

Production Draft 9/19/96



BLADE

*Written by David S. Goyer
Based on the Marvel Comics Character*

**FOR EDUCATIONAL
PURPOSES ONLY**

1 INT. HOSPITAL, INNER-CITY TRAUMA WARD - NIGHT

1

It's 1967, the Summer of Love and --

BOOM! Entry doors swing open as PARAMEDICS wheel in a FEMALE BLEEDER, VANESSA (20s, black, nine months pregnant). She's deathly pale, spewing founts of blood from a SAVAGELY SLASHED THROAT --

A SHOCK-TRAUMA TEAM swarms over her, inserting a vacutainer into an artery to draw blood, wrapping a blood pressure cuff around her arm. As the trauma team continues their work, we INTERCUT the following with FLASHES --

2 INSIDE HER BLOODSTREAM

2

The sound of a HEART BEATING, pounding as we whip-snake through. CORPUSCLES floating in amber plasma. Erythrocytes, leukocytes, neutrophils and eosinophils.

3 BACK IN THE TRAUMA WARD,

3

A Paramedic reaches for Vanessa's blood-spattered wallet, pulling out her driver's license, glances at the I.D. picture --

NURSE #1

(with stethoscope)

She's not breathing!

SENIOR RESIDENT

Intubate her!

The RESPIRATORY THERAPIST feeds an endotracheal tube down the woman's ruined throat, attaches that to an Amblu bag --

RESIDENT

Blood-pressure's forty and falling --

4 INSIDE VANESSA'S BLOODSTREAM,

4

the rhythmic expansion of the artery walls, pulsing with each successive surge of blood as the HEART BEATS FASTER AND FASTER, taking us --

5 BACK TO THE TRAUMA WARD

5

as Vanessa starts spasming violently. It takes three staff members just to hold her down.

SENIOR RESIDENT

Jesus, her water's broken --

(calling for help)

She's going into uterine contractions --

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: 5
6 IN UTERO, 6

A CHILD, alive but unborn, shifting in a sea of amniotic fluid, surrounded by the white, protective substance known as vernix caseosa. The HEARTBEAT races like a locomotive now. The unborn child shifts, turns its head towards us --
-- and opens its eyes.

BLADE

Main credits end.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. INNER CITY - NIGHT 7

Various angles. A city teeming with NIGHT-LIFE. PREDATORS lounging under sodium vapor lamps. Subway trains rushing past. An ill wind blowing refuse and leaves. Suddenly --

8 INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT 8

-- we're inside a black Mercedes 850, whipping down the street. Raquel, a wasp-wasted woman, sits behind the wheel. 20s, rich, sickeningly attractive. Hungry eyes.

Squirming around in the passenger seat is DENNIS, a model/actor boy-toy with a sub-zero IQ and a "fuck me sideways" grin.

DENNIS
So where we going?

RAQUEL
It's a surprise.

DENNIS
I likes surprises.

Raquel eyeballs Dennis -- "if looks could devour".

RAQUEL
What do you have down there, little man?

DENNIS
Heat-seeker.

RAQUEL
I'll bet.

Raquel slides a manicured hand up his thigh, squeezes his groin. Dennis MOANS. She pulls her hand away, downshifts.

9 EXT. MEAT PACKING PLANT - NIGHT 9

Industry never sleeps, and certainly not this grisly facility. Raquel leads Dennis around the back of the plant, where a host of WORKERS are loading refrigerated trucks with product.

DENNIS

What the fuck are we doing here?

Raquel just smiles, heads on into the plant via a loading door. The workers ignore her.

10 INT. MEAT PACKING PLANT - NIGHT 10

Dennis follows Raquel through the bowels of the plant, catching glimpses here and there of carcasses being rendered or hacked apart.

Through one partially open door we see what might be a line of BODYBAGS being trundled into the back of a truck via a hook and chain pulley-system. Dennis pauses, trying to get a better view, while Raquel heads towards --

A STEEL DOOR

at the end of a hall. Raquel keys an adjacent intercom. A VOICE answers, offering a verbal challenge in a language we've never heard, laced with a devilish cadence.

Raquel responds in kind. Dennis turns, still distracted by what he's seen, having half-heard the strange exchange --

DENNIS

What did you say?

Raquel turns back, shutting him up with a hungry kiss. As the clench continues, the door behind them opens --

11 INT. CLUB - NIGHT 11

MUSIC assaults us -- a beat so heavy it could jar the fillings from your teeth. Brutal "DARKCORE" along the lines of Prodigy or Underworld.

Raquel and Dennis move past a hulking DOORMAN, making their way down a narrow stairway. Dennis is suitably impressed.

THE CLUB

is elite, underground -- an "abattoir-chic" version of an old-time juke joint with a greasy, dangerous vibe. White-tiled walls and floors for easy hosing, chromed fittings, run-off gutters, drains. No bar.

BODIES

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

writhe on the strobe-lit dance floor. Leather. Latex. Tattoos. Body-piercings. A D.J. wearing head-mounted spotlights orchestrates the tunes on twin-decks.

Raquel pulls Dennis out onto the dance floor. They sway.

A lupine-featured GAULTIER GIRL with a streak of white running through her raven hair moves in behind Dennis, pressing up against him. Rachel Williams as the Angel of Death -- we'll call her MERCURY.

Mercury flicks her tongue against Dennis' ear -- it's been pierced with a silver post which clicks against her teeth. Tattooed across her back is a swirling, black tribal vortex.

Dennis is now sandwiched between Raquel and Mercury, the three of them dry-humping their way to every man's glory.

The beat gets LOUDER. The action heavier. The atmosphere more narcotic. People are stripping off their clothes, sweating like fiends. It's a virtual orgy.

Dennis laughs, reveling in the hedonism. Everything rises to a fever pitch --

DENNIS

(over the music)

Fuck, I need a drink!!!

Raquel just smiles -- then Dennis notices a DROP OF SOMETHING spattering his hand. It looks like blood. Dennis looks up, concerned --

-- MORE BLOOD DROPLETS are falling. Raquel's face is sprinkled with them now. Dennis stops dancing. What is this?

Raquel turns her face toward the ceiling, as if washing herself in a summer shower. Now the other club goers are looking up too --

BLOOD SHOWERS DOWN

from sprinkler heads in the ceiling, drenching the dancers. The club goers love it, thrusting their heads back, mouths open wide to receive the crimson offering.

Horrified, Dennis recoils, turning towards --

RAQUEL,

whose face morphs, for one split-second, into a preternatural, canine-extended snarl.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: 2

11

RAQUEL

What's wrong, baby?

Dennis SCREAMS, pushes away from Raquel, only --

-- Mercury has fangs now too. In fact, everyone in the club does, with the exception of poor Dennis. That's because they're all vampires.

Dennis tries to run, but the burly Doorman blocks his exit, brutally SMASHING his fist into Dennis' face.

Dennis falls, dazed. The club-goers close in around him. They make a game of it, shoving him from one person to another, their pale faces leering like twisted jack-o-lanterns.

The strobe lights quicken to a seizure-inducing intensity. Dennis spins, tumbling into Raquel's arms. She shoves him forward -

Dennis lands on the floor, falling at someone's boot-clad feet. He looks up. A DARK FIGURE sits in the shadows, unnoticed until this moment. As the blood-shower drizzles to a stop above, the figure moves into the light. Time screeches to a halt --

A BLACK MAN,

towers above Dennis, wearing a leather longcoat -- a sneer of cruel contempt etched upon a face tempered by a lifetime of horror. His name is BLADE.

Blade whips open his long coat, shrugging it off, revealing an arsenal of high-tech weapons strapped to his body:

6-point adjustable body armor, an assault rifle with an ultra-violet entry light, a pair of custom-made, hand-tooled MACH autos -- raw, unfinished, unpolished -- made for killing, not show.

In addition, Blade has a custom automatic cross-bow, a bandoleer of gleaming, silver stakes, an Indian-style katar punching dagger -- and last, but certainly not least, his namesake -- a sword which is secured in a back-scabbard.

CLOSE ON BLADE

A gaze as cold and pitiless as a midnight sun. The vampire club-goers stare back. Nuclear silence. And then --

All hell breaks loose. With a SNARL, Raquel charges at Blade, moving at superhuman speed, practically a blur --

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11 CONTINUED: 3

11

Blade draws his guns, FIRES in multiple directions -- silver-tipped dum-dum bullet which explodes on contact. Vampire blood fountains, their bodies instantly incinerating into swirling clouds of black-ash.

Blade continues FIRING, then -CLICK!- magazines empty. Next. He holsters the MACH autos, swings up his assault rifle, calmly flicks on the UV entry light mounted above --

MERCURY

races across the room -- we've never seen anything move so fast. Blade's rounds stitch a line of FIREPOWER just behind her, but she vanishes through a doorway.

THE OTHER VAMPIRES

surge towards Blade. He retaliates -- a shaft of blinding UV "sunlight" cutting across them. They rear back, skin smoking from the light's corrosive effects. Blade opens FIRE, pumping round after round of wooden fragmentation bullets into the crowd -- vampire genocide.

The strobe lights flicker as the mayhem mounts. Some of the vampires try to flee, scurrying up the stairs, but the exit quickly becomes clogged with incinerating bodies --

-- then Blade's rifle jams. He drops the rifle, reaches over his shoulder and -SCHINGGG!- unsheathes his sword with a double-handed grip.

THE SWORD

Four acid-etched feet of blood-soaked titanium alloy. An edge so sharp it could cleave a shadow in two.

Blade moves like lightning, hacking his way into TWO CHARGING VAMPIRES, cutting one of them clean in half --

ON THE FAR END OF THE CLUB,

a LATEX-CLAD VAMP makes a break for it. Blade flings his sword, sending it spinning end over end -- THUNK! The sword punches into the vampire's heart. The hellish creature combusts, dies.

Beat. Blade retrieves his sword, then senses --

SOMETHING

rising up behind him. In a flash, Blade swings his sword downward, cutting off the vampire's right hand at the elbow. The severed limb falls to the floor --

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: 4

11

-- but it doesn't slow the creature down. It SLAMS into Blade. Blade flies backwards thirty feet, tumbling over tables, slamming into the rear wall so hard that plaster rains down from the ceiling.

Blade suddenly finds himself wrestling with a feral-faced, knife-wielding nightmare named QUINN. Wild eyes, truly insane. The vampire rears back its head, stabbing the knife repeatedly into Blade's (armored) chest --

Blade SMASHES Quinn across the face, knocking him back across the room. Quinn rises up, charging again --

Blade unholsters the cross-bow secured to his leg. With a flick of a switch the arms of the bow -SNAP!- open, drawing the bow-string taut. Blade FIRES --

The bolt hits Quinn in the shoulder, catching him mid-air, throwing him backwards and nailing him to the wall. As Quinn reaches over with his other hand to pull out the stake --

Blade FIRES AGAIN. A second bolt slams into Quinn's other arm, effectively pinning him like a butterfly to a board. Blade strides over.

BLADE

Quinn. I'm getting a little tired of hacking you into pieces --

Blade sheathes his sword.

QUINN

(snarling)
Fuck you, Blade. You just got lucky this time --

Blade unclips an incendiary device from his combat harness, arming it --

BLADE

Thought I'd try fire for a change.

Quinn unleashes a stream of vampire invectives.

BLADE

Say hi to Frost.

Blade tosses the device at Quinn. WHOOMP! Quinn ignites. Blade turns, surveying his work, ignoring the HOWLING pyre behind him.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: 5

11

DENNIS

sits huddled in a corner, pissing his pants. As Blade approaches, he cringes back --

DENNIS

Please don't --

Blade simply grabs Dennis by the jaw, tilting his head upward, rotating it from side to side -- looking for bite marks. There aren't any.

Just then, we hear the sound of APPROACHING SIRENS. Blade looks up sharply. From the stairs we can hear CARS STOPPING, FOOTSTEPS --

ON THE STAIRS

as the POLICE enter, swarming into the club.

THEIR POV

All evidence of the vampires is gone, with the exception of a few piles of ash and the blood-drenched walls -- everything else has been burned away by the acidic process of the creatures' accelerated decomposition.

As for Blade, he's nowhere to be found. Quinn is still nailed to the wall, HOWLING as he burns.

PARAMEDICS rush past the Police, training their fire extinguishers on Quinn. By the time the CO2 mist dies down, though, Quinn is nothing but a charred "scorpse".

PARAMEDIC #1

(gagging)

Christ, what a mess!

Meanwhile, the Police have surrounded Dennis.

POLICEMAN #1

What happened here?

(re: Quinn)

Who did this?!

Dennis can only stammer, still terrified.

12 EXT. ALLEYWAY/MEAT PACKING PLANT - NIGHT

12

Blade exits into an alley, climbing up from an access grating set low in the wall. As he walks towards the street, he sweeps his longcoat forward to conceal his weapons.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: 12

OUT IN THE STREET

Blade proceeds along, unnoticed by the POLICE and RESCUE PERSONNEL who have arrived on the scene.

CUT TO:

13 INT. CITY HOSPITAL, AUTOPSY ROOM - NIGHT 13

CAMERA FOLLOWS a BAGGED CORPSE as it's rolled into the autopsy room by an ASSISTANT.

ASSISTANT

Brought you a baked potato, nice and crispy. Still warm, too.

CURTIS WEBB, the forensic pathologist (30s, white bread, a little on the smarmy side) steps forward, unzips the bag --

It's Quinn, what's left of him, anyway. Burnt to a charcoal briquette, limbs twisted horribly, oozing fluids.

Curtis turns his head, grimacing, wafting the air.

CURTIS

Jesus, that's rank --

Curtis turns back, makes note of the blackened stump where Quinn's arm used to be, the ruined throat --

CURTIS

What's his story?

ASSISTANT

Paramedics said he was still screaming when they found him. Looks like some joker had stapled him to a wall.

CURTIS

Pretty.

CUT TO:

14 INT. HOSPITAL, HEMATOLOGY LAB - NIGHT 14

MICROSCOPE POV

of a slide-mounted blood smear stained with Wright stain (blue ink). What we see is a collection of donut-shaped pink things (red blood cells) intermingled with some small blue specks (platelets) and the occasional larger, light-blue blobs (white blood cells).

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

KAREN JANSEN (20s), a fine-featured hematologist with a social life in suspended animation, sits back from the microscope, stumped.

KAREN

You took this off a DOA?

Curtis sits on a stool nearby, slowly nodding.

KAREN

This isn't human blood.

CURTIS

I know.

KAREN

(re: microscope)

Look at this blood smear --

Curtis takes a look for himself.

KAREN

The red blood cells are biconvex, which is theoretically impossible. They're hypochromic, there's virtually no hemoglobin in them.

(shaking her head)

Look at the PMNs, they're binucleated, they should be mononucleated.

Curtis taps a computer print-out he's holding.

CURTIS

Did you check the chemistry panel? Blood sugar level is three times the norm, phosphorous and uric acid are off the scales.

Karen removes her glasses, rubbing the bridge of her nose.

KAREN

Curtis, it's three in the morning. I'm really not in the mood for one of your practical jokes.

CURTIS

(insistent)

It's not a joke. I've got the stiff sitting in the morgue right now --

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: 2

14

KAREN

I thought you promised to give me some distance?

CURTIS

-- look, just come up and see him, okay? Five minutes, that's all I ask.

Karen rolls her eyes, lets loose a tired sigh.

KAREN

Five minutes, not a second more. And I don't want to hear a word about "us".

CURTIS

Done. We've had that conversation.

15 INT. HOSPITAL MORGUE - NIGHT

15

The dead of night, not a mouse in the house. Curtis and Karen, each garbed in a mask, stand on either side of Quinn's body, which now rests on the autopsy table.

QUINN'S BODY

A preliminary exploratory Y-incision has been made across the chest, stretching from shoulder to shoulder, then continuing on down the abdomen. Ribs and cartilage have been cut open to expose the heart and lungs.

KAREN

You haven't started in on the internal organs?

CURTIS

Just the blood sample from the pericardial sac.

Curtis pauses, studying Quinn's disfigured face -- the features seem much less damaged now -- almost as if the corpse were healing itself.

CURTIS

That's weird --

KAREN

What?

CURTIS

I thought his injuries were more extreme than this --

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

Curtis pulls out a penlight, flicks it on. He leans over Quinn, shining the light into one of his eyes.

CURTIS

Tell me something, honestly, you ever have second thoughts about us?

KAREN

(grudgingly)
Sometimes --

Curtis looks up from the corpse, grinning beneath his mask.

KAREN

-- but then I remember what an ass-hole you were.

CURTIS

Come on, Karen, give me some slack here. You wanted time to cool off, you've had it --

Karen is growing increasingly annoyed with Curtis' whining.

KAREN

It's over, Curtis. What part of that statement don't you understand?

(stopping herself)

Jesus, I can't believe I'm even listening to your shit --

QUINN

suddenly bolts up from the autopsy table, sinking his fangs into Curtis' jugular. He snaps the man's neck in two for easier access, sucking in blood like a living vacuum.

Karen stumbles backwards, turning towards the doors --

QUINN

rises from the table, flinging Curtis' twitching body aside. He curls his blood-soaked lips back, baring viper-like fangs, emitting a GUTTURAL GROWL --

16 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

16

BOOM! Karen bursts through a pair of swinging doors, rushing into a corridor populated by PERSONNEL.

Quinn is upon her in a half-second, wrapping a hand about her throat, heedless of the panicking crowd.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

His mouth opens/morphs disturbingly wide as he sinks his fangs into Karen's carotid artery and starts to nurse --

ON KAREN

The sound of RUSHING BLOOD pounding through her skull. Everything spinning.

ON QUINN,

orgiastic, in the grip of a feeding frenzy --

A HAND

reaches in from off-screen, gripping Quinn by his hair, yanking him back, spinning him around --

BLADE

stands behind Quinn, firing off a volley of punches into Quinn's face. Quinn staggers back, dropping Karen.

BLADE

Came back to finish you off.

QUINN

Get out of my way, you freak!

Blade FIRES off a final punch, Quinn reels. Blade unholsters one of his MACHs, taking aim, but before he can fire, he himself is shot by --

TWO POLICEMEN

who are standing at the end of the hall, weapons drawn. Blade spins on them, seemingly unaffected by the gunshot.

BLADE

What the fuck are you doing?!

The policemen hesitate, confused, and we're --

BACK TO QUINN,

moving through the corridor like a human tornado, heading for a bank of nearby windows -- SMASH!!! Out goes Quinn.

17 EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

17

Quinn lands on the roof of an ambulance parked four stories below, CRASHING straight through it --

- 18 INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT 18
- Quinn drops in alongside an apoplectic OLD WOMAN strapped to a gurney. He SNARLS. Behind her oxygen mask, the old woman's eyes widen in disbelief.
- Quinn kicks the back doors of the ambulance open, then pauses and rips the woman's oxygen line out for good measure, before loping off into the night.
- 19 INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT 19
- Blade looks down, SEES Karen bleeding her life away on the floor. She reaches a hand out to him, beseeching. Blade pulls away from her grasp, takes a step towards the exit -- then hesitates.
- A flicker of doubt washes across Blade's face. He looks down at Karen once more, wrestling with his conscience, finally making a decision.
- DOWN THE HALL,
- MORE POLICEMEN arrive, immediately opening FIRE --
- Blade hauls Karen up, turning to face the window before him. It's a good thirty feet to the roof of the adjacent building, a parking structure, and --
- 20 EXT. HOSPITAL/PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT 20
- Blade heaves Karen across the gap as if she were a sack of potatoes. She lands on her shoulder, clutching it in pain --
- As BULLETS cascade around him, Blade leaps, clearing the impossible distance -- almost. He snags the ledge of the adjacent parking structure with his left hand, a last-second save --
- Blade GRUNTS, heaves himself up, crouching beside Karen. BULLETS continues to SPANG. Karen SCREAMS as Blade scoops her up and heads for --
- HIS '69 OLDSMOBILE 442,
- which is parked nearby. Midnight-black. The definitive high-performance heavy-metal muscle machine with an engine big enough to power an Apollo rocket.
- 21 INT. BLADE'S OLDS - NIGHT 21
- Blade sets Karen down in the passenger seat, climbs behind the wheel.

(CONTINUED)

- 21 CONTINUED: 21
- KAREN
(gasping)
My shoulder -- dislocated --
- Blade places a hand on her shoulder, another around her elbow and without any consideration to discomfort -CRACK!- brutally pops it back in place.
- Blade keys the ignition. The engine ROARS to life, belching fumes through the dual exhaust. Blade floors it, burning serious rubber as the Olds vanishes from sight in a HAIL OF LEAD.
- 22 BACK AT THE DEMOLISHED MORGUE WINDOW 22
- as the policemen stare numbly in open-mouthed astonishment.
- CUT TO:
- 23 EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT 23
- Blade pilots the Olds down the streets, moving through a series of increasingly degenerating neighborhoods, coming at last to the sprawling warehouse district.
- 24 EXT. ABANDONED FACTORY - NIGHT 24
- The Olds approaches a mammoth industrial facility that's been cordoned off by cyclone fencing and razor wire. Ultra-violet floodlights illuminate the area, while an army of security cameras keep a watchful eye.
- 25 INT. BLADE'S OLDS - NIGHT 25
- Blade glances at Karen, cursing himself for giving into his emotions. He hits a remote secured to the sun visor --
- 26 EXT. BLADE'S OLDS/ABANDONED FACTORY - NIGHT 26
- A gate grinds open. We follow the Olds as it cruises around the back of the building, heading down a concrete loading ramp. At the bottom of the ramp, a heavy iron door rises. Blade's Olds disappears into the darkness.
- 27 INT. ABANDONED FACTORY, INDUSTRIAL ELEVATOR - NIGHT 27
- More UV lights flicker on. We're in a massive loading elevator which HUMS as it ascends, eventually reaching its destination with a BOOMING CLANG. The doors at the rear glide open. Blade guides the Olds out.

28 INT. ABANDONED FACTORY, WHISTLER'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

28

Set up in an old ironworks, the place looks like a cross between an auto junkyard and an armory. Equipment is strewn everywhere -- mills, old furnaces, gutted vehicles, an ad hoc surgical theater -- all of it jerry-rigged in a brutal, oily-tech.

Blade climbs out of the Olds. He opens the passenger door and pulls Karen out, carries her in his arms. We hear the sound of HEAVY MACHINERY being operated and SEE --

A SILHOUETTE

standing at an industrial lathe, working away.

BLADE

(over the noise)

Whistler!

(beat)

WHISTLER!

After a beat, the silhouette reaches for the off switch, killing the lathe.

ABRAHAM WHISTLER (60s)

hobbles out of the shadows, leaning heavily on a cane. Gimlet-eyed, bitter, his right leg encased in a metal brace. Though his face is lined with wrinkles and his hair has long since gone gray, we sense he could kick the living shit out of any man half his age.

WHISTLER

Are we bringing home strays now?

BLADE

She's been bitten.

WHISTLER

You should've killed her, then.

BLADE

I know.

(beat)

But I didn't.

Blade stares Whistler down. Finally, Whistler turns and heads over to the operating theater.

WHISTLER

You watch her close. She starts to turn, you finish her off. Or I will.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

Blade nods, lays Karen down on the operating table. Whistler turns on an overhead light. Karen is sheathed in sweat, ashen. She's lost a lot of blood.

Whistler snaps on a pair of surgical gloves, probes the wound in Karen's neck with an antiseptic swab -- there's capillary damage around the perimeter of the wound, the tissue looks bruised, gangrenous.

WHISTLER
Localized necrosis. She's
borderline. Another hour and she'd
be well into the change.

BLADE
It was Quinn.

Whistler looks up at Blade, suddenly interested.

WHISTLER
Frost's little errand boy? Did you
get a lead on him?

Blade shakes his head.

WHISTLER
Too bad.

Whistler cracks open a smelling salt capsule and waves under Karen's nose. As she starts to stir, Whistler reaches for a massive syringe filled with caustic-looking fluid. Karen sees the syringe, resists --

WHISTLER
Hold her.

Blade forces Karen back. Whistler readies the syringe.

WHISTLER
(reading her name tag)
"Dr. Karen Jansen". Listen close,
I'm going to inject you with allium
setivum -- garlic. This is going
to hurt. A lot.

Whistler sinks the needle into Karen's neck and depresses the plunger. "Hurt" doesn't begin to describe what Karen experiences next. Imagine undergoing childbirth while someone pumps battery acid through your veins.

Karen SHRIEKS, her body going into uncontrolled paroxysms. The wound on her neck begins to smoke as the antidote attacks the poisonous vampire venom.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED: 2

28

Karen clutches at Blade's arms, digging her nails in. She stares up at him with unflinching intensity, like a child desperately searching for assurance.

ON BLADE,

uncomfortable playing the roll of nursemaid. He'd like nothing more than to be done with this, but the only thing he can do is hold Karen while she rides out the seizures.

KAREN'S POV

growing darker by the moment. The last thing she sees is Blade staring down at her -- then the night closes in.

CUT TO:

29 INT. HOUSE OF EREBUS, MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

29

CLOSE ON a monitor featuring footage taken at the vampire club massacre.

A WITHERED, CLAWED HAND

moves into frame, holding a remote. With a tap of a button, the monitor goes dark.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL a large, minimalist conference room -- the House of Erebus, seat of the vampires' legislative assembly.

Gathered around a massive table are the TWELVE VAMPIRE LORDS, representing a "rainbow" of racial colors -- names like PALLINTINE, VON ESPER, ASHE, BAVA. Two of them, the FAUSTINAS, are identical twins -- lethal-looking women with alabaster skin.

Carafes filled with blood are situated along the table.

At the head of the table is GAETANO DRAGONETTI, current vampire "Overlord". Parchment skin stretched over skull-like features. Incalculably ancient, but still deadly and virile as a viper.

Dragonetti speaks. He uses the "secret tongue" -- the ancient vampire language.

DRAGONETTI

(subtitled)

Blade, the "Day Walker". Once again, our interests have fallen victim to his ridiculous crusade.

(to Pallintine)

How many died?

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

PALLINTINE

(subtitled)
Over two dozen.

Silence. Dragonetti fumes. The Overlord is pissed. He reaches for an intercom, tapping it.

DRAGONETTI

(subtitled)
Send Frost in.

Seconds later the boardroom doors open --

DEACON FROST,

a mere "Underlord" in the vampire hierarchy, steps forward. Strikingly handsome, younger, less conservative than his superiors, fueled with a passionate intensity. Amongst the vampire community he's known as an agitator. He's also the vampire equivalent of a racial supremacist.

At the moment, though, Frost looks more like a smug schoolboy who's been sent to see the principal. He takes a look around the room, then bows his head in mock penitence.

FROST

(in English)
Forgive me Father, for apparently I have sinned.

DRAGONETTI

(subtitled, taking
umbrage)
You refuse to speak our language, you insult the House of Erebus by using the humans' gutter-tongue. Have you no respect for tradition?

Frost lifts his head and matches Dragonetti's gaze.

FROST

Why should I respect something which has outlived its purpose?

This causes quite a stir amongst the other vampires. Frost might as well have slapped Dragonetti in the face. The conversation continues in English from this point on.

PALLINTINE

This "establishment" of yours is an embarrassment. It never should have been operating in the first place.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: 2

29

FROST

(unconcerned)

The kids were restless. They needed a place to gather.

DRAGONETTI

You're too loud, Frost. Our livelihood depends on our ability to blend in, on our discretion.

Frost steps forward, emboldened.

FROST

You sound like a lawyer.

Dragonetti looks apoplectic. LORD PALLINTINE interjects.

PALLINTINE

You're out of line, Frost.

FROST

Am I? Or am I just the first to say out loud what we've all been thinking? We've lived in the shadows for too long --

DRAGONETTI

(cutting him off)

The shadows suit us, Frost. We've existed this way for thousands of years. Who are you to challenge our ways? You're not even a pure-blood --

FROST

Like it matters?

DRAGONETTI

I WAS BORN A VAMPIRE --

Dragonetti slams his fist down, cutting Frost off. The carafe nearby cracks, a single trickle of blood oozing out. He rises, indicating the others --

DRAGONETTI

-- as was every other member of this House. But you, Frost, you were merely "turned".

Dragonetti spits out the last word like it was toxic. To his credit, Frost stands his ground, looking to the others.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: 3

29

FROST

The world belongs to us, not the humans! Who do you want leading you?

Frost stabs an accusing finger at the Overlord.

FROST

Some dried up fossil ready to snap like a brittle bone at the first sign of change?

Dragonetti GROWLS like an beast, raking his claws across the tyro vampire's face, knocking him to the ground.

DRAGONETTI

GET OUT!!!

Frost picks himself up, touches the gashes on his cheek. An uneasy silence permeates the room. Frost looks at his fingers, licks the blood from them, laughs.

FROST

Careful, old fang. You might wake up one day and find yourself extinct.

Frost smiles at Dragonetti and calmly exits the room. CAMERA FOLLOWS him, then holds on the fractured carafe -- yet another trickle of blood oozing from it.

CUT TO:

30 INT. WHISTLER'S WORKSHOP, BLADE'S CELL - DAY

30

ON KAREN as she comes to. Her wounds have been bandaged. She rises, a little shaky, takes in her surroundings -- She's in a spartan room, like a monk's cell. A collection of knives and daggers are scattered about. In the center of these rests Blade's sword, dominating all else.

On a nearby table Karen spies a few personal effects. Amidst these is a TATTERED DRIVER'S LICENSE. Karen picks it up, inspecting it --

LICENSE (VANESSA'S),

the same one we glimpsed in the prologue. Vanessa's faded photo stares back at us, her face marred by long-dried blood-stains.

Karen sets the license down and moves towards the door --

31 INT. WHISTLER'S WORKSHOP - DAY

31

We hear VOICES now. Karen rounds a corner and SEES --

BLADE

strapped into a surgical restraint chair. His shirt is off, his body slick with sweat. Whistler finishes strapping Blade in, then stands back, holding up a gas-powered pistol injector, hesitant --

WHISTLER

I had to increase the dose. You're building up a resistance to the serum --

BLADE

(impatient)
Just do it, old man.

Whistler nods, fitting Blade with a bite guard. Then he presses the pistol-injector against Blade's carotid artery.

Blade shakes violently, grinding his teeth through the bite guard, veins cording in his neck. He clutches Whistler's hand, holding it tightly as he fights his way through the hellish seizure. To his credit, Whistler never lets go.

Mentor and student stare at one another as the mysterious serum runs its violent course. We understand that these shared moments, oddly private in their horror, are the glue which binds the two vampire hunters together.

Finally, Blade slumps forward in his restraints, exhausted. In that moment, as if sensing her presence, he looks up and SEES --

KAREN

She draws back, fearful. She looks for an exit, SEES another doorway. As she makes for it, she knocks aside a tarpaulin which was concealing --

A LARGE TANK

filled with swirling blood plasma, choked with electrical leads and biomedical sensors, emitting a low-pitched BUZZING, like an industrial transformer.

SOMETHING

floats within the tank, suspended in the murky fluid -- the corpse of an emaciated OLD MAN. Impossibly pale, withered, drifting about like a medical oddity preserved in formaldehyde, its face hidden behind a long veil of hair --

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

THUMP! The corpse SLAMS up against the glass. Karen backpedals, startled. Its eyes are open now, pupils blown. It snarls, revealing twin fangs.

Karen stifles a sob, turning and running right into --

BLADE,

who now blocks the exit, sword in hand. Karen retreats a step, wary --

BLADE
You shouldn't be here.

KAREN
I'm sorry, I --

WHISTLER (O.S.)
Wandered off the beaten path,
Doctor?

Whistler has entered the room from a second doorway. Karen looks from Whistler to Blade, trapped between them. Whistler nods at the tank.

WHISTLER
Don't worry. It can't get out.
Electrical current keeps the son of
a bitch in line --

KAREN
Who are you people?

WHISTLER
My name is Abraham Whistler.
(re: Blade)
This is Blade. As for our little
homunculus here -
(re: tank)
-- he's a vampire.

Whistler raps his cane against the tank. The creature snaps at it reflexively.

KAREN
You're joking.

WHISTLER
Not at all. You're looking at a
prime specimen of the homines
nocturna. This one's somewhere
between five and six hundred years.
He makes an excellent guinea pig.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: 2

31

The vampire snaps at Whistler's cane again, following the silver tip back and forth like a fish after a lure.

Karen backs away. She's seen enough.

KAREN

You people are insane --

She turns and runs from the room. Whistler shrugs, rolls his eyes -- one of those "can't please everyone" gestures.

BLADE

Where does she think she's going?

Whistler pulls a hospital I.D. from his pocket, handing it to Blade.

WHISTLER

I did some checking, she's a hematologist. Knowledge like that might come in handy.

BLADE

(studying the badge)
Maybe.

TIME CUT TO:

32 INT. WHISTLER'S WORKSHOP - DAY

32

Karen leans against a packing crate, watching --

BLADE

as he suits up for his nightly hunt -- strapping on body armor, loading ammunition. He pauses to inspect one of his modified MACHs, sighting down the length of it.

KAREN

So am I a prisoner here?

WHISTLER

Not at all. We just had to take certain precautions before we let you go.

Whistler fires up a cigarette, then starts nonchalantly fueling up Blade's Olds.

WHISTLER

We hunt them, you see, moving from one city to the next, tracking their migrations. They're hard to kill. They tend to regenerate.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

CLACK! Blade pulls the trigger on an empty chamber, then checks his next weapon --

KAREN

(sarcastic)

So what do you use, then? A stake?

WHISTLER

(nodding)

Some of the old wives' tales are true -- they're severely allergic to silver, various types of wood. Feed them garlic and they'll go into anaphylactic shock --

Blade picks up his customized rifle with the UV entry light, flicking on the beam.

WHISTLER

-- and of course there's always sunlight, ultra-violet rays.

Karen shakes her head, incredulous --

KAREN

And you honestly expect me to believe all this?

BLADE

You saw the thing in the tank.
(turning back to her)
You want my advice, you'll be out of the city by nightfall. If you're stupid enough to stay, that's your business.

KAREN

I can't just leave. I have a life here, a career --

BLADE

You've been exposed to them.
(glancing at Whistler)
One way or another, somebody's going to take you out.

Karen stares at Blade, not liking the undercurrent of that. Whistler gestures to the windows --

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: 2

32

WHISTLER

There's a war going on out there. Blade, myself, a few others -- we've tried to keep it from spilling over onto the streets. Sometimes people like yourself get caught in the cross-fire.

Whistler shrugs. As far as he's concerned, there's nothing else to say. Karen is still protesting, though.

KAREN

I can go to the police. I have blood samples. I can show them.

BLADE

They've infiltrated the police. You'd be dead before you could file the complaint.

KAREN

That's ridiculous! No one's that powerful.

Whistler sighs. He doesn't suffer fools gladly.

WHISTLER

You're talking about a brotherhood that predates the Catholic Church by thousands of years. Chances are, you've encountered them and not even known it. On the subway, in a bar --

Blade slings his CAR-15 onto his shoulder, impatient. He starts towards the Olds, gesturing.

BLADE

Get in. You're leaving.

WHISTLER

Wait.

Whistler tosses a small metal canister to Karen.

WHISTLER

Consider it a parting gift. Vampire mace -- silver nitrate, essence of garlic.

KAREN

(in disbelief)

So that's it? You guys just patch me up and send me on my way?

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: 3

32

WHISTLER
There is one other thing.
(beat)
I'd buy yourself a gun if I were
you. If you start becoming
sensitive to the daylight, if you
start becoming thirsty regardless
of much you've had to drink -- then
I suggest you take that gun and use
it on yourself. Better that, than
the alternative.

Karen stares at Whistler, horrified, as we --

CUT TO:

33 INT. BLADE'S OLDS - DUSK

33

Blade drives. Karen's mind is still reeling from
information overload.

KAREN
Are you saying I may have been
infected?

Blade nods, his expression stone.

KAREN
Jesus, I don't believe this --

BLADE
You're tainted. The venom's
still inside you. There's a chance
you could still turn.

KAREN
What happens then?

A beat of awkward silence ensues.

BLADE
Then I'd have to take you out, just
like any other bloodsucker.

As they come over a rise in the road, the glare from the
sinking sun blasts its way through the windshield. Karen
averts her gaze, pulling the sun visor down.

The reaction, innocent enough under normal circumstances,
does not go unnoticed by Blade.

CUT TO:

34 INT. THE VAMPIRE ARCHIVES -

34

We are deep in the narrow stacks of a sepulchral archive. Exactly what and where this place is will become more clear later on. But for now -

The CAMERA DRIFTS through the warren of aisles. Along the way, we glimpse a HULKING SILHOUETTE cowering behind a series of Japanese shoji screens. Then we find --

FROST

tucked away in a carrel, surrounded by books and scriptures, with only the SICKLY GLOW of his laptop to provide light. On the screen is a DIGITIZED IMAGE -- a page taken from an ancient manuscript, which the computer appears to be decoding.

DRAGONETTI (O.S.)

What are you doing here?

Frost pauses, SEEING Dragonetti emerge from the shadows.

DRAGONETTI

These archives are restricted to members of the House of Erebus.

FROST

Please. You and the other Lords wouldn't know what to do with these texts if your lives depended on it.

DRAGONETTI

(contemptuous)

You're wasting your time, Frost. Far greater scholars than you have tried to decipher these words. Whatever secrets they hold have been lost.

FROST

Maybe. But then the ancients didn't have access to Pentium processors, did they?

Frost studies Dragonetti, a self-satisfied grin on his face. If the act was intended to unnerve Dragonetti, it succeeded, though the ancient vampire would never admit it.

DRAGONETTI

What are you up to, Frost?

Frost shuts the lid on his laptop, rising, drawing intimidatingly close to Dragonetti.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

FROST'S VOICE
Wouldn't you like to know, Old
Fang?

A beat as the young turk stares his elder down. Dragonetti is the first to lose his nerve, turning away.

CAMERA DRIFTS back to the hulking silhouette, which has been eavesdropping on the conversation, quivering in fear.

CUT TO:

35 INT. BLADE'S OLDS (ON KAREN'S STREET CORNER) - DAY

35

Blade brings the car to a stop. Karen looks at him. His eyes are hidden behind his glasses, his expression stone.

BLADE
Remember what we said. Keep your
eyes open. They're everywhere.

36 EXT. KAREN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DUSK

36

Karen climbs out, but before she can say anything, the Olds is already ROARING off down the street. She watches it vanish, then draws her attention to the PEOPLE around her -- everyone of them a potential enemy.

37 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING, LOBBY - DUSK

37

Karen crosses the lobby, stepping into an elevator. Just as the doors are closing, a WOMAN and TWO MEN duck in alongside her.

38 INT. ELEVATOR - DUSK

38

Silence, the uncomfortableness of an elevator ride magnified tenfold. Karen can FEEL the eyes of her fellow passengers upon her. Finally succumbing to paranoia, she hazards a glance -- would she be able to tell if these people weren't human? The woman turns to Karen, smiles --

Karen surreptitiously fishes the "vampire mace" from her pocket, clutching it -- and now one of the men turns to look at her, nodding --

39 INT. KAREN'S APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY - DUSK

39

The elevator doors open. Karen hurries out, heads left, finds herself in a deserted hallway. She looks back ---- then skips a heartbeat as the trio also step out! As Karen raises the canister of mace --

-- the trio turn and head down to the right. Karen breathes a sigh of relief, shakes her head.

40 INT. KAREN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DUSK 40

Karen enters quickly. She picks up the phone, dials 911. After a few moments, a VOICE answers --

PHONE VOICE
Emergency, Operator 789 --

Karen hesitates before answering, then thinks better of it and hangs up.

41 INT. KAREN'S BEDROOM - DUSK 41

Moving hurriedly now, Karen pulls a suitcase from the closet, throws it on the bed. She starts tossing clothes inside, then catches sight of -

HER OWN REFLECTION

in the vanity mirror. Karen studies herself for a moment, bringing a hand to the bandaged wound at her throat.

Just then, we hear a CLICK from the entry way outside. Karen freezes, listening. SOMEONE is out there. Karen fishes the vampire mace Whistler had given her out of her pocket, moving cautiously back towards the living room --

42 INT. KAREN'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DUSK 42

As Karen rounds the corner, she nearly runs into --

A ROOKIE POLICE OFFICER,

GIDEON, fresh-faced, barely into his 20s. He jumps back, equally startled.

KAREN
What are you doing here?!

GIDEON
I'm sorry, I'm sorry --
(gesturing)
I didn't mean to scare y . The
door was open, I was just doing a
routine check --

Karen relaxes a few notches, mollified by Gideon's flustered demeanor. He smiles, takes a quick glance around the room, then studies the bandages on Karen's neck.

GIDEON
You're Karen Jansen?

Karen nods.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

GIDEON

Your coworkers at the hospital said
you were kidnapped last night --

(beat)

Are you all right?

KAREN

I'm okay, I guess I'm a little
freaked out, but, um --

(remembering)

Listen, do you have any idea what
happened to the other doctor I was
with? Curtis?

GIDEON

(matter of fact)

Oh, he's dead. But I wouldn't
worry about that if I were you.

KAREN

(alarmed)

Why?

In the blink of an eye Gideon's affable charm vanishes as he
unholsters his gun.

GIDEON

Because you're dead too.

Karen GASPS. She has a half-second to act -- in which she
triggers a spray of vampire mace into Gideon's face. Gideon
stumbles back, blinded, cursing, rubbing the heel of his
palm against his eyes --

Karen expects pyrotechnics -- but the end result is little
more than an annoyance. A second later, Gideon is simply
blinking, sniffing his fingers, confused --

GIDEON

Garlic?

KAREN

He said it would work against
vampires --

Gideon forces Karen against the wall, placing the gun
against her head --

GIDEON

Who said I was a vampire?

BLADE (O.S.)

Nobody.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: 2

42

Blade's hand enters from off-screen, clamping down around Gideon's gunhand, squeezing hard enough to wring water from a stone. Gideon sinks to his knees, GASPING as his finger bones snap like kindling. Blade looks to Karen --

BLADE

He's a familiar --

-- then fires a fist into Gideon's face.

BLADE

A human who works for the
vampires --

Blade punctuates the statement with another blow, then lifts Gideon up and flings him clear across the room. Gideon tries to rise, but Blade is all over him, kicking the shit out of the rogue cop until he sinks to the floor in a half-conscious haze.

Blade stands over Gideon's limp form, fists clenched, breathing heavily, touching down after his adrenaline high. Finally, he looks to Karen --

BLADE

You okay?

Karen nods, glances at Gideon --

KAREN

How did you know?

BLADE

Figured they'd send someone after you. Thought I'd wait around and see who showed up.

KAREN

You used me as bait?! But, he
could've --

BLADE

He didn't. Get over it.

Blade kneels next to Gideon. He turns the man's head, inspects the neck, the skin behind the ear --

BLADE

See this mark?

Blade pushes aside Gideon's hair, revealing a tiny, cryptic symbol tattooed into the man's scalp.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: 3

42

BLADE

That's a glyph, kind of like a vampire cattle brand. That means Officer Gideon here is someone's property. Any other vampire tries to bleed him, they'll have to answer to Gideon's owner --

(studying the glyph)

How 'bout that? This glyph belongs to a son of a bitch named Deacon Frost. We've been tracking him for a while --

KAREN

Why in God's name would anyone want to work for them?

BLADE

Because they're vampire wanna-bes. If they're loyal, if they prove themselves, then their masters will turn them.

KAREN

And that's a good thing?

BLADE

For some.

Just then, Gideon MOANS. Blade drags the man up so they're eye to eye.

BLADE

How 'bout it, Gideon? You a good little bloodhound?

CUT TO:

43 EXT. KAREN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DUSK

43

Blade and Karen are standing by Gideon's police cruiser. Blade shoves Gideon against the hood. He finds Gideon's keys, moves to the trunk, opens it --

IN THE TRUNK -

A sophisticated medical cooling unit for transporting organs. Blade opens the unit, coolant vapor hisses out. Inside are plastic bags containing blood.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED:

43

BLADE
Looks like our friend was
blood-running.
(to Gideon)
Where were you headed?

Gideon mumbles through a split lip and chipped teeth --

GIDEON
Mphuck you --

WHAM! Blade plants Gideon's face into the hood of the car.
Gideon GROANS, coughs --

GIDEON
Jesus -- 1227 Brookner - the
Holliston Clinic --

Blade releases him, then draws one of his MACH autos.

KAREN
What are you doing?!

BLADE
Preventive medicine.

Karen steps in front of Blade, shielding Gideon.

KAREN
You can't do this, he's human, it's
murder.

BLADE
It's war, now get the fuck out of
the way!

Karen grabs Blade's arm, wrestling with him, trying to push his hand away. As the two of them struggle, Gideon makes a break for it, stumbling across the lawn. Blade pushes Karen aside, takes aim, FIRES --

-- but Gideon ducks into an alley, disappearing from sight.
Blade spins on Karen, enraged --

BLADE
God-damnit!!!

But Karen's defiant, she's not backing down.

KAREN
You were going to kill him. What
was I supposed to do?! Shut my
eyes and pretend I didn't see what
I saw?

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: 2

43

Blade's face split-second morphs into a bestial snarl, distorting with fury. We see a split-second flash of WHITE FIRE in his eyes -- something utterly inhuman -- and then, just like that, it's gone again.

BLADE

Let me set you straight on something, Doctor. What you've "seen" so far is nothing. The world you live in's just the sugar-coated topping. There's another world beneath it, the real world -- and it's a fucking bloodbath. If you want to survive in it, you'd better pull your head out of your ass.

Blade turns to leave, but Karen reaches for his arm, angry as hell.

KAREN

Wait a minute! I'm coming with you
--

BLADE

Forget it.

KAREN

(in his face)

Look, if what you've been saying is true, if there's a chance I could turn into one of them, then I've got no choice, do I? I have to work with you. I need to learn everything I can about them. It's the only way I'll be able to find a cure for myself --

Blade heads for his Olds, yanking the door open.

BLADE

There is no cure.

KAREN

Don't be so sure.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. EDGEWOOD TOWERS, PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

44

We are soaring through the air above the gleaming city skyline, moving towards the Edgewood Towers whose windows reflect the rising moon.

45 EXT. FROST'S PENTHOUSE, ROOFTOP POOL - NIGHT

45

Mercury, the lupine Gaultier girl from Frost's club, glides beneath the water, surfacing at the deep end. We SEE --

FROST

lounging in a chair, studying his laptop which rests beside him. On screen is the same manuscript we glimpsed before, the laptop furiously decrypting the ancient language. Next to Frost is Quinn, who appears to be sulking.

OFFICER GIDEON

waits nearby, cradling his ruined hand, his battered face cast downward.

GIDEON

I know you're disappointed --

QUINN

(chiming in)
Crestfallen.

GIDEON

Blade was waiting for me.

Frost just shakes his head, disgusted.

FROST

Yeah, whatever --

Gideon stammers. In the blink of an eye, Frost lifts Gideon from the floor, dangling the Officer over the deep end of the pool by his throat --

FROST

All you had to do was bring her
here.

(pulling him closer)
Tell me something, Gideon, what
blood type are you?

Gideon GURGLES as Frost's fingernails pierce his flesh. In a flash, Frost sinks his fangs downward, tearing out Gideon's throat with animalistic fury.

QUINN

(grinning)
Wild.

Mercury rises from the water, dripping wet. She crosses to Frost. He kisses her hungrily, still clinging to Gideon all the while. Mercury pulls back from the kiss, flicking a tongue over her lips, tasting the blood.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

MERCURY
 (disappointed)
 O negative.

FROST
 Figures.

Frost drops Gideon into the deep end of the pool. Gideon's body sinks downward, his police badge twinkling like sunken treasure.

CUT TO:

46 EXT. HOLLISTON CLINIC, REAR ENTRANCE - NIGHT

46

The Holliston Clinic is your basic inner-city blood-barter establishment where desperate transients parley their plasma into cash. A series of refrigerated trucks are parked out back, with PEOPLE loading medical transport cases into them.

BLADE

emerges from a nearby alley, then cautiously crouches behind one of the trucks. He places something against a nearby door and activates it with a BEEP. Just then, we hear the SCUFFLE OF FEET --

Blade whirls, drawing his sword, wheeling at an APPROACHING SHADOW, stopping mere millimeters from decapitating --

KAREN,

her eyes wide with fright. Blade's sword vibrates from the tension in his forearm, having drawn just the slightest taste of blood.

Blade lowers his sword. Karen remembers to breathe. He Blade shakes his head, amazed.

BLADE
 (hissing, sotto)
 Do you have a death wish or are you just stupid? I told you to stay in the car.

KAREN
 (pointing)
 I didn't have a choice.

THEIR POV (THE ALLEY)

Blade's car sits at the mouth of the alley. A TRIO of OMINOUS SILHOUETTES are gathered around it.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

46

Blade looks back to Karen, conceding the point. It's then that she notices the building they're crouching by.

KAREN

I know this place -- the Holliston blood bank --

BLADE

Owned by vampires. There's one in every major city, and just like Domino's, they always deliver. (checking his watch)
Now step back --

KAREN

Why?

BLADE

(shoving Karen behind a dumpster)
Because the shit's about to hit the fan --

As Blade speaks, the charge on the door EXPLODES and --

47 INT. HOLLISTON CLINIC, LOBBY - NIGHT

47

-- BLOWS the door off its hinges. An ALARM rings.

48 EXT. HOLLISTON CLINIC, REAR ENTRANCE - NIGHT

48

The silhouettes at the Blade's car come running. Blade grabs Karen by the wrist, dragging her inside.

BLADE

Move.

49 INT. HOLLISTON CLINIC, LOBBY - NIGHT

49

Blade enters, swinging his rifle around for all to see.

BLADE

Get out. Now.

POTENTIAL DONORS scramble for the exit. Behind the counter, TANAKA, a male nurse, reaches for an alarm button. Blade vaults over the counter, aiming his rifle.

BLADE

I know you're blood-running. Who's your sponsor?

TANAKA

I don't know what you're --

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

POW! Blade backhands him across the face hard enough to loosen his teeth. Karen flinches, stepping forward --

KAREN

What if you've made a mistake?

Blade pins Tanaka's head to the wall, turning it to the side -- revealing the man's glyph. It's different than Gideon's, looking more like a Japanese kanji character.

BLADE

What's this? A birthmark?

Blade grips Tanaka by his collar, shoving him through a doorway --

50 INT. HOLLISTON CLINIC, SUPPLY ROOM - NIGHT

50

Karen and Blade SEE supply cabinets, cots, a number of locked refrigeration units. Blade FIRES into the door handle of one of the units, tears it open -- the fridge is stacked floor to ceiling with plastic packets of blood.

BLADE

(to Karen)

Still think we might be wrong?

(to Tanaka)

How much are you shipping?

TANAKA

Bite me!

Blade opens FIRE, sweeping his rifle around the room, shooting everything in sight. Glass cabinetry SHATTERS, ampoules and vacutainers go flying. Tanaka cowers, arms wrapped about his head.

Blade stops shooting. He leans down towards Tanaka, placing the end of his rifle against the man's forehead. Tanaka looks like he's about to wet his pants.

BLADE

Give Frost a message for me. Tell him it's open-season on bloodsuckers.

Blade pulls back his rifle, leaving a red indentation mark where the end of the rifle barrel pressed into Tanaka's skin. He starts towards the exit. Karen follows.

CUT TO:

51 INT. BLADE'S OLDS - NIGHT

51

Blade and Karen return to the Olds. He keys the ignition, lets the engine idle. They're parked down the street from the blood clinic. Karen looks to Blade, needling him --

KAREN
I'm impressed. An hour ago you
were ready to kill a man for less,
this one didn't even talk.

BLADE
He will.

Blade points --

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD --

Tanaka rushes from the clinic, climbing behind the wheel of a Mustang parked nearby. He takes off --

Blade follows the Mustang, CLICKING on a cell-phone scanner mounted on the dash. Numbers flash on the LCD screen as it searches for a signal, then locks onto it. We hear a DIAL TONE, then a number being dialed --

AUTOMATED VOICE
(filtered, on scanner)
"You've reached a number that is no
longer in service. Please consult
your operator and try again".

TANAKA'S VOICE
(filtered, on scanner)
It's Tanaka, PIN
sixteen-zero-zero-nine --

A "real" voice comes on the line:

VOICE
(filtered, on scanner)
Yes?

Karen looks to Blade, impressed.

52 INT. TANAKA'S MUSTANG - NIGHT

52

Tanaka speeds, shouting into the speaker phone --

TANAKA
Get me Pearl!

VOICE
(filtered, on speaker)
Pearl is feeding --

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

TANAKA

Look, I'm not fucking around here!
That hunter Frost has been talking
about? He was just at the clinic.
Tore the goddamn place apart!

CUT TO:

53 EXT. THE BLACK PEARL - NIGHT

53

Tokyo town. A black edifice, no windows, secured parking, no signage except for a purple neon scroll above the entrance -- a FLASHING KANJI, just like the glyph tattooed on Tanaka's neck.

Tanaka's Mustang pulls into the crowded parking lot. He climbs out, flagging away the VALETS, heads inside --

WHIP PAN TO

Blade's Olds stopping a few blocks down the street.

54 INT. BLADE'S OLDS - NIGHT

54

Blade kills the engine, studying The Black Pearl.

BLADE

Looks like we hit pay-dirt. This
place is crawling with them. See
that graffiti?

Blade indicates a graffiti-covered wall which has been scrawled with various designs that look like post-modern hieroglyphics.

BLADE

Those aren't gang tags, those are
vampire markings. It means there's
a safe-house nearby. A place they
can go if dawn is coming --

(pointing)

See the valets over there? They're
vampires. So is the doorman.

KAREN

How can you tell?

BLADE

The way they move, they way they
smell --

Blade continues to scan the area, pointing out a few more
likely candidates --

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

BLADE

The whore on the corner, she's one too.

(an evil smile)

Those johns are in for a surprise.

Blade reaches into the back seat, retrieves his sword and a satchel. He snaps open his shotgun, loads it.

KAREN

I can't believe there are so many of them -- this is a nightmare.

BLADE

There are worse things out here than vampires.

KAREN

Like what?

BLADE

(pumping his shotgun)

Like me.

55 EXT. BLADE'S OLDS/BLACK PEARL - NIGHT

55

Blade and Karen climb out. He lets his shotgun fall within the folds of his longcoat and starts across the street. Karen follows, hurrying to keep up with him.

BLADE

All right, listen up, Vampire Anatomy 101. Crosses and running water don't do dick, so forget what you've seen in the movies.

Blade enumerates the following on his fingers:

BLADE

You use the stake, silver, or sunlight, got it?

Blade holds up one of his MACH autos.

BLADE

Know how to use one of these?

Karen takes the weapon from him, eyes all over it.

KAREN

No.

Blade takes the gun back, snorting derisively.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

BLADE
Safety's off, round's already
chambered --
(cocking it)
Silver hollow-points filled with
garlic. You aim for the heart or
the head, anything else is a
one-way ticket to a pine box.

Blade spins around a corner, only to be challenged by a
HULKING DOORMAN at the entrance of the Pearl.

DOORMAN
(Japanese, subtitled)
I'm sorry, sir -- do you have an
invitation?

56 INT. BLACK PEARL - NIGHT

56

CRASH! The front door flies open as the Doorman's body
sails through. Blade enters, Karen at his heels --

The 'Pearl' is an all-hours strip club cum casino catering
exclusively to Japanese ZAIBATSU CLIENTELE. Dimly lit, the
air thick with cigarette smoke, deafening MUSIC. Go boards,
pachinko machines, sexy little MANGA WAIFS in schoolgirl
outfits doling out drinks --

STRIPPERS writhe in the circular "pit" tables surrounded by
HOWLING grab-ass men. But that's nothing compared to --

THE MAIN ATTRACTION,

who's doing a bump and grind down the runway, shaking a body
worthy of a schoolboy's wet dream. Her attire? A leather
S&M face mask, nipple rings, 6-inch spikes, and a pair of
panties to hide her modesty.

Blade scans the room -- just in time to see Tanaka ducking
into a back hallway. Blade pushes towards the rear of the
club. Karen follows.

ON THE STRIPPER

as she catches sight of Blade and freezes in mid-routine.
The stripper pulls off her hood. Long black hair with a
streak of white tumbles down her back -- it's Mercury.

57 INT. BLACK PEARL, HALLWAY - NIGHT

57

Blade and Karen head past the bathrooms. At the end of the
hall is a door marked "OFFICE". A SUMO-TYPE GUARD moves to
intercept them --

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

57

GUARD

Hey --

Blade plants a hand over the guard's face, shoving him back into the bathroom as he KICKS open the office door --

58 INT. THE BLACK PEARL, BACK OFFICE - NIGHT

58

Tanaka spins around, startled, tries to throw a punch --

Blade traps Tanaka's arm, levering the man up and over. He CRASHES into a shelving unit, taking the whole thing down with him. Karen winces. Blade grabs a handful of Tanaka's hair, yanks his head up --

BLADE

Where's the entrance?!

TANAKA

I can't -- they'll kill me!

Blade's eyes glow.

BLADE

I got news for you, friend.
You're already dead.

TANAKA

(terrified)

Oh God, shit -- behind the filing
cabinets --

Blade drops Tanaka, moves to a wall of filing cabinets. He searches the wall a moment, then finds a trigger. Hits it -- the cabinets slide apart, revealing a hidden elevator.

Behind Blade, Tanaka pulls a handgun from a desk drawer, swinging it up --

Blade unholsters one of his MACH autos faster than any gunslinger in history. He FIRES over his own shoulder, BLOWING Tanaka back against the wall. Then he motions to the elevator and nods to Karen --

BLADE

After you.

59 INT. THE BLACK PEARL, ELEVATOR - NIGHT

59

The elevator descends. Then a tone CHIMES, signaling the end of the ride. The doors hiss open --

60 INT. THE VAMPIRE ARCHIVES, HALLWAY - NIGHT

60

Blade and Karen enter the narrow, maze-like "stacks" of the vampire archives, weaving their way through shelves of climate-controlled, digitized records. It's cold down here. Their breath comes out in frosty plumes.

KAREN

What is this place?

BLADE

Some kind of archive. This must be where they keep their records --

KAREN

Isn't this all a little high-tech? I thought vampires were more into cobwebs and coffins.

BLADE

You've been watching too much TV. They've got their claws sunk into everything -- finance, real estate, politics. They own half of Downtown.

Blade pulls a CD-ROM from the shelves, its spine labeled in indecipherable vampire glyphs. He pauses, hearing a DISTANT WHISPER. Blade signals quiet, silently leading Karen through the stacks towards --

PEARL'S LAIR

A vestibule of sorts, leading to a larger bed chamber constructed of rice paper shoji screens and tatami mats. Candles glow within, illuminating a MONSTROUSLY OBESE SHADOW beyond the translucent rice paper walls.

The shadow speaks in a tremulous, bird-like voice -- the secret tongue. As Blade draw his sword, the massive shadow freezes --

PEARL'S VOICE

(frightened)

Lorca, is that you?

Blade slides open the nearest shoji screen. Nothing Karen's seen up until this point could prepare her for the archive's curator --

PEARL,

a nine-hundred-pound androgynous vampire of Asian origin, lounging amidst pillowed rice mats, wearing a communications headset. Think of a cross between Divine and Jabba The Hutt.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

Skin the complexion of buttermilk, so corpulent he can barely move, so engorged with blood that he's actually sweating it from the pores of his skin.

Pearl is surrounded by a nest of monitors and keyboards which have been affixed to counter-balanced arms -- this way, Pearl can access information without leaving bed.

Lying next to Pearl, dwarfed by the vampire's massive size, is the chalk-white body of a recently-drained NAKED BOY.

At the sight of Blade, Pearl's eyes widen in fear --

PEARL
(into a speakerphone)
He's here!

FROST'S VOICE
(over speakerphone)
Congratulations, Day-Walker.

BLADE
Frost?

61 INT. FROST'S PENTHOUSE, POOL - NIGHT

61

Frost paces the length of his pool, wearing a hands-free communications headset, grinning.

FROST
In the flesh, Blade. I understand you've been looking for me. I'm flattered.

62 INT. THE VAMPIRE ARCHIVES, HALLWAY - NIGHT

62

As Blade listens, Pearl reaches for his trackball, attempting to delete the document currently on his monitors -- but Blade lunges forward, sinking the tip of his sword into Pearl's fleshy throat. Pearl freezes.

BLADE
(eyeballing Pearl)
Don't be. You're another notch on my sword hilt, nothing else.

Frost's DEEP LAUGHTER drifts from the speakerphone.

63 INT. FROST'S PENTHOUSE, POOL - NIGHT

63

Frost settles into his chair, enjoying the cat and mouse.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

63

FROST

You're quick, I'll give you that.
In the space of an hour you've
crossed my familiar, destroyed a
blood bank. Now here you are in
the heart of our archives,
terrorizing our tight-lipped
curator.

PEARL'S VOICE

He has a knife to my throat, Frost!
He --

FROST

(cutting him off)
You're history, Pearl. Have the
good grace to die with some
dignity.

Frost hangs up, moves over to an intercom, keying it, trying
to keep his excitement in check.

FROST

Blade is at the Black Pearl. Get
over there now.

64 INT. THE VAMPIRE ARCHIVES, HALLWAY - NIGHT

64

Blade tosses his satchel on the bed, opens it. Inside is a
hand-held UV lamp hooked up to a nine-volt battery. Pearl
eyes the device, fearful --

PEARL

What is that?

BLADE

A sun lamp. We're going to play
twenty questions. Depending on
your answers, you might get
yourself a tanning session.

Blade looks to Pearl's monitor and SEES a digitized image,
the SAME MANUSCRIPT Deacon had been studying earlier.

BLADE

What were you in such a big hurry
to delete just now?

Pearl hesitates. Blade turns on the lamp. Pearl HOWLS as
the harsh light falls on him. Blade flicks the light off.

Pearl cringes, GROWLING, his face smoking profusely.
Exposure to the UV rays, even for one short second, has made
his face blister like a plague victim's.

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED:

64

PEARL

(gasping)
It's a fragment of the Prophecy.

BLADE

And which prophecy would that be?

Pearl hesitates again -- Blade turns on the lamp for a longer time. Pearl thrashes, covering his face. His hands blacken, the skin sizzling away to expose the finger bones beneath. Karen has to avert her gaze --

Blade turns off the lamp. Pearl SNARLS, his body quivering with poisonous rage. He can't contain himself --

PEARL

The Sleeper awakens! The Blood
Tide comes! And you can't do a
thing about it, Day Walker!

Blade leans in close so he's eye to eye with Pearl.

BLADE

Is that so?

Pearl's momentary fanatical zeal vanishes as he realizes he's said more than he ought to. He sweats blood, his flaking, slug-like lips quivering.

PEARL

Well, er, that's what Frost says --

Pearl casts a sidelong glance away from Blade. Blade follows the vampire's eyes to an armored door, then he stands back, handing the UV rig to Karen.

BLADE

If he moves, cook him.

Blade approaches the vault door, sizing up its locking mechanism. He pulls an explosive charge from his combat belt and secures it to the door, arming it with a BEEP!

PEARL

(panicking)
There's nothing in there, it's just
a storeroom --

BLADE

Then you won't mind if I take a
look.

PEARL

NO!!!

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED: 2

64

Pearl LUNGES from his bed. Karen triggers the UV rig, flash-frying him to a blackened crisp. Pearl quivers, his enormous body smoking like a piece of charred meat.

Blade looks back at Karen, impressed. She shrugs.

KAREN

He moved.

TIME CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER,

BOOM! The charge goes off and Blade kicks the damaged door in, knocking it clear off its hinges --

65 INT. ARCHIVE VAULT - NIGHT

65

Ancient papers flutter through the smoky air like wind-borne leaves. On the walls are a series of glass-encased documents, dozens of pages -- fragments of an ancient, illuminated manuscript.

Blade steps forward, studying the pages. The significance of the find is not lost on him --

KAREN

What is this?

BLADE

A goldmine. These are pages from the Book of Erebus --

(off Karen's look)

The vampire Bible. It's got everything in it, their entire history --

(to himself)

So what the hell does Frost want with it?

QUINN (O.S.)

Wouldn't you like to know?

Blade and Karen spin ----

QUINN,

Mercury, and a number of other vampires stand at the entrance to the vault.

QUINN

(grins)

Hola, amigo. Remember me?

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

65

Karen triggers the UV light, but Mercury ducks under it, ripping it from her hands, crushing it. In a split-second, the she-demon has her claws around Karen's throat.

As Blade reaches for his rifle, the vampires converge on him like quicksilver, knocking Blade back against the glass panels. The panels SHATTER, sending glass and prophecy pages every which way.

While on the ground, Blade snatches up one of the prophecy fragments even as he is hauled back up. The vampires fling Blade against the vault wall, pinning him.

QUINN

You took my arm, Blade. But that's okay, I'm growing a new one --

Quinn lifts up his "arm". A skeletal forearm has grown from the stump. It's got cartilage, sinew, and muscle, but no flesh yet.

QUINN

Nice, huh? Think I'll ever play the piano again?

(shrugging)

You can slice him, you can dice him, and the man just keeps on coming.

Blade struggles violently, but Quinn is upon him, pounding his fist into Blade again and again and again -- giving him payback with compounded interest. When it's over, Quinn steps back, winded --

Blade's head hangs down. He gasps, wincing, every breath sending a red hot poker to his gut. Quinn grabs a hold of Blade's jaw, forcing his head up.

QUINN

Stay with me, sweetness, I'm not through with you yet.

Quinn pulls Blade's jacket open, SEES the bandoleer of stakes. He tugs one out, admiring it.

QUINN

Silver. Nice craftsmanship.

(to the others)

Now here's a man who takes his job just a little too seriously, don't you think?

(back to Blade)

Which reminds me, Blade, think I owe you one --

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: 2

65

Quinn stabs the stake into Blade's shoulder. Blade CRIES OUT, tries to pull free. Karen, who's being held by Mercury, averts her gaze.

QUINN
Actually, if you want to get technical, I owe you two.

As Quinn reaches for another stake, Blade starts to laugh.

QUINN
What's so funny, bright eyes?

BLADE
I'm expecting some company.

It's then that Quinn notices the micro ear-coil radio receiver in Blade's ear. As we MOVE IN on it, we hear a tiny VOICE squawking from it --

BOOM!!! The wall of the vault EXPLODES INWARD, knocking Quinn and the rest of his cronies to their feet.

WHISTLER

stands in the smoking hole where the wall used to be, brandishing his cane in one hand and an automatic rifle in the other. He balances the rifle against his hip like an over-the-hill gunslinger and OPENS FIRE on the vampires.

As Whistler lays down his COVER FIRE, Blade drags Karen up, the two of them retreating back through the newly created exit.

Whistler is wearing a backpack which he now shrugs off. He tosses it at the vampires and runs. CLOSE ON the backpack as it skids across the floor. We SEE a LED timer on it --

66 INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL - NIGHT

56

The three of them find themselves in a subway tunnel running parallel to the archives and --

WHOOSH!!! A train is hurtling towards them. Blade and the others flatten against the tunnel wall as it THUNDERS by. Whistler sucks air, wheezing from overexertion.

WHISTLER
Christ, I'm too old for this.
Somebody get me a goddamn
wheelchair.

Blade GRUNTS as he yanks the stake from his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

66

KAREN

How did you find us?!

Whistler taps a tiny radio headset curled around his ear.

WHISTLER

We keep in radio contact.

KAREN

You've been listening in the whole time?

WHISTLER

You think I'd let him run loose without a chaperone? Blade ferrets their rat-holes out, I map them. Then we blow them all to kingdom come.

67 INT. ARCHIVE VAULT - NIGHT

67

CLOSE ON the backpack bomb as the timer reaches zero. An EXPLOSION rips through the vault, mushrooming outward --

68 INT. BLACK PEARL - NIGHT

68

Zaibatsu clientele pause as a RUMBLING TREMOR shakes the cocktail tables, sending glasses TINKLING about.

69 INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL - NIGHT

69

Whistler WHOOPS with excitement, loving every minute of it. As the train's rear car sweeps past them, Whistler starts across the tracks.

WHISTLER

Let's go!

But his triumph is short-lived, for now we SEE --

THE VAMPIRES

surging into the tunnel like a pack of hungry wolves on high-octane. A dozen of them now -- armed Asian enforcers from the club above -- with Quinn and Mercury in the lead.

DOWN THE TUNNEL,

ANOTHER TRAIN is approaching, gaining fast, HEADLIGHTS blinding. Blade shoves Karen forward, out of its path, then DIVES after her. They roll to safety on the other side of the tracks just as -

TWO VAMPIRES

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED:

69

leap after them, hoping to clear the tracks. But they're just a half-second too late and --

WHAM!!! The vamps are struck by the train engine like bugs against the grille of a speeding car.

Karen drags herself up -- through the flickering gaps between the rail cars rushing past them, she glimpses Quinn and the remaining vampires, trapped on the other side of the track --

Then she SEES Whistler, unnoticed by Quinn and Mercury, ducking down a maintenance access shaft.

KAREN
(over the noise)
Whistler!

BLADE
He can take care of himself!
(pulling her towards him)
HANG ON!!!

Even now, the end of the train is hurtling into view, ROARING towards them some sixty miles an hour. In another instant it will be alongside them --

-- and here comes Quinn and Mercury, RUSHING towards them now that their path is clear. Karen has one terrified second in which to realize what Blade is about to attempt before he LUNGES forward and --

-- snags a safety rail on the back of the rear car just as it storms past! The action would have ripped a lesser man's arm clean out of its socket, Blade on the other hand, only has to contend with sheer, unmitigated agony as he --

-- holds on for dear life, still clutching Karen in his one-armed grip. He hauls her up onto the coupling foot-plate, then SMASHES open the emergency exit door. Karen climbs inside, Blade starts to follow but --

BEHIND THEM,

Quinn is still coming! Racing along the tracks on foot, gaining on the goddamned train! Closing fast. Too fast.

QUINN

springs forward, snagging Blade's ankle with his "good" hand. The vampire's weight threatens to haul Blade down, who's still half-in, half-out of the car. Blade reaches to his back-sabbard, unsheathes his sword --

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: 2

69

THUNK! Blade brings the sword down on Quinn's good arm, cutting it off at the wrist! Quinn falls to the tracks, tumbling head over heels back into the darkness --

THE AMPUTATED HAND,

which continues to clutch at Blade's ankle, starts to incinerate. With a cry of disgust, Blade kicks the thing away.

70 INT. SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT

70

Karen helps Blade inside. PASSENGERS take one look at the pair and head for the other end of the train, quickly exiting through the doors between the cars. Blade sinks to the floor, exhausted. He's looking ashen now. The whites of his eyes are shot through with red.

Karen gets a good look at Blade's wounds -- the front of his jacket is soaked in blood. She reaches for him --

KAREN

You're shoulder's dislocated --

Karen places a hand on his shoulder, another around his elbow and -CRACK!- brutally pops it back in place. Blade CRIES out, in agony. Then he reaches into his jacket and pulls out the small, gas-powered pistol-injector we saw Whistler inject him with earlier. He tries to load one of the ampoules into it, but because of his wounds, he's not having much luck --

BLADE

(frustrated)

I need help with this --

Karen nods, inserting the ampoule into the gun. Blade shrugs off his jacket, holds out his arm. Karen pauses --

KAREN

What am I injecting you with?

BLADE

(weakly)

Serum -- it's a human hemoglobin substitute.

Karen locates a vein, presses the injector against it -- Blade tenses, grits his teeth, fights to keep his body thrashing as the serum enters his bloodstream. He grips the wall behind him -- the agony he's going through is excruciating, like nothing we could imagine.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

70

When it's over, he slumps forward, spent, vulnerable, flushed with sweat. Karen stares at him --

KAREN

You're one of them, aren't you?

Blade turns away from Karen, filled with self-loathing.

BLADE

No. I'm something else.

Off Karen's surprised reaction, we --

FADE TO BLACK:

WHISTLER (V.O.)

(pre-lapping over from
the next scene)

He's a hybrid. Half-human,
half-vampire.

FADE FROM BLACK

71 INT. ALL-NIGHT DINER - NIGHT

71

Whistler and Karen are situated in a back booth, nursing coffees.

WHISTLER

Blade's mother was attacked by a vampire while she was pregnant. Ultimately, she died, but her unborn child lived. Unfortunately, he'd undergone certain genetic changes while in the womb --

Whistler reaches for a pack of cigarettes, pulls one out. He thumbs a match, fires up. Takes a long drag --

WHISTLER

I found Blade when he was thirteen. He'd been living on the streets, feeding off the homeless. Apparently the Thirst manifested itself at puberty --

(beat)

I took him for one of them at first, almost killed him, too. But then I realized what he was.

Whistler studies Karen, exhaling another lungful of smoke.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

71

WHISTLER

Blade's unique, you know. A one in a billion anomaly. He can withstand sunlight, garlic, even silver. But he still has the Thirst.

KAREN

What happens if he doesn't take the serum?

WHISTLER

The Thirst overcomes him, just like the others. It's not something he can control --

CUT TO:

72 INT. WHISTLER'S WORKSHOP, BLADE'S ROOM - NIGHT

72

Blade crouches in the corner, shaking, fighting back the effects of another attack.

BACK TO:

73 INT. ALL-NIGHT DINER - NIGHT

73

Whistler shakes his head, frustrated.

WHISTLER

The problem is, time's running out. His body's starting to reject the serum. And so far, all my efforts to find a cure have ended in failure --

KAREN

No offense, Whistler, but you haven't exactly been working with state of the art equipment. You might have missed something.

WHISTLER

I doubt it. I've been doing this a long time.

Karen nods, conceding the point for the moment. An awkward beat passes between them.

KAREN

Why do you hunt them?

WHISTLER

Habit, mostly, just like this.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

Whistler gestures with his cigarette, then stubs it out.

WHISTLER

I had a family once -- a wife,
three daughters. Then a drifter
named Deacon Frost came calling one
evening --

KAREN

He killed them?

WHISTLER

Eventually. He toyed with them
first. He made me choose, do you
understand? Which order they would
die in --

Karen stares at Whistler, horrified.

KAREN

How did you escape?

WHISTLER

I didn't. He was cruel enough to
let me live.

(slapping his brace)

Even gave me a souvenir to remember
him by.

Karen nods -- it's all falling into place for her now.

KAREN

And now you're using Blade to exact
your revenge?

WHISTLER

(pointedly)

Frost's bodycount keeps rising, and
I'm not getting any younger, am I?

CUT TO:

74 INT. BLADE'S ROOM - NIGHT

74

Karen enters. It's dark, just a trace of moonlight.

KAREN

Blade?

No answer. Then Karen SEES him -- crouched in the corner of
the room like some kind of nocturnal animal.

KAREN

It's dark in here.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

74

BLADE

You get used to the darkness.

Karen takes a step towards him, then notices the driver's license of Vanessa which Blade keeps on his bedside table.

KAREN

Whistler told me about your mother.

BLADE

Whistler's full of shit.

Karen draws closer, refusing to be put off so easily.

KAREN

I'm sorry. I can only imagine what you must've gone through.

BLADE

(harshly)

No you can't. I can't even close my eyes without hearing her scream. I felt her die.

KAREN

Those aren't real memories. No one has that kind of recall.

BLADE

How do you know? You don't know me. You don't know what I am. I remember from day one. People staring at me, sensing I was different. Knowing in their hearts I wasn't human.

(beat)

Do you know what it's like, having to fight for people who hate you? Who think you're a monster?

(shaking his head)

Of course you don't. I had to save you too, just like all the others.

KAREN

(pointedly)

I never asked you to save me. It was your call.

Blade glares at Karen, his lambent eyes glowing in the moonlight. The truth of her statement stings more than he'd like to admit.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: 2

74

BLADE
(hushed, angry)
Just get out of here.

Karen exits, leaving him alone with his demons.

CUT TO:

75 EXT. EDGEWOOD TOWERS, PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

75

Frost stands at the roof edge looking out at the glimmering cityscape before him. Nearby is the laptop, almost finished translating the document which we now realize is a page from the Book of Erebus.

BEHIND FROST,

Quinn cradles his amputated stump with his newly grown arm.

QUINN
He took my fucking hand! Again!

FROST
This is starting to become a habit
of yours, isn't it?

MERCURY
Maybe the amputee lifestyle just
suits him.

Quinn scowls. Frost glances up at the moon above, which is nearly full.

FROST
Time is short --
(cryptically)
-- and we've got some dead wood to
clear away.

CLOSE ON THE LAPTOP,

the translating program still decoding the cryptic words.

CUT TO:

76 EXT. CLIFF SIDE - JUST BEFORE DAWN

76

We're on a stretch of ragged coastline. At the water's edge we find --

FROST,

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

76

grinning like the Cheshire Cat. He's dressed from head to toe in a black motorcycle suit -- boots, gloves, a visored helmet tucked under one arm. Mercury and Quinn are standing nearby, similarly attired.

DRAGONETTI

struggles before them. His wrists have been bound behind his back, his face has been covered with a black condemned man's hood.

DRAGONETTI

What is this? Where am I?!

Frost steps forward, pulling the hood off, turning him towards the open sea. Dragonetti stares, horrified.

FROST

When was the last time you stopped to appreciate a sunrise, Dragonetti?

(stopping himself, sarcastic)

Oh, that's right, you were "born a vampire". You've never had the pleasure, have you?

Frost checks his watch. On the horizon, a SLIVER OF GOLD appears. Frost yanks Dragonetti's coat back, tearing it from his shoulders. Dragonetti clings to his dignity.

DRAGONETTI

(resolute)

Do what you want, Frost. It won't make any difference. You'll never be a true blood.

Dragonetti's words cut deeper than Frost would like to admit. Frost lifts a pair of pliers into view.

FROST

(to the others)

Hold him.

Quinn grabs Dragonetti from behind, forcing the aging vampire's mouth open. As Dragonetti SHRIEKS, Frost reaches in and methodically rips the Overlord's fangs out.

FROST

The wheel turns, old fang. Guess you just got a little too long in the tooth.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED: 2

76

Frost forces Dragonetti to his knees, the sea foam washing around him. As the first rays of daylight fall upon Dragonetti, he HOWLS. His skin begins to sizzle and smoke, then he catches fire, like paper beneath a magnifying glass.

As the red sun rises in all its glory, Frost flips down the visor of his helmet. Quinn and Mercury follow suit as --

DRAGONETTI

suddenly EXPLODES in a flash of BLINDING WHITE LIGHT.

CUT TO:

77 INT. HOUSE OF EREBUS, MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

77

Once again, the vampire Lords are gathered. Only this time, FROST

is sitting in Dragonetti's chair. All eyes are on him. He reaches into his pocket, fishing something out, casually tossing it onto the table --

FROST

Dragonetti is dead.

DRAGONETTI'S BLOODY FANGS

CLINK across the tabletop, coming to a rest before a terrified Pallintine.

Frost looks at each of the vampire Lords in turn. No one says a word.

FROST

Let's get down to business, shall we?

CUT TO:

78 INT. WHISTLER'S WORKSHOP - DAY

78

Karen and Whistler are at the back of a van, unloading a host of new medical equipment -- from centrifuges to genetic sequencers and beyond.

Blade emerges from his room, looks to Karen. As if by silent agreement, last night's words go unacknowledged. He straps on his bandoleer of stakes, secures his scabbard.

WHISTLER

Going somewhere?

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

78

BLADE
China Town. I need more serum.
(re: new equipment)
What's all this?

KAREN
We made a trip to the hospital last
night, borrowed some equipment.

BLADE
(sarcastic)
For your miracle cure?

WHISTLER
I think she's on to something,
Blade.
(to Karen)
Show him --

Karen looks to Blade, who shrugs. She opens a refrigerator,
removing a syringe filled with blue fluid.

KAREN
This is EDTA --
ethylene-diamine-tetra-acetate.
It's an anti-coagulant. We use it
to treat blood-clots. Vampire
blood is thinner than humans,
though. Watch what happens when I
introduce some into a sample --

Karen gestures to the microscope. Blade takes a look --

BLADE'S POV

Vampire blood cells swirling about.

Karen injects the contents of the syringe onto the slide of
cells -- the reaction is immediate. The vampire blood turns
black, then begins violently bubbling.

Blade lifts his head away from the microscope just in
time -- the blood on the slide atomizes, exploding outward
in a fine mist which bursts apart the glass lens of the
scope.

Whistler chuckles, then limps away.

BLADE
Some cure.

KAREN
I'm still working on it.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: 2

78

Blade moves to follow, but Karen stops him --

KAREN
Wait. I need a sample of your
blood.

Blade grudgingly rolls up his sleeve. As Karen takes her sample, Blade looks to Whistler. The older man brings a handkerchief to his lips, coughing into it.

KAREN
Is he sick?

BLADE
Cancer.

Karen watches as Blade's blood flows into the vacutainer. She fills the first, then inserts another.

KAREN
You care about him, don't you?

BLADE
We've got a good arrangement,
that's all. Whistler makes the
weapons, I use them, the vampires
die -- end of story.

Karen finishes. Blade rolls up his sleeve.

KAREN
(pointedly)
My mother used to say that a cold
heart is a dead heart.

BLADE
Your mother sounds like a Hallmark
greeting card.

Blade slips his MACH autos into a shoulder holster, then shrugs into his leather jacket, donning his sunglasses.

BLADE
I'd wish you luck, Doc, but I never
put much stock in optimism.

He heads towards the elevator.

CUT TO:

79 EXT. CHINATOWN, STREETS - DAY

79

Blade makes his way down a street lined with vending stalls, passing MERCHANTS peddling exotic vegetables and cheap curios, butcher shops with rows of roast ducks in the windows.

BLADE'S POV

Even though the streets are crowded, the people seem to make way for him, avoiding eye-contact.

Blade turns into a dark alley, ducking into the doorway of a hole-in-the-wall herbalist shop.

80 INT. HERBALIST SHOP - DAY

80

A bell atop the door JINGLES, announcing Blade's arrival. We're in a dusty, cave-like room filled with baskets and bottle-lined shelves featuring things like "Toad Spleen Extract" and "Barking Deer Wine". Joss sticks burn, sending wispy tendrils of incense into the air.

At the back of the shop, an elderly CHINESE MAN in a cardigan sits in front of a battered television, watching a boxing match. He's eating a bowl of litchi fruit. On the counter nearby, a SPIDER MONKEY watches attentively.

BLADE

How's it going, Kam?

KAM

(re: calendar)

You're a week early.

BLADE

I was in the neighborhood.

Kam sets his fruit bowl aside, leads Blade through a curtain into a back room.

81 INT. HERBALIST SHOP, BACK ROOM - DAY

81

Kam hands Blade a leather valise. He opens it -- its lined with tiny ampoules of scarlet-colored serum. Blade pulls one out, holds it up to the light.

BLADE

Whistler says I'm building up a resistance to it.

KAM

I was afraid that might happen.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

81

BLADE

Maybe it's time to start exploring other alternatives.

KAM

There's only one alternative to the serum.

Blade nods. They both know what that "alternative" is.

BLADE

Yeah. I know.

Blade closes the valise and tucks it inside his jacket.

BLADE

Thanks, Kam.

(thinking)

One other thing. Have you ever heard of a vampire called the Sleeper?

Kam shakes his head. Blade pulls out the parchment he took from Pearl.

BLADE

I found this in their archives. I need to find someone who can read their language.

Kam studies the parchment.

KAM

I've heard about a woman named Miracia. Some say she's a mayombero, a Santeria witch. Supposedly she lives in that tent community down by the landfill. I'm told she only sees people at night.

Blade nods his thanks and heads back through the curtains.

82 EXT. CHINATOWN, STREET - DAY

82

Blade emerges from the alley into the sunlight, then hears his name WHISPERED on the wind.

VOICE (O.S.)

Blade.

Blade spins, scanning his surroundings -- did he really hear his name, or was it just the wind?

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED:

82

VOICE (O.S.)

Over here.

Again, the voice calls him. Blade's gaze settles on --

A MAN

sitting on a bench in the deep shade, his face obscured by the Chinese newspaper he's reading. There's a LITTLE GIRL sitting stiffly beside the man -- a look of pure terror written on her face.

MAN

Afternoon, Blade.

The man lowers his newspaper. It's Deacon Frost. He's wearing sunglasses, but otherwise, he's seemingly unprotected by the sun.

Blade reaches for his pistol --

FROST

Easy.

Frost's hand rests on the back of the girl's neck. We see his claws extend, caressing the flesh beneath her chin.

FROST

Wouldn't want our little friend here to wind up on the back of a milk carton, would we?

Blade reluctantly lowers his hand. Frost smiles. He takes in a deep breath of air, savoring it.

FROST

Beautiful day, isn't it?

BLADE

(confused)

How can you be out here?

FROST

I dabble in pharmaceuticals, medical research. We've developed a type of sun-blocker using octyl salicylate, a few others things.

On closer examination we see that Frost is wearing a TRANSLUCENT LOTION on his face. He touches a finger to his cheek, rubs some of the lotion between his fingers.

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: 2

82

FROST

It's not very effective in direct sunlight, but it's a start. The goal, of course, is to be like you, "the Day-walker".

BLADE

Why?

FROST

Why not? The future of our race runs through your bloodstream. You've got the best of both worlds, Blade. All of our strengths and none of our weaknesses.

BLADE

Maybe I don't see it that way.

FROST

Oh, so it's back to pretending we're human again, is it? Spare me the Uncle Tom routine. You can't keep denying what you are. You're one of us, Blade. You always have been.

BLADE

You're wrong.

FROST

Am I? You think the humans will ever accept a half-breed like you? They can't. They're afraid of you.

(pointedly)

The humans fear us because we're superior. They fear us because in their hearts they know their race has become obsolete. The same thing happened when Homo sapiens replaced the Neanderthal.

Frost watches the marketers stream past, sneering in contempt.

FROST

Look at them, an endless stream of cattle in a mad race to the slaughterhouse. No thought to the future at all. What difference does it make how their world ends? Plague. War. Famine.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: 3

82

FROST (cont'd)
Morality doesn't even enter into
it. We're just a function of
natural selection.

Frost lifts a silver flask to his mouth, taking a swig of
blood. He smacks his lips, sighs contentedly --

FROST
(offering it to Blade)
Care for some?
(off Blade's reaction)
You sure now? I bled a newborn for
this.

Blade's hand falls towards the butt of his MACH. Frost nods
towards the girl, pressing his thumbnail against the child's
jugular. --

FROST
Careful.

BLADE
What do I care? They're cattle.
You said so yourself.

FROST
You wouldn't dare --

BLADE
(cutting Frost off)
Try me. See how fast I can draw.
I'm willing to bet I can put a
bullet through your skull before
you blink.

Blade and Frost match stares. The worm has turned. Now its
a test of wills.

A bead of sweat runs down Frost's neck, washing away a
minute amount of the sun-blocking cream. The patch of
exposed skin instantly blackens.

BLADE
Better go powder your nose again,
Frost. Looks like your mascara's
running.

Frost reaches a hand to his cheek, then gazes upwards at the
sun. He rises, somewhat anxious, taking the little girl by
the hand. Blade follows, ready to draw --

BLADE
You're not going anywhere.

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: 4

82

FROST

Watch me.

Frost's eyes flicker towards the street -- a CITY BUS is RUMBLING by. In a heartbeat, Frost hurls the little girl forward --

-- out into the path of the oncoming bus! Blade has a split-second to act. It's Frost or the girl. Blade looks back at Frost, having decided --

-- but Frost is gone.

Cursing, Blade DIVES forward, scooping the girl into his arms, throwing themselves out of the bus' path. The bus misses them by a hair. Blade rises, scanning the street as market-goers gather around him. Frost is nowhere in sight.

WHIP PAN TO --

SOMEONE sitting astride a motorcycle, watching Blade from the roof of an elevated parking garage. The rider is clad from head to toe in a helmet and black leather -- Mercury.

CUT TO:

83 EXT. ABANDONED FACTORY - DAY

83

Blade's Olds cruises into the gated grounds. It zips down the ramp way into the loading elevator.

BACK BY THE TRAIN TRACKS -

Mercury's cycle rolls into frame. She picks up a radio handset and keys it.

MERCURY

(into radio)

This is Mercury. Tell Deacon I've found their hiding place.

CUT TO:

84 INT. WHISTLER'S WORKSHOP - DAY

84

Blade enters through the loading elevator, finding Karen and Whistler hard at work. She turns as he approaches -- SEES him back-lit by the sun. She looks pale, the whites of her eyes are streaked with red.

BLADE

Any progress?

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED:

84

KAREN
Some. It's been slow --

BLADE
You don't look so good.

KAREN
I'm just tired, that's all. We've
been up all night.

Blade nods, not buying her explanation. He shoots a glance to Whistler, which doesn't go unnoticed by Karen.

KAREN
Excuse me.

Karen turns, heading for the back of the workshop.

85 INT. WORKSHOP - BATHROOM - NIGHT

35

Karen enters a dingy bathroom, turning on the overhead bulb. She studies her reflection in the mirror above the sink, then grimaces as she peels the dressing from her wound -- the wound is clearly infected, gangrenous.

BLADE (O.S.)
It's started.

Karen spins, startled. Blade stands behind her. He grips her jaw, turning her head so he can better view the wound.

BLADE
You've got another day or two at
most.

Karen nods, shaken. As she moves to leave, Blade reaches for her arm, stopping her.

BLADE
For what it's worth, I'm sorry.

KAREN
You make it sound like I'm already
dead.

Blade exits, leaving Karen alone. Karen moves to a grimy bathroom window, watching the sun go down, an unmistakable look of dread creeping over her.

CUT TO:

86 EXT. LANDFILL GHETTO - DUSK

86

Windy. Urban desolation. Blade stands on the perimeter of a sprawling cardboard and plywood squatter's ghetto which has sprung up around the city dump. CHILDREN and DOGS forage for salvageable items, while in the distance, dumptrucks grind over the dunes of refuse.

MOMENTS LATER,

Blade is winding his way through the maze of makeshift homes and ashcan fires. A CROWD quickly closes in around him, suspicious. A BRUTISH MAN steps forward --

MAN

Extranjero. ¿Quien es?

BLADE

I'm here to see Miracia. Kam sent me.

The man turns to his fellow squatters, WHISPERING. After a heated debate, a GAUNT WOMAN steps forward, motioning --

WOMAN

This way.

CUT TO:

87 INT. WHISTLER'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

87

Whistler and Karen sit at a work table. Karen is looking at a blood smear slide through a microscope.

KAREN

All right, let's start with the basics -- why do vampires need to drink blood?

WHISTLER

Their own blood can't sustain hemoglobin.

KAREN

Then vampirism is a genetic defect, just like Hemolytic anemia?

Whistler nods.

KAREN

So what about gene therapy?

Whistler looks intrigued. Karen continues.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

87

KAREN

Basically you'd have to re-write the victim's DNA, alter it so that the DNA will produce proteins capable of generating hemoglobin.

WHISTLER

How?

KAREN

With a retrovirus. It's injected into the bone marrow cells, it causes the host's DNA to mutate. They've been using them to treat Sickle-cell anemia.

Whistler can hardly believe what he's hearing.

WHISTLER

You're serious? You actually think this could work?

Karen pauses -- we can see in her expression that there's something she's been holding back.

KAREN

On me, yes. On Blade, I'm not so sure --

(gravely)

The problem is, Blade didn't contract the vampire virus from a bite like I did. He was born with it. The irony is, I could probably cure every vampire but him.

WHISTLER

Then we're back to square one, aren't we? Sooner or later, the Thirst always wins.

At that moment, the lights in the workshop flicker, then go out. Karen looks around the room, alarmed.

KAREN

What happened to the power?

WHISTLER

(concerned)

I don't know, but the back-up generator should've kicked in.

A few seconds pass. The back-up generator still hasn't activated. Whistler moves to the window --

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: 2

87

WHISTLER

UV floodlights are down too.

As Whistler reaches for a flashlight we hear the sound of GLASS SHATTERING coming from the other end of the workshop. Whistler shines the flashlight in that direction. We hear MORE SOUNDS now -- WATER DRAINING, GLASS TINKLING.

Whistler raises a finger to his lips, signaling silence. He edges forward, Karen falling in behind him.

THE TANK

containing the vampire has been smashed open. It's empty now, with just the steadily draining blood seeping across the floor in a widening pool -- and a trail of BLOODY FOOTPRINTS leading away.

Karen scans the shadows. Whistler moves the flashlight in a slow circle, shining the beam over every inch of the room. And just as he's about to complete his circuit --

THE ANCIENT VAMPIRE

leaps from where it had been hiding overhead! Karen SCREAMS. Whistler is knocked to the floor, the flashlight spinning from his hand --

The blood-soaked vampire lands atop Whistler, HISSING like a cobra. And just as it's about to strike -- ZZZZING! Whistler withdraws a silver rapier which had been hidden inside his cane. He lunges forward --

-- but the vampire ducks beneath the sword thrust, throwing itself at back Whistler. As the two of them struggle, Whistler SCREAMS --

Karen runs to a shelving unit where Whistler's weapons are stored, grabs one of the modified pistols.

She tries to draw a bead on the creature -- FIRES, misses, FIRES again -- she's getting more unnerved as the seconds tick by and she can't get off a clean shot anymore because she might hit Whistler too and Karen hesitates now as --

WHISTLER

SHOOT IT!!!

-- suddenly it's right in front of her, rushing forward, fangs bared!

The vampire knocks Karen back against the wall. It's at her throat, sinking its claws into her neck, its pale face leering at her from behind a cowl of blood-slick hair.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: 3

87

And just as it's about to bite --

-- Whistler reaches in from behind, YANKING the vampire's head back, FIRING a pistol into its skull. The creature slumps --

Karen cries out, disgusted, flinging the corpse away from her. As it continues to writhe --

THUNK! Whistler swings his cane-rapier down on the creature, brutally decapitating it. Finishing the job. Then he looks to Karen, winded.

WHISTLER

Understand this -- they are
monsters. Hesitate for even a
moment, and you've lost.

FROST (O.S.)

Words to live by, Whistler.

Whistler spins, eyes wide. He knows that voice.

DEACON FROST

steps into the pool of illumination thrown off by the flashlight, followed by Mercury and Quinn.

FROST

It's been a long time, hasn't it,
"old friend"?

CUT TO:

88 EXT. LANDFILL GHETTO - MIRACIA'S CABIN - NIGHT

88

Blade is led to a plywood cabin crowded with candle-lit altars -- garish pictures of Saints and demons abound, alongside bottles of roots and herbs steeped in alcohol, human bones, voodoo dolls.

MIRACIA

sits on a sagging couch outside, clutching a deck of well-thumbed Bicycle playing cards. She's ancient, with a mouthful of gold-capped teeth and cataract-clouded eyes. Blind.

MIRACIA

Is something wrong, my friend?

BLADE

I'm sorry, I was hoping you'd read
something for me --

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED:

88

MIRACIA

There are other ways to see. Sit.

Blade approaches, uneasy. Miracia deals out the playing cards on a rickety table, setting them in nine piles which take on a cross formation.

MIRACIA

Perhaps you have brought me something -- an offering for the orishas?

Blade tosses a handful of bills on the table. Miracia nods, then flips over the first card in the center pile -- a one-eyed Jack. She sighs, grave --

MIRACIA

Hold out your hands.

BLADE

I didn't come here to get my palms read. I need something translated.

Blade removes parchment fragment from his jacket and sets it on the table. Miracia traces her fingers over the ancient paper, touching her fingertips to her lips.

MIRACIA

Sangre. Written in blood.

She runs her hands over each line as if it were written in Braille. Some of the candles gutter, then extinguish themselves as the wind around them rises.

MIRACIA

This is an old tongue, from an old world. It concerns LaMagra.

BLADE

Who is LaMagra?

MIRACIA

The vampire God. This speaks of His return.

Miracia's fingers search the parchment again.

MIRACIA

"-- there will come a Day Walker."
("reading")
"His blood will call the Sleeper from beyond the Veil of Tears."

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED: 2

88

Blade stares at Miracia, shaken.

BLADE

His blood -- ?

The old woman nods, reaching for a smoldering cigarette.

MIRACIA

The Day Walker's blood is a
disparador -- a trigger, you see?
For LaMagra's return. One need
only consume it and the spirit of
his ancestors will settle upon him.
("reading")

"And the Sleeper will rise from the
shadows anew, cleansing the world
in a Tide of Blood."

BLADE

(recalling the phrase)

"The Blood Tide".

MIRACIA

(nodding)

Yes. The vampire apocalypse. It
is said that all who feel its taint
will succumb to the Thirst.

BLADE

How do I stop it?

Miracia shrugs, spreading her hands.

MIRACIA

The Great Wheel turns, my friend.
The Dark is rising. How would you
fight a shadow?

Miracia sits back, slumping into her chair. The candles
have burnt themselves down to nothing.

MIRACIA

I am tired. Dawn is coming.

BLADE

But I just got here --

MIRACIA

You've been here longer than you
think.

Blade rises, looking to the horizon. Incredibly, dawn is
coming. As he stands there, mystified, the wind picks up,
sweeping the parchment fragment out of his hand.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED: 3

88

He tries to snatch it back, but the fragment is quickly borne away. He watches it disappear into the sky, then turns back --

Miracia is gone. Blade glances around him, but she's nowhere to be found.

CAMERA PULLS BACK,

isolating Blade amidst the ghostly squalor. He raises a hand to shield his eyes from the morning sun.

BLADE

(to himself)

Day Walker.

The irony of his situation is not lost on him.

DISSOLVE TO:

89 INT. WHISTLER'S WORKSHOP - DAWN

89

Blade steps out from the elevator into the workshop --

The place has been trashed. It looks like a tornado has touched down in his absence. Blade pulls out one of his MACHs, cautious --

BLADE

WHISTLER?!

-- and then he stops dead in his tracks.

WHISTLER

has been strung up by his arms against the far wall, tortured and left for dead. In response to Blade's voice, a MOAN escapes the dying man's lips.

Blade rushes to the wall, cutting Whistler down with his sword, gently lowering him into a chair. As he cradles the old man in his arms, Blade sees the primary wound -- two ragged puncture marks along Whistler's throat.

BLADE

Jesus, Whistler, what did they do to you?

Whistler opens his eyes, struggling to speak --

WHISTLER

Frost took her --

Whistler spasms and coughs, wincing from the pain.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

89

BLADE
Don't try to talk --

WHISTLER
Listen. You have to -- finish me
off. You don't want me coming
back.

BLADE
No, we can treat the wounds --
But Whistler is shaking his hand.

WHISTLER
Too far gone, you know that.
Blade's at a complete loss.

BLADE
Whistler, I can't.
Whistler clutches at Blade's arm, his eyes burning with
conviction.

WHISTLER
Yes you can. Now get on with it.
As much as he'd like to deny it, Blade knows that Whistler
is right. He pulls a stake from his bandoleer, hesitates.

BLADE
Whistler, I --

WHISTLER
(cutting him off, more
gentle now)
I know.
(forcing a smile)
Just be quick about it, will you?
Do it right.

Whistler grips Blade's hand, holding it tight -- an echo of
the action Karen witnessed when Whistler was injecting Blade
with the serum.

Blade fights back tears. With a wretched moan, he turns his
head and drives the stake into Whistler's chest. Whistler
GASPS, continues to grip Blade's hand --

Gradually, the light dies from Whistler's eyes. His grip
slackens. The old man is gone. Blade turns away, catching
sight of --

A SHARP VIEW-CAMCORDER

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: 2

89

resting nearby, labeled, "PLAY ME". Blade reaches for the camcorder, cues the tape -- Frost's face appears on the tiny built-in screen.

FROST

Hello, Blade. By the time you watch this, Whistler will no doubt be winging his way to Heaven, thanks to your capable hands. If it makes any difference to you, he put up quite a fight.

Frost touches a deep gash which runs across his cheek.

FROST

I'll make this as easy as possible for you, Blade. You can find us at the Edgewood Towers. We'll be waiting with baited breath.

TIME CUT TO:

A FURNACE,

Blade stands before the open flames, heating his sword in the fire. He withdraws it -- it's molten red.

Blade turns now to the medical equipment Karen brought from the hospital. In the midst of it we SEE the canister labeled "EDTA".

Blade douses the molten hot sword into the EDTA canister. The refrigerated liquid reacts with the heat, causing the sword to STEAM and HISS.

When Blade withdraws the smoking sword, we SEE that the gleaming steel has changed colors, taking on a bluish tinge, just like the EDTA it was immersed in. Blade smiles to himself, satisfied.

CUT TO:

90 INT. FROST'S PENTHOUSE, INNER CHAMBER - DAY

90

Sparse decor in a Neo-Japanese vein. Minimalist lighting. The walls are glass. Recirculating pumps send a constant stream of water cascading down them.

Karen is escorted into the room by Mercury. She gestures to a chair at the end of a long table. Karen sits.

FROST

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED:

90

leans forward out of the shadows, resting his elbows on the table, hands steepled together.

FROST

Well, here we are, Doctor.

A cigarette appears in Frost's hand. In the blink of an eye, the cigarette is lit, burning. The movements are so quick we barely have time to register them.

FROST

I understand you've taken an interest in our race.

KAREN

I believe your condition can be treated. Whistler and I were working on a cure when --

Frost crosses over to Karen, leaning in close.

FROST

What makes you think we want to be cured? Blood is only part of the equation. The hunt, the killing, that's what the Thirst is really about.

Frost runs a fingernail across her cheek. She flinches.

MERCURY

Deacon likes to play with his food before he eats it.

Frost smiles. Karen tries to keep calm, hoping to reason with him.

KAREN

Look, your people can't keep living like this. Sooner or later, the rest of the world's bound to find out about you --

FROST

Now there I'd have to agree with you. A given location can only sustain so many predators. In the past, we've had to restrict our numbers for fear of discovery.

(beat)

That won't be necessary after tonight.

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: 2

90

KAREN

What happens then?

Frost reaches out to Karen, placing his fingers against her temple. As he speaks, we SEE BRIEF, VIOLENT FLASHES of what he's describing -- a vision of the vampire apocalypse:

FROST

The Blood Tide.

91 INT. TEMPLE OF NIGHT (THE VISION)

91

We are in an underground chamber (one which will shortly be known to us as the Temple of Night). A TIDAL FLOW OF BLOOD surges forward, collecting into a whirling cyclone. And out of that swirling blood-mist --

FROST (O.S.)

There's a force, you see -- a spirit that exists in our blood. Its name is LaMagra. It came once before, at the dawn of our race. I've discovered a way to invoke it again.

92 EXT. BANK OF EREBUS - CITY STREET - NIGHT (THE VISION)

92

Every door and window of the bank is BLOWN OUTWARD as a TORRENT OF BLOOD flows down the entry steps.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

as the Blood Tide expands, manifesting into an hemispherical "bow-wave" of BLOOD-RED ENERGY which mushrooms outward through the city streets like a manga nuke explosion. PEOPLE, cars -- anything in the flash-flood's path is swept up and carried away as the Biblical deluge ROARS onward.

Finally, the Blood Tide subsides, leaving the city a dripping, crimson wasteland.

FROST (O.S.)

Anyone caught in the Tide's path will be turned, instantly. In the course of a single night, our numbers will overrun the world.

THE PEOPLE

are rising now -- only they're not people anymore. They're vampires. An endless army of them.

CUT TO:

93 INT. FROST'S PENTHOUSE, INNER CHAMBER - DAY

93

Karen steps away from Frost, reeling from the vision he's given her.

FROST

The answers were there all along, of course, waiting for someone with the patience to decipher them. My elders were foolish enough to dismiss them as wives tales. But I knew better.

(beat)

Imagine my surprise when Blade turned out to be the key which would set that force free.

Frost settles back into his chair, smiling.

FROST

LaMagra isn't a physical being. He's a spirit, requiring a flesh and blood host in order to manifest himself.

KAREN

(realizing)

You.

FROST

Who better to usher in the Blood Tide?

KAREN

(shaking her head)

Even if what you say is possible, there'd never be enough people to supply --

FROST

(finishing the thought for her)

-- our thirst? Fortunately, I've found a way around that particular obstacle.

Frost pushes a button. With a HUM the ceiling above slides open, revealing something Karen wishes she'd never seen --

LIVING BLOOD BANKS

Sedated HUMANS hang above her, suspended by wires like nightmarish angels, hooked up to IV feeds which replenish various nutrients as their blood is drained from them. Shunts have been implanted in their forearms which serve as taps.

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED:

93

FROST

Under these conditions a donor can be kept alive for years, producing anywhere from fifty to a hundred pints of blood a day.

(admiring his charges)

Of course, this is really just a pilot program. Once the Tide comes, we'll have to institutionalize production.

Karen turns away, overwhelmed by revulsion.

KAREN

Concentration camps.

FROST

If you like.

KAREN

You disgust me.

FROST

Why? Because we live at another species' expense? Your people farm cattle and veal, don't they? Fattening them up with steroids? It's called evolution, Doctor. Survival of the fittest.

Frost stares at Karen with an intense, uncompromising gaze.

FROST

It's time the human race heard a wake-up call. They're no longer at the top of the food chain.

Just then, an alarm RINGS. A GUARD rushes into the room --

GUARD

We've got an intruder.

FROST

(with certainty)

Blade.

(CONTINUED)

- 93 CONTINUED: 2 93
- CUT TO:
- 94 INT. FROST'S PENTHOUSE, VARIOUS - DAY 94
- The ALARM continues ringing throughout as we SEE a series of assorted shots. Blade moving through the penthouse complex like a lethal shadow, rising up behind one vampire after another, ending their lives with a quick stake or a well-placed shot.
- CUT TO:
- 95 INT. FROST'S PENTHOUSE, INNER CHAMBER - DAY 95
- Frost's people are panicking as reports of Blade's progress flood in. He rushes for the exit, shouting orders --
- FROST
Close the shutters!
- CUT TO:
- 96 INT. FROST'S PENTHOUSE, VARIOUS - DAY 96
- Blade rounds a corridor and SEES a series of curtained windows with mechanical "blackout" shutters slowly lowering over them. Blade unslings his shotgun, FIRING into one shuttered window after another --
- SHAFTS OF BRILLIANT SUNLIGHT
- slice through the hall as the shutters are blown apart.
- TWO GUN-WIELDING VAMPIRES
- move to stop Blade, but they're caught in the sudden swath of sunlight and are quickly burning up before our eyes.
- A THIRD VAMPIRE
- leaps at Blade. He spins, flipping the vampire over his shoulder, sending him straight through a window --
- 97 EXT. FROST'S PENTHOUSE - DAY 97
- The vampire tumbles earthward, SCREAMING as the sun's rays ignite his body, falling like a human comet.
- 98 INT. FROST'S PENTHOUSE - DAY 98
- Blade unsheathes his sword and heads out into the hall --

99 INT. FROST'S PENTHOUSE, HALLWAY - DAY

99

To Blade's right is Frost's inner chamber. ANOTHER VAMPIRE approaches, Blade readies his sword --

VAMPIRE

You think I'm afraid of that toothpick of yours?

BLADE

You should be. I've made some improvements.

Blade thrusts his EDTA-enhanced sword through the vampire's chest. Immediately, the vampire begins to boil from the inside out, as if he were being microwaved. The creature SHRIEKS and atomizes -FWOOSH!- flying apart in a fine-beaded spray of blood mist which splatters the walls.

CUT TO:

100 INT. FROST'S PENTHOUSE, HALLWAY - DAY

100

Frost hurries through the complex, trailed by Mercury and a coterie of vampire bodyguards.

FROST

Where is he now?

MERCURY

The sleep chamber --

FROST

(grinning)

Perfect. He's in for the shock of his life.

CUT TO:

101 INT. FROST'S PENTHOUSE, ANOTHER HALLWAY - DAY

101

On Blade. Up ahead are a set of steel doors with a time-lock mechanism. Blade draws a MACH auto, BLASTS away at the lock, then shoulders the doors open --

102 INT. FROST'S SLEEPING CHAMBER - DAY

102

We are in a windowless, vault-like room dominated by a series of high-tech STAINLESS STEEL SARCOPHAGI. Think of a hyperbaric coffin, each unit possessing a small face-plate window through which the sleeping subject can be viewed.

Blade unsheathes his sword. He grabs the lid of the first sarcophagus, HEAVING upward. With a PNEUMATIC HISS, the lid rises, belching out a cloud of condensation mist.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

102

As the mist clears, revealing the occupant within, Blade raises his sword, ready to plunge it downward -- only it's not Deacon Frost who rests beneath him, it's --

VANESSA,

Blade's mother!!! Although some thirty years have passed since the events of our prologue, Vanessa looks exactly the same -- vibrant, beautiful, full of life. Naked as Lady Godiva, unsettling. Her eyes open.

VANESSA

Erik.

Blade gasps, uncomprehending.

BLADE

Mother -- ?!

Vanessa rises from the sarcophagus, tears staining her cheeks.

VANESSA

I've missed you so much, Erik.

(drawing closer)

You have no idea what I've been through, how much I've wanted to see you --

Blade falters, his mind reeling. What he's seeing is incomprehensible -- his mother is dead. Yet, here she is in the flesh, reaching out to him and --

-- flashing a mouthful of viper-like fangs! She SNARLS and strikes, brutally raking her claws across Blade's face, knocking the sword from his grasp --

A TRIO OF BLACK-CLAD VAMPIRES

led by Mercury step from the shadows where they'd been waiting all along. They're armed with TASERS which they FIRE en masse --

Blade is hit by the taser darts from all sides. He writhes as electricity courses through him, then collapses in a heap. He labors to lift his head, looking up at Vanessa --

BLADE

But you -- died --

VANESSA

(a hellish smile)

Deacon brought me back.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: 2

102

BLADE

You can fight him --

As if on cue, Frost appears at Vanessa's side, wrapping a proprietary arm about her waist, kissing the nape of her neck. She leans into him -- an act of practiced intimacy.

FROST

You're assuming she'd want to.
(looking at Vanessa)
You love me, don't you, Vanessa?

VANESSA

Yes.

Frost kisses Vanessa. Then he kneels and reaches into Blade's jacket, retrieving a vial of Blade's serum.

FROST

What do we have here? Your precious serum? I don't think you'll be needing this anymore.

Frost crushes the vial in his fist. Blade struggles to reach Frost, stretching a palsied hand upwards --

BLADE

Please --

VANESSA

Listen to your father, Erik. It's going to be a better world.

Blade stares at Vanessa uncomprehending.

FROST

Don't look so surprised, Blade. You've spent your life looking for the vampire who fathered you. Well you can rest easy now --
(gripping Blade's chin)
-- you've found him.

Blade's eyes widen in shock. Frost simply laughs.

FROST

It's true, Blade. You've got my blood running through your veins.
(smiling)
Thirty years ago. A moonlit street, a woman on her way home alone. You were conceived the night I tore my fangs into your mother's flesh.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: 3

102

Frost swings his fist into Blade's skull. Everything goes black.

CUT TO:

103 INT. ARMORED TRUCK - NIGHT

103

FADE IN as Blade opens his eyes, still groggy, his face beaded with sweat. Feverish. His hands have been bound tightly behind his back with manacles and chains.

KAREN

sits nearby, watching him. From the steady rocking motion and the SOUNDS of traffic outside, it's evident that they are in the back of a moving truck.

KAREN

Are you all right?

BLADE

(weakly)
I've been better --

BLADE

How long have we been driving?

KAREN

(shaking her head)
I don't know. I woke up just
before you did --

As he struggles to sit up, she crosses over to him. Blade shuts his eyes for a moment, fighting a wave of pain.

KAREN

Is it bad?

BLADE

(nodding)
We get out of this alive, maybe
I'll take that miracle cure of
yours.

Karen doesn't respond. Instead she looks away. How in the world is she supposed to tell him this?

KAREN

(quietly)
It won't work on you.

BLADE

What are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED:

103

Karen forces herself to meet his gaze.

KAREN
Your condition's congenital, the
genetic mutations occurred in
utero. All the other victims
contracted vampirism after birth.

Blade stares at Karen, disbelieving. Who could imagine a more horrifying irony? She's crying now. She can't help it.

KAREN
I can't cure you, Blade. I can
cure myself, but I can't cure
you.
(beat)
I'm so sorry.

Blade's head sinks, the last vestiges of hope draining out of him.

And then, as if the final stake were being pounded in, the truck lurches to a stop. We hear the ENGINE being killed, then FOOTSTEPS approaching, and then a series of BOLTS BEING SHIFTED as --

-- the back of the truck is thrown open. Frost stands there, grinning, flanked by Mercury, Quinn, Vanessa, and a throng of other VAMPIRE ASSOCIATES.

104 EXT. THE BANK OF EREBUS - NIGHT

104

Blade and Karen are dragged from the back of the truck, which is revealed now to be an armored car.

THE BANK OF EREBUS

rises up before them. A towering beaux-arts edifice situated in the heart of the city's high-priced financial district -- one of the many institutions owned and operated by the vampire enclave.

Dozens of limos and assorted cars are pulling up around the bank, VAMPIRES of every ilk climbing out from them. They've come to see Blade, the Day Walker, who will turn their fabled prophecy into a reality.

The vampires WHISPER amongst themselves as Karen and Blade are led through them. Among the gathered faces we recognize those of Bava, Pallintine, and the other Lords.

FROST

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED: 104

glances up at the moon overhead, which has reached the zenith of its nightly travel. He nods in satisfaction, then starts up the marble steps towards a grand, triple-arched entrance flanked by Corinthian columns. Karen and Blade are dragged along after him.

105 INT. BANK OF EREBUS - ATRIUM - NIGHT 105

Frost leads his vampires into a high-ceilinged atrium, moving towards a bank of elevators -- one of the doors of which is outfitted with a high-tech hand-key ID system.

Frost places his palm on the ID screen. The screen GLOWS GREEN. In response, the doors HISS open.

106 INT. SECURITY ELEVATOR - NIGHT 106

Blade and Karen are pulled inside the elevator. The control panel buttons have vampire glyphs, rather than numbers. Frost presses the bottom one. The doors close with a WHOOSH and the car descends -- down, down, down.

Frost glances over at Karen, smiling amiably.

FROST

On its surface, this building houses one of the city's oldest financial institutions -- and for over two-hundred years its served our corporate needs. Look beneath the surface, however, and you'll discover another truth entirely --

The elevator CHIMES, having arrived at its destination. The doors HISS open, revealing -

107 INT. THE TEMPLE OF NIGHT 107

A vast, barrel-vaulted chamber lined with recessed tombs stretches out before us -- an underground cathedral of sorts, wrought from alabaster and marble. Restrained. Elegant. Replete with dark splendor.

FROST

As above, so below.

We get the sense that the Temple has only recently been reoccupied, as evidenced by the jerry-rigged lighting system of cables and work-lights strung throughout -- like a tomb being excavated.

(CONTINUED)

107 CONTINUED:

107

FROST

Welcome to the Temple of Night.
Our forefathers built it for one
singular moment in history --
ushering in the Blood Tide.

Blade and Karen are led to the middle of the room, where a stone altar rises up from a dais. Blade is roughly thrown to the ground. He kneels there, eyes cast downward. Broken. His system being assaulted by the devastating effects of the Thirst.

Quinn and Mercury pick their way through Blade's discarded gear. Quinn picks up the punching dagger, admiring it.

Frost turns to Mercury, who's been holding Blade's scabbarded sword.

FROST

Let's see this sword of his.

Mercury draws the sword, handing it to Frost. He sights down the length of it, testing its weight. With a flick of his wrist, he lashes out, slashing Blade's cheek open.

FROST

Still quite sharp, I see.

Blade feebly struggles to rise. Frost clubs him on the back of the neck with the sword pommel. Blade crumples. Karen tries to pull free, but Quinn holds her tight.

KAREN

Blade --

FROST

He can't hear you now. It's the Thirst, you see? It already has him in its grip.

Frost reaches down, dragging Blade's head up by his hair. Karen watches on as Frost continues to taunt him.

FROST

How long has it been since you had your serum? Twelve hours? More? You must be quite thirsty by now -

He crouches down so he's eye to eye with Blade.

(CONTINUED)

107 CONTINUED: 2

107

FROST

What does it feel like? Is your blood on fire? Are you burning up inside? Give in to the Thirst, Blade. Embrace your true nature.

Blade shivers, grits his teeth, it's like he's going through heroin withdrawal.

BLADE

-- go to hell --

Frost turns to the others, motioning.

FROST

Take him to the sanctuary. It's time he was bled.

The other vampires retreat, dragging Blade along with them. Karen is left alone with Frost and Quinn.

FROST

I'd let you watch the proceedings, Doctor, but I'm afraid that privilege is reserved for members of my own race. Don't worry, though, I've made alternate arrangements for you.

Frost motions and Quinn drags Karen towards --

THE MOUTH OF A PIT

some forty feet deep, its lichen-encrusted stone walls worn smooth over time. As Frost gestures to the yawning darkness beneath them, Quinn forces Karen towards the edge.

FROST

We call this the Bone Pit. It's where we keep our mistakes, the ones who couldn't successfully make the transition from human to vampire.

Frost reaches out, caressing Karen's neck, puncturing the soft flesh beneath her chin with a razored fingernail.

FROST

They'll feed on anything, given the chance -- animals, corpses, even other vampires.

Frost nods. Karen struggles against Quinn, but it's no good. In a manner of seconds, she's falling -

108 INT. BONE PIT - NIGHT

108

-- making a decidedly rough landing on a heap of bones far below. She GROANS, taking stock of her battered body.

UP ABOVE,

Deacon watches from the lip of the pit, amused.

FROST

Of course, a strapping young woman like yourself -- well I think you just might be considered finger food.

And with that, he's gone, stepping away from the pit.

CUT TO:

109 INT. TEMPLE OF NIGHT - BLEEDING CHAMBER - NIGHT

109

We are in a small, elevated antechamber which is situated above the main vampire sanctuary.

BLADE,

now weakened to the point of collapse, futilely struggles as Mercury and her cohorts secure him to a retro-fitted, high-tech restraining device clearly installed to account for his own, unique strengths.

FROST

approaches, still carrying Blade's sword.

FROST

It's been a long road, hasn't it? Such a shame Whistler led you so far astray.

Frost cocks his head to the side, studying Blade's face.

FROST

I don't blame you, though. I want you to know that. Even after all you've done. I understand, Blade, I really do. It's the human side of you which has corrupted your reasoning, made you weak. But we'll take care of that, won't we?

Blade struggles to lift his head, forcing himself to match Frost's gaze, shaking with hatred.

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED:

109

BLADE
I'd kill myself -- before I turned
into something like you.

Frost just smiles and shakes his head.

FROST
No you wouldn't. I'm going to
bleed you dry, Blade. All the
poison that makes you human.
(drawing closer)
When the Tide comes, you'll be
begging me put you through the
Change.

Frost lifts up Blade's sword, methodically slitting Blade's wrists one by one. He makes the cuts lengthwise, opening up the cephalic and basilic veins with almost surgical precision.

Blood wells up from the fresh wounds, running down Blade's forearms, collecting in a cistern beneath his feet.

Frost watches the steady, inexorable process, then nods, satisfied. He looks to the others who are gathered behind him, watching on with silent reverence.

FROST
It's done. We should ready
ourselves for the invocation.

Frost leads the others from the sanctuary. Blade struggles futilely against his bonds, crying out in frustration, his body eventually sagging from exhaustion.

VANESSA (O.S.)
There's no use fighting us, Erik.

VANESSA,

has remained behind. Blade stares at her. As terrible as his physical torment is, his mother's betrayal is worse.

BLADE
How could you be a part of this?

VANESSA
These are my people now. I'm
one of them.

BLADE
You don't have to be.

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED: 2

109

VANESSA

You don't understand. Your mother died a long time ago. I've killed, I've hunted, and I've enjoyed it.

She draws closer, caressing her son's face. There's just a hint of creepy eroticism in her action, a dash of incest.

VANESSA

I wish you could see the world as I do. Deacon opened my eyes. There's no turning back from that.

BLADE

I don't believe that.

VANESSA

You will. Time is on our side.

Vanessa pauses, looking back, smiling cruelly.

VANESSA

Sooner or later, the Thirst always wins.

And with that, she's gone, melting into the shadows.

CUT TO:

110 INT. THE BONE PIT - NIGHT

110

Karen rises, wary, taking in her shadowed surroundings.

HEAPS OF HUMAN BONES

are piled against the pit walls -- skulls, rib-cages, femurs, tibias -- all picked clean of flesh. Some of the skulls have large, canine-like fangs -- the remnants, no doubt, of long-deceased vampires.

Suddenly we hear a WHISPER of sorts, the soft CLINKING of bone fragments grinding together --

Karen spins, trying to place the source of the sound. Then she hears the SOUND again. Behind her now, closer.

REVENANT (O.S.)

Karennnnn --

Karen looks up with a growing sense of dread.

A FACE

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED:

110

emerges from the darkness. Pallid, cadaverous, shedding its desiccated flesh. Lidless eyes like black marbles slick with Vaseline. A mouth like a raw wound.

REVENANT

Karreennnnnn. I never thought I'd see you againnnnn.

Karen backs away, realizing who she's standing before.

KAREN

Curtis?!

What used to be Curtis SNARLS, knocking Karen back into the drift-pile of bones. It pins her to the ground, kneeling above her, GURGLING through its gutted trachea.

CURTIS REVENANT

Tell, me, Karennn -- ever have second thoughts -- about us?

Karen SCREAMS, trying to force the revenant away from her, but it lunges closer, lolling its distended tongue over her mouth in a pathetic approximation of a French kiss.

She fumbles behind her, choking, grabbing hold of a human femur, blindly swinging it upward --

CRACK! The blow shatters the Curtis-thing's jaw. It rears back, falling to the side.

Karen crawls out from under its weight, swinging the femur again and again --

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK! Karen pummels the howling horror, driving it back until the femur actually splinters in half. The creature's head hangs at an awkward angle now, its neck broken -- but still it advances, dragging itself back up.

Sobbing, Karen retreats, clutching the splintered femur like a makeshift dagger.

Curtis charges at her, a blur of slashing claws. At the last moment, Karen ducks, thrusting the bone dagger up into Curtis' chest --

Curtis impales himself, right through the heart. For one split-second, his eyes widen in surprise --

-- and then he goes into a death-spasm, vomiting up a spray of caustic vampire blood-bile, spattering Karen. She sinks to her knees, GASPING, as the thing that used to be Curtis shrivels up, melting away into burbling puddle.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED: 2

110

After a beat, Karen rises and moves to the pit wall, running her hands over the lichen-slick surface, searching for a way out. The mortar between the brickwork is ancient, crumbling.

Karen looks to the ground, reaching for one of the splintered femurs. She pounds it into the mortar between two bricks -- and it holds, working as a makeshift piton.

Karen reaches for another broken femur, lodging it a foot above the first. She hauls her body up now, suspending her weight from the two makeshift pitons. Again, they hold.

Trembling from exertion, Karen pulls the right piton free, hanging solely from her left hand now. Though her handhold is precarious, she manages to swing the right hand up again, pounding that piton another foot above the left.

In this slow, torturous manner, Karen begins to climb her way up out of the pit.

CUT TO:

111 INT. TEMPLE OF NIGHT - BLEEDING CHAMBER - NIGHT

111

Blade hangs, head slack, eyes half-lidded and lusterless. His skin has grown ashen as his life's blood has been bled away.

Mercury appears before him, accompanied by Quinn. She bends in close to kiss Blade lightly on the lips.

MERCURY

It won't be long now, lover.

Quinn draws alongside her, hefting Blade's punching dagger. He places it against Blade's throat, slowly applying pressure. At this point, Blade's too weak to even resist.

QUINN

We should finish him off.

MERCURY

(shaking her head)

No. Deacon wants him turned.

Quinn releases Blade, disgusted.

QUINN

Fucking waste, if you ask me.

As Mercury and Quinn exit, the CAMERA DROPS DOWN to the cistern beneath Blade's feet. We follow the blood which has collected there as it flows into a crude drain and --

112 INT. SANCTUARY - NIGHT

112

-- emerges from the ceiling of the sanctuary below. The stream of blood is directed down the channels of a spiral column, where it finally pools into a waiting chalice.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

the sanctuary in full. A large circular chamber, the perimeter of which is lined with recessed alcoves housing the remains of the vampire ancients, set into the sanctuary walls like cells in a hive.

DEACON FROST

stands in the center of the chamber, allowing Vanessa to disrobe him. Having finished, he turns to face the other vampires, naked as the day he was born.

A hush settles upon them. There's an excitement in the air, a sense that something remarkable is about to happen.

FROST

The human cattle have been left to graze unchecked for far too long. It's time their rightful masters penned them up again once and for all. No more compromises. No more half-measures. Tonight, the blood-dimmed Tide is loosed upon the world. Tonight, the Age of Man comes to an end.

The vampires bellow out a CHORUS OF CHEERS, their voices resonating off the stone walls like thunder.

CUT TO:

113 INT. TEMPLE OF NIGHT - BONE PIT - NIGHT

113

Karen's hands appear over the lip of the bone pit. She heaves herself up, collapsing onto the floor --

-- but there's no time to rest. Even now she can hear the VAMPIRES CHEERING. She drags herself to her feet, letting the voices guide her.

CUT TO:

114 INT. ANTECHAMBER - NIGHT

114

Karen slips around a corner, guarded, searching. She SEES Blade strung up before her, seemingly lifeless. She releases him. Blade crumples to the floor, lying still. Karen is at his side in an instant --

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED:

114

KAREN
 (whispering, urgent)
Blade.

Blade's eyes flicker open, fixing on her. Inhuman. He's shaking like an alcoholic going into delirium tremens.

CUT TO:

115 INT. TEMPLE SANCTUARY - NIGHT

115

Vanessa hands Frost the chalice containing Blade's blood. He lifts it up for all to see.

FROST
 (grinning, to himself)
 "And what rough beast, its hour
 come round at last, slouches
 towards Bethlehem to be born?"

Frost draws the chalice to his lips and begins to drink. The vampires begin to chant en masse, led by a TRIO OF VAMPIRE PRIESTS -- some long-forgotten invocation in the vampire tongue.

CUT TO:

116 INT. ANTECHAMBER - NIGHT

116

Blade tries to sit up, gripping Karen's wrist --

BLADE
 Get out of here --

KAREN
 I'm not leaving without you.

BLADE
 You don't understand. The
 Thirst --

He clutches his stomach, experiencing phenomenal pain.

KAREN
 I know. Take some of my blood.

BLADE
 No --

KAREN
 It's the only way. You know
 that. We'll never get out of
 here alive if you don't.

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED:

116

Blade suppresses a shudder. Simply keeping himself from attacking her takes every ounce of his resolve.

BLADE

I can't -- I won't be able to stop --

KAREN

Yes you will. The human side of you is stronger. I know it is.

Karen matches Blade's gaze, steeling herself. The truth is, she's terrified.

Blade stares back at her. At this moment, he wants what Karen is offering more than anything he's ever desired. And so he rises --

CUT TO:

117 INT. TEMPLE OF NIGHT - SANCTUARY - NIGHT

117

Frost continues drinking down the blood, when suddenly, a force seizes his body. He throws his head back, eyes rolling to white, flinging the chalice aside.

And as the vampire incantation reaches a fevered pitch, we SEE the stone tomb tablets off the vampire ancestors beginning to judder -- as if some force within were trying to break free --

CUT TO:

118 INT. ANTECHAMBER - NIGHT

118

Karen turns her head to the side, baring her neck, offering herself to Blade. Blade opens his mouth. His canines elongate. He lowers his head --

-- and starts to feed. Karen involuntarily stiffens as Blade's teeth puncture her skin and we --

CUT TO:

119 INT. TEMPLE SANCTUARY - NIGHT

119

Frost shakes, possessed by an unseen force. A wind picks up from nowhere, swirling about the chamber, accompanied by a strange HUMMING.

Suddenly, one of the tombs BURSTS OPEN. A WRAITH-LIKE SPIRIT rushes outward in a fountain of light, penetrating Frost's body.

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED:

119

Then ANOTHER TOMB SPLITS APART. Then ANOTHER, and ANOTHER -- until a torrent of SPIRIT-WRAITHS are surging into Frost, buffeting him about like a scarecrow in a cyclone.

Mercury and the other vampires back away, apprehensive, humbled by what they're witnessing.

Frost drags Vanessa in towards him, kissing her hungrily -- and as he does so, she too, is consumed by the occult energy which washes over him.

Her flesh begins to warp and melt, fusing into and flowing over Frost, so that the two vampires become as one, morphing into a single, polysexual entity as we --

CUT TO:

120 INT. ANTECHAMBER - NIGHT

120

Blade moans, sinking his teeth deeper. Karen's head rolls back. Her eyes open -- glassy, unseeing -- as a wave of ecstasy overtakes her.

She shudders, her breath quickening, falling into a synchronous rhythm with Blade's. Her fingers dig deep into his back, clawing downward, tearing into him --

She's not Karen anymore -- she's a red blood cell, an erythrocyte, spinning in a river of plasma, roaring up Blade's femoral artery, racing towards the pumping chambers of his heart which beats like the deafening breath of God, which blots all other sounds out of existence and we're --

CUTTING BACK AND FORTH NOW

between Frost's transformation and Blade's, each of them growing stronger by the second, caught in an ever-increasing feedback loop of expanding energy until --

BLADE

NO!!!

Blade tears himself from Karen, his pulse racing as --

CUT TO:

121 INT. TEMPLE SANCTUARY - NIGHT

121

-- the invocation of LaMagra reaches critical mass. Frost is consumed by a hellish force, unable to withstand the onslaught of spirit energy any longer.

CUT TO:

122 EXT. BANK OF EREBUS - NIGHT

122

The moon gleams amidst the heavens. We realize that it has attained a strange conjunction with the other celestial bodies overhead -- all of them having fallen in line directly above the Bank of Erebus.

CUT TO:

123 INT. ANTECHAMBER - NIGHT

123

-- Karen clawing at Blade, tears streaming down her cheeks.

KAREN

Don't stop --

But Blade grips her by her shoulders, shoving her back. Karen stares at Blade, wide-eyed, as if waking from a trance. She touches the raw wounds on her neck, shaken --

KAREN

My God --

Blade rises to his full height. His strength has more than returned, it's been doubled by the infusion of real blood. And there's something else in his gaze now too -- an animal fury that was missing before. Blade has taken one giant step closer to the darkness.

KAREN

(hesitant)

Are you -- all right?

Blade pulls at the chains manacled to his wrists, SNAPPING them apart like toys. He flexes his hands -- fingernails lengthening to tapered points. And he smiles, offering us a view of his canines, which have elongated into fangs.

BLADE

(near-demonic)

Never been better.

CUT TO:

124 INT. TEMPLE SANCTUARY - NIGHT

124

The aftermath. Smoke hangs heavy in the air, occluding the area where Frost had stood. As it dissipates, Mercury and the others creep forward, apprehensive --

MERCURY

Deacon?

FROST

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED:

124

stands with his back to us, his body trailing wisps of occult fumes. As he slowly turns, we catch a glimpse of his eyes -- burning with an awesome, inner fire.

FROST

No longer.

For a brief instant, Vanessa's features emerge from his own, as if bubbling their way to the surface. But then, Frost's personality reasserts its hold on their new form.

BLADE (O.S.)

Frost!!!

All heads turn --

BLADE

stands at the balcony overhead, Karen at his side. He leaps from it, somersaulting down to the floor below, landing on his feet like a predatory cat.

BLADE

Who dies first?

FROST

(dismissive)

Take him.

Quinn GROWLS, stepping forward, armed with Blade's punching dagger. He offers his second "new hand" up for view.

QUINN

Grew another hand for you sweetmeat

--

(tossing the dagger to
his new hand)-- and now I'm gonna kill you with
it.

Quinn charges. Blade meets the vampire head-on, dropping into a low kick and sweeping the vampire's legs out from under him. He spins behind Quinn --

BLADE

Let's see if you can grow a new one
of these!

Blade hooks a finger through the metal ring at the end of his jacket sleeve, pulling out a retractable strangle-wire which he twists around Quinn's throat.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: 2

124

Blade tightens the wire, decapitating Quinn. The headless body staggers about, then drops to the cavern floor. Blade scoops up his punching dagger --

BLADE

Next?

Mercury and the other faithful vampires charge en masse. Blade launches a spinning wheel kick into the first vamp's face, SNAPPING its neck. Mercury has Blade's MACH autos. She aims them at him --

MERCURY

Have a taste of your own medicine!

As she FIRES, Blade tucks and rolls, knocking one of the guns from her hand. The guns spins across the floor, where it's scooped up by --

KAREN,

who takes aim at an approaching vamp, BLOWING it away.

Meanwhile, Blade traps Mercury's other hand, disarming her, flipping her over his shoulder. He hefts his MACH auto and --

A bloodbath ensues. Blade moves like speed-personified, FIRING off one, two, THREE HEADSHOTS with brain-numbing accuracy, cutting down the vampires where they stand.

It's an orgy of gunpowder smoke and showering bodily fluids and -CLICK!CA-CHING-CLICK!- Blade and Karen have spent their bullets and --

FROST (O.S.)

ENOUGH!!!

Blade turns to face --

FROST,

who's advancing, clutching Blade's own sword in his hand. He thrusts the sword forward --

Blade presses the grip-trigger on his punching dagger - CHING! - the two side blades spread out. We hear the RASP and CLANG of metal on metal as Blade manages to trap the sword-point between two of the dagger blades --

Fro a moment, both men are eye to eye, their weapons locked together. Then, Frost's face flicker, allowing the Vanessa persona to surface. She smiles wickedly --

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: 3

124

-- and Blade hesitates, allowing Frost the opening he needs. He forces Blade backwards --

What happens next is the most blindingly-fast sword fight ever exposed to celluloid. Both men, fueled by super-human speed, lunge and spin across the cavern floor in a blurred ballet of lethal moves.

Frost lands a powerful blow on Blade's shoulder, the sword-edge biting deep into the flesh. Blade SCREAMS. Frost withdraws the sword for another strike --

-- until Blade sees an opening and takes it, slicing Frost's left arm off at the shoulder --

The severed arm releases Blade's sword, but the arm doesn't fall! To Frost and Blade's mutual surprise, the arm floats in mid-air, bleeding red, quivering like a zero-G liquid, then SLURPING back to Frost's arm-stump to re-attach itself!

Undaunted, Blade slices the punching dagger into Frost's mid-section, meeting only liquid-like resistance. The moment Blade withdraws his dagger, Frost's flesh seals itself back up again.

Blade backs away, uncertain -- and Frost laughs, understanding what has happened. His features flicker back and forth between his and Vanessa's, in rapid-fire succession.

FROST

You're too late, Blade. The Sleeper has awakened.

Even as Frost utters the words, his body begins to ripple and morph, bleeding red, taking on the characteristics of liquid. He doesn't walk so much now as flow. He's become a three-dimensional creature of animated blood! A blood demon. We realize now that he is transforming into the very same creature we glimpsed in his vision. The prophecy is coming true.

ON KAREN,

as she watches Frost's transformation, wide-eyed. She SEES Blade's discarded sword, reaches for it -- suddenly, a SHADOW moves on the periphery of her vision --

MERCURY

rushes at Karen in a near-blur. The SNARLING hellion is upon Karen in an eye-blink, SLAMMING her down against the temple floor, pinning her.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: 4

124

BACK TO FROST,

who towers above Blade, swaying back and forth in his new, liquid-like form.

FROST

You can't hurt me anymore.

WHOOSH! Frost rises upwards on a spiraling column of blood, HOWLING WITH LAUGHTER, then just as suddenly --

-- SPLASHES back to earth, spreading out in a widening pool. In the blink of an eye, he streams through Blade's feet, re-solidifying behind Blade. Blade spins, swings his dagger --

Once again, Frost morphs into blood-form. He races around Blade in a series of spouting arcs, turning from blood-form to solid and back again in a series of split-second transformations.

Blade whirls, striking with his dagger and missing every time --

WHOOSH! Frost suddenly dissipates, SPLASHING away into a million zero-G blood bubbles, vanishing. Blade spins, unnerved, trying to pin-point his foe's next manifestation.

BLADE

Where are you?!

Frost's VOICE answers from all directions.

FROST

Everywhere.

A DROPLET OF BLOOD

spatters the floor at Blade's feet. Blade looks up --

A SHOWER OF BLOOD

rains from above, coalescing into Frost as he sweeps down on Blade like a giant bird of prey, crushing him against the temple floor.

FROST

You want my blood so much?! Take it!

Frost's arms elongate and liquefy, flowing into two snake-like spouts of blood -- the rest of Frost remains solid.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: 5

124

The blood-spouts twist around Blade's neck, melding together, completely encasing Blade's head in a bubble of blood.

Frost sweeps Blade up into his arms. Blade claws at the blood-bubble as if it were a solid object that he could dislodge, but his fingers just pass through it!

The two men are in the eye of the hurricane now, enmeshed in a whirling cloud of blood tendrils which spin ever faster. We realize that Frost is reaching critical mass. In a matter of seconds, his expanding form will explode outward, washing the world in crimson.

BACK TO MERCURY

as she wraps a hand around Karen's throat, choking her.

As Karen struggles, she frees a hand, sliding it down to her hip pocket, digging something out -- Whistler's vampire mace canister!

She forces it up between them, triggering a jet of TOXIC MIST into Mercury's face --

Mercury recoils, HOWLING, as the mace blasts a path into her eyes and clear out the back of her head! The she-vampire GURGLES once, then collapses to the floor, her body instantly combusting.

Sickened, Karen rises and lunges for Blade's sword -

BACK TO FROST AND BLADE

Blade is drowning in Frost's blood. His eyes bulge. Oxygen bubbles stream from his mouth. Frost leans in close, his face a twisted mask of insanity.

FROST

I was wrong about you, Blade. You were never one of us. You're a traitor to your race.

KAREN (O.S.)

Get away from him!

Frost looks up -- Karen slashes Blade's sword down, severing a number of the blood-tendrils which envelope Blade. The blood-bubble dissolves instantly, flowing away from his face. He gasps, chokes in air --

Frost rears back, horrified. His blood-tendrils don't reform. Instead, the lay where they fell, solidifying into crystalline powder.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: 6

124

KAREN

Blade!

Karen flings the sword at Blade.

THE SWORD

spins end over end, its mirrored surface reflecting pinwheels of candlelight as Blade catches it by its hilt --

Frost reaches out, clutching at Blade's wrist, preventing him from stabbing the sword downward. The two men struggle for control of the weapon. Frost is genuinely alarmed now, having just witnessed the sword's lethal effect.

BLADE

Guess you're not quite as invulnerable as you thought.

FROST

(growling)

A few seconds more and it won't matter.

BLADE

You don't have a few seconds, Frost.

Blade tears free of Frost's grasp, ready to plunge the sword downward --

-- and in that instant, Frost's face shimmers, taking on Vanessa's features. Blade hesitates, stopping the sword in mid-strike --

Frost/Vanessa smiles, for he's found a final weakness of Blade's to exploit.

FROST

Still chained to your mother's breast after all these years.

(laughing)

You're too human, Blade.

BLADE

(steeling himself)

It's because I'm human that I can do this.

Blade drives the sword-point down through Vanessa's chest, on into Frost's heart!

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: 7

124

Frost and Vanessa HOWL AS ONE, their SCREAMS rising to an unendurable intensity as their blood boils from within. An instant later, the vampires go nova, EXPLODING into an expanding BALL OF LIGHT and ATOMIZING BLOOD.

Blade is thrown back off his feet, having to shield his eyes from the backlash of occult energy as a near TIDAL WAVE OF BLOOD surges over him --

125 EXT. BANK OF EREBUS - CITY STREET - NIGHT

125

Every door and window of the bank is BLOWN OUTWARD by the EXPLOSION. While along the street, manhole covers flip from their moorings, spinning up into the air like dimes, being buoyed by geysers of blood.

126 INT. TEMPLE SANCTUARY - NIGHT

126

Silence, just the steady DRIP-DRIP of liquid draining. The underworld temple gleams with a crimson sheen now.

ON BLADE

as he stirs. He's been blown clear across the sanctuary by the force of the blast, soaked to the quick by blood. He rises to his feet he SEES --

HIS SWORD

The intensity of the occult explosion has shattered the blade into a hundred pieces. He crouches, retrieving the broken hilt.

KAREN (O.S.)

Blade?

Blade turns. Karen moves to him, searching his eyes. Which side of Blade's soul has won out? Human or vampire?

Then she SEES the tears rimming Blade's eyes, the first he's shed in a lifetime. Human.

They embrace, holding each other that way for a long, long time. And we --

DISSOLVE TO:

127 EXT. ROOFTOP, BANK OF EREBUS - DAWN

127

Blade and Karen stand on the rooftop, watching as dawn slowly creeps across the silent city.

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED:

127

KAREN

I never imagined I'd be so happy to
see the sun rise --
(turning to him)
It's over, isn't it?

BLADE

For them. But for me --

He lifts his face towards the rising sun, letting its warmth
wash over his upturned face.

BLADE

I feel like it's finally beginning.

And on that note we leave them -- TWO FIGURES, silhouetted
against the new day.

FADE TO BLACK.