

Camarilla club. And I'm wondering why you're still eating on the street, too. ELIJIO gave you a VIP card for Krafthaus after all.

CASSANDRA: Not my scene.

ROSE: And eating off the streets like an animal is your scene? Why would you do that to yourself? Why would you do that to SAMAEEL? You're not a fucking Anarch. You're one of us.

CASSANDRA: For now.

ROSE: So eat like us. For now.

CASSANDRA: I'll consider it.

ROSE: (BEAT) Off you go. I need to get my signature.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS AWAY, BEHIND HER, THE DOOR OPENS AND ROSE WALKS INTO THE INTERROGATION ROOM, AND THE DOOR CLOSSES, CASSANDRA STOPS

SAMAEEL (ECHO): You will never put my paper away again when I request it. Are we clear?

CASSANDRA: Yes, Your Honor.

SAMAEEL (ECHO): You understand I must punish you for that.

CASSANDRA: Yes, Your Honor.

SAMAEEL (ECHO): Tell me you regret that you did it.

CASSANDRA: You know I don't.

SAMAEEL (ECHO): Yes, and for that, you have gained my silence. I shall not speak with you again until you have atoned.

CASSANDRA: What must I do?

SAMAEEL (ECHO): I should forbid you from seeing RUTH.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I understand, Your Honor.

SAMAEEL (ECHO): (BEAT) No. Instead. Go back to Krafthaus. Feed. We'll talk again after you're done.

SCENE 7. — KRAFTHAUS AS PUNISHMENT (INT: KRAFTHAUS CLUB, MAIN ROOM, NIGHT)

- CASSANDRA (NA)

/SFX/ CLUB TRACKS PLAYING, WALLA OF PEOPLE CHATTING, DRINKING

CASSANDRA (NA): I did as they ordered. I returned to Krafthaus that night in my fancy dress and re-applied makeup. I searched the crowd for someone worth my time. It was difficult, but I found a man I was reasonably sure I wouldn't regret sleeping with, and invited him to the VIP lounge. He said he was there with a friend. So I invited the friend too. Once we were in a private room, I ordered the friend to look away while I drank from my chosen neck. I made them forget, although I don't think they would have minded remembering. And then I did my work. I kissed them. I went down on them. I swallowed. It wasn't terrible. I just felt my time was worth more than simply blood. I wished I could have just given them the memories of my award-winning performance instead of performing for them. At the time, I could only remove memories. And I wasn't as good as I thought.

SCENE 8. — WAGES OF DISOBEDIENCE (INT: PENTHOUSE IN SPARROW APARTMENTS, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), JOSEPHINE

/SFX/ PENTHOUSE AMBIANCE, NEIGHBORS WITH DULL MUSIC, DOOR OPENS, CASSANDRA WALKS IN, DOOR SHUTS

CASSANDRA (NA): I came home and went to bed, exhausted by the night even though I was brimming with blood. SAMAEEL didn't speak to me until the following evening. I professed to them that I was ready to be useful to ROSE that night. I left a message with RUTH, inviting her over the following night, with instructions to bring a blindfold and her favorite dildo. I hoped that would tease her sufficiently. And then, I gave JOSEPHINE a quick call.

JOSEPHINE: (PHONE) What's cookin', Camarilla?

CASSANDRA: I have to warn you about something. You're in danger.

JOSEPHINE: (PHONE) Shhh. Not on the phone. There's a Redbox in front of the Seven-Eleven in the central district. Write it up and leave the letter behind the box. It's been broken for years. No one will check.

CASSANDRA: Okay.

JOSEPHINE: (PHONE) Thanks for looking out for me. Bye bye.

/SFX/ CALL ENDS ON PHONE

CASSANDRA (NA): I wrote up my warning that MARA was going to come for her. Once again, I apologized and offered my services to her. Then, I hid my face with my N95 mask and traveled to the Seven-Eleven to deposit my letter behind the Redbox. (BEAT) I never should have gone.

SCENE 9. — DISCOVERY (EXT: CITY STREET OUTSIDE 7-11, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, SAMAEL, STEPHANIE

/SFX/ CITY STREET AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA WALKS TO THE REDBOX, STOPS

CASSANDRA: And. (BEAT) There we go.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA STUFFS THE LETTER BEHIND THE REDBOX, AND WALKS AWAY ON CONCRETE, STOPS

SAMAEL (ECHO): One delivered letter behind whatever that thing is.

CASSANDRA: It was an automatic movie dispenser back when it worked.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Named “Red Box” because it’s a large, red box. Did they even bother with a marketing agency?

CASSANDRA: I assume they put the same amount of thought into their name as “Netflix.” Internet flicks? “Flicks” is slang for movies.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Yes, I have been watching the flickering of film projectors since their popularity in the 1890s. I just hope “Red Box” doesn’t start a frenzy of phone booths being “Clear Boxes” or outdoor lavatories being “Blue Boxes.”

CASSANDRA: We don’t have phone booths anymore.

SAMAEL (ECHO): And the Camarilla especially misses those.

CASSANDRA: Well, if you want me to go into business, I could make pink boxes for freshening your makeup, or green boxes to get high in. We already have brown or black boxes for taking photographs in. We could sell Goth gear in purple boxes though.

/SFX/ STEPHANIE WALKING BY STOPS

STEPHANIE: CASSANDRA?

/SFX/ PAUSE, CASSANDRA WALKS AWAY, STEPHANIE FOLLOWS HER

SAMAEL (ECHO): Fuck! STEPHANIE.

STEPHANIE: Excuse me. You sound a lot like someone (STAMMERS) someone I used to know.

CASSANDRA: I have to go.

STEPHANIE: Yeah. I’m sorry. (BEAT, REALIZING) You look a lot like her too.

CASSANDRA: (ANGRY) I’m leaving.

STEPHANIE: (REALIZING) Fuck. (BEAT) Your eyes. (BEAT) Come on. CASSANDRA?

CASSANDRA: Leave me alone.

STEPHANIE: I'm sorry. Please. Please take off your mask.

CASSANDRA: No.

STEPHANIE: (BEAT) I know you're faking it. You sound like her faking another voice too. What the fuck!

CASSANDRA: Stop it!

STEPHANIE: You know me.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND STEPHANIE STOP WALKING

STEPHANIE: You look at me like you know me. Who the hell are you?

CASSANDRA: I'm not this "CASSANDRA."

STEPHANIE: You talk like her. What the hell is going on? She's dead!

CASSANDRA: Off the street.

STEPHANIE: What?

CASSANDRA: We'll talk. Off the street. In that alley.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND STEPHANIE WALK INTO ALLEY, STOP

STEPHANIE: Seriously. CASSANDRA?

CASSANDRA: No.

STEPHANIE: I watched you die.

CASSANDRA: I'm not whoever you think I am.

STEPHANIE: What the fuck! You were dead on my floor. You didn't respond to CPR. They fucking body-bagged you.

CASSANDRA: I'm someone else.

STEPHANIE: Stop lying! Let me see your face!

/SFX/ STEPHANIE PULLS DOWN CASSANDRA'S MASK

STEPHANIE: (HORRIFIED) Fuck you.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE DEEPENS) I am not CASSANDRA. You made a mistake. Forget.
(VOICE RETURNS TO NORMAL) Forget you saw me today.

STEPHANIE: (WOOZY) Uh.

CASSANDRA: Leave. Go wherever you were going. Now.

STEPHANIE: (WOOZY) Okay.

/SFX/ STEPHANIE WALKS AWAY

SAMAEL (ECHO): I don't blame you for releasing her. (BEAT) But that was a breach.

CASSANDRA: It was.

SAMAEL (ECHO): See that it doesn't happen again.

CASSANDRA: (FRUSTRATED) I can't even talk to you on the street.

SAMAEL (ECHO): You could focus more on your thoughts to talk to me.

CASSANDRA: It's harder. I hate this.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I would have killed her.

CASSANDRA: I know. (BEAT) But RUTH's a breach too. As was I.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I do not trust your STEPHANIE to keep quiet.

CASSANDRA: Well, I made her forget. I just have to take care in the future not to let her hear me again.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I'm sorry, love.

CASSANDRA: I am, too.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS ONTO THE SIDEWALK, CONTINUES

CASSANDRA: Let's go punch something.

SCENE 10. — BLOOD DOLL PLANNING (INT: PENTHOUSE IN SPARROW APARTMENTS, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), RUTH, SAMAEL

/SFX/ PENTHOUSE AMBIANCE, NEIGHBORS WITH DULL MUSIC

CASSANDRA (NA): I spent the night working through all the moves SAMAEL instructed me to perform. I did notice the chains holding the punching bags up had increased size by a few gauges. I spent hours in grueling work, learning new forms and then practicing them repeatedly until they stopped making sense. True to SAMAEL's word, I earned my rest. Krafthaus was closed by the time we were done and SAMAEL permitted me to wait for RUTH to take my meal. The following evening, she arrived at my penthouse, eager with a bag of toys.

/SFX/ PENTHOUSE DOOR OPENS, RUTH WALKS IN, DOOR CLOSES, RUTH STOPS

RUTH: (PERKY) Hello hello!

CASSANDRA: Knees. Now.

RUTH: (SUB MODE ON) Yes, CASSANDRA.

/SFX/ RUTH SETS HER BAG DOWN AND KNEELS

CASSANDRA: You're feeling feisty. Expectant.

RUTH: Yes, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: I don't know why I have the lights on.

/SFX/ SWITCH FLICKS LIGHTS OFF

RUTH: (ANTICIPATING) Mmm.

CASSANDRA: I have had a rough couple of days. I'm very much looking forward to eating you.

RUTH: May I make a request?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I'll allow it.

RUTH: Use your mind domination on me when you bite me? Tell me to be still. I want to feel it take me.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) No. I only dominate my prey on the street before I feed on them. I don't like using that before feeding on you.

RUTH: I understand.

CASSANDRA: I will, however (BEAT) order you to kiss me. (VOICE DEEPENS) Kiss me, you little slut.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH KISS

RUTH: (SWOONING) Mmmf.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE RETURNS TO NORMAL) I release you.

RUTH: (SHUDDERING) I like being compelled against my will to do the things I want to do.

CASSANDRA: You like losing control.

RUTH: Yes, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: You're wearing too many clothes. Strip.

/SFX/ RUTH STRIPS, LEAVES CLOTHES ON THE FLOOR

CASSANDRA: Stand. Lean against me.

/SFX/ RUTH STANDS, LEANS INTO CASSANDRA

CASSANDRA: That's right. Your flesh against my clothes. Let's dance.

/MUS/ SOFT MUSIC STARTS

RUTH: (MOANS) Uhhh.

CASSANDRA: That's right. I'll lead. Just sway. Back and forth. We'll turn ever so gently. I've got you. You're soft. You smell good.

RUTH: No scented bath products. I did my research.

CASSANDRA: Good girl. Mmm. I can make claws. You like claws, don't you?

RUTH: Yes, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: I'll just run mine up (BEAT) and down (BEAT) your spine. (BEAT) That's right. You can shudder. I like feeling you scared. (BEAT) As you should be.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH KISS SOFTLY

CASSANDRA: Yes. Your arms around my neck. You can't defend yourself. Enjoy it. (BEAT) Is there any part of you that you feel self-conscious about?

RUTH: (BREATHES AND EXHALES) My belly.

CASSANDRA: Well. (BEAT) It comes with the territory.

RUTH: I know.

CASSANDRA: Shh. Press your warm little body against mine. (BEAT) In the seventeen hundreds, Edmond Burke wrote that beauty emerges from pleasure. When pleasure happens within these walls, there is beauty. You experiencing pleasure is beautiful beyond English's ability to describe. When I drink from you, I am

enraptured in the beauty of your love of the drink. You do not make beauty alone in here. We do it together. And I am humbled by that. I have to thank you for making my home as beautiful as it is.

RUTH: Thank you.

CASSANDRA: No, thank you. (BEAT) Your neck.

RUTH: (SMILING) Yes, CASSANDRA.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA DRINKS RUTH, LICKS HER

RUTH: (SHUDDERS) You're right. That was beautiful.

CASSANDRA: Ah, I've wanted that so much. (BEAT) Please, sit.

RUTH: Okay.

/SFX/ RUTH RELEASES CASSANDRA AND SITS IN A CHAIR

CASSANDRA: I have a matter I'd like to discuss with you.

RUTH: Sure.

CASSANDRA: I was basically a live-in Blood Doll for half a year, not long ago. Now, I'd rather you had your freedoms than not. So. Why should I stop at you?

RUTH: You want more Blood Dolls.

CASSANDRA: I'm not saying I want more relationships per se.

RUTH: No, I understand. I'm poly too, technically.

CASSANDRA: I do care for you, immensely. I'm just looking for more people who enjoy what you do. Fuck, my initial proposal for Harbinger's was supposed to select for people who liked being bitten and drunk.

RUTH: Could you do a Harbinger's again?

CASSANDRA: No. I had the funds from both the Anarchs and the Camarilla then. It's just me now.

RUTH: I can help. I know some play parties around Seattle. I've been on dates to them.

CASSANDRA: But no loves there.

RUTH: It's dangerous to bring someone into my life.

CASSANDRA: Oh, hon.

RUTH: It's okay.

SAMAEL (ECHO): It's not okay. RUTH is right. Telling Blood Dolls that we exist and not confining them is the most textbook breach you can imagine.

CASSANDRA: The Camarilla don't go around killing Kitsap scientists when they clearly know about us.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Perhaps they should.

CASSANDRA: They let you rot there for two years and you're defending them?

SAMAEL (ECHO): (BEAT) I grant you that the Kitsap scientists are both a breach and maintainers of the Masquerade.

CASSANDRA: Blood Dolls can be both as well.

SAMAEL (ECHO): It is not the same. Blood Dolls have no reason to stay quiet.

CASSANDRA: I'll tell them the truth. They stay quiet, or they all die. I'll bind them together, in a coven they can never leave. They can stop providing blood services, of course, but I'll have members checking on them, reminding them that their silence protects. When they're in service, they'll be drunk together, in full view of the rest of them, so "accidents" don't happen.

RUTH: Yes! Get the Blood Dolls and the Kindred to trust each other. Invest the Blood Dolls in the Kindred world. Everyone should share their secrets, equally.

CASSANDRA: I'll have to think on that.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Pen. Paper.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA OPENS HER PURSE, PICKS UP A PEN, PUTS PEN TO PAPER, PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) No. Absolutely not. Humans do not trust Kindred. CASSANDRA is an aberration.

RUTH: And me.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) I lived nearly three hundred years beside you lot. And the only time I trusted anything out of your mouth was after I'd poured my blood into it.

RUTH: Was CASSANDRA the first consensual Blood Doll you ever heard of?

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) The only one I knew personally.

RUTH: Aren't there more humans now than there were two hundred years ago?

CASSANDRA: RUTH.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEAL (ECHO): (WRITING) And so many more of us, too.

RUTH: So why can't we assume that...

CASSANDRA: RUTH! The Kindred are talking.

RUTH: (ANGRY) I don't get a say?

CASSANDRA: No. And you need to understand that you're not the one with the power here. You speak when we allow you to.

RUTH: (PAUSE) And what about my experience as a "Blood Doll?"

CASSANDRA: I've been on both sides of this discussion. You may think you know Kindred. You don't. (BEAT) That's why you're here. To listen to us. And learn.

RUTH: (SIGHS) Yes, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: I do cherish you and our time together. SAMAEAL and I have been discussing this for a while now, though.

RUTH: (PAUSE) I trust you'll tell me if there's anything I can do to contribute.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEAL (ECHO): (WRITING) We shall. You should know, you can do nothing to earn my forgiveness. That said, you make my CASSANDRA happy in ways she is never when she is without you. Let that be the wages of your sin.

RUTH: (PAUSE) Thank you, SAMAEAL.

CASSANDRA: There is something you can do, actually. Those play parties you mentioned.

RUTH: Yes?

CASSANDRA: They sound like a fantastic opportunity to find some Blood Dolls. How'd you like to get us in one?

RUTH: (EXCITED) Oh, gosh!

CASSANDRA: Let's make plans then!

SCENE 11. — NO HELP (INT: LOREA'S WAREHOUSE, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, LOREA, JOSEPHINE, HANK

/SFX/ WAREHOUSE AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA WALKS IN, STOPS

CASSANDRA: LOREA?

LOREA: Oh, good gods, I have a meeting in five minutes. Is ROSE on your tail again? I have footage of her showing up in my apartment complex.

CASSANDRA: She's isn't. I'll be quick. Would you help me with a project that needs to be kept very, very secret?

LOREA: (BEAT) No. I don't even want to hear about it.

CASSANDRA: It would help you. It would help all of us.

LOREA: Fuck, is this another Blood Doll project?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Yes.

LOREA: And you don't want the Camarilla to find out.

CASSANDRA: No.

LOREA: Can't help you. And I don't advise doing it.

CASSANDRA: I haven't told you anything about it!

LOREA: Good. Let it stay that way.

CASSANDRA: I can't believe you all just go along with eating people in the streets or clubs without telling them!

LOREA: If you want consensual lunches, you have to pay for them. Set up your Doll in an apartment somewhere. Spoil them and kill them the second they turn tail.

CASSANDRA: I want something long term.

LOREA: Humans don't live long, I'm afraid. How many years did you get?

CASSANDRA: So you won't help.

LOREA: Nope.

CASSANDRA: Why don't I ask the rest of the Anarchs? Or at least the other half who support or, I don't know, hate the Fire Brigade?

LOREA: (PAUSE) You will do nothing of the sort. Actually, you will leave right now and be lucky I don't kick you out of your penthouse. (BEAT) Oh Gods, you're going to bring all your Dolls up there, aren't you?

CASSANDRA: I only have the one.

LOREA: And the one, it should stay. Just keep her around your place. You liked being kept around.

CASSANDRA: I'm the only one protecting her. And I might not be around long!

LOREA: (PAUSE) Are you leaving?

CASSANDRA: The Ventrue Council are sending an investigation into AARALYN's death. Probably JUDITH's too.

LOREA: (SHOCKED) When are they arriving?

CASSANDRA: I don't know. Maybe the next few months.

LOREA: Well, you won't need any Blood Dolls after that.

CASSANDRA: Whether or not I do, you will.

LOREA: Things are fine.

CASSANDRA: Things are not fine. Everyone's eating wherever they can. The bodies are piling up again. I've seen the statistics ROSE kept.

LOREA: And without Camarilla help, that's how they will remain. Are we done?

CASSANDRA: You know I can pull this off.

LOREA: (BEAT) Prove it. Then we'll talk. Leave.

CASSANDRA: Okay. (BEAT) Bye.

LOREA: Bye.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS AWAY, STOPS AS JOSEPHINE APPROACHES AND STOPS

CASSANDRA: (SURPRISED) JO.

JOSEPHINE: (IMPATIENT) What?

CASSANDRA: I'm sorry I ran.

JOSEPHINE: (CAN'T BE ARSED, BUSY) I got your letter.

CASSANDRA: I wanted to ask you.

JOSEPHINE: I don't have time for this.

/SFX/ JOSEPHINE WALKS AWAY

JOSEPHINE: (TO LOREA) LOREA! Sweetheart. How's it going? What's the good news?
(VOICE FADES OUT)

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS AWAY, STOPS

HANK: Hey CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: (DEJECTED) Hi.

HANK: How's Camarilla life?

CASSANDRA: Suffocating.

HANK: That's what I hear. They paying you at least?

CASSANDRA: (DEJECTED) No.

HANK: Then what's the fucking point of them? (BEAT) You mad that LOREA's talking to JOSEPHINE?

CASSANDRA: No. That's (BEAT) fine.

HANK: Look, from a team that doesn't have Camarilla cash, I'm not hiding that we're wasting resources on JO.

CASSANDRA: She does need help. I have a feeling that molotov bit is all an act.

HANK: It is. Still burns you pretty good though. (BEAT) You look like you could use a drink.

CASSANDRA: (DEJECTED) I'll grab someone on the way home.

HANK: No, we need to get you to a bar.

CASSANDRA: I don't want to go somewhere I could be recognized.

HANK: Trust me, we're going somewhere nobody knows anyone's name. I've been there longer than the current bar staff.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) All right.

HANK: Good. Let's mosey. We'll take my car.

SCENE 12. — FUCK ICE (INT: GEORGETOWN BAR, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, HANK, LEXI, BROWNSHIRT

/MUS/ ALEXANDRA VALENTINE'S "VICTORY ASTERISK" TRACK PLAYS ON THE RADIO

/SFX/ BAR AMBIANCE, DRINKING, CASUAL WALLA, DOOR OPENS, CASSANDRA AND HANK WALK IN, THEY STOP, DOOR CLOSSES

HANK: Hey LEXI. What's happening? My usual scotch?

LEXI: Sure.

HANK: And whatever she's having?

CASSANDRA: Whiskey. Surprise me.

LEXI: Coming up.

HANK: They been here yet?

LEXI: They will be.

HANK: Right on. (TO CASSANDRA) C'mon and have a seat here.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND HANK WALK TO TABLE, SIT

CASSANDRA: You want to know what I tried to talk to LOREA about?

HANK: Not really. This is a little bit of a social call, and a little bit of checking in. You are grist for the rumor mill.

CASSANDRA: What's the latest on me?

HANK: That you've gone full Camarilla and they've got Tremere magicians trying to extract SAMAEEL from you.

CASSANDRA: Not a chance of either happening.

HANK: Well, I don't see you anywhere Anarchs meet. And nowhere neutral either. Best I see is you bugging LOREA or SIOBHAN for one thing or another.

CASSANDRA: I have to take whatever help I can get.

HANK: Naw. You could go into a full eight to four hour Camarilla shift and be everyone's pet stormtrooper. But that ain't you, right?

CASSANDRA: I would love to have been wrong in my human years about judging our world as such a shitshow. Nothing's changed.

HANK: Kindred don't change.

CASSANDRA: Ha! Well then, neither will I. I will strive to make this world better for everyone again, whether they like it or not.

HANK: You and what army?

CASSANDRA: You'll see.

HANK: Heh!

/SFX/ LEXI SLIDES DRINKS OVER TO CASSANDRA AND HANK

LEXI: Here you are.

HANK: Ah, thanks!

CASSANDRA: Thank you.

/SFX/ DOOR OPENS, CROWD GOES QUIET, MULTIPLE FEET WALK IN, STOP

HANK: (LOW) These fuckers.

BROWNSHIRT: (TO LEXI) Hey. You. Set us up with (BEAT) seven Budweisers, three Coors, and two Natty Lights.

HANK: (LOW) Government brownshirts. Come on.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA, HANK, AND OTHERS WALK OVER TO BROWNSHIRTS, STOP

BROWNSHIRT: I said, seven Buds, three Coors, two Natties. Something wrong with your ears, faggot?

/SFX/ LEXI TURNS THE MUSIC UP

LEXI: I'm sorry. You'll have to speak up.

BROWNSHIRT: Seven Buds. Fuck it. Twelve Buds. Now!

LEXI: Sorry! Still can't hear. Bad with both ears.

/SFX/ BROWNSHIRT SLAPS A MENU ON THE COUNTER

BROWNSHIRT: Right there! On the menu! That! The Buds! Twelve! Two hands! Two fingers! Twelve!

LEXI: I don't know what to say, man. You're just pointing around, weird.

/SFX/ BROWNSHIRT SLAMS A FIST ON THE COUNTER REPEATEDLY

HANK: (LOW) Nice tantrum there.

BROWNSHIRT: Fucking pour it!

/SFX/ BROWNSHIRT THROWS A GLASS AT A BOTTLE BEHIND THE BAR, GLASS BOUNCES OFF THE BOTTLE AND RATTLES ON THE FLOOR, UNHARMED

LEXI: Sorry. Were you trying to break that? There's a Stars and Bars up the street. I'm sure you can smash their shit up.

HANK: (CALM, MENACING) There a problem here?

BROWNSHIRT: (PAUSE) We'll be back.

/SFX/ DOOR OPENS, MULTIPLE FEET WALK OUT, DOOR CLOSSES, CONVERSATION STARTS IN THE BAR AGAIN

HANK: We got your back, LEXI.

LEXI: I know you do. Fuckers've seen Blues Brothers too many times, trying to break my bottles.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND HANK WALK TO TABLE, SIT

CASSANDRA: How often do they come by?

HANK: Regularly. These fuckers are in our neighborhoods, harassing and kidnapping our people. This is where we need to be focusing our efforts. Not on the Camarilla or the Fire Brigade. Fuck 'em. Let 'em fight it out. They aren't dogshit to us. These Brownshirt motherfuckers though? They've got to go. We should be spending cash on helping folks to organize against them. But LOREA? She sees the romance in fighting for Thin Blood equality, like you do. At least she sees them fucking up Camarilla businesses and wants to be part of the action. Whichever it is, she's not helping us. This is the fight we need to be having. Not hers.

CASSANDRA: I feel you.

HANK: I hope this has explained a few things about what's going on around here.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Leftist schisms suck.

HANK: I'm hoping there won't be a schism. But LOREA and her posse are not helping.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA DRINKS HER WHISKEY

CASSANDRA: Ahh. Thanks for the whiskey.

HANK: Thanks for listening. Have a good night, whatever you're doing.

CASSANDRA: It's leg day at the gym.

HANK: I remember those. They're turning you into a powerhouse, huh?

CASSANDRA: Something like that.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA STANDS AND WALKS AWAY

SCENE 13. — POSTER (EXT: CITY STREET NEAR 7-11, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), SAMAEL

/SFX/ CITY STREET AMBIANCE

CASSANDRA (NA): SAMAEL took me through my exercises, training on lifts, squats, and moving my body from all sorts of positions. They seemed distracted though, and didn't explain why until the next evening, when I went out to check the Redbox for any word from JOSEPHINE. Not that I anticipated any, given her cold shoulder to me.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS ON PAVEMENT

SAMAEL (ECHO): Love. Can we talk?

CASSANDRA: What's on your mind?

SAMAEL (ECHO): I've been wanting to give you the benefit of the doubt. But I have thoughts on your "Coven of Blood Dolls" plan with RUTH.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS INTO QUIET ALLEY, STOPS

CASSANDRA: It should be safe to talk in here. What's the matter?

SAMAEL (ECHO): (BEAT) I disagree with your assertion that telling humans about us does not break the Masquerade per se. I think this plan of yours is highly dangerous and likely to get all your Dolls killed.

CASSANDRA: We have to start somewhere with developing a human-Kindred community.

SAMAEL (ECHO): The Anarchs are in the best position to do that and have you seen them try?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I don't like living like this. In secret. Lying to people.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I'm well aware. I always have been.

CASSANDRA: The Masquerade does not honor me. I am subservient to it and I hate it.

SAMAEL (ECHO): It protects you. It protects us all.

CASSANDRA: It enforces an unnecessary rift between us and humans. Do you know how many monsterfuckers there are out there?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Yes, and as monsters, our side gig is to frighten humanity along with whatever despicable acts we need to do. We don't make sense as friends, priests, medical professionals, whatever, to humans.

CASSANDRA: That's quitter talk.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Ah. Once again, you want us better than our natures compel us to be.

CASSANDRA: I'm elevating us. I want to spit in the face of our creator. I am ending the time of monsters being separate from humanity.

- SAMAEL (ECHO):** And do you think, politically, this is a good moment to introduce a paranoid administration to a new minority with a very spotty historical record filled with murder and crime?
- CASSANDRA:** Some humans are ready even if the public is not.
- SAMAEL (ECHO):** Do you think any creature on Earth enjoys second or third-class status? This is where society wants us. In secret. It keeps us safe here.
- CASSANDRA:** Every sapient creature should have the right to be free from oppression. You think trans people enjoyed going stealth throughout most of Western history?
- SAMAEL (ECHO):** And yet they lived. And look at Kitsap. To what RUTH does. Humans do not consider us sapient or worthy of respect. To them, we don't deserve the most basic of rights and I know this because they had me locked in a cell for two fucking years with no hope of freedom. I agree that the system is not right or fair. I am trying to explain that you cannot change things yourself and you risk us all by attempting so!
- CASSANDRA:** I won't act alone. I'll get allies, like JOSEPHINE.
- SAMAEL (ECHO):** (SAD, PLEADING) Why? I live with you. I've been with you through your most formative moments. I know you, and how you ache. It is wrong to take humans without their consent. This I grant. And what you propose goes through the mind of every neonate with half a brain. But before you tell a single new human of our existence, if you will not listen to LOREA or me or any of your Kindred comrades, think of STEPHANIE. Consider how she reacted to you on learning of your undead existence. And consider what the government would do to her if they suspected a connection between the two of you. The Masquerade protects everyone. It is not simply the result of persecution. It keeps you, and yes, even your beloved RUTH from captivity and torment. I know you want to be out, loud, and proud, but tell me what you would tell the government when they ask you how many people have died by your hand. Fuck, they already know your body count from your escape from Kitsap! Now, I know our salons rarely convince you of anything. (NEAR CRYING) So convince me. Tell me what is broken about the system. Tell me that a human keeps a secret as well as a Kindred. Tell me why I am begging you not to break the Masquerade because I am fucking terrified of losing you! You stupid, stupid inflexible girl! Tell me you have any claim to ethics now when your survival, and my love for you, are on the line!
- CASSANDRA:** (BEAT) I truly love you.
- SAMAEL (ECHO):** Love is not enough! Give me faith in you that you will not get us, and all you love, killed!
- CASSANDRA:** (BEAT) I don't think there is a path forward for me without risk. But I promise you. I will not do it alone, or only with RUTH.
- SAMAEL (ECHO):** (PAUSE) I've said all I can on the matter. Whatever choice you make, please respect that my objections come from love. And that I know you. Not some idea

of you. And I want that reality of you safe, as safe as can be expected of a monster, so very, very much.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT, SPOTS SOMETHING IN THE DISTANCE) Hold up.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Is something the matter, love?

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS OUT OF THE ALLEY TO A PHONE POLE, AND RIPS A POSTER OFF OF IT

CASSANDRA: This!

SAMAEL (ECHO): Oh dear.

CASSANDRA: “Have you seen this woman? CASSANDRA Davril.” And a picture of me. From when I was hanging out with STEPH.

SAMAEL (ECHO): “Any sighting, please call...” and that’s her number I assume.

CASSANDRA: Yup. Fuck! (BEAT) There’s another poster.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS TO ANOTHER PHONE POLE, AND RIPS A POSTER OFF OF IT

SAMAEL (ECHO): We never checked up on any of your prey. You might not be wiping their minds as thoroughly as you need to be.

CASSANDRA: (FRUSTRATED) I’ve been following your directions.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Perhaps I’ve been slacking. I assumed your abilities would be as good as mine. Fuck. We need to see STEPHANIE again. Give me access to your mind and I’ll do what I can to make her forget you.

CASSANDRA: Let me try something first.

SAMAEL (ECHO): All right.

CASSANDRA: And then, if I fail, you can do it.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I assume she’s using her computer to print out these posters. There’ll be files we need to delete.

CASSANDRA: I know. Let me try to convince her to drop this.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Love. There’s only one way to end a breach like this for sure.

CASSANDRA: She deserves better than that.

SAMAEL (ECHO): They all do.

CASSANDRA: I’m giving her a chance. And then, if she turns it down, (REGRETFUL) you can have her.

SCENE 14. — MEETING WITH GOD (INT: STEPHANIE'S APARTMENT, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, SAMAEAL, STEPHANIE

/SFX/ QUIET NIGHT HALLWAY INTERIOR, MUFFLED NEIGHBORS LISTENING TO TV

/SFX/ CASSANDRA KNOCKS ON HER DOOR, WAITS KNOCKS AGAIN

STEPHANIE: What the fuck? (BEAT) That's her knock.

/SFX/ STEPHANIE WALKS TO THE DOOR, OPENS THE DOOR

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) Let me in, STEPHANIE.

STEPHANIE: (SCARED) Come in.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS IN, STEPHANIE CLOSES THE DOOR, WALKS IN FRONT OF CASSANDRA, BOTH STOP

STEPHANIE: (IN AWE) CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) No. That's who I was. (BEAT) Leave me be.

STEPHANIE: (IN AWE) You really look like her.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) Even my claws? Even my teeth?

STEPHANIE: (IN AWE) I know. (SCARED) Fuck.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) I'm here to tell you to stop looking for me.

STEPHANIE: (SCARED) Okay.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) Take down your posters. Cancel any reports you've made to the police. Delete any posts about me online.

STEPHANIE: (SCARED) Sure.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) Now, please. While I wait.

/SFX/ STEPHANIE WALKS TO HER CHAIR, SITS, TYPES ON HER COMPUTER, COMPUTER BEEPS

STEPHANIE: (SCARED) Okay. They're gone. (BEAT) What's going on?

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) I want you to take me as a secret to your grave. Never mention that you saw me walking again. Never mention I was here.

STEPHANIE: (BEAT) What's wrong with you?

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) I'm a god.

STEPHANIE: (BEAT) How?

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) The next time you see me, it will be to end your life. But I'm trying to avoid that. I will answer two more of your questions. And in exchange, you will not give me a reason to return. Understand?

STEPHANIE: (SCARED) Yes.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) I grant you that which few mortals ever get to receive. You are correct that I was once CASSANDRA. But I'm not her any more.

STEPHANIE: (SCARED) What happened to you?

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) I died. Some time before I last saw you. That time, I was already dead.

STEPHANIE: (BEAT) What brought you back?

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) Are you sure that's your final question to me?

STEPHANIE: (THINKS) No. (BEAT) Could I come back too?

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) From the dead? Not as a human. And perhaps, (BEAT) someday. I don't know. The future is not my domain.

STEPHANIE: Okay. (BEAT) You know I miss you, right? If you're really you, I miss the fuck out of you.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) Surely my money helps?

STEPHANIE: Yeah. Fuck. It has. I'm thinking about getting a new place with it. Somewhere we can start a commune. Help other folks.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) I'm glad.

STEPHANIE: (BEAT) May I touch you?

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) You may.

/SFX/ STEPHANIE STANDS, TOUCHES CASSANDRA

STEPHANIE: You're cold.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) I don't live anymore.

STEPHANIE: There's so much more I want to ask.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) What kind of god would I be if I gave you all the answers?

STEPHANIE: (BEAT) It's not fair that you have them and I don't.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) You know more now than most people ever do. (BEAT) Goodbye, STEPHANIE. Promise to let me go. Live your life instead.

STEPHANIE: (BEAT) It's hard.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) Nothing gets easier. Even for a god.

STEPHANIE: (BEAT) Thanks for coming back to see me.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) Don't make me do it again.

STEPHANIE: I won't.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) And for that, I must trust you.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA KISSES STEPHANIE SOFTLY

STEPHANIE: (AMAZED) Oh my god.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS TO THE DOOR, STOPS, OPENS THE DOOR

CASSANDRA: (VOICE BOOMS) You will never lose my heart either. Please do not make this a painful memory.

STEPHANIE: (BEAT) Of course.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS OUT, SHUTS THE DOOR, WALKS DOWN THE HALL

SAMAE (ECHO): That's a lot of trust to put into one mortal.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE NORMAL) If she can do it, there's hope for the rest of them, isn't there?

SCENE 15. — PARTY PREP (INT: PENTHOUSE IN SPARROW APARTMENTS, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), RUTH, MARA

/SFX/ PENTHOUSE AMBIANCE, NEIGHBORS WITH DULL MUSIC

CASSANDRA (NA): After my nightly practice session in the gym, I returned home to find a message from RUTH on our secret phone. She had found a play party for us to attend the next evening. She was excited to go, with or without me, but how could I say no? I wanted this Blood Doll project to work. I wanted to prove competent to SAMAEEL. And ELIJIO was right. I didn't want to eat on the streets again if I could help it. So she arrived the next evening.

/SFX/ DOOR OPENS, RUTH WALKS IN, DOOR SHUTS

RUTH: Hello, hello!

CASSANDRA: Hello, my enthusiastic little chew toy. Take your coat off. Let me see your outfit.

/SFX/ RUTH TAKES OFF HER COAT, SPINS IN PATENT LEATHER

RUTH: (DOE-EYED) How is it?

CASSANDRA: Very nice. Plenty of places to bite you.

RUTH: I brought my own cuffs.

CASSANDRA: You don't need restraining.

RUTH: (HUMBLE) I like it though.

CASSANDRA: I'll take that under advisement. Do you like my dress?

RUTH: I like anything on you.

CASSANDRA: I don't think I could pull off leopard print.

RUTH: I'd still be happy to see you in it.

CASSANDRA: I know you would. Kneel.

RUTH: Yes, CASSANDRA.

/SFX/ RUTH KNEELS IN PATENT LEATHER

CASSANDRA: Tonight, the two of us are embarking on a dangerous voyage. One we might not survive. And our success will only come after many achievements. We will fight each battle as it happens for the rest of our days. Are you prepared to depart with me?

RUTH: Whatever I do with you fills me with joy and direction. I'm ready. Heart and soul.

CASSANDRA: Interesting oath, considering I have neither.

RUTH: Oh.

CASSANDRA: I tease. My unflinching heart is where it should be and I probably have a soul somewhere. Now, this is for your neck. It will come off when it is time to drink you.

/SFX/ HEAVY CHAIN CLINKS

RUTH: A collar?

CASSANDRA: I didn't have a lot of time to make one. But. It's for you. If you'd like it.

RUTH: (EXAMINES COLLAR) These are, what? One gauge chain links?

CASSANDRA: Zero gauge.

RUTH: How did you put these together?

CASSANDRA: I'm very strong. Would you like this on your neck?

RUTH: I would.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA FASTENS THE COLLAR AROUND RUTH'S NECK AND BENDS A LINK TO LOCK IT IN PLACE

CASSANDRA: Then it's done. (BEAT) This changes nothing between us. But it's useful to pull you to me.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA PULLS RUTH TO HER BY HER COLLAR, KISSES HER

RUTH: (OVERWHELMED BY GOOD FEELINGS) Ummumuwalumum.

CASSANDRA: Yes, I think it fits very nicely on you. Stand. Carry my toys with yours. I bought them with the dress earlier this evening so they'll have to be broken in.

/SFX/ RUTH STANDS, PICKS UP BAGS

RUTH: Ready.

CASSANDRA: We'll take my car.

RUTH: Sure. The place is up in Shoreline. Parking will be a bear.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH WALKS TO THE DOOR, OPEN DOOR, WALK OUT, CLOSE DOOR, LOCK DOOR, WALK TO ELEVATOR, RING BELL, ELEVATOR OPENS, THEY WALK IN, STOP, PRESS BUTTON, ELEVATOR DESCENDS ONE FLOOR, STOPS, DINGS, OPENS, MARA WALKS IN

MARA: Hello.

CASSANDRA: Good evening, MARA.

RUTH: (NERVOUS) Hello again.

MARA: You are dressed as performers.

/SFX/ ELEVATOR DOOR SHUTS, ELEVATOR DESCENDS

CASSANDRA: We're off to a play party.

MARA: Playing as humans?

CASSANDRA: Playing with pain, pleasure, power dynamics.

MARA: Oh. The basic fundamentals. Let me know when either of you want to experience supreme ecstasy by having your flesh remolded or your internal organs moved.

RUTH: I'm not sure I could survive either.

MARA: But you would scream so nicely at the end. (BEAT) Relax. If you were my prey, you would not suffer. Pain is part of everything.

CASSANDRA: Are you going out to kill again?

MARA: I am. Are there any you would prefer I not kill tonight?

RUTH: (BEAT) I don't think anyone I know will be in the city tonight.

MARA: Well, tell me if there is someone and I will spare them.

/SFX/ ELEVATOR STOPS, DINGS, DOOR OPENS, MARA, CASSANDRA, AND RUTH WALK OUT

RUTH: Thank you.

MARA: Not at all. I do not wish to bring you pain, RUTH. That seems to be CASSANDRA's duty tonight.

CASSANDRA: Good hunting.

MARA: And to you. And you, RUTH? Enjoy being hunted.

RUTH: I feel very caught right now.

MARA: Only because CASSANDRA believes in catch-and-release. But that could change, couldn't it, CASSANDRA?

CASSANDRA: (SMILES) No. Kindred don't change.

SCENE 16. — PLAY PARTY (INT: RENTED PLAY SPACE, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), MELISSA, RUTH, AUTUMN, MAPLE

/MUS/ SOFT AMBIENT TRACKS

/SFX/ IMPACT PLAY, PEOPLE MOANING, CASSANDRA AND RUTH WALK IN, STOP

CASSANDRA (NA): The drive to the play space wasn't terribly long. The goddess of streets smiled on us and we were able to sneak into a parking spot as its resident left. To stay partially anonymous, I slipped on a leather cat mask that covered the top half of my face. RUTH carried the toys while I took the rope and chains I'd left in the car, and followed her inside. I showed the dyke on door duty my falsified driver's license, and along with the entrance fee and the release form, that was enough to get me in.

AUTUMN: RUTH? Oh, gosh! Hi again!

RUTH: Hi AUTUMN! This is Lily. She'll be topping me tonight.

CASSANDRA: How do you do?

AUTUMN: Welcome to the play space! You read over the rules? If you have questions about anything, the other monitors and I can answer whatever you have.

CASSANDRA: This space is frikkin' sweet! Can we use that bondage frame in the back after the scene there is finished?

AUTUMN: Absolutely. Do you need any help with setting up?

CASSANDRA: (SELF-SATISFIED) No.

RUTH: She's very strong. Also, we'll be doing some cutting and bloodplay tonight if that's all right?

AUTUMN: Definitely. Just remember to keep the equipment sanitary. We have puppy pads for the blood and alcohol wipe everything down.

CASSANDRA: I promise to lick all the blood up.

RUTH: We're fluid-bonded. It's all right.

AUTUMN: Fantastic. We'll be looking forward to see what you'll be doing!

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH WALK ACROSS THE PLAY SPACE

CASSANDRA (NA): Every piece of furniture in the room had a scene happening on it. Couches, spanking benches, leather tables, Saint Andrew's crosses, and gold chairs for boot worship. The air was saturated in sweat, leather, and sex. One couple were finishing some intense needle play among gorgeous shibari ropework. A woman was blowing out fire set on another woman's skin. A couple rested on a couch, one naked and face down in the other's lap, her ass criss-crossed in thick red

stripes. I had my work cut out for me to get attention at this party. But that was fine. I had techniques beyond any human's in my toolkit.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH STOP WALKING

CASSANDRA (NA): We prepared our scene while the couple on the bondage frame were winding down. I had RUTH strip and tied a sturdy harness to her torso. I had her touch her toes while I warmed up her ass with a suede flogger. I had her stand while I teased her nipples with clamps until the frame was available. I put her wrists and ankles in cuffs and I took out my chain.

/SFX/ CHAIN IS PULLED OUT OF TRAVEL BAG

CASSANDRA (NA): I started with her wrists, securing them up at a comfortable height. Then I attached the chains to her harness and lifted her from the ground with one arm, while I stabilized her with the other. Then I secured her ankles so her feet would not simply dangle as she hung suspended in place. I noticed AUTUMN watching me, with a smile that seemed to say I had impressed her with my strength. She'd seen nothing yet.

RUTH: (HAPPY, FLOATY) Oh, gods.

CASSANDRA (NA): I gave RUTH a ball she could drop if she wanted to stop but was unable to vocalize it. Otherwise, she was entirely helpless and could only squirm as I grew out my claws enough to cut the barest layer of her skin. After laying down the puppy pads, I started on her arm, carving an intricate weave of diamonds all the way up her shoulder. She moaned and grimaced as the little blades sliced into her, and I had to say, the way the blood droplets welled up in the carvings filled me with pride. I did this. I made this beautiful thing happen. I licked up the largest of the gathering streams of blood, leaving me hungrier for more. I bent beside her and carved the outline of a falcon's head into her left outer thigh. She flinched as she rode the swell of pain receptors and endorphins. I began cutting little waves into her other leg, when I felt her slow her breathing, melting into subspace. I wanted to leave her there but MARA had been right. We were performers that night.

CASSANDRA: RUTH. Eyes open. I need you here with me.

RUTH: (BREATHES) Yes. (BEAT) CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: How're you doing?

RUTH: (BREATHES) It's a lot.

CASSANDRA: How'm I doing?

RUTH: (BREATHES, LOOKS AROUND) You've (BEAT) got a fanbase.

CASSANDRA: Good, It's time. But first.

CASSANDRA (NA): I finished the wave I was cutting into her leg. I let my nails graze her flesh without harming it as I pulled them towards her vulva and then (BEAT) slipped inside. Of course, I had shifted my nails into round and soft nubs, so as not to hurt her. But from the way she shuddered, she certainly feared I hadn't.

CASSANDRA: Relax. Taste.

CASSANDRA (NA): I took my fingers from inside her and slid them into her mouth. She sucked on them, confirming that only her own juices ran over them. No blood, like the droplets welling up from the lines I had carved into her. I gently undid her collar and let it fall to the floor.

/SFX/ HEAVY CHAIN FALLS TO THE FLOOR

CASSANDRA: Are you ready?

RUTH: (BREATHES) Please.

CASSANDRA: Thank you.

/SFX/ ROOM AMBIANCE AND MUSIC IS CUT, CASSANDRA DRINKS RUTH, LICKS HER, ROOM AMBIANCE AND MUSIC RETURNS

CASSANDRA (NA): My focus had been on her, ensuring her extremities had circulation, that her joints were not under any pressure, and that I had not sliced deep enough to require medical intervention. But when I drank from her, all that passed away. I was in my heaven. I did feel the singularity of mindfulness MARA had described, and I pulled myself away from her, licking her wound closed before my greed could get the better of me. Then I licked her neck more, so we both could return to ourselves and finish the work we had come to do.

RUTH: (BREATHES) AUTUMN's watching. So's a woman with orange fire hair. Tattoo on her arm, a nude with a skull. MAPLE.

CASSANDRA: Okay.

RUTH: And a brunette. With a foxglove tattoo on her chest. She's in a wheelchair. MELISSA. Right. Played with her once.

CASSANDRA: Shh. Settle down.

RUTH: Think I'm ready to come down.

CASSANDRA: Of course. Can I clean you up first?

RUTH: Yes, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA (NA): I took my tongue to her sliced flesh and eagerly licked the streams of blood dribbling down her body, as I sealed the cuts I'd made. I started with the waves on her leg and finished with the diamonds on her arms. You wouldn't even know she'd been marked from the look of her skin. But the falcon head? I left that on her, after covering it with a pad. Then I carefully lowered her legs, her arms, and

her torso until she could move on her own accord. I clipped off the chains, brought her to the floor, and kissed her.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH KISS, SMALL APPLAUSE

MELISSA: Hey. That was beautiful.

AUTUMN: Oh wow. Fuck. You two were amazing.

MAPLE: That was so fucking hot. Oh my gosh. How intricate you were with her. Can I get you two anything?

RUTH: (BREATHES) Water.

MAPLE: Yeah, hang on. I'll be back.

CASSANDRA: Thank you.

CASSANDRA (NA): I settled RUTH on one of the couches, ensuring her comfort before returning to the frame to take my chain down. I wanted to fuck her so bad and there was still time for that. But we had a project to start.

/SFX/ CHAIN IN DROPPED INTO A TRAVEL BAG

CASSANDRA: Thanks for helping me with the teardown.

MELISSA: Happy to help. This chain is heavy.

CASSANDRA: What was your name again?

MELISSA: MELISSA. I don't think I introduced myself.

CASSANDRA: Lily.

MELISSA: Pleasure to meet you, Lily. I've never seen you here before with RUTH?

CASSANDRA: We've just started dating. She's absolutely adorable.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA SPRAYS DOWN THE FRAME

MELISSA: I know. Sometimes she plays. Sometimes she waits in the corner, watching all of us.

CASSANDRA: She has a lot going on.

MELISSA: Don't we all.

CASSANDRA: I hate to fish for compliments. But what did you like about our scene?

MELISSA: What were you wearing to cut her like that, with just your fingers?

CASSANDRA: Oh! Flesh-colored prosthetics. You have to be really careful with them.

MELISSA: I imagine. And. Please. That was really hot, the way you went for her neck.

CASSANDRA: (SMILES) And you like doing that, or having it happen to you?

MELISSA: (THINKS) Both. I think.

CASSANDRA: Hmm. I have to get back to RUTH. But let's talk sometime. How can I DM you?

CASSANDRA (NA): MELISSA gave me her Signal contact.

MELISSA: (FLATTERED) I am very interested. Thank you!

CASSANDRA: Let's talk then. Have a lovely night.

MELISSA: You too!

CASSANDRA (NA): I went back to RUTH and cuddled her until she returned fully to this world. I cleaned her falcon cutting and covered it with Tegaderm.

RUTH: It's really gorgeous. Thank you.

CASSANDRA: Something you can remember me by. I'd say, mission accomplished.

RUTH: (STILL FLOATY) I remember a few more onlookers too.

CASSANDRA: You did great. Let me take you home. We can feed you and I can fuck you.

RUTH: That sounds amazing.

CASSANDRA: Good, Rest. (BEAT) One more thing though. We'll need allies to make this project happen. Kindred allies.

RUTH: Oh. Any idea who?

CASSANDRA: Yes. And tomorrow, I'm going to ask them.

SCENE 17. — MESSAGE IN A REDBOX (EXT: CITY STREET OUTSIDE 7-11, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), JOSEPHINE

/SFX/ CITY STREET AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA WALKS TO THE REDBOX, STOPS

CASSANDRA (NA): RUTH and I had a lovely night at my penthouse, but eventually I had to send her home. I still had a few hours left before sunrise, so I wrote up another letter and took it to the broken, empty Redbox by the Seven-Eleven. The Camarilla wouldn't help me. The Anarchs wouldn't help me. The only faction left, however, just might, I thought.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA PULLS OUT A LETTER FROM BEHIND THE REDBOX

CASSANDRA: Huh.

CASSANDRA (NA): I found a response from JOSEPHINE already there.

JOSEPHINE: (READING) Camarilla. If you're reading this, I have not forgiven you. But I am willing to talk. Come to this address no earlier than 8 PM and no later than ten minutes after that. I can't be expected to wait for you any longer. JOSEPHINE.

CASSANDRA (NA): The address was to a disused contractor space in an old warehouse. I went to bed and returned there the following evening.

SCENE 18. — TWO PHONES TAPED TOGETHER (INT: ABANDONED WAREHOUSE, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), JOSEPHINE

/SFX/ ABANDONED WAREHOUSE AMBIANCE, WIND OUTSIDE, CASSANDRA WALKS IN, STOPS

CASSANDRA: Hello?

JOSEPHINE: (ON PHONE) Over here. In the chair.

CASSANDRA (NA): I walked over and found a phone laying face-up in the seat of a folding chair, set in the middle of the room.

JOSEPHINE: (ON PHONE) Don't bother tracing this call. Thank you for being prompt.

CASSANDRA: I'm working on a project that needs absolute secrecy.

JOSEPHINE: (ON PHONE) So why are you talking to me?

CASSANDRA: And help.

JOSEPHINE: (ON PHONE) Ah. And why would I be interested in this?

CASSANDRA: I can only tell you in person. No electronics. No chance of recording.

JOSEPHINE: (ON PHONE) Why me?

CASSANDRA: Because you're good at hiding. You're good at secrecy. And (BEAT) I'm going to help you with a problem you may not even know you have.

JOSEPHINE: (ON PHONE) Twenty grand for one meeting. Cash.

CASSANDRA: Fifteen.

JOSEPHINE: (ON PHONE, BEAT) Done. Leave the money here when you get it and ring the phone. I'll give you details of where to meet at the usual place.

CASSANDRA: I'll have it here in over an hour.

JOSEPHINE: (ON PHONE) Then I'll possibly see you later tonight, Don't get followed again.

CASSANDRA: ROSE hasn't given a shit about me in days.

JOSEPHINE: (ON PHONE) Or that's what she's making you think. Go. We'll talk again if you're serious.

/SFX/ PHONE BEEPS, CALL ENDS

CASSANDRA (NA): I went home and picked up the cash. SAMAEEL agreed to withdraw more and wrote the appropriate letters. I returned to the warehouse, left the money, and told JO on the phone. Around midnight, I checked behind the Redbox again, and

found GPS directions to a forest near Sultan. I left behind my phone in my car, and walked towards the area I'd been told to go to.

SCENE 19. — FOREST MEETING (EXT: FOREST, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, JOSEPHINE, SAMAEL

/SFX/ NIGHT FOREST AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA WALKS ON A FOREST DIRT PATH

JOSEPHINE: That's far enough.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA STOPS

JOSEPHINE: Let me check you for electronics.

/SFX/ JOSEPHINE PATS DOWN CASSANDRA

CASSANDRA: Only fair that I check you too.

JOSEPHINE: Go ahead.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA PATS DOWN JOSEPHINE

JOSEPHINE: Now. What did you want to talk about?

CASSANDRA: Do you know what a Blood Doll is?

JOSEPHINE: A human into getting bitten by a Kindred. Who knows about us.

CASSANDRA: Would you like one?

JOSEPHINE: Are you giving them out?

CASSANDRA: Would you like enough for the whole Fire Brigade?

JOSEPHINE: I don't like where this is going.

CASSANDRA: When I was human, I was a Blood Doll to SAMAEL, one of the Prince's ministers. SAMAEL and I convinced the Court to start Harbinger's. But that wasn't my intention. I wanted to find other humans who would also enjoy being Blood Dolls. And I've found some.

JOSEPHINE: You're keeping these Blood Dolls, what, personally?

CASSANDRA: No. I'm not imprisoning them. They're free to go and live their lives in their own homes when they're not serving.

JOSEPHINE: Even I know that's a breach.

CASSANDRA: Only if you consider a breach any revelation of us to humans. Which I don't. Imagine. A secret society of humans. A coven of Blood Dolls. All to feed and service us.

JOSEPHINE: (DOUBTING) While they live free.

CASSANDRA: Don't tell me it can't happen.

JOSEPHINE: It's dangerous.

CASSANDRA: To who? The Camarilla? Why the fuck would you care about them?

JOSEPHINE: For the Blood Dolls.

CASSANDRA: Depends who talks. You or them. What if nobody talks? What if everyone knows the consequences?

JOSEPHINE: Why would any human agree to this?

CASSANDRA: I would have. In my old life. In a heartbeat. (BEAT) How are you feeding now? Don't tell me. I know you need your privacy. But just think, what if you had access to a community of humans who wanted what you have to give them? Who you don't have to lie to, to drink from them? Who will take your secrets to their graves because they love being bitten so fucking much?

JOSEPHINE: There's no one like that out there. Except you.

CASSANDRA: I cannot be the only one.

JOSEPHINE: Maybe you are.

CASSANDRA: Before the week is out I will have at least three Blood Dolls with a complete understanding of the situation, ready to meet you of their own consent. And from there, their numbers can only grow.

JOSEPHINE: This is a lot.

CASSANDRA: You have all the time you want to think about this. I'm developing rules and support systems for both humans and Kindred. To keep us both safe and invested in each other. This is no wham, bam, thank you. I'm looking to create a community.

JOSEPHINE: We could be exposed.

CASSANDRA: Who the fuck are they going to tell? The Camarilla? The Anarchs? Other humans? Who exactly is it in their interest to reveal themselves to?

JOSEPHINE: (THINKS) What do you need from us?

CASSANDRA: Hiding places to gather in. Security. Keep these humans as safe as you'd want to be if you were one of them.

JOSEPHINE: That costs.

CASSANDRA: I can pay. And understand, these humans I'm bringing in? They have practice staying hidden. The ones I have in mind are queer and trans, in the current authoritarian regime. They are invested in hiding from cops and government thugs.

JOSEPHINE: And what happens when we don't meet up with their expectations of vampires? Especially we Duskborn.

CASSANDRA: Ever asked a human how your bite feels?

JOSEPHINE: (BEAT) They said, "ecstatic."

CASSANDRA: Then what are you worried about?

JOSEPHINE: Mostly you, Camarilla.

CASSANDRA: And my neck won't be severed if I'm found out?

JOSEPHINE: You're putting a lot of us in danger.

CASSANDRA: And what does your Beast think of the idea of regular, enthusiastic food?

JOSEPHINE: (PAUSE, THINKING) I meet your Blood Dolls next week before I decide.

CASSANDRA: That's fine.

JOSEPHINE: And if I say no?

CASSANDRA: You're causing a split in the Anarch community over whether or not to support you. (BEAT) I may have another faction I can go to soon.

JOSEPHINE: (GRUMBLES) All right. See you in a week.

/SFX/ JOSEPHINE WALKS AWAY

SAMAEL (ECHO): Now, I suppose you actually need three consenting Blood Dolls.

CASSANDRA: I'm not worried. That was a big party.

SCENE 20. — INTERVIEW WITH A BLOOD DOLL (INT: KENT COMMUNITY CENTER, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), MELISSA, RUTH, SAMAEL

/SFX/ WIND OUTSIDE, COMMUNITY CENTER CREAKING AMBIANCE

CASSANDRA (NA): I contacted MELISSA immediately after. I explained I wanted to interview her for a new play group. She was interested. It took some calling but I found a community center in Kent that let us rent their space for an interview, with no questions about who would be there. I invited RUTH over the next evening and we had a fabulous time together. We also developed the questions we wanted for the interview process. And how to ensure consent throughout the whole event. As for my own issues with making humans forget, SAMAEL agreed to train me better and RUTH, well.

RUTH: I can be your practice dummy.

CASSANDRA: Are you sure?

RUTH: I'm curious about how it feels. But ten seconds only. No more.

SAMAEL (ECHO): We can work with that.

CASSANDRA (NA): I became much better at memory wiping overnight. (BEAT) I sent RUTH to pick up MELISSA the following evening. I wanted to scope out the center and ensure I wasn't followed. I memorized the cars behind me and didn't recognize any staying there. The community center seemed safe enough, so I took out a folding chair, and waited.

/SFX/ DOOR OPENS, RUTH WALKS IN, MELISSA ROLLS IN ON HER CHAIR

SAMAEL (ECHO): Here they come. Prove me wrong, my darling.

RUTH: (TO MELISSA) And you're okay with this.

MELISSA: You're acting like I've never done anything like cracking a fascist over the head before. I'm fine!

CASSANDRA: MELISSA!

MELISSA: Hello, Lily!

/SFX/ RUTH AND MELISSA STOP

CASSANDRA: You know that's my scene name.

MELISSA: That's fine. Nice to meet you again.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND MELISSA SHAKE HANDS

MELISSA: Oh, you can shake harder than that.

CASSANDRA: (SMIRKS) Sure.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND MELISSA SHAKE HANDS FIRMLY

MELISSA: There you go. Now, what kind of play party are you doing?

RUTH: So. (BEAT) This is a farraday cage. Would you be comfortable putting your phone in it?

MELISSA: (CURIOUS) Sure.

/SFX/ MELISSA PUTS HER PHONE IN THE CAGE

MELISSA: What's going on?

CASSANDRA: The type of play we're doing is extremely rewarding. And the most important part is that it must be consensual. It's not safe. It's not sane. It's very RACK. And it's something I gave my life to, once.

MELISSA: D/s play? I'm a switch. I like impact. Branding. Needle play. Pushing boundaries.

CASSANDRA: Good. We're planning regular parties. But before we get into that, I need you to understand something. And after I tell it to you, I'm going to ask if you're comfortable knowing it. And then I'm going to tell you why it's dangerous to know it. (BEAT) And if you don't want to be a part of this project, I need you to forget it. You'll probably want to forget it too. This is for your own protection.

MELISSA: Okay. What's this about?

RUTH: She's going to wipe your memory of this conversation.

MELISSA: (CONFUSED) How?

CASSANDRA: It'll just be what's said later. You'll remember everything that's happening now. Even me saying I can erase your memory. If you want to leave now, I completely understand. RUTH can drive you home. This is a lot to ask anyone. But I'm not comfortable continuing the interview unless I know you're willing to keep this secret.

MELISSA: (SWALLOWS) Okay.

CASSANDRA: Forever. You can't talk about this with anyone but the others in this project. Ever. You have to be complicit in it.

MELISSA: RUTH? Is this right?

RUTH: It's serious. And it's the most rewarding thing I've ever been a part of.

MELISSA: And the mind wiping?

RUTH: It's safe. I've had it done to me.

MELISSA: Okay. (BEAT) Show me you can wipe my memory.

CASSANDRA: Sure.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA PASSES MELISSA A PEN AND PAPER

CASSANDRA: Write on this paper, "You won't remember writing this."

MELISSA: (BEAT) Okay.

/SFX/ MELISSA WRITES ON THE PAPER

CASSANDRA: (VOICE DEEPENS) And now, forget. (BEAT) (VOICE RETURNS TO NORMAL)
We're done!

/SFX/ MELISSA CRINKLES THE PAPER IN HER HAND

MELISSA: (SURPRISED) This is my handwriting.

CASSANDRA: Yes.

RUTH: How do you feel?

MELISSA: Fine. (BEAT) That's amazing. How?

CASSANDRA: That's part of what I want to tell you. (BEAT) Promise me you'll consent to forgetting what I'm about to tell you, if you're not comfortable keeping it secret as long as you live.

MELISSA: (PAUSE) I'll bite. You have my permission. What's this secret?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Do you know how I lifted RUTH so easily? How I cut her without effort and sealed all her wounds so seamlessly? How I drank from her neck but you don't see a single wound there?

MELISSA: (PAUSE) Holy shit.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE) I'm a vampire.

RUTH: She really is. I study them.

CASSANDRA: And I know other vampires who would like to drink from you. We can make it feel very, very good.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Well, this is it. Crossed the Rubicon and waiting for disaster.

CASSANDRA: Also your life is now in terrible danger. From two groups. The first is mine. Other vampires live by a code of keeping our existence hidden. If they learn you know I'm a vampire, they'll kill you. And then they'll kill me.

MELISSA: (PAUSE, WORRIED) I... I think I understand.

RUTH: The second group is my organization. I experiment on vampires as part of my day job, and I work with the First Light. Who are vampire killers. If they find out

you know vampires exist, they will disappear you and interrogate you for everything you know. I don't know if they'll ever let you go.

MELISSA: (PAUSE) Hmm. (BEAT) You were serious. I can see why I'd want to forget this.

CASSANDRA: But good news. Neither organization suspects anyone knows anything. And if you keep this private, I don't anticipate any problems. Just, say nothing online and don't talk to anyone who doesn't also know about us.

MELISSA: Who else is there?

RUTH: You're the first.

CASSANDRA: Someone has to be.

MELISSA: I'm. (BEAT) Can I think about this first?

CASSANDRA: Of course. Would you like some privacy?

MELISSA: (PAUSE) Can I ask you some other things?

CASSANDRA: Yes. Anything.

MELISSA: So your people. Other vampires. How long have they been around us?

CASSANDRA: I have no idea. At least a thousand years? I know one who was almost three hundred.

RUTH: There are less than a hundred in Seattle. More in the surrounding areas.

MELISSA: Do you kill people?

CASSANDRA: No vampire who agrees to be part of this project will kill anyone in this project. All feeding will be done around the other participants. No one in the project will want the project to end. Trust me. (BEAT) But to answer your question, of course. I have. And I hate that I have. I don't want to anymore. And I won't have to, once we have enough people in this project.

MELISSA: Huh. How old are you?

CASSANDRA: About a month, but I've served vampires as a human for almost three years.

MELISSA: You drink blood.

CASSANDRA: I do.

MELISSA: You're strong.

CASSANDRA: Yes.

MELISSA: You can make me forget things.

CASSANDRA: I can command you to do all sorts of things. But only if you ask me to.

RUTH: I fucking love it. She tells me to do things I already want to do and I love feeling my body do them.

MELISSA: And you live forever?

CASSANDRA: No. I've known so many who have died while I watched. The only thing that keeps us safe is money. And if you don't have it now, it's not going to help with what you're about to ask me.

MELISSA: What's that?

CASSANDRA: Will I make you a vampire? (BEAT) No. Even if you had money. And neither will any other vampires in this project.

MELISSA: I. (BEAT) Okay, I was thinking it.

RUTH: It's all right. You've read all the stories. Most of which we've proven bullshit in the lab.

SAMAEL (ECHO): At great cost.

MELISSA: So you?

RUTH: Oh! No, I don't want to be one of them. It's like asking a lab tech if they want to be a rat.

CASSANDRA: A rat god.

RUTH: (SMILES) Yes. I know too much about their biological processes to want to be one. Though I kinda do swoon over this one.

CASSANDRA: Aw.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH KISS

MELISSA: You're adorable.

CASSANDRA: So I've been told.

MELISSA: Well. Say I decide to remember all this, and join with you. I'll be in danger for the rest of my life.

RUTH: Yeah, but (BEAT) there's all this political shit around us, endangering us too.

MELISSA: There's that. But I'll be safe with you?

CASSANDRA: You will. I'm not bullshitting you.

MELISSA: (BEAT) Would you bite me? I want to know if it's worth all this.

CASSANDRA: Mmm. You are pretty cute. All right.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA STANDS, BITES MELISSA, LICKS HER

MELISSA: (MOANS, PANTS) Oh my god.

CASSANDRA: I can't do that to just anyone. But you? You are scrumptious.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Clock's ticking. The window in which we can wipe her mind safely is closing.

CASSANDRA: So one more thing. By donating your body to us, you're helping to keep other people alive. The more consensual blood drinking, the fewer people get hunted on the street.

RUTH: Yeah. Vampires can end up targeting vulnerable populations especially. It's (BEAT) just who's available. You'd be saving a lot of lives.

MELISSA: (PAUSE) Well.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (PAUSE) Come on.

MELISSA: (BEAT) All right. I know about keeping people safe. It sounds like you have your heart in the right place. If I was doing this, I'd do it like you're doing now. Fuck it. I'm in.

RUTH: (RELIEVED) Oh, thank heavens.

CASSANDRA: This is such a relief, MELISSA. Thank you.

MELISSA: I hear you. This sounds like something I want to be in for the long haul.

RUTH: We've been sweating about this all night.

MELISSA: I could tell.

CASSANDRA: I'm just (BEAT) reeling. Thank you again. (BEAT) RUTH. This could work.

RUTH: This could work.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I'm not convinced. And you need two Dolls more before next week.

RUTH: I don't want this to get culty, but do you think AUTUMN and MAPLE would be into this too?

MELISSA: I'd think so. If you're as honest with them as you are with me.

CASSANDRA: Okay. Fuck! It feels so good to say this. (BEAT) Ask me anything. Anything about being a vampire. Please.

-END-