Vampire: The Masquerade: Blood Doll Script, v2

Season 2, Episode 13: “Liberate the Blood Doll”

by Alicia E. Goranson

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Approximate playing time: 1 Hour, 20 minutes

CAST OF CHARACTERS

CASSANDRA DAVRIL	30s trans woman, Ventrue, femme, main character
SAMAEL (GEORGE GATAKER)	Ventrue, demimasc, former vassal of Seattle prince AARALYN, CASSANDRA’s sire, alter in CASSANDRA
ELIJIO	Lasombra, SAMAEL’s boyfriend, masc
RUTH	Naval biology scientist, 30s, trans femme
ROSE	Toreador sheriff of Camarilla
JOSEPHINE	Thin blood, 15th generation, advocate for Duskborn rights
LOREA	Cult of Set Non-Believer, femme, SODO Anarch community organizer, on the Weaponry Security Collective
MARA	Buddhist Tzimisce, femme, formerly incarcerated
HANK	Anarch, 30-40s, masc
SIMON	Toreador, former member of SAMAEL’s coterie
MELISSA	40-something human woman, wheelchair user, Blood Doll
MAPLE	30-something human woman, Blood Doll
FIRST LIGHT LEAD	Leader of the First Light in Kitsap
SPARK	Thin Blood, Member of the Fire Brigade
ENOCH	Ventrue Elder
HELENA	Enoch’s Lictor, Ventrue
SIOBHAN	Gangrel, femme, full time mutual aid provider, SODO Anarch community resource distributor

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SCENE 1. — CHECKUP (EXT: OUTSIDE EVERETT MOTEL, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), SAMAEL, SIMON

/SFX/ TOWN NIGHT AMBIANCE, TRAFFIC IN DISTANCE, WIND

/SFX/ KNOCK ON WOODEN DOOR

CASSANDRA (NA): After my escape from the First Light, I hitchhiked my way home and hid. Guilt got the better of me, and the next evening, I returned to the motel in Everett.

/SFX/ KNOCK ON WOODEN DOOR

CASSANDRA: Hey? SIMON? I know someone's in there! Is it you, SIMON?

/SFX/ INSIDE, FOOTSTEPS WALK TO DOOR, DOOR OPENS

SIMON: Leave me alone.

CASSANDRA: You escaped!

SIMON: Yes, I got out of there as soon as I smelled the First Light. (BEAT) You didn't?

CASSANDRA: No. (BEAT) I'm still getting used to always smelling everything.

SIMON: Well, you look okay.

CASSANDRA: I'm not. I had to fight them off. They trapped me in a burning building.

SIMON: Going to Kitsap was one thing. Dealing with the fucking First Light? I'm done. I can't help you.

CASSANDRA: It's all right. I just wanted to know if you'd been kidnapped.

SIMON: I'm right here.

CASSANDRA: Thank you for your help.

/SFX/ SIMON SHUTS THE DOOR ON CASSANDRA

CASSANDRA: Fair.

SAMAEL (ECHO): It's good to know he's fine.

CASSANDRA: Yes.

SAMAEL (ECHO): But you're not.

CASSANDRA: I'm really afraid of fire. It's not even the constant fear of Kindred killing me when I was alive. It's intense and I see it everywhere. In every wooden structure.

SAMAEL (ECHO): It eats at you like that. It helps to think that fire does not spontaneously combust from wood. You'll need reassurance to understand that subconsciously. And that's why I'm here.

CASSANDRA: I appreciate that. It would help if I didn't fucking live in a wooden complex.

SAMAEL (ECHO): With a fire suppression system. But your fear is justified. Come. Let us go to the gymnasium and get your slugger skills polished. Offense is certainly the path for you now.

CASSANDRA (NA): We spent the rest of the night at the gym. SAMAEL taught me to mix up my jabs, hooks, and crosses unpredictably to set my opponents off-guard. With their newfound control of my arms, they demonstrated the patterns my opponents would use and the responses my opponents would not expect. It was good to work together and a relief when I was able to return home.

SCENE 2. — CAN WE TALK (INT: ELEVATOR IN SPARROW APARTMENTS, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), MARA, SAMAEL

/SFX/ ELEVATOR AMBIANCE, MOVING UP

SAMAEL (ECHO): You did well tonight. I'm also excited by the ways I can move you about. Won't this be an excellent surprise for ELIJIO when I see him next?

/SFX/ ELEVATOR STOPS, DINGS, OPENS, CASSANDRA WALKS OUT

MARA: Hello, CASSANDRA?

CASSANDRA: MARA? What's this about?

MARA: Could we speak a moment in private?

CASSANDRA: Sure.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA UNLOCKS HER DOOR, OPENS DOOR, CASSANDRA AND MARA WALK INSIDE, STOP, DOOR SHUTS

CASSANDRA: What's happening?

MARA: (BEAT) I appreciate all you've done for me. I haven't been idle these past weeks. I've been getting used to my freedom, although I must say, I still have much of my prison within me. (BEAT) I won't waste your time. I'd like a job. I'd like to be self-sufficient once more. I was hoping you could introduce me to the Anarchs? I think they would take kindly to me if I showed up with a friendly face next to mine.

CASSANDRA: Your clan isn't welcome anywhere but the Sabbat?

MARA: There are many historical reasons for that. I'd reassure the Anarchs that I'm acting on my own.

CASSANDRA: Sure, I'd love to introduce you.

MARA: Thank you. It doesn't have to be now. In truth, some fear exists that they wouldn't be accepting of me. A couple more days of meditation and cleaning my space would suit me fine.

CASSANDRA: In two nights then?

MARA: Perfect! Let's do that.

CASSANDRA: I know this hasn't been easy for you.

MARA: I am used to keeping my feelings to myself. It will be a great relief when I can find others to trust. Speaking of which, how is RUTH?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I think she's been taken by the First Light.

MARA: (BEAT) Should we flee to a location she doesn't know about?

CASSANDRA: They attacked me last night. If they knew I lived here, they would have come for me already.

MARA: Ah. You have no other way of contacting her?

CASSANDRA: I tried. I went to Kitsap.

MARA: That is unbelievably dangerous.

CASSANDRA: (LAUGHS)

MARA: I'm sorry. What about your phone?

CASSANDRA: I haven't seen anything in our chats in a while.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS TO HER PHONE, STOPS, PICKS UP IT, TAPS IT

CASSANDRA: Wait.

MARA: What is it?

CASSANDRA: I just received a message from an unknown sender. (BEAT) "Constellations bar, tomorrow, nine thirty, bathroom."

MARA: Who else knows of your phone?

CASSANDRA: You and SAMAEL.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA TAPS PHONE

CASSANDRA: Constellations is a bar in Olympia.

MARA: A public space. Capturing you would be harder there.

CASSANDRA: But if there are any First Light there, they'd recognize me.

MARA: Then consider yourself fortunate that you know a fleshmancer! I can change your face. Make it unrecognizable to them. And don't worry. Any light modifications will vanish after a day's rest.

CASSANDRA: That would be fantastic. Thank you.

SAMAEL (ECHO): May I ask a favor?

CASSANDRA: SAMAEL is requesting a favor.

SAMAEL (ECHO): At a later time, not anytime soon, could she make you a little more like me, for a night with ELIJIO?

CASSANDRA: They ask if you could make my face look more like theirs for a special evening with their other partner? Not tomorrow tonight, of course.

MARA: It depends. I would need a picture. Or a thorough description. And I'd prefer not to do this work for free.

SAMAEL (ECHO): She'll be well compensated.

CASSANDRA: They'll reward you generously. Don't worry.

MARA: Good. Tomorrow evening then. I'll work on your face for your meeting with RUTH. But nine thirty doesn't give us a lot of time.

CASSANDRA: Do what you can. Thank you.

MARA: I haven't done fleshwork on another for so long. You're lucky I have the extra arms. I'll speed through it once I recall the basics. If you'll excuse me, I have prey to catch and practice on before I work on you.

CASSANDRA: (SIGHS) Thank you.

MARA: Don't worry. Maybe I won't even have to kill this one. And such a story they'll have to tell!

CASSANDRA (NA): The following evening, Mara returned with a small kit of knives and surgical tools.

MARA: All right! Let's do this in your bedroom, so you can lie still comfortably while I do my work. I have gauze and pads to handle the blood. I cannot guarantee you will like what you see when I finish. Only that you won't look like you.

CASSANDRA: That's all I need.

MARA: Then let's begin. As a fledgling, this may hurt a little. But I have the hope that SAMAEL will help you endure it. I will explain what I am doing so you will not feel entirely at my mercy.

CASSANDRA: I appreciate it. I'm ready.

CASSANDRA (NA): My surgery took about an hour and a half. MARA cut into my face, on the edges of my nose, the ridges of my eyebrows, and the underside of my chin. Each slice hurt as much as if I'd been alive, but I'd experienced far worse pain since then and I was able to grit my teeth through it. I felt myself bleed, and then her finger would run over the wound, pulling free any excess flesh and sealing it behind her. She explained how she was shrinking the sides of my nose, making my cheekbones more prominent, and shifting my forehead around. Eventually, after all my exertion not to twitch my eyes or breathe by instinct, she set her four scalpels down.

MARA: There you are! You are ready for a night at your bar.

CASSANDRA: May I see myself?

MARA: I don't (BEAT) recommend it. People with new faces find only depression and depersonalization when their face does not match their internal vision of

themselves. I can explain the changes I made again, of course. Suffice it to say, you appear a different woman than you were.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I trust her.

CASSANDRA: Thank you. I'll (BEAT) wait until tomorrow to look at myself again.

MARA: That would be prudent. Well, off you go! I'll clean up here and lock your door on the way out.

CASSANDRA: You're incredible.

MARA: I've had much practice! My current face isn't even my original, from so long ago. Anyhow, goodbye!

SCENE 3. — NOT LOOKING (INT: CASSANDRA'S CAR, NIGHT)

- CASSANDRA (NA)

/SFX/ DRIVING AMBIANCE

CASSANDRA (NA): I drove out to Olympia, trying not to glance too far into the rear view mirror. Or touch where MARA had changed me. I did catch a glimpse of the upper corner of my new face, a stranger staring back at me, and I let it go. It wasn't worth satisfying my curiosity. (BEAT) I parked a block away from Constellations and walked over, not knowing what to expect.

SCENE 4. — BATHROOM (INT: BAR, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), RUTH, SAMAEL, FIRST LIGHT LEAD

/SFX/ BAR AMBIANCE, PEOPLE TALKING, GLASSES CLINK, MUTED MUSIC, CASSANDRA WALKS IN, STOPS

CASSANDRA (NA): It was one of those neighborhood bars that puts in the extra effort, with antique lamps and wooden crates painted like nineties cereal boxes. It had some barcade games, and I made my way between them, checking for anyone I recognized. I didn't know anyone. I even checked the women's restroom, and when the hall was empty, the men's. I ordered a cocktail that I had no intention of drinking, and sat at the bar. Nine thirty passed. But fifteen minutes later, a familiar scent and voice entered the bar.

/SFX/ BAR DOOR OPENS, MANY FOOTSTEPS WALK IN, DOOR CLOSES

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: You have to hear the Blazin' Raisin' Christ podcast. Twice the personality of Joe Rogan.

RUTH: (NERVOUS) That's a lot.

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: I swear you'll love it. They speak to everyone, not just Christians.

RUTH: So where're we sitting?

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: Up on the second floor. We've got reservations.

RUTH: Ooo, I think I'm going to get the Neon Tacomadome cocktail.

CASSANDRA (NA): There were ten of them, total. I recognized some of their scents as they walked behind me. I turned my head and stared directly at RUTH. She seemed flustered. She didn't recognize me.

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: We'll order the loaded fries. I love 'em!

/SFX/ MANY FOOTSTEPS WALK BY, FADE OUT

CASSANDRA (NA): I brought my drink to one of the barcade stations, and started playing. I kept sniffing the air. Smelling her. My ears picked up on her attempts at conversation with the First Light assholes. And finally.

RUTH (ECHO): Excuse me. I have to stop in the ladies.

CASSANDRA (NA): She was on the move. I hoped she wouldn't lock the door.

/SFX/ RUTH'S FOOTSTEPS WALK BY, CASSANDRA FOLLOWS, RUTH STOPS, OPENS DOOR, WALKS IN, CLOSES DOOR, CASSANDRA STOPS, WAITS A FEW SECONDS, WALKS TO DOOR, OPENS IT, WALKS IN, CLOSES DOOR, SOUND IS MUFFLED OUTSIDE

RUTH: Excuse me. Occupied!

CASSANDRA: RUTH. It's me.

RUTH: (PAUSE, REALIZING) Oh, thank god.

/SFX/ RUTH HUGS CASSANDRA

RUTH: What happened to your face?

CASSANDRA: Temporary surgery from MARA. What's going on?

RUTH: They went through my department and just selected the people they wanted. I told them no. And then. (BEAT) They called me a "breach." They said it was too dangerous to know what I know. They threatened me with solitary imprisonment for possession of state secrets. (BEAT) CASSANDRA. You have to get me out of this.

CASSANDRA: I will. I promise. Is it safe for you to walk out of the bar right now? We can take the back door where they won't see us.

RUTH: No, they'll be after me if I'm gone too long. There's stop light cameras and recording devices everywhere. (BEAT) I can't believe you're still alive.

CASSANDRA: They didn't make it easy. When would it be safe to get you?

RUTH: Two nights. My roommate, she was also conscripted? She'll be out. They'll trust me to be alone briefly. I'll drive to Bethel, ditch my car, and hide in the forest until you arrive. Here.

/SFX/ RUTH GIVES CASSANDRA A PIECE OF PAPER

RUTH: I'll be here.

CASSANDRA: I'll find you a safehouse.

RUTH: Not your apartment. Your sheriff doesn't like me.

CASSANDRA: I have connections. I'll find somewhere.

RUTH: Thank you. Thank you for this. I'm going to take as much information as I can with me.

CASSANDRA: RUTH. I don't care about your intelligence on the First Light. I care about you.

RUTH: (BEAT) I care about you too. A lot.

CASSANDRA: You'll be hiding the rest of your life.

RUTH: I know. Like you. And every other Kindred in the world.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I'll be there in two nights.

RUTH: Thank you so much. I am so done with all of this.

CASSANDRA: Hey.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA KISSES RUTH

CASSANDRA: You're going to disappear. It's going to be okay. Stay safe.

RUTH: I will.

CASSANDRA: Don't be a hero.

RUTH: (BEAT) I won't.

CASSANDRA: I'll be there for you. Now, go. Get back up there before they suspect anything.

RUTH: I will. (BEAT) I love you.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE) I care for you immensely. Go.

RUTH: (DISAPPOINTED) All right.

/SFX/ RUTH OPENS DOOR, WALKS OUT, CLOSES DOOR

CASSANDRA: Fuck.

SAMAEL (ECHO): It was only a matter of time.

CASSANDRA: She's not even out yet.

SAMAEL (ECHO): You'll get her a place of her own. You can arrange to have separate lives.

CASSANDRA: Love, please. Don't solve this for me. Let us figure this out ourselves. Fuck. (PAUSE)

/SFX/ CASSANDRA OPENS DOOR, WALKS OUT, CLOSES DOOR, WALKS INTO BAR

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: Three lagers, two sours, three dry ciders, the Olympia Moontree and the Neon Tacomadome cocktails. In addition to our food order, please. Thank you.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA STOPS WALKING

SAMAEL (ECHO): There's the leader of the First Light team that tried to kill us.

CASSANDRA: I'd love to take him outside and cut his throat out.

SAMAEL (ECHO): You don't want to endanger RUTH, though. In case they suspect her involvement.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE) Yeah, but fuck it. When will I get a chance at him again?

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS TO FIRST LIGHT LEAD, STOPS

SAMAEL (ECHO): Love, I don't advise this. They have protections against us, especially their leaders.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE DROPPING) Hey, let's go outside. I want to talk.

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: (UNFAZED) And what do you want to talk about, Kindred?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Fuck.

CASSANDRA (ECHO): (TO SAMAEL) Help me.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Fuck!

CASSANDRA: (VOICE DROPPING) I'm asking again. I just want to go out front with you and...

CASSANDRA & SAMAEL (ECHO): Have a short chat.

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: (AMUSED) Okay.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I don't think that worked. Watch his hands. Make sure he didn't signal anyone to come after us.

CASSANDRA: (VOICE DROPPING) Good. Let's go.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND FIRST LIGHT LEAD WALK TO FRONT DOOR, STOP, OPEN FRONT DOOR, WALK OUT

SCENE 5. — COMPEL (EXT: PARKING LOT OUTSIDE BAR, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, SAMAEL, FIRST LIGHT LEAD

/SFX/ MUTED BAR AMBIANCE, TRAFFIC IN DISTANCE, WIND, CASSANDRA AND FIRST LIGHT LEAD WALK OUT, STOP

CASSANDRA: Here's good.

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: Sure thing. (BEAT) I'm not calling anybody. See? My hands are right here. Who are you? I don't recognize you.

CASSANDRA: Will there be no peace between us?

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: Your kind started it. How do you know who I am?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Say it's the lavender scent. They like to anoint themselves with it.

CASSANDRA: No one else but you and your crew smell of lavender.

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: Huh. So you know a thing or two about us. Have we met?

CASSANDRA: We haven't.

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: Because your size and shape seem kinda familiar. And there's your voice. Yeah. That hasn't changed. You didn't kill half my crew in a paintball maze two nights ago?

CASSANDRA: I'd have remembered that.

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: (AMUSED) No, I'm sorry. I'm the one asking all the questions here. You have any for me?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Boil your blood. We need to wipe this asshole's mind or we have to kill him.

CASSANDRA: I assume you consider yourself a servant of God. While I serve Satan.

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: That's right.

CASSANDRA: So who did Angela of Foligno serve?

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: Who?

CASSANDRA: Beloved of Saint Francis of Assisi? She would strip naked and drink the blood she witnessed flowing from Christ's side wound.

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: You will not confuse me, Kindred. My mind is clear.

CASSANDRA: Of course. We inspire the pious, such as you. And what would you take inspiration from if we were all eliminated?

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: There are always non-believers.

CASSANDRA: Of course. Because God wants the Devil to exist. He wants us to fight.

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: God despises the fallen angel.

CASSANDRA: God is omnipotent.

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: And He has such plans for us. The Devil still rules this world.

CASSANDRA: And God wants you to gain it back? What if God wants you to lose?

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: My faith will not waiver before you, Kindred.

CASSANDRA: What if God likes it when you or your team fall? Because that also inspires the pious.

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: I will not falter, Kindred.

SAMAEL (ECHO): He's stalling. He's on the defensive.

CASSANDRA: No. You will not falter. (VOICE DROPPING) You will forget.

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: Never.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I'll help you, love.

CASSANDRA & SAMAEL (ECHO): You will forget.

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: I… I...

CASSANDRA & SAMAEL (ECHO): Forget.

FIRST LIGHT LEAD: I… (BEAT) How'd I get out here?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) How the fuck should I know?

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS AWAY

SAMAEL (ECHO): That was too close, love.

CASSANDRA: I'm hungry.

SAMAEL (ECHO): You exhausted yourself, trying to make him forget so many times.

CASSANDRA: I'm not killing anyone.

SAMAEL (ECHO): You are putting them in the hospital though.

CASSANDRA: I'll have to make do then.

SCENE 6. — FEEDING (INT: CASSANDRA'S CAR, NIGHT)

- CASSANDRA (NA)

/SFX/ DRIVING AMBIANCE

CASSANDRA (NA): It took me most of the night to find someone I could feed on. I decided to stop by Tacoma on the way home. I drove by all the queer bars until I spotted someone I could see myself hate-fucking, and left him drained on the sidewalk. I did shout until someone called nine one one. So he probably lived through that. (BEAT) I rested back at my place until the following night, when MARA stopped by early, excited to meet the Anarchs. Which was where I needed to go, anyway. If anyone had a good safehouse for RUTH, it was LOREA.

SCENE 7. — HAZE (INT: WAREHOUSE INTERIOR, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, SAMAEL, MARA, LOREA, HANK, SIOBHAN, JOSEPHINE, SPARK

/SFX/ WAREHOUSE AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA AND MARA WALK ON CONCRETE, STOP

MARA: An impressive warehouse! And a capitalist among anarchists?

CASSANDRA: Everybody works. Even LOREA.

MARA: I'm interested to hear how owning a warehouse isn't paid for by wage theft. (BEAT) Relax. I'll be good.

HANK: Hey! It's a CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: Hello.

SIOBHAN: Hey you.

LOREA: Hi.

CASSANDRA: Hi! I didn't expect you all here.

SIOBHAN: We're waiting on someone.

CASSANDRA: Ah. I can come back another time?

LOREA: No need to leave. Who's your friend?

MARA: (PAUSE) Hello.

CASSANDRA: This is MARA. I mentioned her to you, LOREA? She's Tzimisce. But she's no longer with the Sabbat.

LOREA: I've been expecting her. Hello.

HANK: Okay. When were you planning on telling us?

LOREA: As I understand it, she's a former prisoner from Kitsap.

SIOBHAN: Oh.

MARA: I've been free for weeks now. Please. Although I'm practiced as a fleshmancer, I mean none of you harm. I'm looking for employment. And, should it be possible, to join your collective?

HANK: Huh.

SIOBHAN: We do have a lot of work we need done around here.

MARA: Yes, I'm familiar with the principles of mutual aid and anarchism. My sect of the Sabbat followed many of them before I left, years ago.

LOREA: So, what skeletons are in your closet that we need to know about?

MARA: I'm open about my life. I have killed several in this city while adjusting to my freedom. I have altered my body several times, as you can see by my radiant new arms. I have participated in actions against the Camarilla in Albuquerque and Denver, and I broke all my vows to my sect and my sire over twenty years ago. I am an apostate to the Sabbat. My only allegiance is to myself, and CASSANDRA, to whom I am grateful for my independence.

HANK: How many actions have you taken against the Anarchs?

MARA: Numerous street scuffles when I was younger. Of course, I was with my sire for seventy-six years. But that's behind me. And I denounce those times with every facet of my being. (BEAT) I assure you, I'm a hard worker, and a surgeon of sorts. You should have seen what I did to CASSANDRA's face yesterday!

SIOBHAN: I kinda like her vibe. (TO MARA) You should meet more of us. Whatcha doing tonight?

MARA: My nights are quite available.

HANK: If you don't mind, I'd love to pick your brain after this.

MARA: Of course. (BEAT) What's happening?

/SFX/ FOOTSTEPS FROM OUTSIDE APPROACH

LOREA: She's finally here. Also with a guest.

/SFX/ FOOTSTEPS STOP

JOSEPHINE: Apologies for my lateness. Timeliness is difficult when you're constantly on the run. (BEAT, TO CASSANDRA) Camarilla, what are you doing here?

CASSANDRA: Introducing MARA to the Anarchs.

MARA: Hello. You helped me escape. I know your scent.

JOSEPHINE: (LOOKS AT MARA) Fuck.

MARA: (MENACING) You've never met someone with four arms before?

JOSEPHINE: I've never met someone from your clan.

MARA: With good reason! We are not the most sociable of Kindred.

JOSEPHINE: (NERVOUS) CASSANDRA mentioned you.

MARA: Did she? Was this a warning or a pleasant introduction?

CASSANDRA: (WARNING) MARA! JOSEPHINE! (BEAT) Can we focus about why you're here?

JOSEPHINE: (NERVOUS) Of course.

MARA: We'll speak again before you leave this place.

LOREA: JOSEPHINE, could we get into why you called this meeting?

JOSEPHINE: Of course. (BEAT, TO SPARK) Come here!

/SFX/ FOOTSTEPS FROM OUTSIDE APPROACH, STOP

CASSANDRA: SPARK?

SPARK: (NERVOUS) Hi.

JOSEPHINE: Yes. This is SPARK. They've been an active member of the Fire Brigade. (BEAT) Until today. They've requested to leave us. Which is understandable. We lead an urban guerrilla lifestyle. I don't blame anyone for being worn down by it. (BEAT) But SPARK has no other family. No other friends. Outside the Fire Brigade. (BEAT, TO SPARK) Go ahead. Ask them.

SPARK: (PAUSE) I'd like to join the Anarchs. (BEAT) I work hard. I can earn my keep.

LOREA: (DUBIOUS) What skills do you have?

SPARK: (BEAT) I can drive a forklift. I've done a little electrical work. I can load trucks.

SIOBHAN: Can you day walk?

SPARK: (PAUSE) No.

HANK: Can you get a job outside of us?

SPARK: (BEAT) I can try!

LOREA: Do you know any alchemy?

SPARK: A little bit! I'm learning.

HANK: How much cash you got?

SPARK: (BEAT) A few thousand? I could rent my own place for a while, if housing is a problem.

HANK: And then? When you run out?

SPARK: (BEAT) I'd hope I'd have a job?

HANK: And if not? The market's bad.

SPARK: (BEAT) I could... I could work for you? You need a runner?

SIOBHAN: We have runners. We have dealers.

HANK: Can you do surgery? She can. (TO MARA) Right, MARA?

MARA: (TAKEN ABACK) Yes.

HANK: I'm sorry. Right now, I'm just seeing another body to house?

SPARK: I'm a hard worker!

HANK: You're a glorified human! When we are fighting against other Kindred! And government forces. We need contributors to our struggles. I wish we had space and the resources for you. I do.

SPARK: I can mix and throw molotovs!

HANK: I know you can. Because you have to, when you face us. So who's your contact? Who do you get your supplies from?

SPARK: (BEAT) JO?

JOSEPHINE: Don't answer that.

SIOBHAN: Say you joined us. We're out somewhere and we hear DHS is at one of our safehouses. What could you do? I can scare 'em real good.

HANK: I can beat the ever-living shit out of them. Take a lot of bullets too. (BEAT) So what could you do?

SPARK: (PAUSE) I could help you mess 'em up!

HANK: Please.

LOREA: Enough of this. SPARK. I will bring up your request to the rest of the collective. In the meantime, get your housing. Get your job. Keep me in the loop.

SPARK: Thank you!

JOSEPHINE: Don't thank her. LOREA, will you take SPARK in? Is there anything you will give them while they try to get employed? Tell me, when their cash runs out and they can't find a job, what happens to them?

HANK: (BEAT) Not our problem.

JOSEPHINE: I asked LOREA!

LOREA: (BEAT) I don't know. I'm not the one who makes these decisions.

JOSEPHINE: Bullshit. You're helping us without the collective's approval.

LOREA: JO.

JOSEPHINE: And your comrade HANK sure doesn't like that!

HANK: You're a drain on our resources.

JOSEPHINE: Is this all we are to you? Camarilla disruptors?

HANK: What's your endgame when the Camarilla keep ignoring you?

JOSEPHINE: Go fuck yourself.

SIOBHAN: You're not doing anything we couldn't do if we wanted to.

JOSEPHINE: But you don't want to. You don't want another war if it's traced back to you. But it's fine if my crew takes all the hits.

LOREA: I respect your struggle.

JOSEPHINE: What a very liberal position for an anarchist. (BEAT, TO CASSANDRA) Camarilla?

CASSANDRA: What?

JOSEPHINE: Would you take care of SPARK for me?

CASSANDRA: I work with ROSE. I can only keep so many secrets from her.

JOSEPHINE: Of course. And you know what, SPARK? The part they're not saying. (BEAT) If the Camarilla learned the Anarchs had taken in any of the Fire Brigade? They'd demand that we be handed over to them. And then they'd have to choose.

HANK: That's about right. I know how I'd decide.

SIOBHAN: Same.

JOSEPHINE: Come on, SPARK. It's abundantly clear who we are to them.

LOREA: JO.

JOSEPHINE: It's all right, LOREA. Our deal is still on. Anarchs. Camarilla. Good night.

MARA: JOSEPHINE?

JOSEPHINE: (BEAT, SCARED) What is it?

MARA: (LOW) I could cut you down without a thought. It would make things much easier for me in this city.

JOSEPHINE: (SCARED) I hear ya.

MARA: (LOW) Be glad, then, that I am joining the Anarchs. Were I unaffiliated, we would not be speaking.

JOSEPHINE: (SCARED) I hope that works out for ya.

MARA: Should anything happen though…

JOSEPHINE: (SCARED) Yeah...

MARA: (MENACING) You cannot prepare for me as you could for ROSE.

JOSEPHINE: (BEAT, SCARED) I understand.

MARA: (MENACING) Good. Goodbye.

JOSEPHINE: (SCARED) Bye.

/SFX/ JOSEPHINE AND SPARK WALK AWAY, FADE OUT FOOTSTEPS

MARA: I should probably go too.

SIOBHAN: (REASSURING) No. Come on. There's a bar near here where we can talk.

HANK: Yeah. I still have a lot of questions for you. And. I am curious about what you have to offer.

SIOBHAN: Thank you for bringing her over, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: Glad I could help MARA out.

MARA: Yes. Thank you. (TO SIOBHAN & HANK) I don't believe I got your names? HANK, right?

HANK: Correct.

SIOBHAN: I'm SIOBHAN.

MARA: I've had several names. MARA is simply the latest. It's an acknowledgment of my place among the living.

SIOBHAN: I think it rocks.

MARA: I'm glad!

SIOBHAN: So where are you hiding your bodies?

/SFX/ MARA, HANK, AND SIOBHAN WALK AWAY, FADE OUT FOOTSTEPS

CASSANDRA: That was cold, what you said to JOSEPHINE.

LOREA: I don't want to have to win her battles for her. She was right about taking SPARK in. If the Camarilla found out. (LOOKS AT CASSANDRA) Somehow. I'd have to give them up. And risk JOSEPHINE's retaliation.

CASSANDRA: So you're going to let that Duskborn live off the street until, what, they combust?

LOREA: Duskborn. Listen to you. Everyone has to pull their weight and the Thin Bloods can't. But it's not their fault. (BEAT) JOSEPHINE made a bad call. With her money, she could have moved them all out to Bainbridge Island or somewhere low-key where they could feed in peace. She got it in her head she could join the fucking Camarilla. No offense, but your lot are harder to join than the EU. (BEAT) Why are you still here? You want something, don't you?

CASSANDRA: My Blood Doll is fleeing from being conscripted by the First Light.

LOREA: Ah.

CASSANDRA: I need a safehouse for her. Preferably something long-term.

LOREA: Why not your rooms?

CASSANDRA: ROSE learned about her. And humans can't live with Kindred unless they're full-time Blood Dolls.

LOREA: So make her your full-time Blood Doll.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) After the inquest into AARALYN's death.

LOREA: Oh. There are two things in play. You either want her to keep her freedom because you never had yours. Or you're having second thoughts about keeping her for her lifetime. (BEAT) Or both?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I'll see that she's cared for.

LOREA: What did you promise her?

CASSANDRA: I do care for her, immeasurably.

LOREA: But not like with SAMAEL. (BEAT) So you know what I would go through if I accepted SPARK into my care.

CASSANDRA: It's nothing like that.

LOREA: Bullshit. Among us, dependents are apprentices, partners, or pets. Which is your Blood Doll?

CASSANDRA: Paramour.

LOREA: Oh dear. (BEAT) Promise me you're not saddling me with her.

CASSANDRA: I promise.

LOREA: Say you have to leave the country, anonymously, without telling anyone. What happens to her?

CASSANDRA: SAMAEL will leave her enough money to stay hidden.

LOREA: That's an awful lot of money. SAMAEL, did you agree to this?

/SFX/ CASSANDRA TAKES OUT PEN AND PAPER FROM HER PURSE, PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) I've agreed to it. She won't live comfortably. But if she moves out of the city, she can make it work.

LOREA: Have you told this to her?

CASSANDRA: No.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) What choice does she have?

LOREA: (BEAT) Good. I have a small bed and breakfast in West Seattle. She can stay there. I'll get you the keys. Three thousand a month. (BEAT) It's a very nice house.

CASSANDRA: We'll get you the money.

LOREA: Great. The neighbors are used to people coming and going. She stays low, she'll be safe.

CASSANDRA: Thank you.

LOREA: This is mostly for her giving us SILVER's file. That was smart of her. I may interview her to see if we can arrange a rescue, someday.

CASSANDRA: I'm sure she'll agree to that.

LOREA: You know how to send me my money. (BEAT) Are the Camarilla paying you yet?

CASSANDRA: I haven't had a job from them in a while.

LOREA: Then why on Earth do they assume your loyalty? Cash is the only thing they have going for them. (BEAT) Well, come on. Let's get you your key.

SCENE 8. — WINDSHIELD (EXT: WAREHOUSE FRONT, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, SAMAEL

/SFX/ NIGHT SODO AMBIANCE, DISTANT TRAFFIC, CASSANDRA WALKS TO HER CAR

CASSANDRA: How's the cash flow looking?

SAMAEL (ECHO): We'll be fine for some time. I'll write more letters. But after the inquest, we'll need to either put most of my money in better investments or start some businesses. I trust you'll be able to help run them.

CASSANDRA: That, I can do.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Wonderful. We'll be back on our feet in no time.

CASSANDRA: (SEES ENVELOPE ON HER WINDSHIELD) Oh.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA STOPS

SAMAEL (ECHO): An envelope?

CASSANDRA: On my windshield?

/SFX/ CASSANDRA TAKES THE ENVELOPE, READS THE OUTSIDE

CASSANDRA: "We're good. It's not personal."

SAMAEL (ECHO): Probably from JOSEPHINE. Lovely.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA OPENS THE ENVELOPE, TAKES OUT THE PAGE INSIDE, READS

CASSANDRA: It's the location of the next Blood Doll gathering.

SAMAEL (ECHO): You haven't done any interviews since the last one.

CASSANDRA: I've been busy. "I've told the Dolls already. Just show up." Breaking protocol already!

SAMAEL (ECHO): RUTH can't act as your go-between to the Blood Dolls anymore. This is a relief.

CASSANDRA: This is a larger venue than the last one. An old diner.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Curious. We can ask JOSEPHINE about it.

CASSANDRA: Or we can just show up.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Yes. (BEAT) Well, we'll deal with that in a few days. For now. I would request that we stop by ELIJIO's apartment.

CASSANDRA: Really?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Yes. I would like to arrange a date. First, stop off at home and get into a nice dress for him. I will enjoy stepping out in our body!

<u>SCENE 9. — BREAKING SAMAEL</u> (INT: EXPENSIVE SKYSCRAPER APARTMENT, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, SAMAEL, ELIJIO

<u>/SFX/ QUIET AMBIANCE, WIND OUTSIDE, CASSANDRA WALKS ON CARPET, STOPS</u>

SAMAEL (ECHO): This door! It's his. Let me do the knock.

<u>/SFX/ CASSANDRA KNOCKS, PAUSE, DOOR OPENS</u>

ELIJIO: I never expected to hear that again! Hello!

CASSANDRA: Hello! One second?

CASSANDRA & SAMAEL (ECHO): 'Ello!

ELIJIO: (SURPRISED) You're talking now?

CASSANDRA: Only a little.

ELIJIO: Come in! Come in.

<u>/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS IN, STOPS, DOOR CLOSES</u>

CASSANDRA: Let me get my pen out.

<u>/SFX/ CASSANDRA TAKES OUT PEN AND PAPER FROM HER PURSE, PEN SCRIBBLING</u>

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Her arms and legs are mine at last, mostly, but good use of her tongue still eludes me. How are you, my dearest?

ELIJIO: Eternally busy on nights I do not have to myself. Deurions-nous continuer en francais pour le bien de Cassandra?

<u>/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING</u>

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) That shouldn't be necessary. Unless ROSE or SOPHIA have told you to keep Camarilla things from her?

ELIJIO: They haven't.

<u>/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING</u>

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Excellent. Love, I asked CASSANDRA to stop by to arrange for a night out with you.

ELIJIO: My dearest. I… I like the idea, but how much of you <u>is</u> there?

<u>/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING</u>

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Let me show you. Close your eyes.

ELIJIO: All right.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS CLOSE TO ELIJIO, STOPS, EMBRACES HIM, KISSES HIM, RELEASES HIM

ELIJIO: (SWOONING) Mmmm.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Mmmm.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Tell me that was someone else.

ELIJIO: Are you proposing that I should be blindfolded on our date?

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) I have a better idea. CASSANDRA has gained the favor of a Tzimisce who is excellent with the scalpel.

ELIJIO: A Tzimisce? Is this the one ROSE mentioned?

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) The very same. She's operated on CASSANDRA before. Now, it wouldn't be exactly me, but it would be closer to me than her.

ELIJIO: No. What are you going on about? We can get someone to glamour you up if you want to look like your old self.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) But you can't touch it then. Feel it. Really feel it when it's glamoured.

ELIJIO: (ANGRY) It's insulting to CASSANDRA and you to turn her into you. She's not you! (BEAT) Now I do love her. But she is herself and you are the passenger.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) I am not just some fucking voice in her head. We are part of each other.

ELIJIO: I know this! You are hers, not mine! I understand the situation. I know you want things to be like they were. But CASSANDRA? Don't take this the wrong way, but you are a wall between me and SAMAEL. And no amount of carving you up or taking you apart will bring back the SAMAEL I knew. (BEAT) You think I haven't been crying about you, love? You are a ghost to me. I miss you like an Elder misses the sun. I will never touch you again and don't fucking remind me of it!

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) I'm still here. I'm still me. I'm getting better at inhabiting her body.

ELIJIO: Oh, yes, I'm sure in time you'll have her tongue and throat and eventually her face and flesh will become as yours, and then, maybe, I will have you back. But before that, I need to know, CASSANDRA, would you give all that up for SAMAEL? I'm not talking glamour. I'm not talking one night surgery. The only way I get SAMAEL back is if you step back and give them everything of yours. Give them their skin, wrinkled, their hair, short and balding, their face, your face. Gone! You disappear inside them! I know it can be done. I've seen it done. Is this what you want, CASSANDRA?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I want to share my body.

ELIJIO: That's not good enough! I want all of SAMAEL here! Here! In my arms! Tasting of SAMAEL! With SAMAEL's scent, and cock, and if I were in your shoes, CASSANDRA, I would be in the right to say no. I would be in the right to deny my metamours their physical reunion, because I am just as much Kindred as either of them! (BEAT) So here's where I stand. SAMAEL has passed through Final Death. I've been spending night after night after night pining over what I could do to bring them back to me. And do you know what gave me my answer? (BEAT) SAMAEL, you never stopped by. You never sought me out. You pined for me, as I pined for you, but you stayed with CASSANDRA. And only one of us can have you, and I'm (PAUSE, CRYING) accepting that that's not me. I would gladly take salons with you. I would gladly watch the moon with you by the mountain. I am yours as you are mine. But what hurts me, right now, here, in my apartment, is that you came to me out of guilt, not out of love. You only came running when you had a new parlor trick to show me.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) I swear. I love you more than her.

ELIJIO: Don't. Fucking. Lie to me! It's not about who loves who more. What the fuck does that even mean? I am not a part of your life anymore, SAMAEL. You won't even eat at our fucking club! I rarely get to see you, and you need to admit to yourself that that's how it has to be! Whatever you two have been justifying to each other, this is CASSANDRA's existence and, even if you take it completely, I will still see her as a ghost. As a corpse. In you. (BEAT) Tell me to stop loving her. Tell me to push her down inside you. Tell me to rip her body apart until she is just you (BEAT) and you will not be the SAMAEL I love. Because the SAMAEL I love, loves her. You tear her into nothing, you'll do the same to me in time. And I will never allow someone in my life who would treat me with such disrespect. Are we clear?

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) I just want to spend the night with you, my love.

ELIJIO: How dare you. How dare you taunt me like this. You want a night with me. You want my heart again. You want to know everything is all right between us when it's fucking not! You are CASSANDRA's! Fucking own up to it! Stop feeling like you owe me your time. I love you. And I will always love you. And we will never be together again as we want to be, and I've done the work owning up to that.

And what about you? Have you cried for me, for what we've lost? Through her eyes? Big bloody streaks across her face? Did you do that, SAMAEL? No? Get started. Get the fuck out.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE) I'm so very sorry, ELIJIO.

ELIJIO: It is not your fault. This is between me and them. You are blameless. Thank you for coming by. I love you.

CASSANDRA: I love you too.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) I will cry for you. I promise.

ELIJIO: Accept that you are as much of a ghost to me as I am to you. We will speak across the aether. Please do not visit me in some (BEAT) simulacrum of yourself. Please do what you can for CASSANDRA.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) I am.

ELIJIO: Then I have no more words for you. Please, ghost. Let me rest in peace tonight.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (PAUSE) Very well. Let's leave, my darling.

CASSANDRA: Okay.

CASSANDRA & SAMAEL (ECHO): Farewell.

ELIJIO: (PAUSE) Don't fucking give me hope. Just go.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS TO THE DOOR, OPENS DOOR, WALKS OUT INTO HALLWAY, CLOSES DOOR

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE) I love you.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I love you. (BEAT) And I wish I could have another. Like you can. (BEAT) We're going to the gymnasium.

SCENE 10. — WORDS YOU CAN'T TAKE BACK (INT: BOXING GYM, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), SAMAEL

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

SAMAEL (ECHO): (SHOUTING IN ANGER) Aaaa! Aaaaa!

/SFX/ CASSANDRA PUNCHES A PUNCHING BAG FURIOUSLY

CASSANDRA (NA): SAMAEL spent the rest of the night fumbling through my body, gaining enough control to take out their despair on the gym's punching bag.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (SHOUTING IN ANGER) Fuck!

CASSANDRA (NA): It was my turn to watch from the sidelines, unable to do anything for them. To offer any words of comfort that wouldn't be spat back at me. SAMAEL was almost three hundred years old and had a towering temper. ELIJIO had been a rock for them for half that time. I couldn't conceive of such a loss. I said nothing, until an hour before sunrise.

CASSANDRA: Love.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (SMOULDERING) I don't want to hear it.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA PUNCHES A PUNCHING BAG FURIOUSLY

CASSANDRA: It'll be morning soon. We have just enough time to get home.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I'm still busy.

CASSANDRA: I know. But we won't be safe here during the day.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (PAUSE) I suppose not. (BEAT) Thank you for your silence.

CASSANDRA: Of course, Your Honor.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (PAUSE) You don't have to call me that anymore.

CASSANDRA: I intend to continue.

SAMAEL (ECHO): It's still a farce. It's still your body.

CASSANDRA: I value your thoughts. I want your respect. I am still yours.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I don't want you.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE) Your Honor?

SAMAEL (ECHO): (BEAT) I'm sick of this. (BEAT) I was looking forward to reuniting with him. Everything wouldn't be about you all the time. (BEAT) I would have my time, too. Now, I don't know what I have.

CASSANDRA: You can still have your time. For just you.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Oh, may I? (BEAT) Let's take tomorrow off. Let's go driving. There are some fabulous views from the mountains east of here.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE) You would have me abandon RUTH?

SAMAEL (ECHO): What the fuck do I care for her?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I'd be very hurt by your words if I didn't know they were coming from a place of the deepest sorrow.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (BEAT) I would take my leave of you if I could.

CASSANDRA: I respect that.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (BEAT) You must think me very callous right now.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Tell me about you and ELIJIO. Tell me how you met. And how you fell in love.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (PAUSE) Very well. But you must promise to never tell another soul what I am about to say.

CASSANDRA: I promise.

CASSANDRA (NA): And I honor that promise, even now. (BEAT) SAMAEL told me of their early days, and the heights of their relationship, and I will recount none of it here. Suffice it to say, they gushed about their time together, as I washed up and drove us home, as I climbed into bed, and as the sun rose. And then, the next evening, they were silent.

/SFX/ SPARROW APARTMENT AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA GETS OUT OF BED

SAMAEL (ECHO): Thank you for letting me blather about my darling ELIJIO, my love.

CASSANDRA: It's my pleasure, Your Honor.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Yes. (BEAT) I apologize for my words last night. I was in pain, in a way I have not experienced for a long time.

CASSANDRA: Give me your hand.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (BEAT) All right.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA HOLDS HANDS WITH HERSELF

CASSANDRA: I was, actually, very hurt by what you said last night.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (PAUSE) I am quite sorry that I said you were not mine. You are. You continue to be. And I (BEAT) am trying to let myself be yours, too. As I am. Truly. (BEAT) The world is a cruel place. You never think it's going to be cruel to you, a Beast

of Cruelty Incarnate, until it is. And then you think, oh, right. I am still merely another pawn on God's great chessboard, deluded into thinking themselves a Queen.

CASSANDRA: Some days you are Judgment, and on others, you are judged.

SAMAEL (ECHO): We have so much judgment ahead of us.

CASSANDRA: That we do. (BEAT) I would like to rescue RUTH tonight.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Ah. Then let us. It would do me wonders to see you smile.

SCENE 11. — LIBERATION (EXT: EMPTY ROAD BY FOREST, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, SAMAEL, RUTH

/SFX/ FOREST AMBIANCE, TRAFFIC IN DISTANCE

CASSANDRA: There she is.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Which did you notice first? Her scent or her movement in the forest?

CASSANDRA: Both. Took a lot of focus though.

/SFX/ FOOTSTEPS ON LEAVES APPROACH

SAMAEL (ECHO): Good. And for now, your mind can only sense one scent at a time. We'll need to increase that, so you can identify multiple dangers, like SIMON did when he avoided the First Light.

/SFX/ FOOTSTEPS ON LEAVES APPROACH, REACH CASSANDRA, STOP

RUTH: Thank you for coming.

CASSANDRA: Any problems?

RUTH: No.

CASSANDRA: Anyone follow you?

RUTH: I don't think so.

CASSANDRA: Come here.

/SFX/ RUTH STEPS ON PAVEMENT, STOPS, CASSANDRA AND RUTH HUG

CASSANDRA: Let's get you to the safehouse.

RUTH: Please.

CASSANDRA: Do you want to put your bag in the trunk?

RUTH: Yes, please.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA OPENS TRUNK, RUTH PUTS HER DUFFLE BAG INSIDE, CASSANDRA CLOSES THE TRUNK

CASSANDRA: Door's unlocked.

RUTH: Thank you.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH WALK TO THEIR DOORS, OPEN CAR DOORS, GET INSIDE

SCENE 12. — WHAT IS LOVE (INT: CASSANDRA'S CAR, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, RUTH

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH SHUT THEIR DOORS, PUT ON SEAT BELTS, CASSANDRA STARTS THE CAR, DRIVES AWAY

RUTH: I saw another suitcase in the trunk. Is it yours?

CASSANDRA: No. It's yours. Some money to start you out with.

RUTH: (BEAT) Oh.

CASSANDRA: I haven't had time to meet with the forger to get you a new ID. But I will soon, I promise.

RUTH: (BEAT) Thank you.

CASSANDRA: And you like diner food, right?

RUTH: Yes.

CASSANDRA: That wrap in the glove compartment is yours.

/SFX/ RUTH OPENS THE GLOVE COMPARTMENT, TAKES OUT THE WRAP

RUTH: What's in it?

CASSANDRA: It's a waffle wrapped around a chicken sausage. There's some syrup in there too. Please don't get any in my car, but enjoy. Sorry it's cold. I had Beth's make it special for you before I left.

RUTH: (BEAT) I've never had anything like this before.

/SFX/ RUTH UNWRAPS THE WAFFLE, TAKES A BITE, SWALLOWS

RUTH: Mmm. This is terrible. I love it.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I need to introduce you to LOREA. She should help you if anything happens to me.

RUTH: (WORRIED) What would happen to you?

CASSANDRA: There's an inquest coming up where I have to give testimony. And then. I'll be at the mercy of the Court.

RUTH: (WORRIED) Oh.

CASSANDRA: I'll see to it you're cared for. If money becomes a problem, you can see my ex, STEPHANIE. She inherited my fortune from when I was alive.

RUTH: Why does this feel like you're telling me goodbye?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I care for you deeply. I have no intention of leaving you if I can help it.

RUTH: (PAUSE) It's because I told you I love you.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE) It's not just you. There's a lot happening right now.

RUTH: (SIGHS) But I'm part of it.

CASSANDRA: I don't want to be without you.

RUTH: No, I get it. I'm not a priority in your life.

CASSANDRA: So, what do you call this? Picking you up? Shipping you to a safehouse with a case full of cash?

RUTH: I don't know. Obligation? (BEAT) I'm sorry.

CASSANDRA: If it were up to me, you'd be staying in my apartment, in the second bedroom, living your own life, where I got to see you grow, every day. I'd bring you into Kindred society. Give you a job. Make them reliant on you. Make them respect you, like I do. (BEAT) But I don't have the influence to do it for you, like SAMAEL did for me. This is the best I can do.

RUTH: (BEAT) I understand. Thank you for what you've done. It's so much more than I'd have if I ran off on my own.

CASSANDRA: This is for my benefit too. You'd make a fearsome Kindred slayer.

RUTH: Ugh. Don't even joke about that now.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Right. I'm sorry.

RUTH: They're such awful people.

CASSANDRA: Yeah. I met your team lead.

RUTH: I wish you had killed him.

CASSANDRA: There's still time. (BEAT) If he does find you, he's dead.

RUTH: I appreciate it.

CASSANDRA: Now. (BEAT) I would like you to sit back. And look straight ahead. At the road. At the red lights of the cars ahead of us. At the billboards for the businesses, candidates, and casinos. Keep looking forward. Be present. Look where you're going. I have you now. You can get distracted. That's okay. Let your distractions fall. Relax. Rest. Breathe. You're going to be staying at an AirBnB. I'm told it's very nice. You'll be safe there. I can get you some prepaid cards so you can order whatever food you need. I don't care about your future right now. Fuck the future. I'm getting you safe <u>now</u>. Say, "Yes, CASSANDRA."

RUTH: (BEAT) Yes, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: Good. Is there anything you'd like to discuss while I drive?

RUTH: (PAUSE) Where do Kindred come from?

CASSANDRA: I'm told the first Kindred still exist, asleep. Somewhere. And the Earth is doomed whenever they arise. I'd ask them your question. No one else has given me a solid answer.

RUTH: Are they thousands of years old? Millions of years old?

CASSANDRA: Thousands. Less than ten as I understand it.

RUTH: So, relatively new. (BEAT) I wonder what other sorts of monsters existed thousands of years ago. Who did the Mesopotamian people share their nights with?

CASSANDRA: So many demons and devils.

RUTH: Are there any of those left? Have you ever met a demon or devil?

CASSANDRA: What would you consider a Kindred's Beast?

RUTH: An infant who never ages, and pulls you toward becoming a creature of pure id.

CASSANDRA: Mine insists I tell the truth. So here it is. It doesn't matter whether or not I love you. I can talk with you honestly about who I am. I can hold you and drink from you. And I want you in my life. I want you in my world. It's very selfish of me, but you are the closest that any physical being is to me. I'm plunging you into a more dangerous world than the one you left. And you haven't said no.

RUTH: (BEAT) What should I know about your world?

CASSANDRA: That in knowing about us, you have value. That in keeping us secret, you have value. And if you can prove your loyalty, the Kindred may have work for you. And it's such a relief when they don't have to ghoul you to have you do a job reliably.

RUTH: (BEAT) Ghouling is, drinking your blood.

CASSANDRA: Yes.

RUTH: Believe me, I know not to touch that shit. (BEAT) All right. I could see working for one of you.

CASSANDRA: I'll try to get you an interview. Now. Remember to keep looking ahead.

RUTH: Yes, CASSANDRA. Thank you.

SCENE 13. — GLORIOUS, PAINFUL SEX (INT: WEST SEATTLE HOUSE, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, RUTH

/SFX/ QUIET AMBIANCE, WIND OUTSIDE, CASSANDRA AND RUTH OPEN DOOR, WALK IN, CLOSE DOOR

CASSANDRA: This place is pretty swank.

RUTH: Yeah. Which is my bedroom?

CASSANDRA: Any of them. The house is yours for the next few months. We'll work on getting you a more permanent residence. You could buy a small townhouse in the city outskirts with the cash I can get for you. Although, to be honest, you'd be safest if you left the state.

RUTH: Don't like that.

CASSANDRA: I'll ask LOREA if she has work for you. She can protect you better than I can.

RUTH: Do you have to go?

CASSANDRA: Not right away. Come.

/SFX/ RUTH WALKS TO CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA HOLDS HER, KISSES HER

RUTH: Drink me.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT, PLAYFUL) Why should I?

RUTH: (SURPRISED) Well. I know you taste any drugs in my system. Estrogen mostly, in my case. But you also taste emotion. I'm terrified I'll be caught by the assholes who stole me from my job and (BEAT) also they did teach me a hell of a lot of skills. I know how to kill you.

CASSANDRA: Oh, do you now?

RUTH: I know where to stab you to release the most blood. Your trachea or the sides of your abdomen. I'm getting better with the techniques they use to resist your mind control. And I know how to dislocate your joints. Even with your massive strength, your joints are still fragile. I know how to defend myself from you while being utterly terrified that you can kill me with my guard down like this. Strength and terror. Are you sure you don't want a taste of that?

CASSANDRA: What a delightful invitation.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA GROWLS, DRINKS RUTH, LICKS HER

RUTH: (PANTS HAPPILY)

CASSANDRA: So. Break something of mine… ow!

/SFX/ RUTH CRACKS ONE OF CASSANDRA'S FINGERS

RUTH: I'm not joking around.

CASSANDRA: No. That's good. Let me pop that back.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA POPS HER JOINT BACK IN PLACE

CASSANDRA: Do you know how hot I am for you now?

RUTH: As much as I am for you?

CASSANDRA: On your knees.

RUTH: (PLAYFUL) No.

CASSANDRA: Interesting. (VOICE DEEPENS) Drop to your knees.

RUTH: (STRAINS TO RESIST, CHUCKLES) No.

CASSANDRA: Huh. I can always force you down. By your shoulders.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA GRABS RUTH'S SHOULDERS, RUTH DROPS HERSELF DOWN

RUTH: Hah!

/SFX/ RUTH SLAMS HER WEIGHT INTO CASSANDRA'S KNEE, IT CRACKS

CASSANDRA: (PAINED) Fuck!

RUTH: How's that one feel? I just broke your knee.

CASSANDRA: You're still on the ground.

RUTH: Technically not kneeling!

CASSANDRA: Well, then!

/SFX/ CASSANDRA FALLS TO THE FLOOR

CASSANDRA: I can join you on the floor.

RUTH: Don't bite me! I have my hand on a power strip!

CASSANDRA: You'd do that to me?

RUTH: Want to try?

CASSANDRA: What else do you have?

RUTH: Let's see. I can try to shatter your jaw, or poke out your eyes. Or I can fuck you until the sun rises, Nosferatu-style.

CASSANDRA: Hmmm. If only it didn't take you so long to heal, I'd give back better than I got.

RUTH: Then drink enough of me to fix your fucking knee.

CASSANDRA: You little tease.

/SFX/ RUTH THRUSTS THE POWER STRIP INTO CASSANDRA'S MOUTH

CASSANDRA: Mmmmth.

RUTH: I don't advise biting down on the power strip now.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA SPITS OUT THE POWER STRIP

CASSANDRA: Oh, we're going to have a very fun night.

SCENE 14. — CRACK (INT: WAREHOUSE INTERIOR, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), MARA, LOREA, HANK

/SFX/ WAREHOUSE AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA WALKS ON CONCRETE, STOP

CASSANDRA (NA): After a lovely night with RUTH, I returned home to allow the day to restore my body properly. The next evening, I wanted to fulfill my promise to RUTH, so I returned to LOREA's warehouse. I didn't expect I'd be intruding in a fight.

HANK: No deal, "comrade."

LOREA: I only need them tomorrow night.

HANK: DHS are moving in northside and southside. We need everybody on the ground to scare the shit out of them.

LOREA: And how are you making rent? With the drug shipment I'm bringing in tomorrow night.

HANK: Oh, sure. We'll sell 'em.

LOREA: But you won't volunteer security for it.

HANK: A: We're busy helping people. B: You can afford your own security. Especially with our kickback. And C: It's not our fault you keep blowing cash propping up the Thin Bloods on their, frankly, doomed little mission.

LOREA: Fuck you.

HANK: What do I care? It's your money.

LOREA: It's keeping Camarilla security off of us. We've only had half the skirmishes we had before JOSEPHINE started her crusade.

HANK: Yeah, but they're getting more aggressive. Like last night's fight. Fortunately, we've got our new doctor on staff.

MARA: I'm not sure I deserve the title of "doctor."

HANK: Please. You are so far ahead of our street medics.

MARA: I'm not so practiced with surgery on living bodies.

HANK: Then it's a good thing most of us aren't living.

LOREA: CASSANDRA? How long have you been standing there?

CASSANDRA: A while.

LOREA: You want a job tomorrow night? Big shipment coming in. We need security I can trust.

CASSANDRA: Possibly. Can we talk when you're done?

HANK: We're done.

LOREA: HANK.

HANK: There's nothing more to say.

LOREA: I can't rely on you for some fucking security?

HANK: I'm just speaking for the others. Feel free to ask 'em if you don't believe me.

LOREA: Go fuck yourself!

HANK: Gladly. Don't need your help for that, either. MARA?

MARA: Yes. Thank you for listening to us, LOREA.

LOREA: I could use your services too, MARA.

MARA: When things settle down, perhaps.

LOREA: Things won't settle down for years to come.

MARA: I'm sorry. I can only do so much.

CASSANDRA: MARA, before you go? A moment of your time?

MARA: Certainly.

/SFX/ MARA AND CASSANDRA WALK ASIDE, STOP

MARA: What's the matter?

CASSANDRA: RUTH has fled the First Light. Will you help her out if she asks?

MARA: (BEAT) I still have conflicting feelings about her.

CASSANDRA: I may not be around after the upcoming inquest.

MARA: Uh. Well. I'll do what I can. I can pay for nothing, but I will have her back and advocate for her.

CASSANDRA: It's all I ask. Thank you.

MARA: You're welcome. If you'll excuse me.

CASSANDRA: Of course. Congratulations on your new job!

MARA: It is not as exciting as pure fleshmancy, but it will pay my bills. I've received some interesting requests, though, from the local mercenaries, to graft plate in their skin for protection. That should be fun!

CASSANDRA: I'll leave you to it.

MARA: Thank you again for all the opportunities. I hope ROSE is not too mad that I joined the Anarchs.

CASSANDRA: I'd think it's the last thing she'd be mad about now. Later!

MARA: Take care.

HANK: See you, CASSANDRA.

/SFX/ MARA AND HANK WALK AWAY

LOREA: So what's this about?

CASSANDRA: How'd you like your own personal Kindred hunter? For your shipment tomorrow?

LOREA: Is this your little Kitsap scientist Blood Doll?

CASSANDRA: She dislocated my finger and knee last night. She's very capable.

LOREA: And she's been through basic.

CASSANDRA: Of course.

LOREA: All right. She won't be enough. But she'll bring me peace of mind.

CASSANDRA: You know where she is. Make the offer yourself. I've already told her about you.

LOREA: Fine. Finally, some actual good news. HANK's been on my ass about any help I request from the collective lately.

CASSANDRA: I'm sorry you have to deal with this.

LOREA: I retired from the collective once. So it wouldn't be the first time if I did so again. But I don't have anyone else who can reliably sell my product. I never saw this coming.

CASSANDRA: Fuck.

LOREA: Yup. Anything else?

CASSANDRA: No. (BEAT) I should go.

LOREA: Enjoy whatever other business you have.

CASSANDRA: I'll try. Our world doesn't make it easy.

LOREA: It never gets any easier. And I'm over a hundred.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS AWAY

SCENE 15. — PREPARATION (INT: WEST SEATTLE HOUSE, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, RUTH

/SFX/ QUIET AMBIANCE, WIND OUTSIDE, KNOCK ON DOOR, RUTH WALKS OVER AND OPENS IT

CASSANDRA: Hi.

RUTH: Hello, hello!

CASSANDRA: It's Blood Doll coven night!

RUTH: So it is.

CASSANDRA: And I have good news for you! LOREA wants to hire you as a security guard for a drug shipment coming in tomorrow.

RUTH: Oh! I don't have any of my kit.

CASSANDRA: She'll provide everything. She'll probably be over tomorrow to ask.

RUTH: What kind of drugs are we talking about?

CASSANDRA: Do you really want to know?

RUTH: Yes. But. I understand discretion.

CASSANDRA: Good girl.

RUTH: I mean, I'm already on the run from the law. Why not get involved in illegal drug trafficking?

CASSANDRA: You also could help out MARA. She's working as a doctor for the Anarchs.

RUTH: Oh! Good for her! I could assist with that. If she's working mostly on Kindred. I've done dissections before.

CASSANDRA: You probably don't want to say that too loudly.

RUTH: Right. But, she knows.

CASSANDRA: Anyhow, we can swing by a late-night tailor and pick you up a nice dress for the party.

RUTH: That'd be thoughtful! I didn't (BEAT) bring a lot of clothes.

CASSANDRA: I know.

/SFX/ THEY KISS

CASSANDRA: Let's go.

RUTH: I’m so glad this is still going on.

SCENE 16. — OUT OF CONTROL (INT: DISUSED DINER, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), RUTH, JOSEPHINE, MELISSA, MAPLE

/SFX/ WIND AMBIANCE OUTSIDE, LOW WALLA, PEOPLE MILLING ABOUT INSIDE

CASSANDRA (NA): RUTH picked a fantastic olive dress that I wish I had ordered first, and we drove over to the disused diner JOSEPHINE had pointed me to. Inside, we found… (BEAT) Not three. Not five. (BEAT) Ten human Blood Dolls. And the entire Fire Brigade. Flirting together on borrowed mattresses.

RUTH: What the fuck?

CASSANDRA: (FURIOUS) JOSEPHINE. JOSEPHINE!

/SFX/ JOSEPHINE WALKS OVER, STOPS

JOSEPHINE: Ah! Camarilla! Welcome!

CASSANDRA: What the fuck is this?

JOSEPHINE: Blood Dolls! The coven grows! And it's all thanks to you.

CASSANDRA: What the fuck did I do?

JOSEPHINE: You started this project.

CASSANDRA: RUTH and I didn't vet any of them.

JOSEPHINE: You were busy. So I took the initiative.

RUTH: You can't erase minds!

JOSEPHINE: We didn't need to. MELISSA, MAPLE, and AUTUMN recommended their friends, and their friends recommended their friends.

CASSANDRA: It doesn't work like that! This is a lifetime commitment to preserving the Masquerade!

JOSEPHINE: They know the risks.

RUTH: How many of the people you interviewed chose not to join?

JOSEPHINE: They all made it in. And they all passed their background checks.

CASSANDRA: That's (BEAT) not how the interview process is supposed to work! We tell them things about Kindred that they may not want to keep remembering! What do you do when that happens?

JOSEPHINE: I knew you'd be like this.

CASSANDRA: Yes! I tried my hardest not to make any of our Blood Dolls a breach but (BEAT) Okay! Let's just let everyone in! What's the worst that could happen?

JOSEPHINE: You said you wanted this to be a community. And that's exactly what's in this room. People who know people. Paramours and metamours.

RUTH: And if any of them had said "no?" If they didn't want to be a target of the Camarilla or the First Light?

JOSEPHINE: That's just you being paranoid.

CASSANDRA: The Camarilla will <u>slaughter</u> them if this gets out.

JOSEPHINE: This won't get out. None of these humans know any Camarilla or First Light. You're the only ones connected to those factions.

CASSANDRA: And if any cops show up like at the last coven gathering?

JOSEPHINE: I can handle cops.

CASSANDRA: You can't dominate them like I can.

JOSEPHINE: I can bribe them.

CASSANDRA: Holy fuck! How much is LOREA paying you?

JOSEPHINE: Enough. And you said you'd contribute too. I'm still waiting on that, by the way.

CASSANDRA: This is a shitshow. This is a drama bomb waiting to happen.

JOSEPHINE: We're been following your rules. Everyone has a support network outside the coven. Look, I know you, Camarilla. You think you're so consistent but you have too much going on to focus on anything. For now, the Fire Brigade is taking a little break. We're growing the coven. See? Everyone's having a good time. We'll pull in all the Duskborn in Seattle. We'll band together. And the Fire Brigade will begin anew, stronger than ever.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Come on, RUTH. We should leave.

RUTH: We should do something about all these poor people.

CASSANDRA: It's out of our hands.

JOSEPHINE: Do you plan to start over with a new coven? Or do you want to see this incredible success story grow?

<u>/SFX/ MELISSA ROLLS HER CHAIR OVER, MAPLE WALKS OVER, BOTH STOP</u>

MELISSA: Hey, Lily?

CASSANDRA: (NONPLUSSED) Hi.

MAPLE: What's up, RUTH?

MELISSA: Is something the matter?

CASSANDRA: You know JO can't fuck with people's heads like I can.

MAPLE: Yeah. No offense. But, it's kinda a relief.

MELISSA: I understand why you want us to be able to say "no" to knowing about vampires. But it is sort of stressful that we can't tell if you've messed with our minds.

MAPLE: Mind control is fucked.

CASSANDRA: I don't wipe the minds of my friends unless they ask.

MELISSA: I know. But. (BEAT) You know, you could.

CASSANDRA: I'm trying to establish consent. People need to be able to walk away from an invitation to be a Blood Doll.

MAPLE: They can. And they'll stay quiet. We can check up on them to make sure they keep quiet about you. It's all in the rules you guys wrote!

RUTH: I know. (BEAT) So all this is because you're not comfortable with how Lily and I run things.

MELISSA: (PAUSE) That's some of it. And we didn't know how to get a hold of you. At least JO comes by regularly.

CASSANDRA: Oh, JO, you can daywalk?

JOSEPHINE: Most of us can, actually. I told SPARK not to tell the Anarchs that to see if they'd still let them in.

CASSANDRA: That was bullshit, what they said to you.

JOSEPHINE: It is what it is, Camarilla. And I'm not hiding our politics from the Blood Dolls anymore.

MELISSA: Yeah. That's really awful, JO. I'm sorry they didn't let SPARK in.

CASSANDRA: Okay, RUTH, let's move.

RUTH: Sure. Bye MELISSA. MAPLE. JO.

MELISSA: It was good to see you!

MAPLE: Later.

JOSEPHINE: Any intention of coming back?

CASSANDRA: RUTH and I will talk. And then we'll see.

JOSEPHINE: Okay then. Bye, Camarilla.

CASSANDRA: Goodbye.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH WALK TO THE DOOR, STOP, OPEN THE DOOR, WALK OUT CLOSE DOOR

<u>SCENE 17. — WELL THEN</u> (INT: WEST SEATTLE HOUSE, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, RUTH, SAMAEL

<u>/SFX/ QUIET AMBIANCE, WIND OUTSIDE, DOOR OPENS, CASSANDRA AND RUTH WALK IN, STOP, DOOR CLOSES</u>

CASSANDRA: Well. Fuck.

RUTH: Provided nobody talks. Maybe, it works.

CASSANDRA: And the likelihood of that is?

RUTH: If they can <u>conceive</u> of the risks?

CASSANDRA: Do they? I'd like to see JOSEPHINE conduct an interview.

RUTH: And then? How do we get this thing back under control?

SAMAEL (ECHO): If I may?

CASSANDRA: Of course. (TO RUTH) SAMAEL has something to recommend.

RUTH: Sure!

SAMAEL (ECHO): Kill JOSEPHINE. (BEAT) Go on. Tell her.

CASSANDRA: SAMAEL wants us to kill JOSEPHINE.

RUTH: That would terrify the shit out of every Blood Doll.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Good. They need terrifying. They need to understand the weight of what they're doing.

CASSANDRA: SAMAEL says they need to understand how serious things are with them. It's not just a play session with actual Kindred.

RUTH: But if you killed her, why would the rest of the Duskborn keep supporting the coven?

SAMAEL (ECHO): And risk losing their easy food source? Why wouldn't they?

CASSANDRA: SAMAEL says they'd want to keep an easy food source.

SAMAEL (ECHO): And where's JOSEPHINE leading them to, anyway? They're already getting dropouts. SPARK can't be the only one.

CASSANDRA: SAMAEL also thinks JO is losing more people than just SPARK. They're right, but it's a big risk and I'm not going to lose any Blood Dolls over this.

RUTH: And the Blood Dolls trust JOSEPHINE over us. (BEAT) She's telling them about the factions. If we need to scare them, why not get an Anarch to explain their side of the conflict? What about MARA?

SAMAEL (ECHO): That's perfect.

CASSANDRA: She would definitely scare the shit out of them. And I trust her to stay quiet about the Blood Dolls.

SAMAEL (ECHO): An excellent idea. Tell RUTH I'm proud of her for thinking practically like that.

CASSANDRA: SAMAEL says it's a good plan and they're proud of you for proposing it.

RUTH: Oh. Thank you again, SAMAEL.

CASSANDRA: We have so much to prep for. I'll find MARA tomorrow to ask her.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Might I also recommend that we proceed to the gymnasium, my beloved? We have avoided training for too many nights already.

CASSANDRA: Sure. (TO RUTH) I need to go train at the gym. Are you good with chilling out the rest of tonight?

RUTH: Absolutely. I'll make a list of things we can ask MARA to do when you see her.

CASSANDRA: Great. But. One final thing before I go.

RUTH: Hmm?

CASSANDRA: Your neck.

RUTH: Oh. Yes, please.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA GROWLS, DRINKS RUTH, LICKS HER

RUTH: (SWOONS) Mmmph. Have a good time at the gym!

CASSANDRA: (SMILING) I will.

SCENE 18. — SKETCHY INVITATION (INT: BOXING GYM, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), SAMAEL, ELIJIO

/SFX/ BOXING GYM AMBIANCE

CASSANDRA (NA): I got into my sweats and drove to the gym, only to get flagged down by the Kindred on management duty. He presented me with a letter. (BEAT) From ELIJIO. Addressed to SAMAEL.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Well? Let's read it.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA RIPS OPEN THE ENVELOPE, TAKES OUT AND UNFOLDS LETTER

ELIJIO: (WRITING) My dearest SAMAEL. I am truly sorry for what I said at our last meeting. I've had some time alone, and I fear I let too much spill from my frustration. And not enough from my heart. I should like to see you, and CASSANDRA, again. Immediately if you are available, to talk and air grievances and explain how many of my words I did not intend to speak. Please, no surgery or glamour. Simply you and your pen. Let us discuss matters of the heart in civilized tones, and perhaps I might don the blindfold to feel your lips once more. Yours forever, come what may, ELIJIO.

CASSANDRA: (UNSURE) Uh.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I didn't expect to hear from him so soon.

CASSANDRA: Is he usually like this?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Quick to temper, slow to take responsibility? No. ELIJIO is a vile and treacherous serpent when he wants to be. It's how we met. But that is his job. His duty. You have not seen him there, as I have. I think we should hear what he has to say.

CASSANDRA: I should get my dress, then.

SAMAEL (ECHO): It would be appropriate. Another trip to your home, love. And then, let's see what of my relationship with ELIJIO we can salvage.

SCENE 19. — VILE & TREACHEROUS (INT: EXPENSIVE SKYSCRAPER APARTMENT, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, SAMAEL, ELIJIO, HELENA, ROSE

/SFX/ QUIET AMBIANCE, WIND OUTSIDE, SAMAEL'S SPECIAL KNOCK ON THE DOOR

ELIJIO: There she is.

/SFX/ ELIJIO WALKS TO DOOR, STOPS, OPENS DOOR

ELIJIO: Welcome CASSANDRA!

CASSANDRA: Hello again.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS IN, ELIJIO SHUTS THE DOOR, WALKS AHEAD OF HER, THEY STOP

ELIJIO: Thank you for returning.

CASSANDRA: It's a pleasure, but I'm a little confused about why you asked us back so soon.

ELIJIO: SAMAEL? I'd like to explain myself to both of you.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA TAKES OUT PEN AND PAPER FROM HER PURSE, PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Go on, please, my darling.

ELIJIO: (PAUSE) I (BEAT) had much to consider. After my outburst. What I said was true. I do love you. Both of you. I thought of when you spoke simultaneously, at the end of your last visit. When I said you gave me hope. (BEAT) Please. Give it to me again. Perhaps there is a way we can be together. Through a slow process of trust. (BEAT) It means a lot that you came over so quickly. (BEAT) I would treasure another kiss.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) I was gravely wounded by your words when we met last. But forgiveness must start from somewhere. Yes. A kiss would be acceptable, if you are all right with one, CASSANDRA?

CASSANDRA: I mostly certainly am.

ELIJIO: I've closed my eyes. Please. Come when you are ready.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Allow me your body, my love?

CASSANDRA: Of course!

SAMAEL (ECHO): Thank you, dearest.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS TO ELIJIO, STOPS

SAMAEL (ECHO): Apologies that I am still unsteady in your shell.

CASSANDRA: It's all right, love.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I've been relishing this.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND ELIJIO KISS, INTERIOR DOOR BURSTS OPEN, BOOTS STOMP OUT

ROSE: And you were right. There she is.

HELENA: Seize her.

CASSANDRA: What's going on?

ELIJIO: I'm so sorry, CASSANDRA.

/SFX/ BOOTS SURROUND CASSANDRA, STOP ENFORCERS HOLD HER IN PLACE

SAMAEL (ECHO): What's happening? ELIJIO...

CASSANDRA & SAMAEL (ECHO): What have you done?

HELENA: Secure her tight.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA STRUGGLES

CASSANDRA: (STRUGGLING) Get off me! ROSE! What the fuck is going on here?

ROSE: Your arrest.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Break out, love!

CASSANDRA: (STRUGGLING) I'm trying!

HELENA: A poor neonate. With the strength of SAMAEL and doesn't even know how to channel it. SAMAEL? I am unimpressed.

CASSANDRA: Who is that?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Oh. Fuck. HELENA. (BEAT) It's started.

HELENA: Expose her chest. I would see her heart.

ELIJIO: I'm so sorry. They said you would not be killed.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA'S DRESS IS RIPPED

CASSANDRA: Fuck!

SAMAEL (ECHO): Love. That's Lictor HELENA.

ELIJIO: CASSANDRA. Don't resist. Don't give them any more reason to hurt you.

ROSE: One stake. Would you prefer I do the honors?

HELENA: I would see it done in one thrust.

CASSANDRA: Does SOPHIA know of this?

HELENA: My dear, anything the Prince wants is irrelevant now.

ROSE: Good night, sweet CASSANDRA. For now.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Tell them to hold up!

CASSANDRA: Stop! SAMAEL says…

/SFX/ STAKE PIERCES CASSANDRA'S CHEST, SOUND GOES SILENT

SCENE 20. — SENTENCE (INT: GREAT COURTROOM, NIGHT)
- CASSANDRA, SAMAEL, HELENA, ENOCH

/SFX/ QUIET AMBIANCE, MURMURING WALLA, SQUISHY STAKE IS PULLED FROM CASSANDRA'S CHEST

CASSANDRA: Aaaa! Ah. Ah.

SAMAEL (ECHO): This is not good. They didn't trust us to go quietly here.

HELENA: Ventrue CASSANDRA? You stand before this court, guilty of the crime of your very existence. All hail this honorable court, and its presiding officer (BEAT) Elder ENOCH.

SAMAEL (ECHO): They sent a fucking Elder. CASSANDRA. We are so fucked.

ENOCH: CASSANDRA. Davril. You, an abomination, stand before us now. You disgust us by your presence. We are reversing the Prince's decision that authorized your creation. Welcome (BEAT) to your execution.

-END-