

Vampire: The Masquerade: Blood Doll

Script, v1

Season 2, Episode 9: “Debut the Blood Doll”

by Alicia E. Goranson

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Approximate playing time: 1 Hour, 55 minutes

CAST OF CHARACTERS

CASSANDRA DAVRIL	30s trans woman, Ventrue, femme, main character
CASSANDRA’S BEAST	CASSANDRA’s Beast, an echo of SAMAEŁ’s voice
SAMAEŁ (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
ESTHER	Salubri, femme, AARALYN’s minister, chosen to replace former minister, appointed as a favor to the Salubri clan to end bloodshed
AMANDA	Graveyard Shift Hecata, one of ROSE’s enforcers
LOREA	Cult of Set Non-Believer, femme, SODO Anarch community organizer, on the Weaponry Security Collective
HANK	Anarch, 30-40s, masc
SIOBHAN	Gangrel, femme, full time mutual aid provider, SODO Anarch community resource distributor
STEPHANIE	30-something human trans woman, BLOOD DOLL’s ex-girlfriend
ELIJIO	Lasombra, SAMAEŁ’s boyfriend, masc
SOPHIA	Ventrue, Seattle prince, femme
NICHOLE	Kindred, femme, CASSANDRA’s ex-girlfriend, one of ROSE’s enforcers
JOSEPHINE	Thin blood, 15 th generation, advocate for Duskborn rights
ARTURO	Malkavian, masc, SODO Anarch community protector, “guard dog,” excellent watcher

NAVY HUNTER	Naval trained Kindred hunter
VICTIM 1, 2, 3	CASSANDRA's victims on the street
GUARD 1, 2, 3	Waterfront warehouse guards
ELIXIR SABBAT	Powerful Sabbat escaping Kitsap base

SCENE 1. — NEW GENESIS (EXT: BEACH, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), SAMAEL, CASSANDRA'S BEAST, AMANDA, ESTHER, LOREA, ELIXIR SABBAT

CASSANDRA (NA): My name is CASSANDRA DAVRIL and I am a predator of humans. I have been given all the tools I need to kill. I'm very strong. My teeth can cut through flesh. Once my eyes catch prey, they cannot flee. And I can feast on them. And I can make them forget.

/SFX/ PUGET SOUND WAVES AND WIND AMBIANCE SLOWLY INCREASE IN VOLUME

CASSANDRA (NA): I have a hunger for a very specific food. They say I'm cursed. I don't feel cursed. I feel like any other animal, with senses and environmental needs developed for my place in the ecosystem. My senses exceed my prey's in every way. I hunt while most of them sleep. (BEAT) But I have a problem. My restricted diet. I can only feed on those who are attractive to me, and yes, I recognize how problematic that is. I don't want to kill. I want to feed on others consensually. Delightfully. In the rapture of existence and sapience. I've read my philosophy. I wish to do as I will. Whatever role the Divine has cast me into, I deny it. I will best whatever Infernal Will commands me and spend my existence in peace with humans someday. (BEAT) Someday. For now. (BEAT) Well, everything has gone wrong. (SAD) I miss her, so much. Especially after what I did to her. I am not a good person. I am quite a good monster. And I hate it. I hate it so much. (BEAT) I'm getting ahead of myself. I had just crawled onto the beach after LEVIATHAN wrecked my boat. ESTHER had shattered my arm and leg. They were useless for movement. I had to wait for help. (BEAT) I was so thankful SAMAEL was there with me.

SAMAEL (ECHO): A god you may be, but blood you'll need. Quite a lot to fix you up, unfortunately.

CASSANDRA: (WISTFUL) It's just a drink.

CASSANDRA'S BEAST: Hungry. Beaten. We cannot hunt like this.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Yes. It is just a drink, and not solely the domain of the cursed. In the thirteenth century, there was a holy woman. Angela of Foligno (pronounced Fol-lin-nyo). She would prostrate herself naked before the cross and said she was bidden to taste the blood that spilled from Christ's side wound. The one made by the Spear of Longinus. And she was considered beloved of Saint Francis of Assisi. For what? Experiencing ecstasy from the consumption of blood? Who else does that sound like?

CASSANDRA: (TO SAMAEL) Sure, but that's Christ's blood, and is there any of that left?

AMANDA: (IN DISTANCE) CASSANDRA? CASSANDRA? Oh my gods. Is that you?

SAMAEL (ECHO): (COMMANDING) Get down! Don't move.

ESTHER: (IN DISTANCE) AMANDA? Oh, AMANDA? It's time to go! That horn won't move itself!

/SFX/ IN DISTANCE, HORN IS DRAGGED AWAY, TRUCK STARTS, DRIVES OFF

SAMAEL (ECHO): (PAUSE) I can't say if any of it's left. But is it all right with the Immortal Divine if I consume nothing but His blessed First Humour? Of course not. Besides, any remaining would be the property of the Church. But if Angela drinks it, it's beautiful. It's a miracle. How the hell do we get in on that racket?

CASSANDRA: Aren't we miracles ourselves? Evil miracles maybe, but still miraculous?

SAMAEL (ECHO): You and I certainly are. After everything we've been through. (BEAT) I love you.

CASSANDRA: I love you. (BEAT) This is going to be so rough for us.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Let's worry about getting you out of the moon's view, and patching you up, first.

CASSANDRA: (FOGGY) Yeah. (LONG PAUSE)

SAMAEL (ECHO): Hey. Hey. Talk to me.

CASSANDRA: It's okay. I'm okay. I'm just tired. And I'm hungry.

SAMAEL (ECHO): If you don't feed, you'll go feral. And I'll have no one to talk with. And you'll be exposed, this close to the Kitsap base.

CASSANDRA: And if I go too long. (PAUSE) Without blood.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Torpor. For days. Weeks. I recall I went through a brief torpor during my imprisonment and I woke up quite the opposite of refreshed.

CASSANDRA: I have a question.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Simply ask.

CASSANDRA: Why are there no stories about Kindred during and before the Middle Ages? (WOOZY, BEAT) The Middle Ages were a haunted world filled with monsters and demons. So why are there so few stories of blood-drinkers? Were tales of trolls and goblins so prevalent that a blood-empty corpse would be blamed on them, instead of a Kindred?

SAMAEL (ECHO): We are romantic creatures. And I fear we were simply not as interesting until the Romantics took hold of our tales.

CASSANDRA: We are just stories, aren't we? Post-Enlightenment creatures, remnants of an ancient time that never was. So do I exist to frighten the current generation? And what will become of me when the next generation searches for newer, more modern terrors?

SAMAEL (ECHO): I was more than a story. I was a puppet. A thug. A lackey. A vizier.

CASSANDRA: A lover.

SAMAEL (ECHO): That too. I wish we had a mirror. I so long to look at you.

CASSANDRA: I probably look like hell right now.

SAMAEL (ECHO): You think I haven't seen you at your worst?

CASSANDRA: No. No, you haven't. Because I was at my worst after I had lost you. And I thought I'd never see you again. (BEAT) And I never will.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Oh, my love.

/SFX/ TRUCK PULLS UP IN DISTANCE, STOPS

SAMAEL (ECHO): I think that's LOREA now.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE) That's her scent, isn't it?

SAMAEL (ECHO): You recognize it! Being able to smell keener than a hound is overwhelming at first. You'll get used to it.

LOREA: CASSANDRA? CASSANDRA?

CASSANDRA: (SHOUTS) I'm here!

/SFX/ LOREA WALKS OVER ON SAND, STOPS

LOREA: Holy shit.

CASSANDRA: Hi. (BEAT) SAMAEL Embraced me.

LOREA: (PAUSE) You're in bad shape.

CASSANDRA: I took a lot of bullets.

LOREA: Your arm. And your leg.

CASSANDRA: ESTHER shattered them.

LOREA: She was on the base?

CASSANDRA: She made AMANDA give her the tracker you were using to follow me. (BEAT) I lost your earrings.

LOREA: Fuck.

CASSANDRA: SAMAEL and my BEAST say I need a lot of blood.

LOREA: SAMAEL's talking to you? I can see your diablerie aura.

CASSANDRA: They chose to do it.

LOREA: And you just went along.

CASSANDRA: And I don't regret a moment of it.

LOREA: Well, then. (BEAT) We need to move. The Sabbat are fleeing from the fight on the base. I'd rather we didn't run into any on our way home.

CASSANDRA: Carry me. Please.

LOREA: Sure.

/SFX/ LOREA LIFTS CASSANDRA, CARRIES HER OVER THE DIRT

LOREA: SAMAEEL and your BEAST weren't kidding.

CASSANDRA: How much blood do I need, doctor?

LOREA: You won't like this.

CASSANDRA: Give it to me straight.

LOREA: You'll need to drink someone to death.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Only one? Why not many? Ones I can leave alive?

LOREA: It's not your decision. (BEAT) The sun's coming up. Our time is limited.

/SFX/ LOREA STOPS BY HER TRUCK, OPENS THE SIDE DOOR

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) So who's decision is it?

LOREA: (HEARS SOMETHING IN DISTANCE) Fuck. Stay down in the truck. Do not move.

CASSANDRA: What's going on?

/SFX/ LOREA SETS DOWN CASSANDRA IN THE BACK OF HER TRUCK

LOREA: Say nothing.

/SFX/ LOREA WALKS AWAY, STOPS

LOREA: Elixir?

ELIXIR SABBAT: (PANTING, TIRED) You knew this would happen!

LOREA: I gave you all the intel I had! You're the ones who went in half-cocked to save your comrade.

ELIXIR SABBAT: Well, I'm thirsty. (BEAT) Whatcha got back there?

LOREA: Nothing for you.

ELIXIR SABBAT: Hah!

/SFX/ ELIXIR SABBAT KNOCKS LOREA TO THE GROUND

LOREA: Mmmph!

/SFX/ ELIXIR SABBAT WALKS TOWARD CASSANDRA SLOWLY

ELIXIR SABBAT: Now. What have we got here?

/SFX/ BODY DRAGS BEHIND ELIXIR SABBAT, AND STANDS

LOREA: She isn't. Yours.

ELIXIR SABBAT: Stop me then.

LOREA: You're wounded. You're shot. I haven't laid a hand on you because I don't want a war with the Sabbat.

ELIXIR SABBAT: I just want to feed on the fledgling. And I'll be out of your hair.

LOREA: There's plenty of other Sabbat on the run. Many alone like you. Are there any who none of your coterie would miss? Because you're going to have to fight me for the one in my truck. And I'm stronger than I look.

ELIXIR SABBAT: (PAUSE) LOREA, LOREA, LOREA. Always has to be right. (BEAT) Swear you'll finish our mission. Swear you'll free our captive brethren someday.

LOREA: I swear it.

ELIXIR SABBAT: (BEAT) She's yours then. Little lioness.

LOREA: May the wounded hunters turn to prey. Get out of here.

ELIXIR SABBAT: (GRINS) Later!

/SFX/ ELIXIR SABBAT WALKS AWAY, LOREA RUNS OVER TO CASSANDRA

CASSANDRA: Oh, fuck.

LOREA: I did what I could. (BEAT) We need to get you fed. Now.

/SFX/ LOREA TAKES OUT HER PHONE, SCROLLS THROUGH IT

LOREA: You're a Ventrue, right? That's a problem.

CASSANDRA: Yeah. SAMAEAL told me I have to be attracted to someone to drink from them.

LOREA: Okay.

/SFX/ LOREA TAPS ON HER PHONE

LOREA: Google Images. (TO CASSANDRA) Scroll through these. Who looks good?

CASSANDRA: Who are these people?

LOREA: News reports from nearby towns. Come on. Find someone.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA SCROLLS THROUGH THE PHONE, STOPS

CASSANDRA: Her.

LOREA: All right. Let me see if it has her name.

/SFX/ LOREA SCROLLS AND TAPS ON HER PHONE

CASSANDRA: Can I at least talk with her beforehand?

LOREA: The less you know of her, the better. (BEAT) Got it. I can do a quick search on a data broker for her address.

/SFX/ LOREA TAPS ON HER PHONE, STOPS

LOREA: There it is.

CASSANDRA: It can't just be her.

SAMAEL (ECHO): It must.

LOREA: Let me get you in the back seat of my truck. (BEAT) Let's get you fed.

SCENE 2. — TAKEAWAY (INT: LOREA'S TRUCK, NEAR DAWN)

• CASSANDRA (NA), LOREA

/SFX/ TRUCK DRIVING AMBIANCE, WIND OUTSIDE

CASSANDRA (NA): We drove to the woman's house. Twilight was beginning to glimmer on the horizon. I waited in the truck while LOREA, masked and robed, broke into the woman's house, soon emerging with her, crying and bound, with her mouth stuffed with socks. LOREA threw her in the back seat with me and we drove to a spot LOREA said was safe. We stopped the truck and I felt my teeth extend.

/SFX/ TRUCK STOPS, PARKS

LOREA: Dig in.

/SFX/ ALL SOUND IS CUT

CASSANDRA (NA): (LONG PAUSE) I don't want to talk about it. (PAUSE) It wasn't fair, what I did to her.

/SFX/ SOUND RETURNS, WOMAN BREATHES FAST, CASSANDRA SLURPING LIQUID,
SOUND CUTS AGAIN

CASSANDRA (NA): She deserved better. (PAUSE) LOREA was right. When I was done, I could begin to move my broken limbs again. It felt so good. It felt...

SCENE 3. — FUCK (EXT: HILLSIDE, NEAR DAWN)

• CASSANDRA, LOREA

/SFX/ WINDY HILLSIDE AMBIANCE, WIND THROUGH BRUSHES

CASSANDRA: Fuck. Fuck!

LOREA: It's all right. I'll teach you how to dispose of the body.

CASSANDRA: This is my fucking life now?

LOREA: This is how it has to be when you fucking wreck your own body.

CASSANDRA: This is fucked.

LOREA: Which part? The attraction or the murder?

CASSANDRA: The part when I couldn't stop drinking her. It wasn't me. It was like (BEAT) an orgasm. I was tensed up. I clung to her.

LOREA: You needed all of her.

CASSANDRA: I couldn't fucking stop!

LOREA: Why was stopping so important?

CASSANDRA: You know why. It didn't have to be just her.

LOREA: I had to break it to you, hon. It did.

CASSANDRA: Why couldn't I have stopped and drunk from others?

LOREA: That's between you and your BEAST.

CASSANDRA: Fuck my BEAST.

LOREA: That's the mantra of all Kindred.

CASSANDRA: I tried. (BEAT) I tried. (BEAT, NEAR CRYING) I couldn't stop.

LOREA: You'll need to get tougher than that if you want to keep those fangs.

CASSANDRA: I don't want it to be like this.

LOREA: Well, get fucking used to it. Blood. Most every night. It took me years to get control of myself. And if I was beaten as badly as you were, I still couldn't hold myself back. (BEAT) This is not the first death you've watched.

CASSANDRA: This is the first death that came from my body but not from me. (PAUSE) I don't want to do this again.

LOREA: CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: If I kill someone, I want it to be me who does it. Not my BEAST.

LOREA: You're not in charge anymore.

CASSANDRA: I. Will. Figure. Something. Out.

LOREA: (PAUSE) Well, I need to get my truck back to my warehouse to have the back seats re-upholstered. Help me break and wrap her body so we can fit it in the back. Then (BEAT) I need to find a place to park. We don't have time to drive home yet. Don't worry. I'll get you somewhere you can have your first day. The time will just fly by.

SCENE 4. — THE RETURN (INT: LOREA'S TRUCK, NEAR DAWN)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), LOREA, SAMAEL

/SFX/ TRUCK DRIVING AMBIANCE, TRUCK STOPS, NEIGHBORHOOD AMBIANCE

CASSANDRA (NA): LOREA found a neighborhood she said would be safe to park in during daylight hours. Suburban residents only reported vehicles left overnight, she said. We had time to black out the windows and then we waited, sprawled across the seats. Her in the front. Me in the back. I was surprised to find the corpse's smell not entirely unpleasant. We waited for a few minutes and...

/SFX/ SOUND CUTS OUT, AFTER A FEW SECONDS, NEIGHBORHOOD AMBIANCE RESUMES

CASSANDRA (NA): I had rolled from my side onto my back. It was night again. It felt as if no time had passed, despite what the clocks said.

LOREA: All right. Break the blinders down, and check for a ticket on the windshield. Then we can dispose of the corpse and get home.

/SFX/ TRUCK STARTS, DRIVES, WIND AMBIANCE

CASSANDRA (NA): I told LOREA everything that had happened on the base; finding SAMAEL again, my Embrace, and my harrowing escape. I don't know how much got through to her. She was angry at ESTHER for tormenting AMANDA, and at herself for having endangered me. We sat quiet for a while, when she eventually spoke.

LOREA: You're on good terms with SAMAEL now?

CASSANDRA: Very much so.

LOREA: Do they have any words for me?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Tell her she can't get rid of me that easily.

CASSANDRA: They say you can't get rid of them that easily.

SAMAEL (ECHO): And tell her I love you. Very much.

CASSANDRA: And that they love me. Very much.

SAMAEL (ECHO): And she can't do shit about that now.

CASSANDRA: (GRINS) And you can't stop them.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (AMUSED) That's not what I said.

CASSANDRA: It's close enough.

LOREA: Ah. You're conversing with them.

CASSANDRA: Always.

LOREA: I don't know if I envy that. But it sounds lovely.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Tell her to tell WILLIAM I hope being alone in her head is everything he ever wanted.

CASSANDRA: They say to tell WILLIAM I hope being alone in your head is everything he ever wanted... [DIALOGUE FADES OUT]

CASSANDRA (NA): We had a lot to discuss on the way to LOREA's warehouse. I needed a place to stay. LOREA could only put me up for so long.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Don't tell her this. Whatever of my funds the Camarilla think they've drained, I still have more stashed away. It's ours, although It'll take some work to access it. But I know you're up for the challenge. I'll tell you more when we're alone together.

SCENE 5. — SHE'S BACK (INT: LOREA'S WAREHOUSE, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), SAMAEL, LOREA, HANK, SIOBHAN, ARTURO

/SFX/ WAREHOUSE AMBIANCE

CASSANDRA (NA): LOREA and I butchered the corpse with the tools in her truck and bagged it in a few trash bins. Over an hour later, we were back at her warehouse. It looked brighter. It smelled more complex. It sounded more vibrant than I had known it before. My senses magnified everything and I stumbled a bit with all I had to focus on.

/SFX/ LOREA AND CASSANDRA WALK ON CONCRETE. CASSANDRA STUMBLES

LOREA: Easy. You're overwhelmed. I can tell. Just one foot after another for now.

/SFX/ LOREA AND CASSANDRA CONTINUE WALKING ON CONCRETE

ARTURO: They're going to need help.

HANK: They're going to drag us into something we can't easily get out of.

SIOBHAN: What, fighting with the Camarilla? When are we not doing that?

HANK: Fire, though. That's terror. I don't disagree with their motives, but they ain't making any allies, is all I'm saying.

ARTURO: Hey. Is that CASSANDRA? (PAUSE, REALIZES SHE'S A KINDRED NOW) No. No way.

/SFX/ LOREA AND CASSANDRA STOP WALKING

SIOBHAN: Look at you. Last time I saw you, you were near dead.

CASSANDRA: Now I'm completely dead.

ARTURO: Well, yeah, but at least you're not Final Dead, technically.

CASSANDRA: Since when have I let a technicality tell me what I can do?

SIOBHAN: Yeah, it's her.

HANK: Congrats on the Embrace. Dare I ask who's the sire?

CASSANDRA: I suppose you're wondering about my aura. It's SAMAEL. Self-diablerie.

ARTURO: I didn't want to say anything.

LOREA: You'll be stuck like that at least a year. You're open season on anyone who sees your aura. Diablerie is a capital offense. (BEAT) Don't worry. I've lived through it.

HANK: As I recall, SAMAEL and ELIJIO kept the heat off you.

CASSANDRA: Has anyone heard any news about ELIJIO? (PAUSE, NO ONE RESPONDS) It's just that I can't exactly step into Camarilla Court now.

SAMAEL (ECHO): You'll have to. The Prince will have a bounty on your head until we can convince her to remove it. SOPHIA, was it?

CASSANDRA: Yes.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Oh, I have all sorts of dirt on her.

HANK: Are you talking with someone? (REALIZES) Oh.

CASSANDRA: (PLEASED) Yes, I know. It's very wonderful and very sad.

LOREA: I think that's everyone's lives here. Anyhow. HANK. ARTURO. SIOBHAN. I asked you to come by tonight.

SIOBHAN: I was wondering if you'd decided to change your mind.

LOREA: I have. I officially want to resume my duties in the Anarchs.

SIOBHAN: Thank fuck.

LOREA: I know you don't like holding down the fort.

SIOBHAN: Not especially.

HANK: Welcome back, friend.

LOREA: Thank you. I admit to the past year being (BEAT) self-indulgent. Even with the war gone, only having to worry about my company was rather liberating. But one cannot rest in the Elysian Fields forever.

SIOBHAN: Don't I fucking know it.

LOREA: And I'd like to have ARTURO full time to protect the warehouse.

ARTURO: Hell yeah. Kickass.

LOREA: I'm concerned that the Sabbat will think I set them up and attempt some sort of retaliation.

ARTURO: Oh.

LOREA: Fortunately I don't expect them showing up any time we're not awake.

ARTURO: Do I (BEAT) have to? Isn't there anyone else?

LOREA: As good as you? No.

SIOBHAN: You are really good at what you do.

HANK: Make her double your salary, comrade. Get paid what you're worth.

ARTURO: Okay. LOREA, I request that--

LOREA: That's fine. It's a temporary measure after all. They will likely lose interest eventually, if they even blame me at all. Now, CASSANDRA. The Camarilla are well aware of your demise and Embrace. But the Sabbat know neither of these. And they certainly blame you for putting their comrade in Kitsap.

CASSANDRA: Did you tell them?

LOREA: They can put two and two together as well as I can. I recommend (BEAT) you die. In front of someone who can report it. You'll want a nice coroner's report to throw them off your very distinguishable scent.

CASSANDRA: (WOOZY) Okay. I...

/SFX/ SOUND IS BRIEFLY MUFFLED

CASSANDRA: Urrgh.

SIOBHAN: Are you okay?

CASSANDRA: Just. Sorta woozy.

HANK: (UNDERSTANDING) Oh, your body's been through a lot, hasn't it?

CASSANDRA: I mean. Yeah. But...

ARTURO: Oh dear.

LOREA: Down she goes.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA FALLS ONTO THE CONCRETE

SIOBHAN: Oh, she's going to be out for...

/SFX/ SOUND CUTS OFF

SCENE 6. — WAKE (INT: GUEST ROOM IN LOREA'S WAREHOUSE, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, SAMAEL, CASSANDRA'S BEAST, LOREA, ARTURO

/SFX/ WAREHOUSE AMBIANCE MUFFLED, CASSANDRA SITS UP

CASSANDRA: Urgghha. How long's it been?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Check the clock.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Ah. It hasn't been that long.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Check the date.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE) Oh.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Almost two weeks.

/SFX/ DOOR OPENS

ARTURO: You're up!

CASSANDRA: Yes, I think I am.

ARTURO: Stay there. I'm going to get LOREA.

CASSANDRA: Staying here!

/SFX/ DOOR SHUTS

SAMAEL (ECHO): Get me a pen. And paper.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA STANDS, FINDS A PEN AND PAPER

CASSANDRA: What do you want me to write?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Nothing. I'm going to write on it.

CASSANDRA: How?

/SFX/ CASSANDRA SITS WITH PAPER

SAMAEL (ECHO): I shall command your hand as I once commanded you. I will reach through you and sign my fucking name.

CASSANDRA: Okay love. (PAUSE) Anytime. (PAUSE) You can start whenever.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (FRUSTRATED) I'm trying! (BEAT) God, your body is (BEAT) not what I'm used to.

CASSANDRA: Love, don't strain yourself.

SAMAEL (ECHO): This is for both our safeties! You'll need my signature to access my accounts and I have some rather nasty letters to write that won't be believed if they are not in my scrawl! We have work to do if you are going to survive outside this room. Whoever is currently sheriff...

CASSANDRA: ROSE. SOPHIA's sheriff.

SAMAEL (ECHO): ROSE, then.

CASSANDRA: I worked with her when I was running Harbinger's. She's (BEAT) agreeable. She's not as scary as JUDITH was.

SAMAEL (ECHO): What happened to JUDITH?

CASSANDRA: Oh, I had her killed.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (PAUSE) Bravo, my darling. My wond'rous cold-blooded girl!

CASSANDRA: This was over two years ago.

SAMAEL (ECHO): And without my protection!

CASSANDRA: Well, ELIJIO helped.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I'm so proud of him too. Now, let's make a list of the things we need to do before we re-enter Court. Don't write any of this down. We must get you to be seen as a credible threat to Camarilla operations. And get you to some of the Camarilla storage units I know will still be in use. Rob them. Leave your calling card, Arsene Lupin-style. It doesn't matter. You must be seen knowing what you have no business knowing. And then. Then we have so much to write. Maybe I can (BEAT) visualize my script and you can copy it down. Or. (BEAT) Or. (FRUSTRATED) Fuck. Or.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA HANDS STARTS TWITCHING ON THE PAPER, STOPS

CASSANDRA: I wasn't trying to move my hand. That was all you.

SAMAEL (ECHO): It's a start, I suppose. Let me try again.

/SFX/ DOOR OPENS

LOREA: CASSANDRA? Thank goodness. You're out of torpor.

CASSANDRA: What happened to me?

LOREA: Your body needed time to fix itself properly. It happens if you're wounded badly enough. Didn't SAMAEL tell you?

CASSANDRA: No, we were busy trying to...

SAMAEL (ECHO): (INTERRUPTS) Don't tell her I am trying to manifest through you. Yet.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE) We were trying to figure out what I'm supposed to do next.

LOREA: You're probably hungry.

CASSANDRA'S BEAST: It is time. You have rested long, and now you return to me.

CASSANDRA: I am. Do you have any Blood Dolls?

LOREA: No. And I'm not letting you chew on my girlfriends either.

SAMAEL (ECHO): There are ghouls at my businesses probably wondering where I am. They could potentially help us feed.

CASSANDRA: I'm not ghouling anybody.

LOREA: Oh? Who does SAMAEL have ghouled? They must be feeling awfully abandoned.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Tell her to fuck off.

CASSANDRA: They say to fuck off.

LOREA: Ooo, they're spilling all their secrets in your head, aren't they? Very well. Who would you like to eat? Your ex-girlfriend perhaps?

CASSANDRA: Fuck you.

LOREA: It was just a thought.

CASSANDRA: Let me get masked up. And (BEAT) Listen, I need to figure out how to do this myself. My way.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Oh, fuck. We're never eating again, are we?

LOREA: Do you want some rats as a backup?

CASSANDRA: Okay, you know what? I don't care if neither of you have any faith in my ability to hunt. Let's just go out, all right?

LOREA: I'd better come along. No offense.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Joy.

SCENE 7. — HUNT (EXT: REVERE STREET, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), SAMUEL, CASSANDRA'S BEAST, LOREA, VICTIM 1

/SFX/ STREET AMBIANCE, PEDESTRIANS WALKING, CASSANDRA AND LOREA WALK

CASSANDRA (NA): LOREA drove me out to southeast Seattle to find someone for me to drink. We got out and we walked. And we walked. And eventually I spotted a cutie. LOREA hung back and I went to seduce her, like when I was back hunting for dates at Harbinger's. (BEAT) It didn't go well.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND LOREA STOP

CASSANDRA: Hey, I hope you don't mind me saying, but your coat is amazing.

VICTIM 1: (PLEASED) Thank you!

CASSANDRA: Could I ask where you got it?

VICTIM 1: (POLITE) I have to go.

CASSANDRA: Of course. Your boots are very nice too.

VICTIM 1: Thanks, I appreciate it.

CASSANDRA: I'm Annabelle. I'd love to get a coffee sometime.

VICTIM 1: Sure. Maybe (BEAT) another time. I have to get going.

CASSANDRA: I understand.

/SFX/ LOREA WALKS OVER

LOREA: (TO CASSANDRA) For heaven's sakes. (TO VICTIM) Hi.

VICTIM 1: Hi.

LOREA: I would very much like to kiss you.

VICTIM 1: Mmm? (IS KISSED HAPPILY) Mmmph.

LOREA: (SEDUCTIVELY) Over there. Between those restaurants. I want to do more.

VICTIM 1: (A LITTLE DAZED) Okay!

/SFX/ LOREA AND VICTIM 1 WALK INTO THE ALLEY. CASSANDRA FOLLOWS, AND THEY STOP

LOREA: My friend's nervous but she wants the first kiss. (TO CASSANDRA) Go on.

VICTIM 1: (A LITTLE DAZED) Sure?

CASSANDRA: Thank you.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA DRINKS VICTIM, LICKS

VICTIM 1: (HAPPY MOAN)

LOREA: Now make her forget.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT, NERVOUS) You're going to forget everything that just happened.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Darling. Please. For the love of God, just a quick "Forget" and a snip to her memory's all you need.

LOREA: Has SAMAEL taught you a damned thing about how to hunt?

CASSANDRA: I've seen it done a thousand times.

LOREA: That's not the same.

VICTIM 1: (HAPPY MOAN)

LOREA: Right. (ENCOURAGING) Let's get going.

/SFX/ LOREA ESCORTS CASSANDRA AWAY BRISKLY, THEY WALK ON SIDEWALK

CASSANDRA: I didn't know you could dominate people.

LOREA: Not like you. I just like feeling girls melt before me.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) What even happens to the blood inside me?

LOREA: It circulates. It's used up over time.

CASSANDRA: One hundred milliliters an hour?

LOREA: Not like the TAM, no. It really depends.

CASSANDRA: On how much I exert myself. I know. But it's obnoxious that I can't store it. Why don't Kindred have the equivalent of fat reserves?

SAMAEL (ECHO): That would be cheating and the curse doesn't like it when you cheat.

CASSANDRA: Either it has rules or it doesn't.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Rules, yes. And one of those is not to lawyer your way past the others. You are a predator. Simply predate and then we can get onto our business.

CASSANDRA: Well, It would help if the curse was a little more specific.

LOREA: I love listening to the two of you argue. At least the side I get to hear.

CASSANDRA: Okay, I'm fed. I could use some cash, extra clothes, and a ride. SAMAEL says I need to hit some storage...

SAMAEL (ECHO): Don't fucking tell her!

LOREA: Need to hit some storage what?

CASSANDRA'S BEAST: Tell her.

SAMAEL (ECHO): No.

CASSANDRA'S BEAST: Tell her the truth.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Oh, this fucking broken record.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I could use a change of clothes. I'll be back later.

LOREA: Of course. I understand if SAMAEL is taking you to some prime Camarilla real estate they don't want me knowing about.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I'll pay you back for the cash and the clothes. I just need something that won't be easily traced back to me.

LOREA: Ah. (BEAT) Well. (BEAT) I'll keep your tab open. But (BEAT) SAMAEL can't exactly stop you from sharing anything with me.

CASSANDRA & SAMAEL: (TOGETHER) It's not going to happen.

LOREA: (SMIRKS) I tried. Fine. But no one does anything for free in Kindred society, as I'm sure you know. So expecting me to do a thing for money better involve a lot of money. And last I checked, you can't touch your accounts without Kitsap agents finding out where you are.

CASSANDRA: I'll pay you. Don't worry.

LOREA: I'm not worried. At all. But you should be. Your training wheels are off.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Tell her she'll get her money.

CASSANDRA: You'll get your money.

LOREA: Good. One other thing. If you're doing anything illegal. On your own. Without backup. I can't have you leading everyone back to my warehouse. You'll need to get your own place.

/SFX/ LOREA AND CASSANDRA STOP, LOREA OPENS HER TRUCK DOOR

LOREA: Get in.

CASSANDRA: Where are we going?

LOREA: Your new home.

SCENE 8. — HOUSING (INT: SPARROW APARTMENTS, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), SAMAEL, LOREA

/SFX/ ELEVATOR PULLS UP, DINGS, OPENS

LOREA: How much of SAMAEL's money do you intend to access?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Fucking hell.

CASSANDRA: A lot.

LOREA: Then welcome to your new address. Sparrow Apartments.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND LOREA WALK OUT OF ELEVATOR, ELEVATOR DOOR CLOSES

LOREA: This glorious, six-story complex has been mine since 2021. Built in 2016, it never managed to turn a profit, and I bought it for a song. (SARCASTIC) I wonder why no one wanted to live here...

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND LOREA WALK ON CARPET, STOP

LOREA: I assume you'd want the penthouse.

CASSANDRA: (SUSPICIOUS) What's wrong with this place?

LOREA: Nothing! It's what's right about it that makes it perfect for you and me.

/SFX/ LOREA UNLOCKS THE DOOR, CASSANDRA AND LOREA WALK IN ON CARPET, STOP, CLOSE DOOR

LOREA: This is the living room and the kitchen. Not that you'll need anything but the fridge. Unfurnished currently although I'm sure I can scrape up some giant wooden spools, ratty sofas, or plush chairs for you. There's two bedrooms with separate baths off the main room. Those have beds.

CASSANDRA: There's no windows.

LOREA: I was wondering when you'd notice. That was the whole selling point of this building. Pack in the apartments like steerage on a cruise liner. Obviously, only the rooms on the outer edge of the complex have windows. But for everyone else? The architect hoped that LEDs would suffice.

CASSANDRA: So why is it empty? Why don't you have a renter here?

LOREA: Oh, but I did. A friend of SIOBHAN's who boosted quite a lot of drugs from the Camarilla. ROSE caught her, and sent her to LEVIATHAN. Which is why, after your own adventures with LEVIATHAN, (GRINS) I thought of you. About how you'd probably like to be somewhere very far from the water.

SAMAEL (ECHO): We'll take it. Take it just to shut her up.

CASSANDRA: We'll take it. Who else lives in the building?

LOREA: Kindred. Some Anarchs. Some transients. Some humans in the apartments with windows.

/SFX/ LOREA WRITES ON A PIECE OF PAPER

LOREA: That's rent. Monthly. Cash only. There's a slot for envelopes in the mail room. I trust you're good for it.

CASSANDRA: (CONCERNED) Yes.

LOREA: Good. Give me an hour. I'll be back with some junk clothes for you. There's your key.

/SFX/ LOREA HANDS OVER A KEY TO CASSANDRA

LOREA: You're free to bring over whichever guests you want. Provided nothing you do here gets traced to me. And if the building itself is compromised? Well, you break it, you buy it. Understand?

CASSANDRA: Yes.

LOREA: Good. Enjoy the space! I'll return in a bit.

/SFX/ LOREA WALKS TO THE DOOR, OPENS DOOR, WALKS OUT, CLOSES DOOR

SAMAEL (ECHO): Let me practice some more with your hand. We'll need that money sooner than I'd like.

CASSANDRA: Sure.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA'S HAND SHAKES ON PAPER

SAMAEL (ECHO): Come on. Come on. Do something!

/SFX/ CASSANDRA'S HAND HITS PEN TO PAPER AND MOVES SLIGHTLY

SAMAEL (ECHO): Yes! Pen to paper! You saw that!

CASSANDRA: It's very impressive, love.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Let's see. Let's see. Ah!

/SFX/ CASSANDRA'S HAND RIPS ACROSS THE PAGE

SAMAEL (ECHO): There! A line!

CASSANDRA: It's more of a squiggle.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I am more of a child than you were when I first found you. Please, a little grace for my efforts.

CASSANDRA: It's a wonderful squiggle, my love.

SAMAE (ECHO): Again!

CASSANDRA (NA): We hadn't gotten much further than the squiggle by the time LOREA returned with other outfits for me. She couldn't stay, with Anarch work nipping at her heels.

LOREA: It's all right. You don't need to tell me where you'll be going tonight. (BEAT) I'll check the news.

/SFX/ ELEVATOR DOORS CLOSE

SCENE 9. — VIRGIN STORAGE (EXT: FREMONT WATERFRONT, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), SAMAEL, GUARD 1

/SFX/ CARS AND BOATS IN DISTANCE, WIND AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA WALKS

CASSANDRA (NA): SAMAEL led me to a small warehouse on the Fremont Waterfront. Waves lapped on the moored boats and the night's traffic ran on the massive bridge that spanned the area. I had changed outfits a mile away and walked over, my hands in balled fists, ready.

SAMAEL (ECHO): There'll just be humans at the storage facility. You can smell them.

CASSANDRA: Yes.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Right. Get your mask off. Get seen.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA TOSSES HER MASK ON THE GROUND

SAMAEL (ECHO): Good. Let the cameras get a fantastic look at you. (BEAT) Two guards in the front. Beat them up until they flee. We'll be gone before backup arrives.

CASSANDRA: (TO GUARDS) Hey.

GUARD 1: Excuse me. Private property. Sorry.

CASSANDRA: I know.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA PUNCHES THE GUARD

GUARD 1: Oof!

/SFX/ SECOND GUARD RUNS UP TO CASSANDRA, SHE PUNCHES THEM, THEY HIT THE SIDE OF THE WAREHOUSE

GUARD 1: (COUGHS)

CASSANDRA: Run. Get your backup. Tell them CASSANDRA was here.

GUARD 1: Fuck.

/SFX/ BOTH GUARDS RUN

SAMAEL (ECHO): That went swimmingly.

CASSANDRA: How do I get in?

SAMAEL (ECHO): The passcode. Should be one six eight two nine.

CASSANDRA: It's been three years, love.

SAMAEL (ECHO): The management company sets it, not us. We kept our medical supplies in here for one of the Camarilla's pharmaceutical companies. We are definitely paying the guards inside. There's quite the fortune in these walls.

CASSANDRA: (DOUBTING) Let's try the code.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA PRESSES THE CODE BUTTONS, GATE OPENS

SAMAEL (ECHO): They hadn't changed it for the last five years I walked the Earth. Those who knew about this place knew better than to piss us off.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS INSIDE

CASSANDRA: I'm surprised the Anarchs didn't try anything here.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Not in a long while. Complacency, my dear. Defenses fall without a regular threat.

SCENE 10. — THE FIRST FLAME (INT: CAMARILLA WAREHOUSE, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, SAMAEL, JOSEPHINE, GUARD 2, GUARD 3

/SFX/ MUTED EXTERIOR AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA WALKS ON PAVEMENT

SAMAEL (ECHO): The storage units on the right aren't worth your time. Turn left.

GUARD 2: Hey! Stay there! The police are on their way!

CASSANDRA: Good.

/SFX/ GUARD 2 CHARGES AT CASSANDRA, SHE PUNCHES THEM INTO A METAL GATE

GUARD 2: Urgh.

CASSANDRA: (FURIOUS) Why are you still here?

/SFX/ GUARD 2 SHUFFLES TO THEIR FEET AND RUN AWAY

GUARD 2: Fuck. Fuck.

SAMAEL (ECHO): The unit to your right. I recall it having some very costly materials inside.

CASSANDRA: Here goes. (GRUNTS)

/SFX/ CASSANDRA STRAINS THE GATE AND RIPS IT OFF, IT CLATTERS ONTO THE CONCRETE FLOOR

SAMAEL (ECHO): Do as you will.

CASSANDRA: Hah!

/SFX/ CASSANDRA SHATTERS GLASS BOTTLES INSIDE, LIQUID SPLASHES TO THE FLOOR, SOME HISSES

CASSANDRA: Where's the camera in the hall? (BEAT, LOOKS) Ah. Right there.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS INTO THE HALL AND STOPS

CASSANDRA: Whoever's watching? This is CASSANDRA DAVRIL. Unauthorized. And I know where all your secrets are.

GUARD 3: Hey! Who're you?

CASSANDRA: I intend to cause trouble. (TO GUARD 3) Right?

/SFX/ GUARD 3 RUNS UP, CASSANDRA PUNCHES THEM, GUARD 3 HITS THE FLOOR, SLIDES DOWN THE CORRIDOR

GUARD 3: (PANTS)

CASSANDRA: Until. I am declared. Authorized.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS INTO THE UNIT, GRABS A BOX, SMASHES IT AND ALL THE BOTTLES INSIDE ON THE GROUND

/SFX/ TRUCK PULLS UP OUTSIDE

SAMAE (ECHO): Someone pulled up outside. Quicker than I expected.

CASSANDRA: Is there a back door?

SAMAE (ECHO): Of course. Head back the way you came.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS DOWN THE CORRIDOR

JOSEPHINE: (IN DISTANCE) Oh, Camarilla?

/SFX/ HUGE MOLOTOV FLIES THROUGH THE AIR, HITS GROUND, EXPLODES IN FIREBALL, FIRE ROARS

CASSANDRA: What the fuck?

SAMAE (ECHO): Fire! Get back!

/SFX/ MOLOTOV FLIES THROUGH THE AIR, HITS GROUND, EXPLODES IN FIREBALL, MORE WALLS START BURNING

CASSANDRA: Shit!

/SFX/ CASSANDRA RUNS THE OTHER WAY

JOSEPHINE: (IN DISTANCE) Running now? Does that become one as powerful as you?

/SFX/ MOLOTOV FLIES THROUGH THE AIR, HITS GROUND, EXPLODES IN FIREBALL

CASSANDRA: Shit, shit, shit.

SAMAE (ECHO): Who the fuck are they?

CASSANDRA: I only had a whiff of them. Something like Kindred.

SAMAE (ECHO): No.

/SFX/ MOLOTOV FLIES THROUGH THE AIR, HITS GROUND, EXPLODES IN FIREBALL, BUILDING BURNS

SAMAE (ECHO): Thin Bloods.

JOSEPHINE: (IN DISTANCE) Tell your “coterie” that the Fire Brigade stopped by!

SAMAE (ECHO): How the fucking fuck do they know about this place?

CASSANDRA: Which way?

SAMAE (ECHO): To the right.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA STOPS RUNNING, MOLOTOV FLIES THROUGH THE AIR, HITS GROUND, EXPLODES IN FIREBALL

JOSEPHINE: (IN DISTANCE) You can stop us anytime!

CASSANDRA: Fuck this.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA CHARGES AT THE WALL, HITS THE WALL, IT CRACKS

CASSANDRA: Making a shortcut.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA CHARGES AT THE WALL, HITS THE WALL, IT BREAKS

JOSEPHINE: (IN DISTANCE) How could you possibly be scared of us?

/SFX/ CASSANDRA CHARGES AT THE WALL, HITS THE WALL, IT SHATTERS OPEN

CASSANDRA: Fuck!

/SFX/ CASSANDRA RUNS OUTSIDE

JOSEPHINE: (IN DISTANCE) Goodbye, little Camarilla! Ask yourself what it costs to keep us out!

SCENE 11. — FLEEING THIN BLOODS (EXT: FREMONT WATERFRONT, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, SAMAE

/SFX/ CARS AND BOATS IN DISTANCE, WIND AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA RUNS

CASSANDRA: Fuck. Fuck.

SAMAE (ECHO): They weren't aiming for us, whoever they were.

CASSANDRA: I don't like fire.

SAMAE (ECHO): Of course you fear it. It is antithetical to your existence.

CASSANDRA: Yeah, I don't remember having a phobia that visceral.

SAMAE (ECHO): A special bonus prize that comes with being a Kindred.

CASSANDRA: I was terrified of it around the boat when LEVIATHAN was attacking me.

SAMAE (ECHO): I'm sure that hasn't helped your trauma response at all.

/SFX/ FIRE AND POLICE SIRENS AS BUILDING BURNS

CASSANDRA: Shit.

SAMAE (ECHO): They'll be too busy with the burning warehouse to come for you. Keep running.

CASSANDRA: Is the Camarilla going to blame me for this?

SAMAE (ECHO): Depends on how much of an idiot SOPHIA is. I wouldn't put it past her. Fuck.

CASSANDRA: Hang on.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA SLOWS RUNNING

/SFX/ REPEAT OF LINE 307 HANK: "FIRE, THOUGH. THAT'S TERROR."

CASSANDRA: When LOREA brought me back, the Anarchs were talking about those Thin Bloods.

SAMAE (ECHO): The Fire Brigade, they were calling themselves. Fitting. (BEAT) I believe we owe LOREA a visit.

CASSANDRA: She said not to bring trouble to her.

SAMAE (ECHO): Well, it's too late for that now. We need to know who we're fucking dealing with.

SCENE 12. — WHO ARE THEY (INT: LOREA'S WAREHOUSE, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, SAMAEL, LOREA

/SFX/ WAREHOUSE AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA WALKS IN SLOWLY, STOPS

CASSANDRA: LOREA?

LOREA: (ANGRY) Didn't I say not to come here?

CASSANDRA: I changed clothes. Who are the Fire Brigade?

LOREA: Oh. (BEAT) You ran into them?

CASSANDRA: Yes.

LOREA: Wait. That fire in Fremont. Did you hit that warehouse that the fire crews are working on?

CASSANDRA: Who are they?

LOREA: Answer my question first.

SAMAEL (ECHO): No.

CASSANDRA: No. Who. Are. They?

LOREA: I don't know. Thin Bloods who throw fire. They've been active the past few months.

CASSANDRA: What do they want?

LOREA: I assume, to burn down the Camarilla facilities.

CASSANDRA: One of them said, "You can stop us anytime."

LOREA: Well, if they want something, they should use their words. Not just burn everything.

CASSANDRA: Have they hit any Anarch property?

LOREA: No. It could be just a matter of time, though. They seem to hit places at random, sometimes twice a week. Sometimes it's weeks between hits.

CASSANDRA: Were you going to tell me?

LOREA: I didn't think they'd hit a place you'd actually be at.

CASSANDRA: Fuck you.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Love. Pen. Paper.

LOREA: A lot has changed, CASSANDRA. I've given you a boost up, but I can't keep protecting you.

CASSANDRA: Pen, paper. Please.

LOREA: For what?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Fine. Tell her.

CASSANDRA: SAMAEL.

LOREA: (PAUSE) Fuck.

/SFX/ LOREA WALKS OFF, COMES BACK, HANDS OVER PEN AND PAPER

LOREA: Here.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA HOLDS THE PEN, HER HAND SHAKES

SAMAEL (ECHO): I think I've got it. It's not pretty. But.

/SFX/ PEN STOPS SHAKING

LOREA: Good heavens. (SQUINTS AT PAGE) One. Of. Urs?

CASSANDRA: "One of yours."

LOREA: No. The Fire Brigade are not Anarchs, nor Anarch sired.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Then who?

LOREA: (BEAT) There was a band of Thin Bloods who used to run drugs from Vancouver. They've disappeared. We think it's them but we don't know why. All of a sudden.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Thanks.

LOREA: You're welcome. (BEAT) CASSANDRA. You can't encourage SAMAEL to control you like this.

CASSANDRA: I can do whatever the fuck I want.

LOREA: Trust me. However much you love them, you do not want them in a position where they can take over.

CASSANDRA: I trust SAMAEL.

LOREA: All right. Don't say I didn't warn you.

SAMAEL (ECHO): One last message, if you would.

CASSANDRA: Of course, love.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) WILLIAM. Get fucked.

LOREA: (PAUSE) Get out.

CASSANDRA: Goodbye.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS OUT

CASSANDRA: What did you do?

SAMAEL (ECHO): I made WILLIAM mad enough to speak in her head.

CASSANDRA: Is that why you changed your mind about telling her I'm helping you manifest?

SAMAEL (ECHO): I saw an opportunity I did not consider before. And I am not happy we had to survive fire again, love.

CASSANDRA: Your penmanship is awful.

SAMAEL (ECHO): As it was when I first was learning my letters at home. Don't worry. It will be better. With practice.

SCENE 13. — WHAT IF (INT: SPARROW APARTMENTS, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), SAMAEL, VICTIM 2

/SFX/ WIND OUTSIDE, NEIGHBORS' MUSIC MUFFLED

CASSANDRA (NA): LOREA had given me a little cash which I spent on piles of pens and stationary. Back in my new penthouse “suite”, SAMAEL and I went to work.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLING FRANTICALLY ON PAPER

SAMAEL (ECHO): There’s something going on with the Anarchs. There’s a reason LOREA didn’t tell us about the Fire Brigade.

CASSANDRA: I don’t think she’s helping them.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Not currently, no. They’re Thin Bloods. They’re smart, but they’ll be caught eventually. And if they gave up LOREA’s name under interrogation, well, there might be another war.

CASSANDRA: She really doesn’t want another. None of them do. I heard stories when it was over and I had reopened Harbinger’s to them.

SAMAEL (ECHO): You wouldn’t have liked to see me in a war against your friends. We would have fought, you and I. I would have moved you out of my home, somewhere you could stay neutral. Somewhere you wouldn’t know what I was doing.

CASSANDRA: I appreciate that you care. I have thought about it. I might well have lost you then anyway. (BEAT) But it’s not what happened. And I can’t think too hard about it, because it upsets me. At least. (BEAT) At least I would have fucking had you.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I would not have abandoned you. We would have been apart so we could be together again, someday. I never gave up hope for you. I kept thinking, she’s out there, you know. I would have known it, somehow, if you had fallen. Even while I hung in the dark, alone, bound in a room crusty with mold, I believed you were pursuing what you loved. Out there in the bright world. You would have other loves. You would find joy in places even I never knew. And you would remember me as I remembered you. In that small way, we would never really be apart. I told you the moon was mine, like you. You are my moon and just because I could not see you, that did not mean I did not feel your pull. (BEAT) Prison brought me religion because I prayed for you, my dearest. (BEAT) And here you are.

CASSANDRA: Your Honor. Please.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I’m holding. (BEAT) I’m holding on as best as I can. I missed ELIJIO as much as I’ve missed you. Soon we will be in Court before SOPHIA, and there, I will learn his fate. I spent so many nights listening for his cries. Sometimes I would shout aloud, never his name, just a cry, in case I ever heard him cry back to me. But I never did. (BEAT) I also prayed that meant he was free. (PAUSE) When you have as many loves as I do, being apart from you hurts twice as hard. I knew you were strong, though. I helped see you to that strength. I knew you would live. At least. (PAUSE) At least I had that.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE) You write with my dominant hand.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Yes.

CASSANDRA: Hold my other hand. Please.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Of course, my love.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA'S HANDS HOLD EACH OTHER

CASSANDRA: I feel you.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I know. (BEAT) Not quite as apart as the wretched world would like us.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE) Don't let go.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I'm trying. It's difficult. (SMILES) I'm getting better at it. You help. Immensely.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE) Let's go to bed. You take control of my wrist. My fingers. You know better than anyone else how to bring me pleasure.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (SLY) I do, that.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA'S HANDS RELEASE EACH OTHER

SAMAEL (ECHO): Where you go, I shall follow.

CASSANDRA: Nothing brings me more joy than hearing that from you.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA'S STANDS, WALKS ON CARPET, STOPS, SETTLES INTO BED

CASSANDRA (NA): SAMAEL and I spent our first night in bed, intimately, after too fucking long. Over two and a half years. I didn't give one shit they were barely fingers on my clit, in my vulva, digging deep inside me. The moans they stirred were real, as were their whispers in my ears.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (SOFT) There we are, my darling. I have you. As hard as I ever did.

CASSANDRA: (MOANING) Yes, Your Honor.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (SOFT) I remember you crying, holding me as Ulysses bound to the mast. I shall not let you go, you understand.

CASSANDRA: No, Your Honor. Thank you, Your Honor.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (SOFT) You are mine.

CASSANDRA: Yes.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Mine!

CASSANDRA: Yes, Your Honor.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I feel your body welling up. Blood rushing to my fingertips.

CASSANDRA: (IMPATIENT) Yes. Yes.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Cum for me, little one. Cum for me.

CASSANDRA: Yes! Yes! Fu...

/SFX/ ALL SOUND CUTS OUT

CASSANDRA (NA): I never doubted again that SAMAEL lived within me, and that our love would remain for all the years I had left in my neverending existence.

/SFX/ WIND OUTSIDE, NEIGHBORS' MUSIC MUFFLED, CASSANDRA'S HAND SCRIBBLES ONTO A PAGE

CASSANDRA (NA): SAMAEL's dexterity with my hand grew noticeably after our lovemaking. I still had to work with them, moving my elbow to help guide their writing over the page. But within a few days.

/SFX/ SWITCH TO EXT: STREET AMBIANCE, VICTIM 2 IS SLAMMED EROTICALLY AGAINST A WALL

VICTIM 2: (BREATHES HAPPILY)

CASSANDRA: (LOW) I'm going to drink you. And then you will forget.

VICTIM 2: (MOANS HAPPILY)

/SFX/ CASSANDRA DRINKS VICTIM 2, LICKS WOUND

CASSANDRA: But not yet. Kiss me. (BEAT) Make me regret taking this memory from you.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND VICTIM 2 KISS

/SFX/ SWITCH BACK TO INT: WIND OUTSIDE, NEIGHBORS' MUSIC MUFFLED, CASSANDRA'S HAND SCRIBBLES ONTO A PAGE

CASSANDRA (NA): In a few days, SAMAEL was writing almost as well as they had when they still had flesh.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) My dear Executrix Willamina, it pains me to write this letter, but you must know of the wicked crimes that SOPHIA, Prince of Seattle, perpetuated against you while Prince of Montreal, regarding the death of your third childe.

CASSANDRA (NA): They wrote and they wrote, hours upon hours, and no member of the Court escaped their wrath.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Dear Dolores, it pains me to scribe this letter to you, but with deepest regrets I must inform you that the villain Carolette who stole your birthright and murdered your coterie now works under the Prince SOPHIA in Seattle, with a new assumed name and identity.

CASSANDRA (NA): Everyone, that is, save ROSE, our Sheriff.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (THINKING) ROSE? ROSE? There's so many ROSEs.

CASSANDRA (NA): I described her.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Oh. (BEAT) She's a fine Sheriff. You can't blackmail Sheriffs. They've done all the worse things imaginable as part of their service to the Court. Toreadors just add a particular elegance to their torments. Some Princes adore it.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA'S HAND CONTINUES SCRIBBLING ONTO A PAGE

CASSANDRA (NA): And then they wrote more. And more. And finally.

CASSANDRA: Love, we do need some money to mail all these letters.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA'S HAND STOPS WRITING

SAMAEL (ECHO): Oh. Of course. Put down a fresh page.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA PUTS DOWN A NEW PIECE OF PAPER

SAMAEL (ECHO): Give me a moment to remember my accounts.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA'S HAND SCRIBBLES ONTO A PAGE

CASSANDRA (NA): It didn't take them long.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA'S HAND STOPS WRITING

SAMAEL (ECHO): There. Mail that. There'll be a suitcase full of fifty thousand cash waiting for us tomorrow at the location I specified. That should satisfy our immediate needs.

CASSANDRA: Thank you, love.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I need this as much as you. Your body is my own now. And I fear this will be the only rest either of us get for weeks to come.

SCENE 14. — COLLECTION (EXT: SEATTLE STREET, NIGHT)

- CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), SAMAEL, VICTIM 3

/SFX/ STREET AMBIANCE, PEDESTRIANS WALKING

CASSANDRA (NA): SAMAEL was right. The next night I was out, masked with padding under my clothes to disguise my figure, avoiding street cameras and cell phones to pick up a suitcase which was, thankfully, right where it should have been. As promised, it contained the cash we needed. I paid LOREA handsomely for my new, if humble, living space. I went out to hardware stores, broke inside, and stole spray paint cans. I then followed SAMAEL's directions to other Camarilla storage facilities, and sprayed my name brazenly on each. "CASSANDRA was here." Mercifully, I did not encounter the Fire Brigade again, nor did I hear any more of their exploits. (BEAT) Finally, it was time. We had prepared well for my debut in Camarilla Court. I was ready for my coming-out party. The following night, I brought the blackmail letters to a mail bin that I could easily break into, should I return to retrieve them. Without my assistance, they would travel to their intended recipients, and then, may the Divine have mercy upon that miserable Court. (BEAT) I found my way to an alley, changed into another of LOREA's trashy outfits, and proceeded northward, to the Court. Completely underdressed.

VICTIM 3: (BREATHING HEAVILY)

SAMAEL (ECHO): Are you ready?

CASSANDRA: Oh.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA DRINKS FROM VICTIM 3, LICKS WOUND

VICTIM 3: (MOANS HAPPILY)

CASSANDRA: Am I ever.

SCENE 15. — INTO THE BREACH (INT: SUMPTUOUS AUDIENCE CHAMBER, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, SAMAEL, ESTHER, SOPHIA, NICHOLE, ROSE, AMANDA

/SFX/ QUIET HALLWAY AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA KICKS IN THE FRONT DOOR, OUTSIDE STREET AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA MARCHES DOWN THE HALLWAY, DOOR CLOSES BEHIND HER

ESTHER: (SURPRISED, AMUSED) CASSANDRA?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Tell ESTHER this, if you would.

CASSANDRA: Shut up, Carolette. I want to speak with SOPHIA.

ESTHER: (CONFUSED THAT CASSANDRA KNOWS THAT NAME) You're not... on the docket? And you're unauthorized.

CASSANDRA: And Dolores would love to know where you are right now. I have no doubts that you could kill me. (BEAT) But then she'd find out. How does that rub your third eye?

ESTHER: (DUMBFOUNDED) SAMAEL?

CASSANDRA: They have the dirt on you, but you're negotiating with me now, all right? Let me see SOPHIA. Unless you want to be responsible when all her enemies learn everything SAMAEL has stored up on her.

ESTHER: (PAUSE) You're sure you really want to do this?

CASSANDRA: I do nothing the Court has not forced upon me.

ESTHER: (PAUSE) Very well.

CASSANDRA: Thank you "ESTHER."

/SFX/ ESTHER WALKS TO THE AUDIENCE CHAMBER DOOR, KNOCKS, THE DOOR OPENS

ESTHER: We have an emergency.

/SFX/ QUIET AUDIENCE CHAMBER AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA WALKS ON CARPET INTO COURT, STOPS

ROSE: CASSANDRA?

NICHOLE: CASSANDRA?

AMANDA: Oh, no.

SOPHIA: (SURPRISED) You?

CASSANDRA: I apologize deeply for my inexcusable return to this Honorable Court.

SOPHIA: Sheriff ROSE. Escort the unauthorized Ventrue to LEVIATHAN immediately.

ROSE: (UNSURE) Hmm.

CASSANDRA: But I must beg the Court to hear my petition. If I am removed at this moment, I doubt Executrix Willamina would appreciate learning who killed the third of her progeny. Over a trifling matter. Or Lictor Samson would understand why he was passed over for Princedom of Montreal, even though the role was all but guaranteed.

SOPHIA: You bluff.

CASSANDRA: Or the Federal Bureau of Investigation might like to know the locations of all the Camarilla storage units filled with smuggled goods. Many of which I've tagged with my own name.

ROSE: Are you working with the Thin Bloods?

CASSANDRA: No. I know nothing about them, except that they wrecked the first storage unit I visited.

SOPHIA: And you, a fledgling Ventrue, know all this because...?

CASSANDRA: The diablerie that brands my aura was consensual. It was by SAMAEŁ's choice. They live within me. They share information willingly. They treasure my body as I do. (BEAT) And they say to tell you you're a devil-swiven puddle of horse shit.

NICHOLE: (BEAT, SHOCKED) You can't say that!

SOPHIA: SAMAEŁ, leave my Court at once.

CASSANDRA: We have written down every delectable piece of filth we have on you, ESTHER, and the remainder of the Court, so if I die or am denied my freedom, it goes out. Everything I've said. It goes straight to the people you least want to find out. (BEAT) Hear my petition. Please.

SOPHIA: (PAUSE) Very well.

CASSANDRA: Accept my diablerie was consensual. SAMAEŁ died of their own free will. (BEAT) You can ask them yourself.

SOPHIA: (SCOFFS) How would I know this isn't some elaborate ruse from you?

/SFX/ CASSANDRA SLAPS A PIECE OF PAPER ON TABLE, PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEŁ (ECHO): (WRITING) Because you know my handwriting better than she does. Tell me this is a forgery, you pus-blooded poisoned cow.

SOPHIA: (READS, PAUSE) It's not that simple.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Explain.

SOPHIA: I can neither forgive nor authorize CASSANDRA. ELIJIO has been charged with assaulting another member of this Court. BLAZE, also known as the VANISHING GIRL. He has done so in defense of the diabolic CASSANDRA. Should I forgive or authorize CASSANDRA, I justify his actions. And I can't have that. My job is to prevent messes from occurring. And I assure you, this is one.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEEL (ECHO): (WRITING) When is his trial?

SOPHIA: Two nights.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEEL (ECHO): (WRITING) We will return and be judged with him.

SOPHIA: You will share his sentence.

CASSANDRA: If that's what it takes, Your Excellency.

SOPHIA: Very well. We grant you your freedom for the next two days. At which time, you will return here for your judgment. Now. You have surprised us with your mention of blackmail. We will be checking the posts for it from here on. It doesn't matter if you mailed them out of Condon, Oregon. We will find them. (BEAT) Begone. ROSE, escort her out.

ROSE: Of course, Your Excellency. (TO CASSANDRA) This way.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND ROSE WALK OUT FROM THE CHAMBER

ESTHER: CASSANDRA, have SAMAEEL tell you where I keep my victims sometime.

/SFX/ CHAMBER DOOR CLOSSES, CASSANDRA AND ROSE CONTINUE WALKING

ROSE: I had hoped you wouldn't be so stupid as to come back to us.

CASSANDRA: I was dying. What was I supposed to do?

ROSE: If everyone dying became a Kindred, LEVIATHAN would be plumper than she already is. (BEAT) It is good to see you again.

CASSANDRA: Same. I see you conscripted NICHOLE.

ROSE: She asked. She needed purpose. Like you.

CASSANDRA: I'll settle for survival.

ROSE: And then?

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Anything after that is a dream.

ROSE: (BEAT) I liked working with you. You kept everyone in line, like I did. But now (BEAT) you're one of us. And you've been attacking our warehouses. I have video of you destroying our supplies.

CASSANDRA: Just the once.

ROSE: Reassure me that the farce is over. Assure me of your behavior for the next two nights.

CASSANDRA: Provided I have my trial.

ROSE: (LAUGHS) You'll have your trial. I should be imprisoning you until then.

CASSANDRA: But I have so many blackmail letters to reacquire.

ROSE: You are a special case in a system that abhors special cases. The nail that sticks out gets hammered down. (BEAT) That said, I do owe you for getting me my job. JUDITH would not have left her post quietly.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I will not raid any more warehouses.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND ROSE STOP WALKING

ROSE: Then you're free to go. (BEAT) But there is a reason I am known as the Shepherd. I tend to the Lost Flock. Those who need purpose. But more importantly, wayward Kindred without their sire's direction.

CASSANDRA: SAMAEL still directs me.

ROSE: I should like to see them then. I should like to shake their hand and look into their eyes.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA TAKES ROSE'S HAND AND SHAKES

CASSANDRA & SAMAEL (ECHO): You are.

ROSE: (BEAT) We'll see if the Prince agrees. Two nights.

/SFX/ EXTERIOR DOOR OPENS, STREET AMBIANCE OUTSIDE

ROSE: Don't get lost.

SCENE 16. — FINAL DECISION (EXT: SEATTLE STREET, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, SAMAEL

/SFX/ STREET AMBIANCE, PEDESTRIANS WALKING, CASSANDRA WALKS

SAMAEL (ECHO): That could have gone better.

CASSANDRA: I'm not dead. Thank you.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Your bones also remain unbroken. Let's reclaim those letters and hide them for future use.

CASSANDRA: We have two days to prepare for a Court case.

SAMAEL (ECHO): It'll be rigged. They always are in Camarilla Court.

CASSANDRA: Should I run?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Of course not. Everyone has their pain point, and their amusement point. SOPHIA is no different. We just need to determine how to make our existence preferable to killing us.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I have no idea.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I do. But it doesn't seem guaranteed yet. (BEAT) You still have the problem of being a target of the Sabbat. Their memories are not as long as they think they are, and it would help us if your human persona had an official coroner's certificate.

CASSANDRA: I could go to the ER and stop moving until they notice.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (CHUCKLES) That could be until morning. You'll want to be reported dead. Processed. And then you get the hell out of the coroner's refrigerator. The coroners are used to finishing paperwork on missing corpses. It's what we pay them for, after all.

CASSANDRA: So where should I play dead?

SAMAEL (ECHO): You're not playing.

CASSANDRA: Probably not anywhere in public then?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Yes. Too much could go wrong.

CASSANDRA: (REALIZES) Fuck. I know how it should go. It'll be reported fast.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Well, there you go.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) And it'll be the end of something that needs to end.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Oh. You'll really do that?

CASSANDRA: Yes. But. (BEAT) You'll get to meet her. I really want that. It would make me very happy if someone in this world knew her besides me.

SAMAE (ECHO): Love. I would be honored.

CASSANDRA: Thank you. Tomorrow night. We'll see her first thing.

SCENE 17. — HUMAN DEATH (INT: STEPHANIE'S APARTMENT, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), SAMUEL, STEPHANIE

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

/SFX/ CASSANDRA KNOCKS ON HER DOOR

STEPHANIE: Hang on. I'm coming.

CASSANDRA (NA): I bought a nice dress to wear. For her to remember me in. Besides, I was sick of sweats and T-shirts all the time.

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

STEPHANIE: (WORRIED) Hi.

CASSANDRA: Hello STEPHANIE.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS IN WITH A CANE

CASSANDRA (NA): I already looked corpse-like. It wasn't hard to play the part.

STEPHANIE: I haven't heard from you in so long. I just. Assumed.

CASSANDRA: My lawyers would have contacted you.

STEPHANIE: Yeah. I kinda hoped.

CASSANDRA: I'm not doing well.

STEPHANIE: You look it. You're paler than before. (BEAT) I'm sorry. I didn't mean to say it.

CASSANDRA: It's all right. I know how I am.

STEPHANIE: You still hurting?

CASSANDRA: Yes. I don't expect that to end anytime soon.

STEPHANIE: Let me get you a chair.

CASSANDRA: I'm okay standing.

STEPHANIE: All right.

CASSANDRA: Tell me how the community center's been going.

STEPHANIE: Good. It's busier now. We started a lunch program that's taking all our time and resources. The cops hate it, of course. (BEAT) Folks miss your classes.

CASSANDRA: No, they don't.

STEPHANIE: I've had multiple people come to me asking where you are. You're remembered. You made a mark.

CASSANDRA: That's sweet of you to say.

STEPHANIE: It's true. (BEAT) I'm glad you're still hanging on here.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I've had a lot of time to think about my end. And I don't want it. But. (BEAT) It's how the world is, you know. Death is in the trees. While the forest lives. (BEAT) Thank you for missing me.

STEPHANIE: (SMILES) Well. (BEAT) You're still here.

SAMAE (ECHO): What a kind soul. Thank you for introducing me. I see why you wanted to be so good to her.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Whatever happens. I'll be looking out for you. Okay? I'll watch over you. I promise.

STEPHANIE: (BEAT) I know you will. (BEAT) I have pictures of you. Video of us.

CASSANDRA: I'm glad. I'm happy I got to know you. And have everything that happened between us. I wouldn't trade it for anything.

STEPHANIE: (BEAT) I wish I knew why you had to break up with me. Who she was. What kind of life you had.

CASSANDRA: I wish I could tell you. (BEAT) But you're safe. Stay safe, okay?

STEPHANIE: I'll try.

CASSANDRA: Uuuh.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA FALLS TO THE FLOOR

STEPHANIE: CASSANDRA? CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: Uuuh.

STEPHANIE: Hey. Hey. How are you?

CASSANDRA: Cold.

STEPHANIE: I'll get you a blanket. I'll call the EMTs.

/SFX/ STEPHANIE RUNS OUT, RUNS BACK WITH BLANKET

STEPHANIE: Here you go. I've got you. You're right here. (BEAT) You are cold.

CASSANDRA: Uuuh.

STEPHANIE: Hey. Hang on.

/SFX/ STEPHANIE CALLS 911 ON PHONE

STEPHANIE: (TO OPERATOR) Hi. Yeah. I have a woman on my floor, who experienced physical trauma, and needs EMTs immediately. I can't lift her. My address is...
[VOICE FADES OUT]

/SFX/ STEPHANIE WALKS AWAY, WALKS BACK

STEPHANIE: (TO OPERATOR) Thank you. I'll be here. (TO CASSANDRA) They're sending a team over.

/SFX/ STEPHANIE ENDS THE CALL, BEEPS, PUTS HER PHONE AWAY

CASSANDRA: STEPH.

STEPHANIE: They'll be here soon.

CASSANDRA: I love you. (BEAT) Uuh.

STEPHANIE: I know you do. I love you too. I never stopped. (BEAT) Hey, let me elevate your feet. (PAUSE) CASSANDRA. CASSANDRA. Fuck. Hey. Hey hey hey. I'm here. Say something. (BEAT) Fuck. Give me your wrist.

/SFX/ STEPHANIE TAKES CASSANDRA'S WRIST

STEPHANIE: Come on. Come on come on come on come on come on. Just move. Come on. Just move a tiny bit. (BEAT) Hey. Pain test. I'm squeezing the flesh between your thumb and index finger. (BEAT) Fuck. Fuck fuck fuck. Wrist pulse. (BEAT) Carotid pulse. (BEAT, SCARED) Fuuuuck. CPR.

/SFX/ STEPHANIE RIPS OPEN CASSANDRA'S DRESS

STEPHANIE: Come on. One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. Eight. Nine. Ten. (BREAKING DOWN) Eleven. Twelve. Thirteen. Fourteen. Fifteen. Sixteen. Seventeen. Eighteen. Nineteen. Twenty. [VOICE FADES OUT]

/SFX/ AUDIO FADES OUT, FADES BACK IN WITH EMTS WALKING AROUND THE APARTMENT, EMS RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

STEPHANIE: Please. Just a little longer. Just. Use the AED on her again. Please. I thought I saw her move. (BEAT) She was walking around fifteen minutes ago.

/SFX/ BODY BAG ZIPS UP

STEPHANIE: Oh god. Please. Don't.

/SFX/ BODY BAG CLOSES

/SFX/ AMBIANCE CHANGES TO AMBULANCE INTERIOR

SAMAE (ECHO): It had to be this way.

CASSANDRA (ECHO): I meant what I said. I'm going to watch her.

SAMAEEL (ECHO): Of course you will.

SCENE 18. — ABSENT MORTICIAN (INT: CORONER'S MORTUARY, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (ECHO), SAMAEL, NAVY HUNTER, RUTH

/SFX/ MORTUARY AMBIANCE, REFRIGERATOR HUMS

/SFX/ CASSANDRA IS ROLLED INTO A REFRIGERATOR, DOOR IS SHUT

CASSANDRA (ECHO): Ow. My ribs still hurt from when she broke them. (BEAT) I'm a little sad this dress is already ruined. I don't have anything as nice as it now.

SAMAEL (ECHO): That poor girl.

CASSANDRA (ECHO): I can't move without alerting the staff. I can't think about her. (BEAT) Do you know how hard it's been to keep from crying?

SAMAEL (ECHO): You've done admirably. (BEAT) Keep an ear out. Wait until the coroners have left the mortuary.

/SFX/ PAPERS RUSTLE, ECHOING

CASSANDRA (ECHO): (BEAT) They're finishing some paperwork. (PAUSE) They're leaving. (PAUSE) They're gone.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Good. Quick. Out.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA TEARS OPEN THE BODY BAG, PUSHES OPEN THE REFRIGERATOR DOOR, AND ROLLS HER TRAY OUT

CASSANDRA: Even I was getting cold in there.

SAMAEL (ECHO): We can still freeze.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA SWINGS ONTO THE FLOOR, PUSHES THE TRAY BACK IN, CLOSES THE REFRIGERATOR DOOR

CASSANDRA: Uh. I'll need some clothes to get out of here.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Over by the desk. There should be some hospital scrubs on the floor. We pay for those too.

CASSANDRA: Right.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA DROPS HER DRESS, PUTS ON HOSPITAL SCRUBS, STOPS

CASSANDRA: It's awfully quiet outside, isn't it?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Disturbingly so.

CASSANDRA: I smell people coming.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Time to move.

CASSANDRA: There's just the one exit.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Carry some papers. Look like you belong.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA SCOOPS UP SOME PAPERS, WALKS TO THE DOOR

CASSANDRA: (LOW) They're right outside.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Go!

/SFX/ CASSANDRA OPENS THE DOOR

NAVY HUNTER: Freeze! Fucking monster!

/SFX/ NAVY HUNTER TASERS CASSANDRA

CASSANDRA: (SHOCKED) Fu-u-u-ck.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA FALLS TO TILE FLOOR

SAMAEL (ECHO): (DESPERATE) CASSANDRA! Get up!

/SFX/ NAVY KINDRED HUNTERS SURROUND HER

RUTH: Twenty seconds left.

NAVY HUNTER: I've got this.

/SFX/ NAVY KINDRED HUNTERS PUT CUFFS ON HER HANDS AND FEET

NAVY HUNTER: Got her hands. Got her feet.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (DESPERATE) CASSANDRA! Command them to stop!

CASSANDRA: Uh-uh-uh-uh.

RUTH: She's coming back.

NAVY HUNTER: Relax. She's secure.

RUTH: You're supposed to blind and gag her first! Ventrue!

NAVY HUNTER: Fuck.

CASSANDRA: (GRITTED TEETH) Stop! All of you! Stop!

/SFX/ ALL NAVY KINDRED HUNTERS MOVEMENT STOPS

CASSANDRA: (SCARED) I can't paralyze five hunters like that.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I can. I acted through you. We don't have time. Break out from those bonds.

CASSANDRA: (GRUNTS)

/SFX/ METAL BONDS SHATTER, CASSANDRA STANDS

NAVY HUNTER: (TRYING TO MOVE) Aurrgh.

SAMAEL (ECHO): They're moving again. We need to concentrate to hold them.

CASSANDRA: I'm trying.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Fuck. I was so concerned about the letters, I forgot to teach you.

NAVY HUNTER: (TRYING TO MOVE) Aurrgh!

CASSANDRA: Fuck this.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA RIPS ONE HUNTER'S THROAT OUT, SMASHES A SECOND ON THE TILE FLOOR

NAVY HUNTER: (TRYING TO MOVE) Shoot her!

/SFX/ REMAINING HUNTERS STIR

CASSANDRA: Shut up.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA STOMPS ON THE HUNTER ON THE FLOOR, KILLING THEM WITH BONE CRACK

RUTH: Fuck!

/SFX/ GUNSHOTS AT CASSANDRA

CASSANDRA: (SHOUTS) Haah!

/SFX/ CASSANDRA CHARGES AT HUNTER, KNOCKING THEM INTO WALL

CASSANDRA: (GROWLS)

/SFX/ CASSANDRA BITES OFF HUNTER'S FACE, THEY SCREAM

SAMAEL (ECHO): Watch out!

/SFX/ THREE RIFLE SHOTS AT CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA THROWS THE HUNTER'S BODY SHE'S HOLDING AT SHOOTING HUNTER, SHOOTING HUNTER IS KNOCKED TO TILE GROUND

NAVY HUNTER: (REELING FROM IMPACT) Uuuu!

SAMAEL (ECHO): They'll get back up.

CASSANDRA: Not if I have anything to say about it.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA PICKS UP A METAL BODY CART, SLAMS IT HARD ON THE HUNTERS

SAMAEL (ECHO): Yes! Crush them under that cart!

/SFX/ CASSANDRA TEARS OUT THEIR NECKS

NAVY HUNTER: (TRIES TO BREATHE, CAN'T, STOPS)

/SFX/ PISTOL FIRE

CASSANDRA & SAMAEL: Stop!

RUTH: (TERRIFIED, PARALYZED) Uth. Uth.

CASSANDRA: Her scent is familiar.

SAMAEL (ECHO): They all should be. Fucking Kitsap Kindred Hunters. Probably got the call when STEPHANIE used your name to the EMTs. Fuck, why didn't I think of that?

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS TOWARD RUTH SLOWLY

CASSANDRA: Hunter.

RUTH: Wait! Don't you remember me?

CASSANDRA: Can't say I do.

RUTH: You drank from me! On Kitsap base! You let me live!

CASSANDRA: That's about to change.

RUTH: I'm RUTH! You remember me! You just wanted to drink from me and you let me go!

CASSANDRA: I could use a drink.

RUTH: (TERRIFIED) What happened to you?

CASSANDRA: You tried to capture me.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Finish her off and be done with her. Her neck is open season for you.

RUTH: I'm not part of this! I'm a scientist!

CASSANDRA: Really? And who do you experiment on?

RUTH: People. (BEAT) Incredible people. People who shouldn't exist. People with untold abilities and strength and its terrible and I hate it, okay? I fucking hate it. I fucking hate what they make me do to you.

CASSANDRA: Then quit.

RUTH: As if they'd let me out. (BEAT) No one finds out about you. No one. (BEAT) I'm trans. I'm not even supposed to be working in the Navy. I'm in a black ops project and they told us in no uncertain terms, we can't get out.

CASSANDRA: I can get you out.

RUTH: I know. I know. You can kill me. I'm even your preference. (BEAT) I know you can't let me go.

CASSANDRA: No.

RUTH: So you can feed on me. (BEAT) As long as you want. (BEAT) CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Fuck.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Ask her if she's First Light. It's the American branch of the Second Inquisition.

CASSANDRA: Are you First Light?

RUTH: No! They show up twice a year to yell at us, but that's it! They think our work is (BEAT) abhorrent.

SAMAEL (ECHO): It is abhorrent.

CASSANDRA: You kept someone I love prisoner for over two years. In chains. In the dark. For experiments.

RUTH: I fed them as best I could. I even gave them some of my own blood when supplies were low.

CASSANDRA: And that makes their torment better?

RUTH: I know. I'm at your mercy, CASSANDRA. And if I'm correct. Also (BEAT) SAMAEL.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Don't you dare say my name!

/SFX/ CASSANDRA GRABS RUTH, SMASHES HER AGAINST A WALL

SAMAEL (ECHO): Don't you say my name you fucking arse of a collaborator. I sat on my fucking knees for years enduring whatever fucked up shit you put in my blood bags. You don't deserve one drop of my spittle before I crush your head in my hands. You understand me? Little researcher?

CASSANDRA: SAMAEL!

SAMAEL (ECHO): What?

CASSANDRA: She can't hear you!

SAMAEL (ECHO): Tell her she's dead.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE, THINKING) Huh.

RUTH: (BEGGING) Please don't.

SAMAE (ECHO): Tell her she's dead, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE) Did they bring you here because they knew I let you live?

RUTH: (BEGGING) I don't know. (BEAT) It's a possibility.

CASSANDRA: Then in saving you, I'd be playing right into their hands.

RUTH: (BEGGING) How? What can I do to you?

CASSANDRA: Then tell me why I should let you live.

RUTH: (PAUSE, BEGGING) Because you can. Because, what I know about you, you don't have to lie to me. (BEAT) Because the more you kill, the more it eats at you. You don't have to just survive. And to you, I'm just nothing.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE, AMUSED) Hmm mmm.

SAMAE (ECHO): (PAUSE) CASSANDRA. Love. I don't want to fucking see this witch a second longer.

CASSANDRA: I think I want to talk with her.

SAMAE (ECHO): Because she offered to be your Blood Doll? Please.

CASSANDRA: I'm curious about that, yes. But I cannot have that conversation with her because my hands are on her throat!

RUTH: (WHIMPERS)

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Do you need me to take charge, love?

SAMAE (ECHO): (PAUSE) Do as you will.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA RELEASES RUTH AGAINST THE WALL

RUTH: (BREATHES) Thank you. Thank you.

CASSANDRA: Do you have use to me, RUTH?

RUTH: Whatever I can do. I can get you experiment results. Information about our deployments.

CASSANDRA: I just want your blood.

RUTH: Please. Here.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Good girl.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA DRINKS FROM RUTH, LICKS WOUND CLOSED

SAMAE (ECHO): (BEAT) Darling, I know you feel isolated in our little penthouse. You've hated every drink you've taken since we escaped Kitsap. But this is a very bad idea.

CASSANDRA: We need help escaping the hospital. (TO RUTH) Get me out of here.

RUTH: Okay. Take a folder so you look professional. And a name tag. I'll lead you out.

CASSANDRA: You wouldn't try anything, would you, RUTH? When we're in the hospital, surrounded by humans.

RUTH: Of course not.

CASSANDRA: You wouldn't pull any alarms or shout for help?

RUTH: I wouldn't. You're too strong. You can use your mind power to command me. I'm nothing against you. You're (BEAT) basically (BEAT) a god.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) That's a good descriptor for me. Lead the way.

SAMAE (ECHO): We'll talk about this later. Clean your face first.

CASSANDRA: Yes, Your Honor.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WIPES HER MOUTH WITH A CLOTH

CASSANDRA: RUTH. How do I look?

RUTH: (NERVOUS) There's a little blood on your right.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WIPES HER MOUTH WITH A CLOTH

RUTH: (NERVOUS) Perfect. (BEAT) Ready when you are.

CASSANDRA: What about your fellow Hunters?

RUTH: (BEAT) We should be out before they're discovered.

CASSANDRA: Perfect. You have a phone?

RUTH: Yes.

CASSANDRA: Order us a Lyft. Don't worry. We won't be going far. We'll walk the rest of the way.

RUTH: Yes, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: Good. Keep your eyes down and walk. Free us from this place.

RUTH: I will. Thank you for my life.

CASSANDRA: For now.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH WALK OUT

SCENE 19. — HUNT (EXT: SEATTLE STREET, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, SAMAEAL, RUTH

/SFX/ STREET AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA AND RUTH STEP OUT OF LYFT ONTO SIDEWALK

CASSANDRA: (TO LYFT DRIVER) Thank you for the ride!

RUTH: (PRETENDING EVERYTHING IS NORMAL) Thank you!

/SFX/ LYFT DRIVES OFF

CASSANDRA (NA): The hospital was filled with busy workers who barely noticed us leaving. The Lyft brought us a couple miles from Sparrow Apartments, where there were plenty of places for us to hide.

CASSANDRA: Come on. Into this alley.

RUTH: Yes.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH WALK INTO THE ALLEY AND STOP

CASSANDRA: So. If I'm going to keep you, you have to understand the rules. First off, phones are dangerous. Destroy yours. (BEAT, CRUELLY) Or don't.

/SFX/ RUTH BREAKS HER PHONE IN HALF

RUTH: Done.

CASSANDRA: Leave it. Let's go.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH WALK DOWN ALLEY

RUTH: (SCARED, ALMOST LAUGH) Heh.

CASSANDRA: What's funny?

RUTH: (SCARED) Nothing! (BEAT) I've never seen any of your people free, in the city. Just walking around like it's natural.

CASSANDRA: Are you studying me?

RUTH: (BEAT) Always. (BEAT) I'm a very specialized biologist. With a minor in behavioral science.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Would you like to watch me hunt?

RUTH: (QUIET PAUSE) Are you talking, me?

CASSANDRA: No, not you. If I let you come with me on a hunt, would you watch as I took my prey?

RUTH: I wouldn't.

CASSANDRA: Why?

RUTH: It would be rude of me.

CASSANDRA: I would insist you watch. I consent.

RUTH: I'm afraid whatever I learned could be used against you.

CASSANDRA: If you had any chance of escaping.

RUTH: I'm not looking to escape. You have me.

CASSANDRA: Then why do you fear learning more about me?

RUTH: The more I know, the more reason you have to kill me.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I don't think we need a reason at this point.

CASSANDRA: Your life is mine, RUTH. You already know too much. You've already done too much. Simply abandon all hope. You may not even last the night.

RUTH: I understand.

CASSANDRA: Good. (BEAT) Welcome to the tiger's cage.

SAMAEL (ECHO): (BEAT) Why are we bringing her home? (PAUSE) I suppose there's nowhere else to put her. Fine.

SCENE 20. — SCIENCE BLATHER (INT: SPARROW APARTMENTS, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, CASSANDRA (NA), SAMAEI, RUTH

/SFX/ WIND OUTSIDE, NEIGHBORS' MUSIC MUFFLED, DOOR UNLOCKS, CASSANDRA AND RUTH WALK IN, CASSANDRA STOPS, LOCKS DOOR

CASSANDRA: I apologize I haven't had time to furnish the space. Sit on the floor.

RUTH: Yes, CASSANDRA.

/SFX/ RUTH SITS ON CARPET

SAMAEI (ECHO): How are you going to feed her? How are you going to keep her in here during the day? What stops her from trying to escape, or worse, kill us?

CASSANDRA: (TO RUTH) You know, I can smell you, right? Wherever you go. If you tried to escape.

RUTH: Of course. Your orthonasal olfaction exceeds that of canids. (BEAT) Which doesn't (BEAT) make sense, because your nose is too close to your face.

CASSANDRA: Orthonasal?

RUTH: The ability to perceive scent at a distance. You need your skull's morphology to be shaped like a snout if you want to detect scents at that range. But you don't. And it doesn't... (INTERRUPTS SELF) I'll shut up.

CASSANDRA: No, no, I'm curious. What else do you know about us?

RUTH: Your retronasal olfaction is slightly better than a human's. You freeze at negative forty degrees Celsius. Your circulatory system only acts "alive" when blood is touching it. But it shouldn't? Your body is basically a preserved corpse, so if we ask your veins if they're alive or dead, if they have "blood" in them, they say they're "alive." But if they're empty, they say they're "dead" without decomposition. (BEAT) And your blood isn't even blood.

CASSANDRA: Oh. What is it?

RUTH: (BEAT) It's complicated.

CASSANDRA: I want to know. Why don't Kindred have the equivalent of fat reserves for our blood?

RUTH: If you're asking why you don't store blood in large polymeric molecules or monomer subunits for metabolism, like fatty acids? I mean, that doesn't even make sense biologically. (BEAT) But to answer your question. Yes, we've thought about why you don't have long term storage for energy. The best theory we've developed assumes that inside you, your "blood" isn't really blood. It is energy. It's directly what allows your body to function. It helps you move and stay conscious. It's the equivalent for all the processes that would normally convert ADP to ATP for cellular use in a human body.

CASSANDRA: So, blood gives me life.

RUTH: Which makes no fucking sense. Blood is a carrier throughout the body and a defense mechanism against hostile foreign bodies. It doesn't produce glucose. The way it operates in your body (BEAT) it's like, a river that creates its own ecosystem. Plants from nothing. Animals from nothing. Fungi from nothing but the river. It only makes sense if we consider that your blood becomes your energy. Like gas in an engine. But it doesn't do things that blood does. If you're cut, your blood doesn't clot the wound. Your flesh uses the blood like glucose to heal itself.

CASSANDRA: And where does the blood go when my flesh is using it as glucose?

RUTH: We don't know. Yes. The plasma, the platelets, and the red and white blood cells pretend they're there. And they break down into simpler molecules when your flesh is using them to "repair" itself. And those molecules? They're just gone. It makes no fucking sense.

CASSANDRA: Conservation of matter.

RUTH: Yes. Your body is a black hole. We have no idea what becomes of the energy in your body. And I'm not even getting started on the things you can do. The mind shit and the moving fast and the disguises.

CASSANDRA: It makes no sense.

RUTH: It makes no sense.

CASSANDRA: Would you like to know why it works?

RUTH: (BEAT) Sure.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT, SCARY) We're storybook monsters. We're cursed. We exist only to terrify humans in the shadows or in forests at night.

RUTH: That doesn't explain why you're a walking conundrum breaking all the laws of physics. Do humans even need scaring that badly?

CASSANDRA: God seems to think so.

RUTH: (BEAT) Forgive me for saying so, (BEAT) but that sounds like the First Light.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) You think there's other reasons for why Kindred exist?

RUTH: Yes. (BEAT) I conducted a study a couple years ago that proved your bodies conform to certain rules. We were wondering, why some of your people get diseases and are able to pass them onto humans, when your "blood" isn't blood. We tried injecting or feeding you vaccines. Those just disappeared into your bloodstream. They were there and then they weren't.

SAMAEAL (ECHO): What did I say about your curse not liking it when you cheat?

RUTH: But then we constructed fully functional viruses with edited RNA that could produce the proteins typically delivered by vaccines. A severely weakened version of the virus, or something that would alert and assist the white blood cells in attacking the virus. And they worked. They didn't disappear into your bloodstream. Your people successfully delivered constructed antivirals into animals. (BEAT) Now this isn't proof that your bodies could deliver vaccines and drugs to the general population yet. But we're getting there. And it's looking encouraging.

SAMAEL (ECHO): It sounds as if they're weaponizing us.

CASSANDRA: We could also be used to deliver even worse plagues with this technology.

RUTH: I suppose but that's not what we're testing for. We've had successful trials with the latest COVID vaccines. My point is, your bodies don't distinguish between "good" viruses and "bad" viruses. We can put a virus in some of you and it'll come out, whatever it is. It doesn't work on all of you, though. But for those of you who do carry a particular virus, your "blood" can just as easily carry a hidden antiviral.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT, UNDERSTANDING) That's incredible.

RUTH: I know. It makes sense. After every conundrum and mystery in you, this makes sense.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I do not believe this.

CASSANDRA: (FLUMMOXED) This is amazing.

RUTH: I know. We're searching for more. I want to figure out how we can help you, or assist you in helping others.

SAMAEL (ECHO): With captive prisoners forced to participate.

CASSANDRA: It's still being developed on people against their will.

RUTH: I know it's not right. I'm on a tight leash though.

CASSANDRA: Do they let you leave the base?

RUTH: Yeah. They can't house everyone there. I have an apartment a few towns over with some of the other women who work on the base.

CASSANDRA: You have your ID on you?

RUTH: Yes.

CASSANDRA: Give it here.

/SFX/ RUTH PASSES OVER HER ID

SAMAEL (ECHO): That's exactly how I got your name and address.

CASSANDRA: (READING) East Bremerton?

RUTH: Yes. There's a really good diner nearby called Mina's Cafe that I hit up for breakfast sometimes.

CASSANDRA: I remember driving out there with my ex. We used to stop by a paintball maze in Bethel when we were staying out there.

RUTH: Oh, fuck. That place closed down during the COVID pandemic.

CASSANDRA: No shit?

RUTH: Yeah. I never went. It sounded fun though.

CASSANDRA: It was a blast. My ex and I would hunt each other down in there. We got preternaturally good.

RUTH: That sounds amazing. I really don't have any friends on the base anymore.

CASSANDRA: Oh?

RUTH: Yeah. It sucks.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I'm sorry.

RUTH: It's a side effect of being stuck out there. The government wants to create supersoldiers out of corpses and we keep telling them it's not sustainable or practical. And they keep funding us. Even though they know your bodies don't make any fucking sense.

CASSANDRA: They don't. Aside from viruses apparently.

RUTH: Yeah. No fucking sense otherwise.

CASSANDRA: (CHUCKLES) No fucking sense.

RUTH: Nope! (CHUCKLES)

CASSANDRA: It's just so (BEAT) arbitrary!

RUTH: Yeah. (CHUCKLES) I guess. Like out of a fucking storybook. Okay!

CASSANDRA: I know! Grrr. I'm a monster!

RUTH: Big teeth. Big eyes.

CASSANDRA: Grr. (BEAT) Gonna dominate you.

RUTH: (CHUCKLES) Oh no! I'm just a poor human! At your bidding, mistress.

CASSANDRA: (LAUGHS) Fuck off!

RUTH: (LAUGHS) I know all the stories. Trust me, they made us read them!

CASSANDRA: Even the ones about the silver and the crosses and the not-crossing-water?

RUTH: Oh my God! They made us try them all!

SAMAEL (ECHO): Fucking hell.

CASSANDRA: (LAUGHS) No way!

RUTH: I swear! (LAUGHS) I was like, what the fuck are these supposed to do?

CASSANDRA: (LAUGHS)

SAMAEL (ECHO): Oh, you're laughing with her. You're bonding with her. You're probably going to fuck her. And I'm going to have to watch.

CASSANDRA: (TO RUTH) Hey. I'm (BEAT) I'm a little scared of you, too.

RUTH: (BEAT) Why?

CASSANDRA: Your story about the antivirals. (BEAT) You give me hope that I can do something about. (BEAT) All this.

RUTH: (BEAT) I've never spoken to one of you who wasn't under (BEAT) duress.

CASSANDRA: And what do you think of me?

RUTH: I'm thankful you haven't killed me.

CASSANDRA: Hmm. (BEAT) I'd like to be more with you.

RUTH: Oh.

CASSANDRA: I want to be able to talk with you.

RUTH: I'm listening.

CASSANDRA: I want you to assure me of some things.

RUTH: Absolutely.

CASSANDRA: Tell me why you were with the Hunters who came for me tonight?

RUTH: They insisted they needed an expert on the ground with them.

CASSANDRA: And they did. They didn't cover my eyes or mouth, like you told them to.

RUTH: They train to secure the arms and legs first. (BEAT) I'm sorry I shot at you. It was all training, I swear.

CASSANDRA: I understand. I'm scary.

RUTH: You're very scary.

CASSANDRA: I could eat you up, right now.

RUTH: I know.

CASSANDRA: Or I could just drink you again.

RUTH: You could.

CASSANDRA: Which I liked.

RUTH: I. I-I. I know.

CASSANDRA: Did you like it?

RUTH: (BEAT) Yes.

CASSANDRA: Have you ever been drunk before me?

RUTH: (BEAT) Every opportunity I had.

CASSANDRA: (SURPRISED) You've had others?

RUTH: Yes. Some needed it. Some I trusted.

CASSANDRA: Hmm. What do you like about it?

RUTH: It's a rush, knowing you could die. And don't.

CASSANDRA: And it feels too good to pass up.

RUTH: Like every orgasm at once.

CASSANDRA: Hey.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Don't fucking do it.

CASSANDRA: I remember feeling that too. Long ago.

RUTH: (WEAK) Oh.

SAMAEL (ECHO): This woman is a risk.

CASSANDRA: (TO SAMAEL) So was I. Let's see if she behaves like a good little falcon.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I don't approve.

CASSANDRA: (TO SAMAEL, SHOUTS) What do you want from me?!

RUTH: (TREMBLES, WHINES IN FEAR)

CASSANDRA: (TO SAMAEL, SHOUTS) Can't I have something, please, for at least one night?

SAMAEL (ECHO): (PAUSE) Fine. She's yours.

RUTH: (SCARED) CASSANDRA?

CASSANDRA: I'm sorry I scared you. My outburst was directed at SAMAEL.

RUTH: (BEAT, SCARED) I figured.

CASSANDRA: I'm sorry. (BEAT) Fuck. I'm really bad at this.

RUTH: (EXHALES) Who isn't, when you're first starting out?

CASSANDRA: I guess. (BEAT) Hey. This is just me. I'm not being scary. (BEAT) This is who I am. Hi.

RUTH: Hi.

CASSANDRA: Hmm. I used to be so much better at flirting. When I ran Harbinger's.

RUTH: Oh. (BEAT) I wish I'd gone.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) I do think you're really hot.

RUTH: (GRINS, BLUSHES) Same.

CASSANDRA: I want to kiss you.

RUTH: (BLUSHES) I'd like that too.

CASSANDRA: Not bite.

RUTH: I know. (SMILES) Go ahead.

CASSANDRA: Thank you, RUTH.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH KISS

RUTH: (BREATHES) You're a good kisser.

CASSANDRA: You taste of loneliness.

RUTH: That obvious, huh.

CASSANDRA: Is there anything you want from me?

RUTH: (BEAT) I've thought about fucking you.

CASSANDRA: Really?

RUTH: Yes. My warmth against your coldness.

CASSANDRA: Your heart beating against my flesh.

RUTH: Your glistening pink tongue in my throat.

CASSANDRA: Your tender flesh entwined with mine.

RUTH: Your eyes telling me what I already want to do.

CASSANDRA: Our hands between each other's legs.

RUTH: Both of us wet, yours filled with my blood.

CASSANDRA: You doing anything I ask, that I know you want.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH KISS AGAIN

SAMAEL (ECHO): You'll forgive me if I stay silent.

CASSANDRA: My bedroom is over there.

RUTH: Yes, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: I intend to drink you again there.

RUTH: Yes, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: I intend to make you cum in there.

RUTH: (BLUSHING) Yes, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: And I'll teach you to make me cum, too. Would you like that?

RUTH: Yes, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: You can leave your clothes on the floor. I doubt you'll need them again tonight.

RUTH: Enthusiastic yes, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: Good. Because tonight (BEAT) you're mine.

RUTH: (SCARED) Mmmm.

/SFX/ RUTH STRIPS, CASSANDRA AND RUTH KISS AGAIN

CASSANDRA: (LOW) Bedroom. Now.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH SCAMPER INTO THE BEDROOM

CASSANDRA (NA): And I fucked my first mortal that night. RUTH. My dear, sweet RUTH. We kissed and our bodies wrapped around each other and I held myself back. I stroked her clit, buried my hand into her gushing cunt, and brought her to the edge. Her legs twitched. Her hips quaked. She breathed so fast, I had to place my mouth over

hers. I wanted to feel her breath inside me. I wanted to feel everything SAMAEEL had felt when they'd fucked me. Here before me, writhing in joy, was life. Gorgeous, rapturous life. Everything I no longer was. A glorious moaning Blood Doll and I waited until her orgasm was about to hit when I drank her. She thrust against me like I must have against the woman I had drained, out of control, animal. Only animal. And my Beast was silent. Fuck, it felt so good to have this control over a bit of prey who was there, willingly, joyously, to whom I did not have to lie. I did not have to pretend I was someone I wasn't, or erase the memory of this moment from her. She would carry it in her bosom and I knew she would not tell another soul. And then she took my cunt in her hands. I was flushed but not exactly wet. I didn't know if I could be anymore. But she shared her own wetness with me, spreading it over her fingers and then rubbing me inside. Oh. My body knew what to do. I wanted to keep her as my own forever. Waiting for me at home, excited to serve. I wanted to see where the future could take us. I wanted her to rub a little harder to the right. I commanded her and she did. And I came. I was afraid I would crush her but I did not. I held her tight and did not lose myself. I was still me. The pleasure came from me, not my Beast. And I almost cried. There was something of me left inside after all.

RUTH: (BREATHES SOFTLY)

CASSANDRA: Are you mine now?

RUTH: (BREATHES) I guess I am.

CASSANDRA: Is this what you want?

RUTH: (BREATHES) It is.

CASSANDRA: (PAUSE) You're free to leave.

SAMAEEL (ECHO): Oh no.

RUTH: (CONFUSED) What?

CASSANDRA: I release you. (BEAT) I will see you again in two nights.

RUTH: (BREATHES) Of course!

CASSANDRA: But I have a condition.

RUTH: Name it.

SAMAEEL (ECHO): Must we?

CASSANDRA: I want a show of good faith from you.

RUTH: Whatever I can do.

CASSANDRA: I want you to free one of your prisoners.

RUTH: (PAUSE) I'll try. I'll do whatever I can. They've transferred some before.

CASSANDRA: Good.

RUTH: I'll try to arrange transit. There's one in particular ready.

CASSANDRA: Lovely. I'll meet you by the abandoned paintball range we spoke of in two nights. I look forward to hearing of your progress.

RUTH: Thank you. (BEAT) I do want to see you again.

CASSANDRA: How will you explain your escape tonight to your fellow Hunters?

RUTH: I'll say I was your toy. I helped you escape the hospital by force. You drank me. And I survived. And you cast me off. I woke up in an alley and (BEAT) that's all I remember.

CASSANDRA: Do you need me to take more blood to help corroborate your story?

RUTH: I'd love for you to. (BEAT) But no. You drank me twice. And that first one was a lot. I think I'm good.

CASSANDRA: As you wish.

RUTH: Thank you.

CASSANDRA: Get fed. Drink well. Be ready for me.

RUTH: I will.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND RUTH KISS

CASSANDRA: Go. The sun is rising soon.

RUTH: I truly appreciate this, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: I appreciate you keeping my secrets safe.

RUTH: I will. (BEAT) I have a security clearance. I have practice.

CASSANDRA: (SMILES) Off you go.

RUTH: Thank you. Thanks for the lovely night. I'm (BEAT) I will never forget this for the rest of my life.

/SFX/ RUTH SLIDES OUT OF BED, WALKS INTO THE LIVING ROOM, DRESSES

SAMAEL (ECHO): I can't say I approve of you dating one of my tormentors.

CASSANDRA: I can't imagine. Two whole years.

SAMAEL (ECHO): A reminder of that time. Here. In your fucking bedroom.

CASSANDRA: Would you prefer I be without her, Your Honor?

SAMAEL (ECHO): (BEAT) She is yours. For now. And when you no longer want her, she is mine.

CASSANDRA: Of course. Do you remember her specifically when you were in prison?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Not offhand.

CASSANDRA: Is it possible she never met you?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Most likely they kept her from me deliberately. They know that I could have ordered anyone in my cell to free me or give themselves to me.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Thank you for offering her to me.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Curiosity begets curiosity. She wants to know us as you once did. I wonder what you would have done if you had her life.

CASSANDRA: (BEAT) Then she needs to know how you feel about her.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I think she has an idea.

CASSANDRA: I mean. (BEAT) She needs a good scare. To know how it is to be imprisoned.

SAMAEL (ECHO): You would do that for me?

CASSANDRA: Of course.

SAMAEL (ECHO): When next you meet her?

CASSANDRA: Yes. In two nights.

SAMAEL (ECHO): We don't know if we'll be alive in two nights. Our trial with ELIJIO is tomorrow.

CASSANDRA: Think of it as an incentive to win.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I am motivated to survive. For you, (BEAT) I suppose you need something to look forward to.

CASSANDRA: I'm enjoying tearing her mind apart.

SAMAEL (ECHO): You're enjoying understanding me better now.

CASSANDRA: I haven't lived a month yet. And I already see what you saw in me.

SAMAEL (ECHO): You were more than a pet, love.

CASSANDRA: And it's only been one night with her.

SAMAEL (ECHO): I'll need time to think about whether I could handle anything long-term with her.

CASSANDRA: She'll be useful. She'll do whatever she can to stay in contact with me.

/SFX/ RUTH OPENS THE DOOR, WALKS OUT, AND SHUTS IT

SCENE 21. — OFF-LIMITS (INT: LOREA'S WAREHOUSE, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, LOREA

/SFX/ WAREHOUSE AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA WALKS IN, STOPS

CASSANDRA: LOREA.

LOREA: You again.

CASSANDRA: I wasn't followed.

LOREA: Taking the Nosferatu highways, are we?

CASSANDRA: I'm off to my trial.

LOREA: They're giving you a trial? A Camarilla trial? Like JOTHAM's?

CASSANDRA: You're right. I may not live through this.

LOREA: I appreciate you've paid your rent and the extra I spotted you.

CASSANDRA: I have a favor to ask.

LOREA: You want help fleeing the city?

CASSANDRA: In case I do survive.

LOREA: (DISAPPOINTED) Oh.

CASSANDRA: There's a human woman who may be coming by my place. I don't know how often.

LOREA: You've already gotten yourself a girlfriend?

CASSANDRA: Better. A Blood Doll.

LOREA: (BEAT) You told her about yourself. On the night before you're likely to be killed. That sounds like a potential breach.

CASSANDRA: I don't give a fuck.

LOREA: Good for you!

CASSANDRA: And if it was just me against SOPHIA, I would expect to lose. But I have SAMAE.

LOREA: You think they'll save you?

CASSANDRA: I have faith that they will.

LOREA: Well. Give me your Doll's description. I'll spread the word in the building that she passes freely.

CASSANDRA: Thank you. I've written it up here.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA PASSES OVER THE PAPER

LOREA: (READS) Quite the cutie, the way you've written about her.

CASSANDRA: I don't know what's going to happen between us. I'm hoping good things.

LOREA: Don't we all have the same hopes. Good luck on your trial.

CASSANDRA: If I don't come back, burn the black candle for me.

LOREA: I will. (BEAT) Until we meet again. Here or elsewhere.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS AWAY

SCENE 22. — POISON PILL (EXT: OUTSIDE LOREA'S WAREHOUSE, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, ARTURO

/SFX/ OUTSIDE WAREHOUSE AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA WALKS OUT, STOPS

CASSANDRA: ARTURO?

ARTURO: Hey! What's up?

CASSANDRA: Would you do a favor for me?

ARTURO: Uh, it depends?

CASSANDRA: Here is two thousand dollars in this envelope. It's for you, whether or not you do the favor.

ARTURO: Oh. (SURPRISED) Thank you. What is it?

CASSANDRA: If you hear I've been executed by the Camarilla, please give this second letter to LOREA. Please don't tell her about it unless I'm dead. It's (BEAT) insurance to keep me alive. It will do me no good if you open it, though.

ARTURO: (BEAT) Okay. I'll do it. For you. Because I liked working for you at Harbinger's.
(BEAT) And if you come back?

CASSANDRA: I'll ask for it back. The money's yours, either way.

ARTURO: You don't have to. (BEAT) I do appreciate it.

CASSANDRA: You're very welcome.

ARTURO: I miss having your blood regularly in the fridge.

CASSANDRA: I miss giving it, too. How's Sabbat watch going?

ARTURO: Haven't heard a peep from them. And I haven't heard anything on the whisper network about them coming. I hope LOREA's just being paranoid.

CASSANDRA: She's not. I get it now. We are always in danger in this world.

ARTURO: Now you know why I feel better in the warehouse. Gotta hunt every evening, but I've got a system.

CASSANDRA: I'm glad. Listen, I have to go. Please. Stay safe.

ARTURO: Stay undead!

CASSANDRA: I am ecstatic to keep thumbing my nose at physics over my very existence.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS AWAY

SCENE 23. — TRIAL (INT: SUMPTUOUS AUDIENCE CHAMBER, NIGHT)

• CASSANDRA, SAMAEL, ESTHER, SOPHIA, NICHOLE, ROSE, ELIJIO

/SFX/ QUIET HALLWAY AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA OPENS THE FRONT DOOR, OUTSIDE STREET AMBIANCE, CASSANDRA ENTERS THE HALLWAY, DOOR CLOSES BEHIND HER

ESTHER: Welcome back. You're ready?

CASSANDRA: Yes.

ESTHER: (BEAT) Should I just save SOPHIA the trouble and kill you now?

SAMAEL (ECHO): Allow me your arm.

CASSANDRA: Of course.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA SLAMS ESTHER AGAINST THE WALL

CASSANDRA & SAMAEL: Have you ever lost an eye?

/SFX/ ESTHER WRENCHES CASSANDRA'S ARM AWAY, KICKS HER TO THE FLOOR

ESTHER: You're intolerable. (BEAT) This way.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA STANDS, CASSANDRA AND ESTHER WALK TO THE CHAMBER DOOR, DOOR OPENS

SOPHIA: Punctual. Excellent.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS IN, DOOR CLOSES BEHIND HER

ELIJIO: (EXCITED) CASSANDRA!

CASSANDRA: Let's get this over with.

ROSE: Stand with me.

CASSANDRA: Yes, ROSE.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA WALKS OVER, STOPS

ROSE: You and ELIJIO will be executed if either of you leave your posts. Am I clear?

ELIJIO: Yes.

CASSANDRA: Yes.

ROSE: We are ready, Your Excellency.

ESTHER: Hear ye, hear ye. This magnificent Court is now in session, for the trial of one CASSANDRA DAVRIL, an unauthorized Kindred, and one ELIJIO, who laid hands on one member of the Court. ELIJIO, how do you plead?

ELIJIO: Guilty, ESTHER. Your Excellency. I bow to whatever punishment the Court deems appropriate.

SOPHIA: I should accept your plea, should your fellow defendant also plead guilty, but we all know she's not about to do that. Unauthorized, how do you plea?

CASSANDRA: Not guilty.

SOPHIA: I decide who is unauthorized, not you. I find you guilty.

CASSANDRA: And SAMAEL wishes to enter their plea as well.

SOPHIA: (BEAT) SAMAEL is not on trial here.

CASSANDRA: SAMAEL shares my body and thus is also on trial by proxy, Your Excellency.

ESTHER: (BEAT) I cannot think of a Court case in which a diablerized Kindred was allowed to speak, Your Excellency.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Give me a fucking pen.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) I am still a member of this Court. My status in this Court has not been formally withdrawn, has it?

ESTHER: (READS) Oh dear. Your Excellency?

SOPHIA: (READS) No, your status was never withdrawn.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Of course not. Because you would have had to admit I was missing and then you would have had to fucking do something about it. Now, does CASSANDRA's aura brand her as having committed diablerie?

ESTHER: (READS) Most assuredly.

SOPHIA: (READS) Clear as the cloudless sky.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) And only one diablerized Kindred may exist within another Kindred at any time?

ESTHER: (READS) Yes. Correct.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Therefore, the Court accepts that I, SAMAEL, exist within CASSANDRA.

ESTHER: (READS) SOPHIA, do you accept that the former minister SAMAEL now stands before us within CASSANDRA?

SOPHIA: (READS) Given what she has shown knowledge of, (PAUSE) it would seem so. I'm curious where SAMAEL is going with this.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Does the Court also acknowledge that I communicate of my own free will?

ESTHER: (READS) Do you believe, SOPHIA, that this possible delusion of CASSANDRA's speaks of their own free will?

SOPHIA: (READS) SAMAEL, if that is truly you, tell me of the party we both attended in Prague in 1901.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) The Marquis seated to your right spit in your blood chalice and thought you never learned of this until his Final Death the following decade.

SOPHIA: (READS) I should kill you to keep your secrets buried.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) I assure you, that and everything else I know will be in the hands of the Anarchs the instant you order my Final Death.

SOPHIA: (READS) Continue.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) As the Court accepts I am who I am and that I speak without duress, may the Court accept my humble request to sire CASSANDRA as my progeny?

SOPHIA: (READS) You can't be serious.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) I apologize for the delay but I was imprisoned at the time and was unable to make my request through the proper channels. But as you can see by my death, your Domain has not gained an extra mouth by my actions.

SOPHIA: (READS) You cannot ask to sire a fledgling retroactively.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) As a member of this Court, with several boons to my name, including permission to sire another with the Prince's consent, I fucking well can! What you see as diablerie, I saw as my only way out from a grim, horrific situation. I sired her at the cost of my own existence. And I am available to resume my duties. Kill her and you kill an active member of the Court. Will you grant me permission to sire my progeny?

SOPHIA: (READS) You are hardly in position to resume your duties.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) That depends on what my duties are. And wouldn't it be wonderful if we could keep members of the Court despite their deaths? And wouldn't you like to see what a consensual conjunction of Kindred might become?

CASSANDRA: I am also available to serve this honorable Court as I have in the past.

SOPHIA: You were removed from service to this Court, CASSANDRA.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Then I petition you to add her services back to this magnificent Court with a glowing personal recommendation from one of this Court's active members. You know of her dedication.

SOPHIA: (READS) Why should I trust her?

CASSANDRA: May I earn your trust, Your Excellency? As any fledgling in your Court starts, from the bottom?

SOPHIA: (PAUSE) And how do I explain to the Council an authorization of diablerie?

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Because you have a fascinating, special new toy at your disposal, and wouldn't they like to know what a weapon you could forge against your enemies? Do you know what we did last night? She dominated five Hunters at once. A fledgling. With my power. Imagine the potential! Keep me invested in the status quo, and CASSANDRA and I shall see that it continues to stand!

SOPHIA: (READS, PAUSE) We are prepared to render judgment. (BEAT) In the case of the traitor ELIJIO, we find him guilty. Although we find his actions detestable, ROSE, the number of lashes will be at your discretion.

ROSE: Thank you, Your Excellency.

ELIJIO: Bless your mercy, Your Excellency.

SOPHIA: In the case of CASSANDRA DAVRIL, (BEAT) SAMAEL has piqued my curiosity. We conditionally grant SAMAEL permission to sire a new member of this honorable Court. Until such time as she shows any disobedience or treachery. Is that understood?

CASSANDRA: Thank you, Your Excellency. Thank you. Bless this merciful Court.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) You shan't regret this, Your Excellency. I shall guide this one better than WILLIAM guided me.

SOPHIA: (READS) I assign CASSANDRA to ROSE, to carry out whatever tasks she has available. I will judge when she has proven worthy of greater rank.

ROSE: All my tasks are currently with trusted workers, but I will assign her Camarilla work before the week is out.

SOPHIA: Excellent. Court (BEAT) is dismissed. ELIJIO, come and speak with me tomorrow once your punishments are over. Do take enough blood to recover properly.

ELIJIO: Bless you, Your Excellency.

/SFX/ COURT MEMBERS MURMUR, NICHOLE WALKS OVER TO CASSANDRA, STOPS

NICHOLE: That was touch-and-go, CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: Thank you. I can't believe I actually lived through that.

NICHOLE: I couldn't believe it myself. Thank you, SAMAEL.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) CASSANDRA is my dearest. I gave my existence to her, and I continue to do so.

NICHOLE: Let's catch up sometime. Probably next month. ESTHER and ROSE are keeping me super busy.

CASSANDRA: I understand that. I hope to be there myself.

NICHOLE: Later!

/SFX/ NICHOLE WALKS AWAY

ELIJIO: CASSANDRA.

CASSANDRA: ELIJIO. Thank you for trying to defend me.

ELIJIO: Anything to protect you and SAMAEL.

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) My moonlit love. Give me your hand.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND ELIJIO GRIP HANDS

ELIJIO: (BEAT, SAD) It even feels like your grip.

/SFX/ CASSANDRA AND ELIJIO RELEASE HANDS

/SFX/ PEN SCRIBBLES

SAMAEL (ECHO): (WRITING) Bear your punishment well, my starlit darling. As CASSANDRA sees you, so do I. As long as she shall live.

ELIJIO: I look forward to the glow from those eyes. (BEAT) CASSANDRA. Take good care of them.

CASSANDRA: I'll do my very best.

ROSE: ELIJIO. Come along.

ELIJIO: (EXPECTING TORMENT) Yes, ROSE.

/SFX/ ROSE AND ELIJIO WALK AWAY

ESTHER: Well. You're free. And authorized. What do you intend to do now?

CASSANDRA: SAMAEL, I promised you I'd be the best Kindred I could be. Please teach me how.

SAMAEL (ECHO): Oh you clever, clever girl. I thought you'd never ask.

-END-