

Interview with the Vampire

Screenplay by Anne Rice  
Produced by Stephen Woolley  
David Geffen  
Directed by Neil Jordan

Cast List:

Tom Cruise	Lestat de Lioncourt
Brad Pitt	Louis Pointe du Lac
Antonio Banderas	Armand
Stephen Rea	Santiago
Christian Slater	Daniel Malloy
Kirsten Dunst	Claudia

**IN:**

**FADE**

**INT. ROOM - NIGHT (SAN FRANCISCO)**

A small bare room, illuminated only by the streetlight coming through the window.

A hand presses a cassette into a recorder and fiddles with a small microphone.

Malloy sits over a table fiddling with the tape. He is young, half-shaven, dressed in T-shirt and jeans. He looks too -

LOUIS, who stands by the window, looking out on the street, with his back to Malloy. Louis is dressed in an old-fashioned suit.

**LOUIS**

So you want me to tell you the story of my life...

**MALLOY**

That's what I do. I interview people. I collect lives. F.M. radio. F.F.R.C. I just interviewed a genuine hero, a cop who -

**LOUIS**

(quietly interrupting)  
You'd have to have a lot of tape for my story. I've had a very unusual life.

**MALLOY**

So much the better. I've got a pocket full of tapes.

**LOUIS**

You followed me here, didn't you?

**MALLOY**

Saw you in the street outside. You seemed interesting. Is this where you live?

**LOUIS**

It's just a room...

**MALLOY**

So shall we begin?  
(playfully, almost teasing)  
What do you do?

**LOUIS**

I'm a vampire.

Malloy laughs.

**MALLOY**

See? I knew you were interesting. You mean this literally, I take it?

**LOUIS**

Absolutely. I was watching you watching me. I was waiting for you in that alleyway. And then you began to speak.

**MALLOY**

Well, what a lucky break for me.

**LOUIS**

Perhaps lucky for both of us.

Still in shadow he turns from the window and approaches the table.

**LOUIS**

I'll tell you my story. All of it.  
I'd like to do that very much.

Malloy is uneasy as he studies the shadowy figure, fascinated but afraid.

**MALLOY**

You were going to kill me? Drink my blood?

**LOUIS**

Yes but you needn't worry about that now. Things change.

Louis stands opposite, hand on the chair. Malloy is riveted.

**MALLOY**

You believe this, don't you? That you're a vampire? You really think...

**LOUIS**

We can't begin this way. Let me turn on the light.

**MALLOY**

But I thought vampires didn't like the light.

**LOUIS**

We love it. I only wanted to prepare you.

Louis pulls the chord of the overhead naked light bulb.

**LOUIS' FACE**

Appears inhumanly white, eyes glittering. Inhuman or not alive. the effect is subtle, beautiful and ghastly.

**MALLOY**

Good God!

He struggles to suppress fear and understand.

**LOUIS**

Don't be frightened. I want this opportunity.

The light appears to go out by itself and suddenly Louis is in the chair, dimly lit by the street-light from the window. The cassette is turning.

**MALLOY**

How did you do that?

**LOUIS**

The same way you do it. A series of simple gestures. Only I moved too fast for you to see. I'm flesh and blood, you see. But not human. I haven't been human for two hundred years.

Malloy is speechless, frightened yet enthralled.

**LOUIS**

What can I do to put you at ease? Shall we begin like David Copperfield? I am born, I grow up. Or shall we begin when I was born to darkness, as I call it. That's really where we should start, don't you think?

**MALLOY**

You're not lying to me, are you?

**LOUIS**

Why should I lie? 1791 was the year it happened. I was twenty-four - younger than you are now.

**MALLOY**

Yes.

**LOUIS**

But times were different then. I was a man at that age. The master of a large plantation just south of New Orleans...

**DISSOLVE**

**TO:**

**EXT. LOUISIANA - DAY (1791)**

A disheveled Louis, hair in pigtail, in deep pocket frock coat, rides his horse through the fields of indigo, passing an overseer and slaves at work.

He passes slave quarters and the distant colonial mansion of Pointe du Lac.

He comes to a small parish church and a graveyard. he dismounts and walks through the tombs to an elaborate one in Greek Style.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

I had just lost my wife in childbirth. She and the infant had been buried less than half a year.

There is a marble angel above the tomb, feminine, with a tiny cherub angel in her arms. Louis looks from the angel, down to the inscriptions on the tomb:

**"DIANNE DE POINTE DU LAC 1763 - 1791  
INFANT JEAN MARIE - 1791"**

Louis rips away the vines already covering the inscription, then drinks from a pocket-flask. His face is ashen.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

I was twenty-four and life seemed finished. I couldn't bear the pain of their loss. I longed for a release from it.

**INT. WATERFRONT TAVERN - NIGHT**

Louis in ragged lace and dirty brocade sitting between two whores at a gaming table, drinking absinthe. All around him flatboatmen, whores, gamblers, black African freedmen.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

I wanted to lose everything. My wealth, my estate, my sanity. But Lady Luck didn't oblige.

Louis displays a hand of four aces. A gambler at the table stands in fury, over turning money, cards, drinks.

**LOUIS**

You're calling me a cheat?

**GAMBLER**

I'm calling you a piece of shit -

The Gambler pulls out a pearl-handled pistol and points it at Louis. The crowd hushes and draws back. Louis smiles drunkenly and stands. he rips open his lace shirt, exposing his chest.

**LOUIS**

Then do me a favor. Get rid of this piece of shit...

The Gambler's finger on the trigger. His hand shakes.

**LOUIS**

You lack the courage of your convictions, sir. Do it.

LESTAT, a hooded figure in the corner, smiles from beneath the shadow of his hood. Gleaming blue eyes.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

Most of all I longed for death. I know that now. I invited it, a release from the pain of living...

The Gambler lowers his gun, scowling. Louis pockets the fistfulls of coins he has won.

**EXT. WATERFRONT - NIGHT**

Loud, crowded riverfront taverns full of ruffians. Louis staggers down, an arm around a whore, drinking from a bottle. A pockmarked pimp follows behind.

**LOUIS**

My invitation was open to anyone. Sailors, thieves, whores and slaves...

**EXT. WHARF - NIGHT**

Louis, quite insensible, being propped up against a wall by the whore in a dank wharf over the water. The pimp rifles his pockets, then pulls a knife, about to slice his throat, when a shadow falls over him. He turns, and we see the face of Lestat, who lifts him

into the air by his throat, breaking his neck. the  
whore screams and Lestat's other hand clamps over her  
mouth. Lestat drags her towards him. Louis falls to the  
ground, supported no more, insensible. Close on his  
face, as we hear the last breaths of life of the whore,  
off.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

But it was a vampire that accepted.

**IN THE WATER**

The bodies of the thief and whore float by. Above on  
the wharf, Louis, now awake, stares down at them. He  
turns, to see Lestat, towering above him.

**LESTAT**

They would have killed you -

**LOUIS**

Then my luck would have changed.

**LESTAT**

You want death? Is it death you  
want?

**LOUIS**

Yes...

Lestat floats down on top of him, then lifts him in the  
air, draws his head back by the hair and sinks his  
teeth in his neck.

**ON LOUIS' FACE**

Every muscle rigid, teeth clenched, as the blood is  
drained from him.

**ON THEIR FEET**

Hovering above the ground, like two quivering dancers.

THE WIND billows through the ghostly white sails and  
rigging of the boats around the wharf.

**LESTAT**

Floats higher, with Louis in his arms, draining his

blood. One hand reaches out and grips a rope, hanging from a shipmast. The other holds Louis. He withdraws his teeth, and looks into Louis' drained face.

**LESTAT**

You still want death? Or have you tasted it enough?

Louis can barely get the words out.

**LOUIS**

Enough...

Lestat smiles and lets him go. Louis falls and plummets into the water below.

**LOUIS' FACE**

Coming to the surface, in the water lapping by the wharf. The bodies of the whore and thief float beside him. He looks up and sees Lestat way above him, dangling from the rope of the shipmast.

**INT. ROOM - SAN FRANCISCO**

**ON MALLOY'S FACE**

Captivated, terrified, enthralled.

**MALLOY**

That's how it happened?

**LOUIS**

No. The Gift of Darkness requires more than that, as you'll see.

**EXT. WATERFRONT - DAY**

Louis floating by mudflats, surrounded by dead fish, the carcasses of animals, eighteenth century rubbish. He gets to his feet and walks weakly through the mudflats. The sun is coming up over the sea behind him.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

He left me half dead that morning.  
he wanted something from me. He  
came back the following night.

**INT. LAVISH FRENCH-FURNISHED BEDROOM AT POINT DU LAC**

Louis is delirious in a four-poster bed, shrouded with mosquito netting. A female slave, YVETTE, bathes his face with a rag. She is crying. Other slave women hover in the shadows. Yvette puts out all candles save one by the bed, and withdraws, with the others.

Candlelight flickers on the face of the bisque virgin.

Louis tosses and turns, dreaming, murmuring incoherently. Then he opens his eyes.

LESTAT, exquisitely dressed in French clothing, stands by the bed smiling. In the light of the candle we see that he is not human; skin too white; eyes too bright. Lestat looks amiable, even mischievous, but impossible - and angel or monster.

Louis grabs his pistol from the table and cocks it.

**LOUIS**

Who the hell are you? What are you doing in my house?

**LESTAT**

And a beautiful house it is too. Yours is a good life, isn't it?

Louis takes aim. Lestat puts his hand over the barrel. Louis fires. The bullet tears a hole in Lestat's hand. Lestat is unfazed. He takes the gun from Louis' hand and throws it away. His hand begins to heal.

**LESTAT**

You're not afraid of anything, are you?

**LOUIS**

Why should I be?

Louis reaches for his sword, hanging by the bed, and point it. Lestat laughs indulgently. He draws closer.

**LESTAT**

Are you going to put that through me too? Ruin my beautiful clothes?

He comes closer to Louis, right up to his face, so the sword passes through his waistcoat.

**LESTAT**

Were all last night's promises for  
nothing?

He reaches out with his now-healed hand and plucks out  
the sword.

**LOUIS**

What do you want from me?

**LESTAT**

I've come to answer your prayers.  
You want to die, don't you? Life  
has no meaning anymore, does it?

Lestat sits down on the bed, drawing up one knee. Louis  
is becoming spellbound.

**LESTAT**

The wine has no taste. The food  
sickens you. There seems no reason  
for any of it, does there? But what  
if I could give it back to you?  
Pluck out the pain and give you  
another life? And it would be for  
all time? And sickness and death  
could never touch you again?

The vampire theme rises, with the sound of a heartbeat.

**DISSOLVE**

**TO:**

**EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT**

The camera drifts through the graveyard where Louis'  
wife is being buried. Everything is lit with an eerie glow,  
as if seen through some unearthly eye.

**LESTAT**

Vampires, that's what we are.  
Creatures of darkness, only we see  
it that darkness more clearly than  
any mortal has ever seen...

Louis and Lestat drifting, dreamlike, through the  
overhanging vines, comes to the grave of his wife and  
child. Above the crypt, the statue of angel, mother and  
child.

**LESTAT**

Wouldn't it be sweet to bid pain  
goodbye? To wave away anguish and  
grief? To embrace the peace of the  
unending night?

The marble fingers of the child on the statue move. The  
angel raises her head and has the face of Louis wife,  
Diane. she raises her hand and touches Louis tear-  
streamed face. The child speaks.

**MARBLE CHILD**

Papa...

Louis reaches out to embrace them and finds himself  
touching cold marble. He cries out in anguish-

**LOUIS**

Diane!!!!

**LESTAT**

They are gone, Louis. Death took  
them. Death which you can now  
destroy...

**LOUIS**

NO!!!!!!

**INT. LOUIS BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Louis, thrashing on the bed in a delirium. Lestat  
places a hand on his forehead and soothes him.

**LESTAT**

You have to ask me for this. You  
have to want it, do you hear me?

**LOUIS**

Give it to me!!!

**LESTAT**

Vampires. We thrive on blood.

**LOUIS**

I want it!

Lestat bends close as if to drink Louis' blood. Louis  
does not shrink back, but stares into his eyes. Lestat  
draws back, then stands up and goes to the French  
doors.

**LESTAT**

Tomorrow night. You must prove yourself. I will give you the choice I never had.

He looks outside.

**LESTAT**

The sun's coming up. Watch it carefully. If you come with me tomorrow, you'll never see it again.

He leaves. Louis sits dazed, staring at the empty French window. The sun rises with unnatural beauty, over the swamplands and the plantation, filling the room, striking water-pitcher, glass, mirror, and the picture of his dead wife.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

My last sunrise. That morning I was not yet a vampire, and I saw my last sunrise. I remember it completely, yet I don't remember any sunrise before it. I watched the whole magnificence of the dawn for the last time, as if it were the first. And then I said goodbye to sunlight and went out to become what I became.

**EXT. PLANTATION - NIGHT**

Lestat and Louis walk through the slave quarters, huddles groups around fires, music, singing. The sound of whipping is heard.

**LESTAT**

Your grief has unhinged you. You've let your estate rot.

In the woods beyond the quarters, the white overseer is whipping a black slave, with horrifying savagery.

**LESTAT**

You let your overseer run riot, work your slaves to the bone. We'll start with him.

**LOUIS**

How do you mean, start?

**LESTAT**

Call him.

Louis calls.

**LOUIS**

Carlos!!!

The overseer turns and comes towards them, with the bloodied whip.

**LESTAT**

Why the bloody whip, Carlos?

The overseer looks into his eyes, shivers with terror, drops the whip and runs for the trees. Lestat is on him in an instant. He sinks his teeth in his neck. Louis runs to him, tries to pull him off. But Lestat turns to Louis and smiles, with his bloodied mouth.

**LESTAT**

Let's call that a start.

**LOUIS**

I can't do it.

**LESTAT**

You've just done it -

**LOUIS**

Kill me if you will, but I can't do this...

He flees, as Lestat ends to finish off the overseer.

**EXT. POINTE DU LAC - NIGHT**

Louis running up the steps leading to the gallery. He is crazed with guilt. He looks up and sees -

**LESTAT**

Sitting collected at the head of the steps.

**LOUIS**

Backs away as Lestat rises and descends the steps so fluidly he hardly seems to move.

**LESTAT**

Don't worry. He was white trash,  
they come at two a penny. I dumped  
him in the swamp and untied the  
slave, licked his wounds clean.

**LOUIS**

You're the devil, aren't you?  
That's who you are.

**LESTAT**

(gently)

I wish I were. But if I were, what  
would I want with you?

**LOUIS**

I can't go through with it, I tell  
you.

**LESTAT**

Your perfect. Your bitter and  
you're strong.

**LOUIS**

But why do you want me?

**LESTAT**

Because you're as strong as I was  
when I was alive.

Louis takes out his flask and drinks. Drunkenly, he  
turns and heads for a nearby swamp.

**EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT**

Louis stops again in front of the crypt. Drinks from  
the flask, leans his forehead against the stone.

Lestat appears beside him, radiant, beautiful.

**LESTAT**

You really want to be with them?

**LOUIS**

Yes. Kill me. Kill me like you  
promised -

**LESTAT**

You asked for death. I didn't  
promise it -

In a quiet rage, Lestat raise his fist and shatters the marble face stone, revealing a coffin below. His fist shatters that in turn, revealing the half-rotted body of a women, holding an infant, no longer recognizable as individuals, a tangle of gruesome rotted hair, flesh, eaten away lace, insects and worms crawling over it.

Louis gasps.

**LESTAT**

It's not your wife and child my friend. It's death. Just that simple. Think and choose. It happens to everyone. Except us.

Lestat stares at him, smiling, becoming a hazy dreamlike vision, then hyperclear. Louis again is spellbound. He drops the flask, which shatters on the stones.

Lestat appears angelic in his radiance.

**LESTAT**

We shall be this way always, my friend. Young as we are now. I'm lonely for a companion, lonely for your strength. But I'm not that lonely. Do you want to come or not?

Louis capitulates in one long sigh.

**LOUIS**

Yes...

Lestat comes closer, smiling.

**LESTAT**

Did I hear a yes?

**LOUIS**

Yes...

Lestat embraces Louis, obscuring his face. He drinks his blood. We hear two heartbeats, out of sync, coming together. We see Louis' face, growing paler, paler, as his blood is drained. His eyes stare upwards, losing their focus.

**LOUIS' POV**

The moon, through hanging vines. The marble statue of his wife and child smile at him, as if come alive. Her hair blows in the breeze, wonderful gold tresses, the child's fingers reach out...

#### **BACK TO SCENE**

Lestat lets Louis fall down beside the broken crypt. Louis looks from the rotting bodies to Lestat above him. radiant. Lestat speaks gently.

#### **LESTAT**

I've drained you to the point of death. If you drink from me you live for ever. If I leave you here you die.

Lestat lifts his hand to his lips and blows Louis a kiss.

#### **LOUIS**

No. Don't leave me here. Give it to me.

Lestat lifts his own right wrist to his teeth. Fangs slash his own flesh, blood falls.

#### **LESTAT**

You're sure?

#### **LOUIS**

Sure...

Louis rises to accept the first drops with his open mouth. Lestat gathers him up, as Louis clamps his hand on Lestat's arm and drinks from the wrist.

The VAMPIRE THEME swells.

Lestat watches him drink his wrist with wry amusement. Louis finishes, staggers away from him as if drunk.

#### **LOUIS' POV**

Vampire vision. The world is transformed, the swamp, the moon, the clouds, the cry of the night birds all come to him with unnatural clarity. He looks down with pity at the corpses of his wife and child who appear beautiful in death now rather than repulsive. He closes the lid of the coffin and replaces it in the ground,

astonished at the ease of it.

He turns and stares at Lestat whom he sees now with vampire's vision. Lestat's eyes are brighter, his buttons are glimmering in the light. Everything is clearer, brighter, containing more facets of light and color.

**LESTAT**

Stop staring at my buttons. Didn't I tell you it was going to be fun?

Lestat leads him into the swamp. Everything astonished Louis, as if he's never seen it before. Louis is suddenly racked by shudders of pain.

**LESTAT**

You're body's dying. Pay no attention. It will take twenty minutes at most.

**LOUIS**

Dying?

Louis dry-retchs.

**LESTAT**

It happens to us all.

Lestat wipes Louis' brow.

**LESTAT**

Come, you're going to feed now.

**LOUIS**

I want a woman.

Lestat laughs and his laughter echoes like bells in Louis' ears.

**LESTAT**

That doesn't matter anymore, Louis. You'll see. Come...

**LOUIS' VAMPIRE POV - SWAMP**

Small high ground. Camp of runaway slaves. Several share a bottle of rum around the fire. A male slave rises. A gorgeous hunk of flesh in the moonlight and goes into the swamp to relieve his bladder.

**LESTAT**

They're all beautiful now. Men,  
women, the old, the young...simply  
because they are alive. -

The slave walks towards them in the darkness. A  
crucifix gleams round his neck.

**LESTAT**

Take him.

**LOUIS**

The crucifix -

**LESTAT**

Forget the crucifix. Take him.

Louis hesitates.

**LESTAT**

Resist no more Louis. Feed...

The slave looks up and sees them. Two gleaming white  
beings standing before him with devil's eyes. The he  
runs.

Louis can resist him no more. He swoops on him with a  
vampire's rapid movement, brings him to the ground and  
sinks his teeth in his neck.

Close on Louis feeding on the slave, the magnificent  
body shuddering in its death-throes. Lestat stands  
above, laughing.

The slave dies. Louis rises from him, drunkenly,  
engorged with blood.

**LOUIS**

What have I done?

**LESTAT**

You have fed. You were made for  
this...

Louis looks down at the body of the slave. Lestat's  
laughter echoes around him.

**LOUIS**

Dear God, what have I done?

**LESTAT**

You've killed Louis. And enjoyed

it.

Lestat laughs harder. Louis runs from him, screaming in anguish.

**EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT**

Louis reaches his wife's grave. He falls to his knees, throws back his head and bares his new fangs to the moon.

**LOUIS**

Dear God, what have I become????

**INT. ROOM. SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT**

Malloy stares at Louis, terrified and enthralled.

**MALLOY**

You said the slave had a crucifix...

**LOUIS**

Oh, that rumor about crosses?

**MALLOY**

You can't look at them...

**LOUIS**

Nonsense, my friend. I can look on anything I like. And I am particularly fond of looking on crucifixes.

**MALLOY**

The story about stakes through the heart?

**LOUIS**

The same. As you would say today... Bull shit.

**MALLOY**

What about coffins?

**LOUIS**

Coffins... coffins unfortunately are a necessity...

**EXT. MANSION - NIGHT**

Louis walks up the steps to the mansion. He looks now like a fully-fledged vampire. Yvette, the slave girl stares at him from the open doorway. Cascades of harpsichord music come from the interior.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

Killing is no ordinary act. It is the experience of another's life for certain. That night I had lost my own life and taken another's. I was drowning in a sea of human guilt and regret, with all the heightened senses of a vampire...

Louis enters the mansion, following the harpsichord music, as if in a dream. Yvette draws back as he approaches.

**INT. MANSION - NIGHT**

Louis wanders into the parlor, where Lestat is playing the harpsichord rapidly and exuberantly. Louis goes to a full-length mirror and sees his own reflection there - quite the perfect vampire.

**LESTAT**

Yes, that's you, my handsome friend. And you'll look that way till the stars fall from heaven.

**LOUIS**

It can't be...

**LESTAT**

Give it time. You're like a man who loses a limb and still imagines he feels pain. It will pass. And we must sleep now. I can feel the sun approaching.

**EXT. POINTE DU LAC**

Dawn spreading over the plantation.

**INT. BASEMENT - POINTE DU LAC**

A brick walled storage room. Two coffins stand on the

floor. Lestat enters with a lantern, Louis behind. Lestat is apprehensive and protective of Louis. He pulls back one lid to reveal a satin interior.

**LESTAT**

You must get into it. It's the only safe place for you when the light comes.

**LOUIS**

And if I don't?

**LESTAT**

The sun will destroy the blood I've given you. Every tissue, every vein. The fire in this lantern could do that too.

Louis approaches the coffin, hands trembling as he peers into it.

**LESTAT**

Don't be afraid. In moments you'll be sleeping as soundly as you ever slept. And when you awake I'll be waiting for you, and so will all the world.

Louis crawls into the coffin, fearful yet fascinated.

**LOUIS**

You told me something earlier. You said you didn't have a choice. Was that true?

Lestat smiles bitterly and nods.

**LESTAT**

Someday I'll tell you. We have a lot of time to talk to each other. You might say... we have all the time we shall ever need.

He closes the lid.

Total darkness. Sounds of Louis' panicked breathing. Of his prayer again.

**LOUIS**

Dear God, what have I done?

**INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Louis and Lestat sitting at a sumptuous table, piled with uneaten food. Lestat is going through sheafs of documents.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

I awoke the next evening to a different world. And I realized there are as profound differences between vampires as between human beings...

Lestat, totting up figures on a piece of paper.

**LESTAT**

Your wealth, dear Louis, is inestimable. Your income from cotton alone will keep us in comfort for a century.

Louis just stares at him.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

I sat there staring at him with contempt. He had the soul of a shopkeeper, he was the sow's ear out of which nothing fine could be made. I felt sadly cheated in having him as a teacher...

Lestat looks up at him and grins.

**LESTAT**

You'll get used to killing. Just forget about that mortal coil. You'll become accustomed to things all too quickly.

**LOUIS**

Do you think so?

Yvette enters, stands behind him, staring at Lestat with loathing.

**YVETTE**

You are not hungry, sir...

**LESTAT**

Au contraire, my dear. He could eat a horse...

Lestat laughs loudly. Louis turns and looks at Yvette. Her beautiful forehead in the candlelight, the veins pulsing on her neck and her hands.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

I looked at anything mortal and saw all life as precious, condemning all fruitless guilt and passion that would let it slip through the fingers like sand...

Yvette returns his stare, troubled.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

It was only as a vampire that I could see Yvette's beauty. Her fear of me increased my desire.

Yvette reaches for his uneaten plate. Louis stops her hand. Holds it for a beat too long, looking at the veins in her wrist.

**LOUIS**

I will finish it, Yvette. Now leave us.

She turns and runs from the table. Lestat leans towards him.

**LESTAT**

Can't you pretend, you fool? Don't give the game away. We're lucky to have such a home.

His hand snakes out under the table. It comes up holding a large grey rat.

**LESTAT**

Pretend to drink, at least.

He bares his fangs and slices the rat's throat. He pours the blood into a crystal glass.

**LESTAT**

Such fine crystal shouldn't go to waste...

He hands the glass to Louis. Louis drinks the blood and stares at it in surprise, then at the dead rat on the fine lace tablecloth.

**LESTAT**

I know. It gets cold so fast.

**LOUIS**

We can live like this? Off the blood of animals?

Lestat shrugs.

**LESTAT**

I wouldn't call it living. I'd call it surviving. A useful trick if you're caught for a month on a ship at sea.

Lestat strokes the belly of the dead rat, studying it sadly.

**LESTAT**

There's nothing in the world now that doesn't hold some...

**LOUIS**

Fascination...

**LESTAT**

Yes. And I'm bored with this prattle -

He throws the rat away.

**LOUIS**

But we can live without taking human life. It's possible.

**LESTAT**

Anything is possible. But just try it for a week. Come into New Orleans and let me show you some real sport!

He rises. Louis follows.

**EXT. NEW ORLEANS - NIGHT**

A big, lavish drinking place with a raised stage.

Italian actors in buffoonish costumes act crude commedia dell'arte on the stage.

Plantation owners in soiled brocade, lace, crooked wigs watch the show as tavern wenches move about.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

This was New Orleans, a magical and magnificent place to live. In which a vampire, richly dressed might attract no more notice in the evening than hundreds of other exotic creatures.

Louis and Lestat by a table, in the shadow of a tree. Teresa, a tavern wench, sits on Lestat's lap, pouring drinks for the two of them. She lifts a fresh glass to Lestat's lips as he flirts with her.

**TERESA**

Come on, mon cher. The best in the colony. Once you touch this you'll never go to any other tavern again.

**LESTAT**

You think so, cherie? But what if I'd rather taste your lips?

**TERESA**

My lips are even sweeter still...

She kisses him. He lets his tongue play with hers, then runs it down her neck. She swoons with pleasure. Then he sinks his teeth gently in her neck, looking playfully behind at Louis, who is appalled and fascinated.

**ANTICS ON THE STAGE**

Laughter rocks the tavern.

Lestat slips the pale and dead Teresa into a chair beside him and folds her hands on the table. No one notices. He lays gold coins on the table and touches Louis' knee.

**LESTAT**

Let's get out of here!

Lestat rushes out, thrilled with himself.

**EXT. TAVERN - NIGHT**

A crowded street. Louis and Lestat emerge from the tavern. Louis looks up at the moon.

**LOUIS**

Have you ever been caught?

**LESTAT**

Of course not. It's so easy you almost feel sorry for them.

They walk down the crowded night street, full of ladies in their finery, freed slaves, whores, sailors etc.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

Lestat killed two, sometimes three a night. A fresh young girl, that was his favorite for the first of the evening.

**INT. FRENCH QUARTER MANSION - BALLROOM**

Small orchestra plays for colonial couples in fine wig and garb prancing to a French minuet. Young women sit in chairs along the walls with their chaperones. Young men stand opposite.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

But the triumphant kill of Lestat was a young man. They represented the greatest loss to Lestat because they stood on the threshold of the maximum possibility of life.

A youth of preternatural beauty, silhouetted against French windows. He is talking to an elegant widow, seated, holding two manicured poodles. Lestat stares at the youth with longing.

**LESTAT**

The trick is not to think about it. See that one? The widow St. Clair? she had that gorgeous young fop murder her husband. She's perfect for you. Go ahead.

**LOUIS**

But how do you know?

**LESTAT**

Read her thoughts.

**LOUIS**

I can't.

**LESTAT**

The dark gift is different for each of us. But one thing is true of everyone. We grow stronger as we go along.

He leads Louis closer to them.

**LESTAT**

Take my word for it. She blamed a slave for his murder. And do you know what they did to him?

He smiles at the young man, who smiles in return.

**LESTAT**

The evildoers are easier. And they taste better...

**EXT. LAWNS - NIGHT**

Lestat walks the youth towards a copse of trees. He looks back at Louis, who holds both poodles on a delicate leash, walking with the widow. The minuet spills from the french windows.

**WIDOW ST. CLAIR**

Now, young man, you really amaze me! I'm old enough to be your grandmother.

She leans towards him conquettishly. Louis, crazed with hunger, sees her as beautiful in the moonlight. He allows her lips reach his. He takes her in his arms, gently, romantically, and sinks in his teeth. She swoons.

**WIDOW ST. CLAIR**

Yes, that's the melody, I remember it. Oh yes...

Louis draws his lips away. She is weak in his arms, but still alive. He can't do it. The poodles growl. He shoots out an arm and grabs one, then the other.

**EXT. TREES - NIGHT**

Lestat, bending over the body of the dead youth. A scream pierces the night.

**WIDOW ST CLAIR**

Murder!!! Murderer!!

**EXT. LAWNS. NIGHT**

The widow on the grass, her poodles dead beside her.  
Louis is trying to quiet her.

**WIDOW ST CLAIR**

My little papillions! My  
butterflies!!! He killed them!!!

Lestat comes from nowhere, claps a hand over her mouth  
and breaks her neck. He spits in fury at Louis.

**LESTAT**

You whining coward of a vampire who  
prowls the night killing rats and  
poodles. You could have finished us  
both!

Louis throws himself on Lestat with extraordinary  
force, pummeling him towards the trees.

**LOUIS**

What have you done to me? You've  
condemned me to hell.

**LESTAT**

I don't know any hell -

Louis hurls him against tree after tree with a strength  
he never knew he had.

**LOUIS**

You want to see me kill? Watch me  
kill you then -

He drags him to the ground and throttles him. Lestat  
looks up at him, amazed and amused at the same time.

**LESTAT**

What strength, my friend, what  
strength. I remember why I chose  
you now.

Lestat squirms from his grip, seemingly effortlessly.

**LESTAT**

But you can't kill me, Louis. Nor I

you.

He ruffles Louis' hair, with wry affection.

**LESTAT**

Feed on what you want, mon cherie.  
Rats, chickens, doves, goats. I'll  
leave you to it and watch you come  
round. Just remember, life without  
me would be even more unbearable...

He smiles. A sly, pleasurable secret secret smile.

**EXT. POINTE DU LAC - NIGHT**

Their carriage draws up to the mansion as the first  
fingers of light spread across the sky.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

Being a vampire to him meant  
revenge. Revenge against life-  
itself. Every time he took a life  
it was revenge. and the slaves with  
a wisdom that was denied their  
masters, began to notice...

**INT. SLAVE-HUT - NIGHT**

In a tiny cabin, a slave family. Kids sleeping on the  
floor, in cribs and cots. The parents sleep on the bed,  
young, beautiful, naked. Beside them is Lestat, who is  
drinking the husband's blood, his hand playing across  
the breast of the wife as he does so. She murmurs in  
her sleep.

**WIFE**

Yes... please...

She grabs his fingers and kisses them, thinking him to  
be her husband. Lestat gently disengages himself and  
leaves.

**EXT. SLAVE-HUT - NIGHT**

The woman's scream pierces the sky, as Lestat walks  
into the night.

**EXT. CHICKEN-COOP - NIGHT**

Every chicken is dead, bloodied necks hanging down from the cribs. Louis emerges from the entrance, blood on his lips. He hears the scream.

**EXT. SLAVE QUARTER - NIGHT**

The sound of drumming is heard, African, primal. The woman runs through the quarters, screaming grief. Others gather at doorways, restrain and console her.

**EXT. DOVE-COTE - DAY**

A beautiful, elaborate eighteenth century dove-cote. Every dove inside is dead, pierced at the neck. A black hand throws in a flaming torch and it bursts into flame.

**INT. CABIN - NIGHT**

A doll, made in the image of Lestat, is pierced with needles.

**EXT. SWAMP BY FIELDS - DAY**

Bodies of slaves floating in the swamp, with the bodies of goats. Slaves at the edge throw ropes around the bodies, pull them towards the shore. The drumming grows louder.

**EXT. SLAVE-QUARTERS - NIGHT**

Louis walking through. The slaves hush as he approaches, gather in doorways and whisper. He turns and looks at them, sorrowfully. He looks truly like a ghost. Their eyes turn away when they meet his. He walks on.

**INT. DINING ROOM IN MANSION - NIGHT**

Lestat and Louis sit at the table, the untouched food between them.

**LESTAT**

Consider yourself lucky. In Paris a vampire has to be clever for many

reasons. Here all one needs is a pair of fangs.

**LOUIS**

Paris? You came from Paris?

**LESTAT**

As did the one who made me.

**LOUIS**

Tell me about him. You must have learnt something from him! It had to happen for you as it did for me!

**LESTAT**

I learnt absolutely nothing. I wasn't give a choice, remember?

**LOUIS**

But you must know something about the meaning of it all, you must know where we come from, why we...

Lestat spits out in anger.

**LESTAT**

Why? Why should I know these things? Do you know them?

The drumming grows outside.

**LESTAT**

(gripping his temples)  
That noise! It's driving me mad!  
We've been in the country for weeks, with nothing but that noise!!!

**LOUIS**

They know about us. They see us dine on empty plates and drink from empty glasses.

**LESTAT**

Come the New Orleans then. There's an opera on tonight. A real french opera! We can dine in splendor!

**LOUIS**

I respect life, don't you see? For each and every human life I have respect.

**LESTAT**

Respect me a little then. I'm the  
only life you know.

Louis stares. Lestat turns childishly, petulantly.

**LESTAT**

You'll soon run out of chickens,  
Louis...

He walks out, humming a French aria. Louis stares at  
his plate.

**EXT. SLAVE QUARTERS - NIGHT**

The slaves, gathered on mass around fires. Frenzied  
drumming, dancing. Lestat rides through, scattering the  
flames. The drumming stops. The slaves look towards the  
house. Slowly, they begin to move towards it.

**INT. POINTE DU LAC DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Louis, sitting in despair by the table. Yvette, the  
slave girl enters.

**YVETTE**

Michi Louis? You don't want any  
supper?

Louis laughs harshly.

**LOUIS**

No, ma cher. I need no supper. Is  
all well at Pointe Du Lac tonight?

Yvette draws closer. Light reveals her beauty.

**YVETTE**

We worry about you master. When do  
you ride about the fields? How long  
since you've been to the slave  
quarters? Everywhere there is  
death. Animals, men. Are you our  
master still at all?

Louis watches her sadly. He's getting hungry. Her  
throat is long and slender, her breasts are gorgeous.

**LOUIS**

(dazed)  
Leave me alone now, Yvette.

**YVETTE**

I will not go unless you listen to me. Send away this new friend of yours. The slaves are frightened of him. They are frightened of you.

She comes closer, and he can hear her beating heart. She touches his hair. He takes her hand and brings it to his lips.

**LOUIS**

I am frightened of myself, Yvette.

He kisses her wrist. She suddenly gasps, sharply, withdraws her hand. She sees her wrist is red with blood. She sees the blood on his lips. She screams.

Louis stands.

**LOUIS**

Hush, Yvette -

She screams even louder. Louis clamps his hand over her mouth. Her hand grips the table-cloth, pulls, bringing the empty glasses and crockery to the floor.

In horror, Louis realizes he has broken her neck. He brings her cut wrist to his lips, then drops it, revolted. He carries her body outside, grief-stricken.

The drumming grows louder.

**EXT. MANSION - NIGHT**

Fires burning in the distance, round the slave-cabins. The slaves are gathered at the foot of the mansion steps. They see Louis come out, holding the body of Yvette. He is deranged with grief.

**LOUIS**

This place is cursed. Damned, do you hear me? And your master is the devil.

He places the body of Yvette in a rocking chair on the veranda.

**LOUIS**

Get out while you can. You're free men.

They don't move. They stare at him blankly.

**LOUIS**

Unlike me, you are no free men...

He turns behind him, and looks at the mansion, all candelabra and chandeliers lighted, all windows open.

**LOUIS**

Do I have to convince you?

He rushed up the stairs, snatches up the candelabra and sets fire to the drapes. He goes from window to window, lighting drapes, lace curtains, everything.

**SLAVES POV - MASTER**

Setting fire to the house.

They rush up the stairs with shouts of "STOP HIM, HE'S MAD". A wall of flame gushes out from the interior, blocking their way.

**INT. BURNING MANSION - NIGHT**

Louis, wandering from room to room of the burning mansion. he sees paintings of his wife consumed by the flames. He is weakening with the fumes, the heat. We can see this in his face, the texture of his skin.

Suddenly a large french window cascades inwards and Lestat stands there, whip in hand. Behind him we can see the morning sky.

**LESTAT**

You fool, what have you done?

**LOUIS**

What you wouldn't do. It's almost sunrise. It will be the sun or the fire. You said they can kill me. The sun or the fire!

Louis stands there, weakened, then collapses onto the floor. Lestat darts forward and catches him before he drops. He runs out the shattered window, carrying him on his shoulder.

**EXT. LARGE GRAVEYARD - DAWN**

With many crypts. Louis, unconscious, carried over Lestat's shoulder.

**INT. CRYPT**

Darkness. Louis lying on the floor of a large crypt. He slowly comes to.

**LOUIS**

Where are we?

**LESTAT**

Where do you think, my idiot friend? We're in a nice filthy cemetery. Does this make you happy? Is this fitting and proper enough?

Louis laughs softly.

**LOUIS**

We belong in hell.

**LESTAT**

And what if there is no hell, or they don't want us there? Ever think of that?

**INT. ROOM. SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT**

The vampire sits in silence, as if tired by his story. Malloy speaks, hesitantly.

**MALLOY**

You loved Yvette...

**LOUIS**

Can a vampire feel love?

**MALLOY**

You loved your wife, surely.

**LOUIS**

I was human then. Might as well ask can an angel feel love. Both are blessed or cursed with a certain... detachment. Though whether angels

take as long to learn it as I, I  
will never know.

He looks directly at Malloy, shocking him with his  
gaze.

**LOUIS**

Yes, I loved Yvette. As I loved  
Pointe Du Lac. And as with each  
thing I loved, I destroyed it.

**EXT. NEW ORLEANS - EVENING**

From the sea, at evening, shrouded in mist.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

Lestat I did not love. And he  
survived.

**INT. INN - EVENING**

A lavish little supper chamber with coffered bed, fancy  
French furniture. Open to rooftops of colonial city.  
Louis sits by an open window looking out over the city.  
Behind, we can hear the laughter of Lestat and two  
female voices. Louis turns and sees -

Lestat, in the main chamber with two drugged or drunked  
whores. One runs her finger down his chest. The other  
seems out of it.

**WHORE #1**

You're skin's icy.

**LESTAT**

Not always...

He presses his thumb on her neck and holds her tight,  
sinking his teeth into her neck. After a time she falls  
to the bed, dead. he turns to the other.

**LESTAT**

Your friend has no head for wine.

**WHORE**

She's stupid. I can warm that cold  
skin of yours better than she can.

**LESTAT**

Do you think so?

He rubs her breast.

**WHORE**

Why you're warm now.

**LESTAT**

Ah, but the price is pretty high.  
Your sweet friend - I exhausted  
her.

He bites her in turn, drinks her blood. She does into  
the swoon.

Louis looks on in disgust. He stands.

**LOUIS**

I'm leaving you. I can't stand this  
any longer.

Lestat pulls away from the whore.

**LESTAT**

What, no flowery speeches? About  
what a monster I am? What a vulgar  
fiend?

**LOUIS**

I'm not interested in you. You  
disgust me. I'm interested in my  
own nature and know I can't trust  
you to tell me the truth about me.

**LESTAT**

What do you imagine you are Louis?

**LOUIS**

I don't pretend to know.

**LESTAT**

Don't you understand, Louis, that  
you alone of all creatures can see  
death with impunity... you alone  
under the rising moon can strike  
like the hand of God.

The girl moans.

**LOUIS**

Lestat, she's alive!!!

**LESTAT**

Vampires are killers. Predators,  
who's all seeing eyes were meant to  
give them detachment.

The girl moans again, open her eyes.

**LOUIS**

The girl, Lestat -

**LESTAT**

I know. Let her alone.

He slashes her wrist with his teeth, and lets the blood  
drip into a glass.

**LESTAT**

You think you can be human. You  
think you can go back. But you  
can't. You live off the blood of  
rats now Louis. How human is that?

The girls moans again. Lestat drinks that glass.

**LESTAT**

Lie still, love...

The girl begins to scream. Lestat picks her up.

**LESTAT**

You're tired love, you want to  
sleep.

He walks to his coffin, puts her inside and sits on the  
lid. We hear muffled screaming and banging from inside.

**LOUIS**

Why do you do this Lestat?

**LESTAT**

I like to do it. I enjoy it. Take  
you aesthete's taste to purer  
things. Kill them swiftly if you  
will, but do it! For now doubt, you  
are a killer Louis. Ah!

He stands up. The girl pushes the lid off, hysterical.  
She looks at Louis.

**GIRL**

It's a coffin, a coffin! Get me  
out!

**LESTAT**

Of course it's a coffin. You're  
dead, love.

Louis screams at Lestat

**LOUIS**

Lestat - finish this -

**LESTAT**

You finish her - if you feel so  
much -

The girl grabs Louis and pleads.

**GIRL**

You won't let me die, will you?  
You'll save me?

**LESTAT**

But it's too late, love. Look at  
your wrist, you breast.

He picks her up again. He turns to Louis laughing.

**LESTAT**

Unless I make her one of us...

**LOUIS**

**NO!!!**

**LESTAT**

**THEN YOU KILL HER!!!!**

The girl screams. Louis puts his hands to his ears.  
Then Lestat, in a fit of pique puts his teeth to her  
neck. She dies at last.

A terrible silence descends. Lestat looks at Louis.

**LOUIS**

My God... to think you... are all I  
have to learn from...

**LESTAT**

In the old world, they called it  
the dark gift, Louis. And I gave it  
to you.

Louis leaves without a word.

**EXT. DANK NEW ORLEANS BACK STREETS - NIGHT**

A rat scurried down a gutter, then another and another. Louis' hand grabs the rat. We see him from behind, walking down the street, gripping one, then another.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

Am I damned? Am I from the devil?  
Is my very nature that of a devil?  
And all the while, as these dreaded  
questions caused me to neglect my  
thirst, my thirst grew hotter, my  
veins were threads of pain in my  
flesh, my temples throbbed.

A smaller side street, in which every house is marked with an X. The street is crawling with rats, and Louis is following them. A man passes with a lantern.

**MAN**

Don't go that way Monsieur. It's  
the plague. Go back the way you  
came.

Louis smiles bitterly at these words, repeating them to himself.

**LOUIS**

The way I came...

He walks on, following the rats.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

... and finally, when I could stand  
it no longer, I stood in an empty  
desolate street and heard the sound  
of a child crying.

A house, the door slightly open, marked with an X. The sound of a child crying inside. Louis walks towards it.

**INT. HOUSE - NIGHT**

A little girl, pulling at a figure in a rocking chair.

**CLAUDIA**

Mama, please wake up. Mama, I'm  
frightened, please wake up.

As Louis enters, he sees the woman is dead. Her eyes are being eaten away by rats.

Louis gasps in horror. Claudia turns. She is a radiant doll or angel as she stretches out her hand to Louis.

**CLAUDIA**

Monsieur, please help us. Papa's waiting for us at the ship. Please wake mama, Monsieur.

She runs to him. Instinctively, he gathers her in his arms. He looks down pitying on her beautiful face.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

And if I am damned, why do I feel such pity for her gaunt face? Why do I wish to warm her tiny arms? Comfort her beating heart?

She snuggles into him, suddenly utterly secure. She tugs at his hair, brings his head down towards her. And we see Louis shiver, as his lips go to her neck.

Her breathing becomes calm as she goes into the swoon. Gradually another sound replaces it.

**LESTAT'S LAUGHTER, GROWING LOUDER AND LOUDER.**

Suddenly Louis backs away, caught red-handed, the child in his arms. He sees Lestat slapping his knee and laughing in the doorway.

**LESTAT**

Ah, my philosopher, my martyr. "Never take a human life". Well you must admit it is funny. Or is it merely touching? I'm not sure.

Louis stares at the unconscious Claudia in horror, then lets her slip gently into a chair. Shamefully he wipes his mouth, sees the tiny wounds on her throat.

Lestat snatches up the dead mother from the chair and begins to dance with her in great circles, humming and talking. Her head falls back. Black water flows from her mouth.

**LESTAT**

Let's make some party of it, shall we? Maybe there's some life in the old lady yet?

Louis flees into the street.

**LESTAT**

Come back, Louis, you are what you are. The plague would have got her within hours anyway. Merciful Death how you love your precious guilt.

**EXT. STREETS - NIGHT**

Louis running through an assortment of streets. All the night life of New Orleans flows by him.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

For years I had not savored a human. And when I had Lestat's words made sense to me. I knew peace only when I killed and when I heard her heart in that terrible rhythm I knew again what peace could be. Yet even then I could not contenance it...

**EXT. WATERFRONT - DAWN**

Fingers of light in the sky. Louis, pale and shivering, walks splashing through the water. He comes to a huge sewer-pipe, crowded with rats. He crawls inside.

**EXT. WATERFRONT - SOME EVENINGS LATER**

The same sewer-pipe. Now the bodies of dead rats lie all around. A pair of fine leather boots splash through the water - Lestat's.

**INT. SEWER-PIPE - EVENING**

Louis huddled there, so pale and shivering he seems close to death. Lestat comes through.

**LESTAT**

All I need to find you Louis is follow the corpses of rats.

He bends down to him, surprisingly gently and puts his own coat around him.

**LESTAT**

Pain is terrible for you. You feel

it like no other creature because  
you are a vampire. You don't want  
it to go on.

**LOUIS**

No...

They emerge from the sewer and walk along the  
waterfront.

**LESTAT**

Do what it is in your nature to do.  
And you will feel as you felt with  
that child in your arms.

**LOUIS**

Oh God Lestat. I felt peace. I felt  
an end to the craving.

**LESTAT**

That and more.

He puts his arm around Louis, to stop his shivering.

**LESTAT**

Evil is a point of view. God kills,  
indiscriminately, and so shall we.  
For no creatures under God are as  
we are, none so like him as  
ourselves.

**LOUIS**

Is God merciless? Greedy and cruel?

**LESTAT**

Ah, but we have even more in common  
with our creator. come, I am like a  
mother tonight. I want a child.

Louis is baffled. He follows.

**INT. INN - SUPPER ROOM**

Lestat enters.

**LESTAT**

She's here, your wounded one.

**LOUIS**

What are you saying?

**LESTAT**

You need company, Louis. More congenial than mine...

Lestat holds up a candle and walks towards a large four-poster bed. Claudia lies there, angelic, under the coverlet, two marks on her neck.

**LOUIS**

Lestat!

**LESTAT**

You remember how you wanted her, the taste of her -

**LOUIS**

I didn't want to kill her.

**LESTAT**

Don't worry, Louis, you're conscience is clear. You left her alive.

Lestat shakes her gently.

**LESTAT**

Claudia, Claudia, listen to me. You're ill, my precious and I'm going to give you what you need to get well.

**LOUIS**

Lestat, what do you mean?

Louis runs at him, but Lestat brushes him aside effortlessly, so he falls to the floor. Lestat bites his wrist and presses the bleeding wound to the child's mouth... He winces in pain.

**LESTAT**

That's it dear. More. You must drink it to get well.

Claudia sucks on the wound, reviving, making little noises like a person waking from sleep.

Louis rises to his feet as Claudia clutches Lestat's arm, sucking the blood fiercely. Lestat moans.

**LESTAT**

Stop, that's enough. No more.

He pulls her loose and she growls and stares at him with big clear astonished eyes.

**CLAUDIA**

I want more.

**LOUIS**

What have you done?

Lestat puts her down on the bed and sits beside her, holding his wrist, obviously in pain.

**CLAUDIA**

More.

**LESTAT**

Yes, cherie, of course you want more. And I'll show you how to get it. You drink from morals, my beauty, but from me? Never again.

Still suffering, Lestat pulls the bell-rope.

**CLOSE ON CLAUDIA**

Being transformed. Becoming white yet robust, bright-eyed yet crazed. She shakes her beautiful curls and the dust falls from them. They are shining in the candlelight.

Louis cannot stop looking at her. He does not notices as -

The MAID enters.

**MAID**

Ah, quelle Belle enfant!

The maid comes near the bed, kneels in front of Claudia. Lestat lays his hand on the maid's throat and Claudia watches keenly.

**LESTAT**

Gently, cherie. They are so innocent. They must not be made to suffer.

Claudia lunges for the throbbing vein in the neck, locking on to the flowing blood.

The Maid is transfixed.

Close on Louis, his anguish, his fascinated horror.

**LOUIS**

You are the devil! You are the  
instrument of Satan!

**LESTAT**

That's enough, cherie. Stop before  
the heart stops.

He lets the dead maid onto the floor. Claudia looks at  
the corpse.

**CLAUDIA**

I want some more.

**LESTAT**

It's bet in the beginning, lest the  
death takes you down with it. yes,  
that's it. My child. My beloved  
child.

Lestat and Claudia sit on the Louis XVI settee. Claudia  
is a vision, a doll made out of pearl. Animated, voice  
crisp.

**CLAUDIA**

Where is Mamma?

The words echo in Louis' head, as he puts his hands to  
his ears.

**LESTAT**

Mamma's gone to Heaven, cherie,  
like that sweet lady over there.  
They all go to Heaven. And you did  
very well, cherie. Not a drop  
spilt. Very good! You're going to  
be our child now.

Lestat takes out his comb and begins to comb her hair.

**LESTAT**

Your mama's left you with us. She  
wants you to be happy.

**LOUIS**

(whispers)

You are the devil! You are the  
instrument of Satan!

**LESTAT**

Shhhh! Do you want to frighten our little daughter?

**CLAUDIA**

I'm not your daughter.

**LESTAT**

Yes you are, my dearest. You are mine and Louis' daughter. You see Louis was going to leave us. He was going to go away. But now he's not. He's going to stay and make you happy.

Claudia runs over to him. She smiles at him.

**CLAUDIA**

Lou...eee...

Louis is conflicted. He cannot leave her. He touches her cheeks, her hair. Same as his. Vampire skin and hair. He draws in his breath, shocked by her beauty, then he embraces her as a father might a daughter. He looks over her shoulder to Lestat.

**LOUIS**

You fiend. You monster.

Lestat smiles

**LESTAT**

One happy family.

**INT. ROOM - SAN FRANCISCO**

Malloy is open mouthed.

**MALLOY**

A child vampire!

He sees the tape has run out. He rapidly and clumsily sticks in another.

**LOUIS**

Shall we go on?

**MALLOY**

He did it to make you stay with him!

**LOUIS**

Perhaps. He knew me. He knew I would love her more than the waking world. But there was more to it than that. Perhaps in the end he did it - to show me that he could. For he lavished affection on her, there was no doubt about that. Life was very different with madame Claudia, as you can imagine...

**EXT. NEW SPANISH TOWNHOUSE - (RUE ROYALE, NEW ORLEANS)**

Two husky movers bring in furniture through the back courtyard, past the fountain and the banana trees, up the back stairs and into -

**INT. FLAT**

Striped wallpaper gives way to flowers in the bedrooms. Huge four-poster beds in the bedrooms, and large chests, as big as coffins standing against the wall. Everywhere there are candles and pretty Louis XVI furniture. Lestat gives instructions to the movers.

**WE MOVE INTO A DIMLY LIT PARLOUR**

We see Claudia draped in lace standing on a petit point chair as a DRESSMAKER measure out a garment.

Louis can be seen, in an inner room.

**DRESSMAKER**

Monsieur, I need more light. I shall go blind if you do not bring me a lamp, or let me fit this child during the day. Ouch!

She has pricked her hand. A spot of blood appears on her finger Claudia takes her hand.

**CLAUDIA**

Let me kiss it better...

Claudia brings the hand to her lips. The dressmaker abruptly pulls her finger away, in pain again.

CLOSEUP - her finger, two holes showing.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

A little child she was, but also a fierce killer, now capable of the ruthless pursuit of blood with all a child's demanding.

Lestat walks through - sees the dressmaker lying dead at Claudia's feet, Claudia still on the chair in the half-finished dress.

**LESTAT**

Claudia, Claudia, will you never learn? Who will we get now to finish your dress? A little practicality, cherie...

**INT. LOUIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT**

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

She would sleep in my coffin, daily, curl her child's fingers round my hair as she dreamt of I know not what...

Claudia and Louis, sleeping in a coffin together, Claudia's fingers curling his hair.

**INT. CLAUDIA'S BEDROOM**

Claudia playing with dolls, each as perfect and beautifully dressed as she is.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

Mute and beautiful, she played with dolls, dressing them and undressing them by the hour.

**INT. PARLOUR - NIGHT**

Claudia tinkling with her child's hands on the piano, picking out a hesitant tune.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

Mute and beautiful, she killed. And to watch her kill was chilling.

**EXT. SQUARE - NIGHT**

The tinkling of Claudia's piano is heard, over -

A well-dressed lady, walking through a square lit by gaslight. The lady hears a child's sobbing and stops, turns.

**POV**

Claudia, the picture of lost innocence, sitting on a bench and crying.

**WOMAN**

Why are you crying, child?

The woman, all solicitude, goes to Claudia.

**WOMAN**

Are you lost, my love?

**CLAUDIA**

Mama...

**WOMAN**

Hush now, don't cry, We'll find her...

**CLAUDIA**

Mama...

The woman takes Claudia in her arms. Claudia nestles her head in her shoulder, her teeth near her neck.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

They found death fast in those days, before she learnt to play with the, to delay the moment till she had taken what she wanted...

**INT. PARLOUR - NIGHT**

A stern, stiff PIANO-TEACHER (male) beating time with a ruler as Claudia picks out scales on the piano. He raps her on the knuckles.

**PIANO-TEACHER**

The thumb girl! Mind the thumb!

Claudia glares at him, then returns to playing, improving rapidly.

**INT. DOLL-SHOP - NIGHT**

Piano music over. Mozart, now well played.

Claudia staring at a glass case, inside of which are an array of eighteenth century dolls. An old DOLLMAKER looks down on her.

**DOLLMAKER**

They are expensive, my dear. Maybe too expensive for a young girl like you...

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

Claudia walking along, clutching the doll.

**INT. DOLL-SHOP - NIGHT**

The dollmaker lying dead, two puncture marks in his throat, his dolls scattered all around him.

**EXT. UNDERTAKER'S - NIGHT**

Claudia and Louis looking through the window at a display of coffins. Claudia point at the smallest one.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

She grew, yet stayed the same. She wanted a bed of her own, yet would climb back into mine.

**INT. CLAUDIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

The child's coffin on the floor. The lid lifts. Claudia emerges, yawning, wanders through the flat into -

**LOUIS' BEDROOM**

Where his coffin sits. She slides the lid off, and curls in beside him.

**INT. PARLOUR - NIGHT**

Claudia playing the piano, now with remarkable

dexterity. The piano-teacher sits mute beside her. As she plays, he topples over and falls to the ground. We see the puncture-marks in his neck. Lestat, hearing the noise, comes in.

**LESTAT**

Claudia, Claudia! Didn't I tell you, never in the house!

Claudia smiles to herself, keeps playing.

**INT. CLAUDIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

CANARIES sing in a cage, above a child's coffin.

Claudia is writing at a secretaire. She is writing in a diary with a quill pen in an adult hand. She murmurs the date as she writes.

**CLAUDIA**

September 21st, one hour after sunset. The sky is still violet, the way Louis loves and as always Lestat was gone when we rose.

She looks up and sees Louis in the doorway, watching her.

**LOUIS**

How did you learn to write, Claudia?

**CLAUDIA**

The way I learn everything. By watching you.

She closes the diary.

**CLAUDIA**

But you never let me see you kill, Louis.

**LOUIS**

Lestat taught you all you need to know about that.

**CLAUDIA**

Infant death, he calls me. Sweet daughter death. You know what he calls you? Merciful death.

**LOUIS**

He jests.

**CLAUDIA**

Why does he call you that?

**LOUIS**

Hush, Claudia don't talk about such things. Show me your book.

She opens it. Inside there is a beautiful pen and ink portrait of Louis.

**LOUIS**

Claudia! You did that?

**CLAUDIA**

Sit still. It's not finished -

She begins to fill in the sketch.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

Time can pass fast for mortals when they're happy. With us it was the same.

**EXT. RUE ROYALE - NIGHT (1800'S)**

Street lamps are oil at this period. Houses are now tall two-story Spanish style. Streets are flagstone. Passing carriages are black.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

It was a very different life. And a new century was beginning. what had once been a small godforsaken French colony was growing into a great port, giving us an endless train of magnificent strangers...

Claudia, Louis and Lestat, dressed in the same clothes walking through a raucous carnival with sideshows. Crowd milling around, sailors, whores, children, thieves, freed slaves, Indians. They pass a Wild West display, jugglers, fire-eaters, three-card tricksters...

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

All human life was here, for the taking. And we took, all three of us, in our different ways...

They come to a raised platform where a troupe of perfectly-formed midgets do a burlesque show.

Claudia stops. She stares, at these small, perfect creatures like herself, intrigued and troubled.

Louis and Lestat walk on, not noticing as -

**CLAUDIA**

Circles the troupe. She comes to a small tent, behind it. At the entrance stands a midget youth.

**YOUTH**

You want to come inside, lovely?

Claudia walks up to him.

**YOUTH**

Ever been kissed?

Claudia shakes her head. He kisses her. Claudia allow her to be kissed, then bites his tongue. he youth struggles, as Claudia holds him and drains him. She lets him go as Louis appears behind her.

**CLAUDIA**

She's like me, Louis. Small and yet not small at all. Like me.

Louis hurriedly draws her away.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

I watched her grow yet stay the same, her doll-like face possessed of adult eyes, eerie, powerful, seductive...

**INT. FLAT - NIGHT**

Claudia playing the piano, now like a demonic Liszt. Louis writing.

Lestat appears in the doorway. He has a big box in his arms.

**CLAUDIA**

Another doll? I have ten, you realize.

FOCUS ON early 19th Century French dolls - wood, glass, wax, bisque - all around the bedroom, on chairs, on the bed. Some newish, some tattered old.

**LESTAT**

Well, I thought you could use another.

He hands her the box. It is a fine Parisian Jumeau doll. She likes it and strokes its face.

**CLAUDIA**

Why always on this night?

**LESTAT**

What night? What do you mean?

**CLAUDIA**

You always give me the doll on the same night of the year.

**LESTAT**

I didn't realize.

**CLAUDIA**

Is this my birthday?

He examines the other dolls.

**LESTAT**

Some of these are so old and tattered. You should throw them away.

**CLAUDIA**

I have. Or there would be twice as many.

**LESTAT**

But you're the fairest by far.

**CLAUDIA**

You dress me like a doll. You make my hair like a doll. Why?

Lestat doesn't answer. Claudia stands up quickly, and strides out into the -

**PARLOUR**

Where Louis is reading by the window. She walks to a mirrored cabinet, takes out a scissors and begins cutting her hair.

**CLAUDIA**

You want me to be a doll forever?

**LOUIS**

Claudia - don't -

**CLAUDIA**

Why not?

She continues cutting. She sees Lestat emerge from her bedroom in the mirror behind her then turns to him, an angelic little boy's face now with soft curls around her face.

**CLAUDIA**

Can't I change, like everybody else?

She walks past him, back into her bedroom and slams the door.

A beat. Louis looks from the mass of blonde hair on the floor to Lestat. Then a HORRID SCREAM pierces the silence. More screams, which become roars.

**INT. CLAUDIA'S BEDROOM**

She stands before the dressing-table, all her long hair grown back over her shoulders. She holds it with both hands, screaming and screaming. Lestat and Louis come through the door.

**CLAUDIA**

Which of you did it? Which of you made me the way I am?

**LESTAT**

What you are? You would be something other than you are?

**CLAUDIA**

And if I cut my hair again?

**LESTAT**

It will grow back again!

**CLAUDIA**

But it wasn't always so! I had a mother once! And Louis - he had a wife! He was mortal the same as she! And so was I!

**LOUIS**

Claudia -

She turns on Lestat.

**CLAUDIA**

You made us what we are, didn't you?

**LESTAT**

Stop her Louis!

**CLAUDIA**

**DID YOU DO IT TO ME????**

She runs at him with the scissors, scoring his face. The cut heals. She scores it again. It heals again. She stares at him in horror.

**CLAUDIA**

(whispering)

How did you do it?

**LESTAT**

And why should I tell you? It's in my power.

**CLAUDIA**

Why yours alone? Tell me how it was done!!!!

**LESTAT**

Be glad I made you what you are!  
You'd be dead not if I hadn't.

He storms out. Louis goes to Claudia and picks her up in his arms.

**LOUIS**

(tenderly)

We're immortal. You've always known that.

**CLAUDIA**

Tell me why... you've got to tell me...

Louis carries her outside, onto the porch. There is an old flower-seller going by.

**LOUIS**

You see the old woman? That will never happen to you. You'll never grow old. You will never die.

**CLAUDIA**

And it means something else too, doesn't it? I shall never, ever grow up.

She clutches Louis desperately.

**CLAUDIA**

I hate him. But I cannot bear to lose you. You're the only companion I have, forever. You taught me everything I know. Please tell me Louis. Tell me how it came to be that I am this... thing...

Louis strokes her beautiful face, her hair.

**LOUIS**

Come... I've something to show you...

**EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREETS - NIGHT**

Louis walking, holding Claudia as if he was about to lose her.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

Though everything was changed, through the years had warped the contours of the streets, I found my way there, aware that I'd always known where it was and avoided it, not wanting to pass the doorway where I'd first heard Claudia cry.

Louis back in the same street, outside the same house. He stands with Claudia at the window. There is a family inside, a picture of domestic tranquility.

**LOUIS**

I heard you crying. You were there in a room with your mother. You were hugging her for warmth, crying

pitifully as you had been for days.  
Because your mother was dead...

Claudia stares at him, suddenly very cold, very alert.

**LOUIS**

I opened the shutters... I came  
into the room... I felt pity for  
you. Pity, but something else.

He can't go on. Claudia's eyes are remorseless.

**CLAUDIA**

You... fed on me?

**LOUIS**

And he found me with you. I ran,  
sickened at what I'd done. Then he  
cut his wrist and fed you from him.  
I tried to stop him, but you were a  
vampire then. And have been every  
night hereafter.

**CLAUDIA**

You both did it?

**LOUIS**

I took your life. He gave you  
another one.

Claudia speaks through indrawn breath.

**CLAUDIA**

And here it is. And I hate you  
both.

She runs.

**INT. ROOM SAN FRANCISCO**

Malloy and Louis.

**MALLOY**

But why did you tell her?

**LOUIS**

How could I not? She had to know.

**MALLOY**

And did you lose her? Did she go?

**LOUIS**

Where would she have gone? She was  
a child, and beautiful,  
heartbreaking merciless child. And  
I had made her that...

**EXT. STREETS - NIGHT**

Louis, walking the streets, shivering.

**LOUIS**

I walked all night. I walked as I  
walked years before when my mind  
swam with guilt at the thought of  
killing. I found myself at the  
Cathedral.

A cathedral rising out of the mist, the doors open.

**LOUIS**

I thought of all the things I had  
done and couldn't undo. And I  
longed for one second's peace...

Louis walks towards the doors, inside.

**INT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT**

Louis enters. The dim lights of candles. A sacristan  
tending the altar, an old woman praying - otherwise  
empty.

**LOUIS**

I had no fear. If anything I longed  
for something to happen, for the  
stones to tremble as I entered the  
foyer.

Louis walking down the nave of the church. He stops by  
the alter.

**LOUIS**

I almost genuflected from old  
habit. I almost prayed.

Louis sits in a pew.

**LOUIS**

And then it struck me.

**LOUIS' POV**

The cross, the statues, the tabernacle.

**LOUIS**

What if the statues gave an image to nothing? What if I was the supernatural in this cathedral? The only immortal under this roof. And I felt nothing but loneliness. Loneliness to the point of madness.

Suddenly a hand is laid on his shoulder. Louis almost jumps. He turns and sees the face of a grey-haired priest.

**PRIEST**

You wish to go to confession? I was about to lock up the church.

Louis stares at him, tears in his eyes.

**PRIEST**

You are troubled, aren't you? Can I help?

**LOUIS**

It's too late, too late -

**PRIEST**

No, it's never too late. Come...

The priest gestures to the confessional. Louis rises, slowly.

**INT. CONFSSIONAL**

Louis, kneeling in the darkness. The hatch slides back.

**LOUIS**

Bless me father for I have sinned so often and so long, I don't know how to change nor beg for forgiveness.

**PRIEST**

Son, God is infinite in his capacity to forgive. Tell him from your heart.

**LOUIS**

Murders, father, death after death.  
The woman who died two nights ago  
in Jackson Square, I killed her.  
And thousands of others before her.  
I have walked the streets of New  
Orleans like the Grim reaper. And  
fed on human life for my own. I am  
a vampire, father, and have turned  
the one I love most of all into on  
too -

The hatch slams down. Louis rises, confused, and the  
door is flung open, the priest stands there.

**PRIEST**

Do you know the meaning of  
sacrilege?

Louis rises. Walks out.

**LOUIS**

Then there is no mercy.

His face comes into the light. The priest steps back,  
open-mouthed.

**LOUIS**

You talk of sacrilege. Why if God  
exists does he suffer me to exist?

He bares his fangs. The priest runs, screaming. Gets to  
the bellrope, begins to ring the bell. Louis swoops on  
him.

**LOUIS**

Why does he suffer me to live?

Louis takes him, lifting him from the floor, till his  
feet stop kicking.

**INT. FLAT - NIGHT**

Louis enters, silently, like a corpse. He hears a voice  
behind him.

**CLAUDIA**

Locked together in hatred -

He turns, sees her sitting in the darkness. She is  
wearing a tiny nightgown of stitched lace and pearls,

weirdly adult and seductive. She comes towards him.

**CLAUDIA**

But I can't hate you Louis.

She sprays perfume over her body as she comes nearer.

**CLAUDIA**

Is this the aroma of a mortal  
child?

She whispers.

**CLAUDIA**

Louis. Lover.

She kisses his cheek.

**CLAUDIA**

I was mortal to you. You gave me  
your immortal kiss. You became my  
mother and my father. And so I'm  
yours. Forever.

She takes his face in her hands.

**CLAUDIA**

But now's the time to end it,  
Louis. Now's the time to leave him.

**LOUIS**

He'll never let us go.

Claudia smiles.

**CLAUDIA**

Oh... really?

**EXT. DOCKLANDS - NEW ORLEANS - NIGHT**

A sailing ship, by the docks. Louis and Claudia talking  
to a shipping-clerk.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

So we made plans. She was convinced  
there were others of our kind in  
Europe, that they would have the  
answers Lestat couldn't provide.  
Lestat whom she now hated, who she  
thought she could be free of. I  
doubted, but then she had a

surprise in store...

**INT. FLAT - NIGHT**

Lestat playing the piano. Louis reading. Claudia enters, wearing a cape and hat. She walks to the piano, sits at the end of the piano and stares at him as he plays.

**LESTAT**

What is it now? You irritate me!  
Your very presence irritates me!

**CLAUDIA**

(sweetly)  
Does it?

**LESTAT**

Yes. And I'll tell you something else! I've met someone who will make a better vampire than both of you.

**CLAUDIA**

Is that supposed to frighten me?

**LESTAT**

You're spoilt because you're an only child. You need a brother. Or I do. I'm weary of you both.

**CLAUDIA**

I suppose we could people the world with vampires, the three of us.

**LESTAT**

Not you my dear.

**CLAUDIA**

You're a liar. But you upset my plans.

**LESTAT**

What plans?

**CLAUDIA**

I came to make peace with you, even if you're the father of lies. I want things to be as they were.

Louis perks up, puzzled.

**LESTAT**

Stop pestering me then!

**CLAUDIA**

Oh, Lestat. I must do more than that. I've brought a present for you.

**LESTAT**

Then I hope its a beautiful woman with endowments you will never possess.

Claudia stares at him for a moment.

**CLAUDIA**

Better than that.

She takes his hand and leads him into an inner room. Louis follows behind.

**CLAUDIA**

You haven't fed enough. I can tell by your color.

**INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Two beautiful youths, lying asleep on a couch, by a table full with a half-eaten meal. Lestat sighs.

**LESTAT**

Oh, Claudia, you've outdone yourself. Where did you find them?

**CLAUDIA**

Drunk on brandy wine. A thimbleful. I thought of you when I saw them.

**LESTAT**

We forgive each other then?

Claudia stares at him, sitting. She nods.

Lestat bites into the neck of one of the youths, sucks greedily and horribly. Claudia watches him without expression. He finished one, is about to take the other when he staggers. He looks at Claudia.

**LESTAT**

Absinthe? You gave them absinthe?

**CLAUDIA**

No. Laudanum.

Lestat stares wildly at her, tries to move towards her, then slips to the floor.

**LESTAT**

Laudanum!

**CLAUDIA**

Yes. It killed them, unfortunately.  
But it keeps the blood warm.

Lestat tries to rise.

**LESTAT**

Ah Louis, Louis, she killed them...  
and let me drink...

Louis watches, appalled. He goes to move.

**CLAUDIA**

Don't Louis -

**LESTAT**

Louis, put me in my coffin...

**CLAUDIA**

I'll put you in your coffin.  
Forever.

She pulls a knife out from under her shawl, walks rapidly to him and slashes his throat. Blood explodes from it.

**LOUIS**

Claudia! Don't do this thing!!!

**LESTAT**

Louis, Louis, I gave you the gift -  
help me -

Claudia lacerates his face. Blood pours from everywhere. She plunges the knife in his chest. He falls back, fangs bared, clutching the knife. Claudia leaps on him then, bites deep into his neck as he dies. Louis screams, runs forward, pulls her away.

**LOUIS**

What have you done, Claudia -

He drags her off Lestat, tries to pull her out of the room. She hisses at him.

**CLAUDIA**

Louis! Look what's happening to him!!

Louis looks. The floor is a sea of blood. Lestat has begun to shrivel, as if he'd been a bag of blood. His skin is shriveling against his bones like parchment, his eyes are slipping back into his skull-like face. His lush, beautiful hair remains unchanged. But his clothes are virtually being emptied of the body. It is no more than bones, wrapped in paper and the pupils of the eyes suddenly roll up into the papered skull.

**LOUIS**

Lestat. Oh, God forgive us.

**CLAUDIA**

Don't mock me, Louis. Help me.

She stares at the shriveled skeleton in its skin wrapping. She is fascinated. She sees the vampiric blood flow all over the floor. She touches it and brings her finger to her lips.

**CLAUDIA**

Goodnight, sweet prince, may flights of devils wing you to your rest.

Louis walks forward, touches the skeleton, the blonde hair.

**LOUIS**

He's dead, Claudia, dead.

**CLAUDIA**

The one good lesson he taught me, Louis. Never drink from the dead.

She stands up, all business suddenly.

**CLAUDIA**

Help me. We must get rid of him.

She drags the coverlet from the table, knocking the crockery over the dead youths, and wraps Lestat's skeleton in it. She takes a bunch of chrysanthemums and places them in his skeleton hands.

**CLAUDIA**

Should we burn him? Bury him? What would he have liked, Louis?

**LOUIS**

Don't mock, Claudia...

**CLAUDIA**

The swamp...

**EXT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT**

Louis whipping the horses. Claudia beside him. Lestat's skeleton in the back, with the bodies of the two dead youths.

**CLAUDIA**

In Europe, Louis. We shall meet our own kind. Find the one who made him. Learn what it means.

**LOUIS**

And suppose the one who made him knows nothing and the vampire who made him knows nothing, and it goes back, nothing proceeding from nothing, until there is nothing! And we must live with the knowledge that there is no knowledge.

The carriage pulls up by a swamp. Mist everywhere. Overhanging creepers.

**LOUIS**

And if we find the one who made him? Do we tell him we destroyed his own creation? The vampire Lestat?

Louis drags out the bodies of the boys. He slides them into the waters of the swamp. We see ripples in the water and the churning of alligators, as they attack the corpses. Louis takes Lestat's skeleton in his arms. He slides it into the waters. The alligators speed towards it.

**CLAUDIA**

He belongs with those reptiles, Louis. He deserved to die.

**LOUIS**

Then maybe so do we. Every night of our lives. He was my brother. My maker. He gave me this life, whatever it is.

**CLAUDIA**

I did it for us, Louis. So we could be free.

He stands there, saying nothing.

**CLAUDIA**

Louis, look at me.

**LOUIS**

(bitterly)

I can't. Go away from me.

Claudia is shocked to her core. She steps back. Louis stares at the rippling waters. Gradually the movement of alligators stops. Then he hears a sound he hasn't heard in years. Soft, choking. He turns, sees Claudia sitting by a cypress tree, like a little girl for the first time in years. She is weeping copiously.

**LOUIS**

Claudia - You're crying -

We see her face, tears of blood running down it. She is heartbroken, lost.

**CLAUDIA**

You never talked to me like that - in all these years.

**LOUIS**

And you never cried -

**CLAUDIA**

I can't bear it when you do - I would die rather than lose you Louis. I would die the way he died.

Louis gathers her in his arms.

**LOUIS**

Hush, Claudia, hush now my dear -

**CLAUDIA**

Tell me you don't hate me Louis. I did it for you -

Louis walks her towards the carriage.

**LOUIS**

I love you Claudia. Always. And we  
are free now, Claudia. No Lestat.  
Just the two of us, beginning the  
great adventure of our lives.

He lifts her into the carriage and drives off, leaving  
the silent waters of the swamp.

**INT. FLAT - NIGHT**

Sturdy mulatto workmen lifting cases and trunks out of  
the apartment. All the furniture is covered in white  
sheets. Claudia dressed in a cap and hat, is playing  
the piano by the light of one remaining oil-lamp.

Louis comes from her room with the cage of canaries.

**LOUIS**

The birds. We forgot about the  
birds. There's nothing for it but  
to let them go.

He opens the cage, and the canaries fly around the  
room.

There is a knocking on the door. Claudia falters.

**CLAUDIA**

What was that?

**LOUIS**

The workmen must have a trunk -  
don't stop, cherie -

He goes downstairs. Claudia plays a moment, then stops,  
perturbed. She goes to the window. Then sees something  
out there that makes her face go white. She screams.

**CLAUDIA**

Louis!!!

**THE STAIRWAY**

Louis walking to the door. The knocking gets louder.

**THE PARLOUR**

Claudia runs for the stairs, after Louis.

#### **THE HALLWAY**

Louis reaches the door. The knocking gets louder. He opens the door as -

#### **CLAUDIA**

Reaches the stairs. She screams -

#### **CLAUDIA**

Don't Louis -

But Louis has opened the door. Nothing there. He looks back at Claudia, puzzled, then at the door again when, swooping into his vision comes the nightmare image of -

#### **LESTAT**

In filthy swamp-soaked rags, robust again, but his flesh shriveled, covered in scars, his eyes riddled, bloodshot. he roars.

#### **LESTAT**

**WHERE IS SHE? WHERE IS THAT  
ACCURSED CHILD?**

Louis throws his body against the door, slamming it on Lestat's reaching hand. The hand withdraws, as Lestat roars. Louis bolts the door.

Louis runs up the stairs, sweeps Claudia in his arms, watching appalled as the door shudders with the force of Lestat's body.

#### **IN THE PARLOUR**

Louis runs through with Claudia in his arms.

#### **LOUIS**

It can't be -

#### **CLAUDIA**

It is! Take the back stairwell -

Suddenly Lestat crashes through the casement window,

scattering blood everywhere, reefing himself on the shattered glass. He tumbles to the floor and gets unsteadily to his feet.

**LESTAT**  
**GIVE ME HER LOUIS!!**

Louis throws Claudia behind him and hurls himself on Lestat, who fights like a ravening animal, bits of his broken body coming off in the process. Then with a terrifying effort, Lestat hurls Louis off, goes for Claudia, who grabs the poker from the fireplace, scatters burning coals over him. He falls back, then comes at her again, as the drapes catch fire. Louis grabs the lamp.

**LOUIS**  
Stay back - for the love of God...  
or I'll burn you alive...

Lestat lunges again at Claudia.

Louis hurls the lamp, which explodes him in flame.

Lestat screams in agony, whirls around the room, then comes on Claudia again. She hurls another lamp.

Louis throws the flaming sheets around him, wrapping him further in fire. Lestat falls to his knees, choking, hands up over his face in the smoke. The whole parlor is afire. Louis gathers up Claudia, smothering the burning house, carries her down the back stairs, through the carriage way and through the gathering crowds of mortals into the street.

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

Louis running, with Claudia in his arms. He looks back at the flames of the house. Sound of a ship's horn.

**CLAUDIA**  
The ship is sailing without us!

**LOUIS**  
Not yet. Holding her tightly, Louis runs.

**EXT. DECK OF SHIP - NEAR DAWN**

Louis stands at the railings in the morning mist as the

ship moves down the river. He sees...

**CITY OF NEW ORLEANS**

With flame lighting up the sky.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

Though the fire seemed to spread through the quartier, I stood on that deck until dawn, fearful he would come out again of the very river like some monster to destroy us both. And all the while I thought, Lestat, we deserve your vengeance. You gave me the dark gift. And I delivered you into the hands of death for the second time.

**INT. ROOM. SAN FRANCISCO**

Louis and Malloy.

**MALLOY**

Did he die in the fire?

**LOUIS**

He was dead to us. We were free. That was all that mattered.

**EXT. SHIP - EVENING**

The ship, shrouded in mist.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

Though the ship was blessedly free of rats, a strange plague nonetheless struck its passengers.

A body is slipped into the sea. A priest reads last rites to a mourning family.

**INT. SHIPS HOLD**

Trunks and cases, creaking with the ship's movement. Dead rats everywhere.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

Claudia and I alone seemed immune.

We kept to ourselves, pondering the mystery of Lestat and the greater mystery of each other.

**EXT. SHIP - NIGHT**

Passing through the Straits of Gibraltar.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

We reached the Mediterranean. I wanted those waters to be blue. They were black, nighttime waters and how I suffered then, straining to remember the color that a young man's senses had taken for granted, that my memory had let slip away for eternity. It was black off the coast of Italy, black off the coast of Greece, Europe itself was black.

**EXT. DECK - NIGHT**

Claudia, sitting with an easel and sketch-pad, sketching the bay of Naples. A beautifully realized drawing, all in shades of grey and black. Louis observes.

**CLAUDIA**

Louis, your quest is for darkness only. This sea is not your sea. They myths of men are not your myths. Their history isn't yours.

The sketch changes to a sketch of -

**THE ACROPOLIS**

In the moonlight.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

We saw the Acropolis by moonlight, shades of grey and silver. And I longed for the brilliant white of those marbles in the hot sun of Homer...

The sketch changes to a sketch of -

**TRANSYLVANIA**

And the traditional shapes of the vampire landscape.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

We docked at Varna and searched the rural countryside of the Carpathians, for what she liked to term "our kind"...

**MONTAGE OF SKETCHES**

**A TRANSYLVANIAN VILLAGE, A GRAVEYARD.**

**RUINED CASTLE AFTER CASTLE, LOOKING INTO THE SKIES...**

**LOUIS**

The quest for these Old World vampires filled me with bitterness. We searched village after village, ruin after ruin and I was glad when always we found nothing. For what could the damned really have to say to the damned?

**INT. ROOM. SAN FRANCISCO**

Malloy and Louis.

**MALLOY**

You found nothing?

**LOUIS**

Peasant rumors, superstitions about garlic, crosses, stakes in the hear, all that - how do you say again? Bull shit. But one of our kind? Not a whisper.

**MALLOY**

No vampires in Transylvania? No Count Dracula?

**LOUIS**

Fictions, my friend. The vulgar fictions of a demented Irishman... So we repaired to Paris...

**EXT. BOULEVARD FACADE OF GRAND HOTEL AND PARIS OPERA**

Crowds and gaslight everywhere. Carriages, horses,  
OPERA coming from the opera house.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

I think the very name of Paris  
brought a rush of pleasure to me  
that was extraordinary. I was a  
Creole, after all and Paris was the  
mother of New Orleans, a universe  
whole and entire unto herself...

**EXT. 18TH CENTURE PALACES ALONG THE SEINE - NIGHT**

The high walls of the Louvre, dark figures walking in  
pairs through the shadowy tulieries.

**EXT. STREET - SHOP WINDOW**

Claudia, in furtrimmed muff and bonnet, peers through  
the glass at a display of dolls. Each doll in there  
seems to resemble her, with blonde hair and blue eyes.  
She peers deep into the shop and sees -

MADELEINE, a young woman bent over a workbench painting  
a doll's face, oblivious to being watched.

**INT. OPERA STAIRCASE**

Louis and Claudia hurrying hand in hand with a crowd of  
mortals towards the sound of an ORCHESTRA TURNING  
beyond.

**INT. NOTRE DAME**

Claudia and Louis standing in the deep shadows, looking  
at the branching arches. Louis is overcome with  
sadness, Claudia is fascinated.

**INT. GALLERY**

Louis and Claudia walk among a series of mythological  
nudes by Poussin.

**INT. SALON - NIGHT**

Claudia, surrounded by discarded dresses and outfits, being attended by couturiers. All the clothes are tiny, to fit her frame, but have an adult cut and shape.

**LOUIS**

We were alive again. We were in love and so euphoric was I that I yielded to her every desire...

**INT. SUMPRUOUS HOTEL SUITE**

Full of late 19th century furniture, lots of Empire style, Regency, gilt, velvet and brocade.

**CLOSE ON A HUGE BLACK EBONY CHEST**

Against a wall, solemn among all the light and glitter.

**CLAUDIA**

By a large gilt mirror, in her new clothes. She is covered with jewelry, fixing earrings to her ears.

**CLAUDIA**

Help me, mon chere...

Louis walks over, helps her with the earrings.

**CLAUDIA**

How do I look?

**LOUIS**

Still my beautiful child.

Claudia laughs.

**CLAUDIA**

A beautiful child! Is that what you still think I am?

**LOUIS**

Yes...

He turns away.

**CLAUDIA**

Why do you turn away? Why don't you look.

She twirls, looking at herself in the mirror, then stops, stares at herself.

**CLAUDIA**

You want me to be your daughter forever, don't you?

**LOUIS**

Yes.

**CLAUDIA**

Well tell me, papa. What was it like making love?

Louis is stunned. He blushes.

**CLAUDIA**

You don't remember? Or you never knew.

**LOUIS**

It was something hurried...and seldom savored... something acute that was quickly lost. It was the pale shadow of killing.

**CLAUDIA**

But how will I ever know, Louis?

She stares at him through the mirror.

**CLAUDIA**

I'll never find them, will I? My own kind...

**EXT. BOULEVARD - EVENING**

Louis and Claudia walk along a boulevard like father and daughter. All around them are bourgeois Parisian families on their evening stroll. Claudia points at the children that pass.

**CLAUDIA**

Have I anything in common with her, Louis?

She points to a beautiful French child walking by with her mother.

**CLAUDIA**

Or her, or her - or any of them?

**LOUIS**

Claudia, you torture yourself.

**CLAUDIA**

They are ducklings, that will grow into swans. Whereas I must be the duckling forever.

**LOUIS**

You are more beautiful than any of them.

**EXT. DOLL-SHOP - NIGHT**

We see Madeleine, inside, painting a doll's face. Louis and Claudia arrive outside.

**CLAUDIA**

All her dolls resemble me.

**POV**

Claudia's face, with the dolls in the background. The resemblance is uncanny.

**CLAUDIA**

Are they my kind Louis? Dolls never change either.

**LOUIS**

You are neither, Claudia. Now stop this -

Madeleine sees Claudia from inside. She waves.

**LOUIS**

You know her?

**CLAUDIA**

Yes. Should I take her, Louis? Among her dolls? make a doll of her in turn?

**LOUIS**

Come, Claudia...

He takes her arm. But Claudia shakes him off, and moves into the shop.

**EXT. LATIN QUARTER - NIGHT**

Louis walks briskly, head bowed.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

For a time we had been almost human, in the sensual whirl of what Paris had to offer. But the human delights of that city only served to remind her of the ageless child she had become. I felt her pain as I walked until I become aware that I was being followed.

**CLOSEUP - LOUIS' FEET**

Walking. A step echoes his.

Louis stops. Turns, sees nothing. Then walks again. The echoing steps begin again.

Louis again. Sees a shadow, flitting.

**LOUIS**

Claudia!

Nothing. He walks again, hears the same effect. Then he stops. He stares at a gaslamp opposite.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

So it was when I had given up the search for vampires that a vampire found me...

Santiago, a tall vampire, materializes under the gaslight. And Louis gradually realizes that this vampire has assumed the same attitude, posture, clothes and hair-style as Louis.

Louis gives an involuntary shake of the head. Santiago mimics. Louis takes a step forwards. Santiago mimics. Louis folds his arms. Santiago mimics.

**LOUIS & STIAGO**

(simultaneously)

Clever.

**LOUIS**

You mean me harm?

**SANTIAGO**

(a beat later)

You mean me harm?

Louis calculates.

**LOUIS**

Trickster. Buffoon!

Santiago echoes the first word, but not the second. Louis has broken his composure. He turns his back on Santiago, only to come face to face with Santiago right in front of him.

Again Louis turns this back to find Santiago facing him.

Louis turns, glowers, refusing to look at him.

**LOUIS**

I've searched the world for an  
immortal and this is what I find?

Slowly he looks up. Santiago draws close, breaking the mirror trick and suddenly slams Louis back against the wall.

Louis is furious. He regains his balance, strikes out at Santiago and when Santiago vanishes, to reappear behind him, Louis slams back his elbow into his midriff. Santiago staggers, amazed and then rushes at Louis, throwing him down.

Louis rolls back to his feet, then to his amazement sees two vampires, one in front, one behind. He looks both ways, then sees one has vanished. He stares, awestruck, at this new one:

**ARMAND**

He looks like an angel.

**ARMAND**

You are all right.

He reaches into his waistcoat, takes an engraved invitation out of his pocket and thrusts it at Louis.

Louis reads it aloud, as we see:

**"THEATRE DES VAMPIRES**

By Special Invitation  
Friday, 9 p.m."

**ARMAND**

Bring the petit beauty with you. No one will harm you. I won't allow it. Remember my name. Armand.

Armand bows and vanishes.

Louis listens to the silence.

**EXT BOULEVARD DES CAPUCHINES - THEATRE DES VAMPIRES - NIGHT**

Louis formally dressed with Claudia in rich attire on his arm. They pass people buying tickets for the theatre and go inside.

**LOUIS**

Remember what I've told you. They'll have different powers. They'll read your thoughts if you allow it.

They draw close to:

**HUGE POSTERS**

Reading -

**"THEATRE DES VAMPIRES PRESENTS  
THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH  
By Edgar Allen Poe"**

The posters are illustrated with cliched images of vampires overcoming damsels in distress.

**ANOTHER ANGLE**

**CLAUDIA**

But this can't be real. This is nonsense.

**LOUIS**

Nonsense all right. But something tell me it's going to be the strangest nonsense we've ever seen.

Warily, they show their invitations to the mortal ticket taker at the door. He glances away

indifferently.

**INT. THEATRE BOX - NIGHT**

Claudia and Louis look at the crowd as the lights go down.

**CLAUDIA**

Mortals, mortals everywhere. And lots of drops to drink.

**LOUIS**

They are here. I know they are. Listen for something that doesn't make a sound.

Stage: curtain rises.

An elaborate painted set of an Italianate castle. Death standing before it, the traditional image of the Grim Reaper, complete with magnificent scythe.

**LOUIS**

(whispers)

It's a vampire. It's the one I saw in Rue St Jacques.

A version of the Poe story unfolds before them. All of the participants are vampires. All beautiful gleaming white, aged 20 or 30.

**LOUIS**

They use no paint. And the audience think it is paint.

**CLAUDIA**

How devilishly clever.

A spotlight uncovers a mortal woman suddenly forced out upon the stage.

**CLAUDIA**

She's no vampire.

**LOUIS**

No. She's frightened. She doesn't know where she is.

The audience laughs uneasily, then stops as the Mortal Woman comes into the footlights. She is too beautiful, too confused. Santiago, as Death, advances on her. She

backs away, terrified, then sees the other vampires, in a phalanx, advancing from behind, in a half-circle.

**MORTAL WOMAN**

I don't want to die!

She looks around in panic. Santiago swoons, arms over his breast as if he is hopelessly in love.

**SANTIAGO**

We are death!

The Mortal Woman steps to the footlights.

**MORTAL WOMAN**

Someone help me. Please... What have I done?

Louis whispers to Claudia.

**LOUIS**

This is no performance.

**CLAUDIA**

And no one knows but us...

**ON THE STAGE**

**SANTIAGO**

We all die. Death is the one thing you share with all those here.

Santiago gestures to the audience.

**AUDIENCE**

Rapt faces.

**ON THE STAGE**

**MORTAL WOMAN**

But I'm young...

**SANTIAGO**

Death is no respecter of age. He can come any time, any place. Need I tell you what fate has in store for you?

**MORTAL WOMAN**

I would take my chance. Let me go!  
Please...

**SANTIAGO**

And if you take that chance and  
live, what is your fate? The  
humpbacked toothless visage of old  
age?

Santiago approaches her and tears the drawstring out of  
her peasant blouse. It opens completely and starts to  
slip. She tries to catch it, but gently stops her  
wrists. The blouse falls, exposing her young breasts.

**LOUIS AND CLAUDIA**

**LOUIS**

This is monstrous!

**CLAUDIA**

Yes, and very beautiful.

**ON THE STAGE**

**SANTIAGO**

Just as this flesh is pink now, it  
will turn grey and wrinkle with  
age.

**MORTAL WOMAN**

Let me live, please. I don't care.

**SANTIAGO**

Then why should you care if you die  
now?

She shakes her head, confused. he catches her wrists  
behind her back.

**AUDIENCE**

Is awestruck by her beauty, her suffering.

**SANTIAGO**

Draws near her cheek.

**SANTIAGO**

And suppose death had a heart to love and to release you? To whom would he turn his passion? Would you pick a person from the crowd there? A person to suffer as you suffer?

**AUDIENCE**

A young girl cries out in jest.

**YOUNG GIRL**

Oh, yes, take me Monsieur Vampire!  
I adore you!

Audience roars with laughter.

**ON THE STAGE**

**SANTIAGO**

You wait your turn.

The audience laughs again.

The Mortal Woman shakes her head in panic.

**SANTIAGO**

Well, have you a sister, a mother,  
a daughter you would send in your  
place?

**CLOSE ON CLAUDIA**

Even she is repelled by the cruelty. She shakes her head.

**MORTAL WOMAN**

Shakes her head. She is helpless.

**SANTIAGO**

We alone can give death meaning. Do  
you know what it means to be loved  
by death, to become our bride?

Mortal Woman looks up on the verge of hysteria or fainting. But then her eyes mist over. She is being

entranced.

**FROM HER POV**

We realize she is looking past Santiago at the divinely beautiful Armand, who has just stepped out of the wings. Armand has entranced her. He passes Santiago. Santiago stiffens, but yields the stage.

**ARMAND**

No pain.

**MORTAL WOMAN**

No pain?

Armand takes her by the naked shoulders.

**ARMAND**

Your beauty is a gift to us.

**ON THE STAGE**

Armand gestures to the others who slowly, gracefully close in.

**ARMAND**

Who deserves such a gift?

He pulls the drawstring from her skirt and it falls revealing her nakedness. But she is spellbound.

**MORTAL WOMAN**

No pain...

Armand embraces her, drinks, her naked body stark against her black clothes, then he passes her to the other vampires one by one.

**CLOSE ON LOUIS**

Who battles desire and hunger with anger.

**LOUIS**

I've seen enough of this! I loathe it!

**CLAUDIA**

Be still!

### **ON THE STAGE**

The naked Mortal Woman lies dead on the floor. The vampires seem to vanish one by one. As the curtain draws across, the Audience loudly applauds what they presume are theatrical tricks.

### **ANOTHER ANGLE**

The audience, milling towards the exits. They talk in vacuous terms about the beauty of the show, the symbolism of it, the daring of it as they leave.

Gradually Louis and Claudia are left alone in the empty theatre. Louis seems anxious to leave. Claudia whispers in his ear.

### **CLAUDIA**

Patience, Louis. Patience.

He looks around the empty theatre, more eerie now than when the play was on. The red curtain shifts slightly in a hidden breeze, a candle sputters and dies in a box. Then the candle flares again, and we see Armand in the box, looking down on them. He stares with a dreamy expression, saying nothing.

### **LOUIS**

We've been searching for you for a very long time...

His voice echoes eerily. Armand gestures for them to follow him.

### **INT. FOOT OF STAIRWAY**

Armand leading, Louis and Claudia following. It opens into a -

### **HUGE UNDERGROUND BALLROOM**

Walls are painted with famous copies of Durer, Brueghel, Goya and Bosch depictions of death. Fine wooden coffins line the walls. Candles burn in sconces, casting alternate shadows and pools of light. Armand walks through, gesturing Louis and Claudia to follow him.

As they walk through, vampire man and women appear out of the shadows like wraiths, startling them, drifting around them, stroking them, touching Claudia as if she were a doll. Shrieks of preternatural laughter.

Armand gestures to the vampires to back off.

All obey but ESTELLE.

**ESTELLE**

Such a darling.

She menaces Claudia, her breasts enormous, her fangs bared. Armand throw her a look, and she is flung against the wall.

Louis stares around. The vampires faces drift towards him and away, always disclosing the face of Armand, who seems some distance away, but strangely close, staring at Louis with a constantly calm, hypnotic gaze. Then a young mortal boy comes from the shadows with a candelabra, which he hands to Armand.

Armand and the boy come towards them, leading them along the walls, his candelabra illuminating the ghastly murals, his face gleaming like an angel above the candleflame.

**LOUIS**

Monstrous.

**ARMAND**

Yes, and very beautiful.

**LOUIS**

Your lips, they didn't move.

**ARMAND**

They did, but too fast for you to see them. No magic, just grace and speed.

The boy is watching Louis. Armand's hand beckons and the boy draws up to Louis in the candlelight. He places his arms on Louis' shoulders. Louis glances at Armand, who smiles. Louis sees the puncture marks on the boy's neck.

**ARMAND**

He wants you...

Louis is utterly confused. Can't resist. Drinks his

blood.

The boy's body presses against him, sensual, willing. The other vampires appear all around Louis, who suddenly senses it and draws away, ashamed.

Claudia watches warily, from a distance. Armand beckons at her and Louis and open a door in the wall which reveals a stone staircase.

**INT. MEDIEVAL ROOM**

Medieval chairs, table, an old coffin, a bed in one corner, a blazing fire. A medieval painting of Satan, being banished from heaven, above the fire. Armand places the boy on the bed, settling him so he sleeps.

**ARMAND**

Disappointing, isn't it? To come so far and find so little. Jaded ingenues, amusing themselves with make-believe...

**LOUIS**

We had feared we were the only ones...

**ARMAND**

But how did you come into existence?

He glances at Louis, then at Claudia, who averts her eyes.

**ARMAND**

You don't want to answer... Two vampires from the new world, come to guide us into the new era as all we love slowly rots and fades away.

**LOUIS**

Are you the leader of this group?

**ARMAND**

If there were a leader, I would be the one.

Claudia stares at him constantly, guarded.

**LOUIS**

So you have the answers...

**ARMAND**

Ah! You have questions?

**LOUIS**

What are we?

**ARMAND**

Nothing if not vampires...

**LOUIS**

Who made us what we are?

**ARMAND**

Surely you know the one who made you...

**LOUIS**

But the one who made him, who made the one who made him, the source of all this evil...

Louis looks at the picture. Armand watches him.

**ARMAND**

That is a picture, nothing more.

**LOUIS**

You mean we are not children of Satan?

**ARMAND**

No.

He smiles at Louis. A smile of infinite compassion.

**ARMAND**

I understand. I saw you in the theatre, your suffering, your sympathy for that girl. I saw you with the boy. You die when you kill, you feel you deserve to die and you stint on nothing. But does that make you evil? Or, since you comprehend what you call goodness, does it not make you good?

**LOUIS**

Then there is nothing.

**ARMAND**

Perhaps...

He passes his finger through the candle flame.

**ARMAND**

And perhaps this is the only real  
evil left...

**LOUIS**

Then God does not exist...

**ARMAND**

I have not spoken to him...

**LOUIS**

And no vampire here has discourse  
with God or the Devil?

**ARMAND**

None that I've ever known. I know  
nothing of God or the Devil, I have  
never seen a vision nor learnt a  
secret that would damn or save my  
soul. And as far as I know, after  
four hundred years I am the oldest  
living vampire in the world.

He stares at them, his face angelic, hypnotic, young.  
His eyes hold them both in a trance.

**LOUIS**

My God... So it's as I always  
feared. Nothing, leading to  
nothing.

**ARMAND**

You fell too much. So much you make  
me feel...

He stares from Claudia to Louis. He seems to be reading  
their souls.

**ARMAND**

The one who made you should have  
told you this. The one who left the  
old world for the new...

**LOUIS**

He knew nothing. He just didn't  
care.

**ARMAND**

Knew? You mean he is...

Claudia appears suddenly to Louis' shoulder, interrupting.

**CLAUDIA**

Come, beloved. It's time we were on our way. I'm hungry and the city waits.

She stares hard at Armand. Armand looks from her to Louis.

**ARMAND**

So soon to go?

He seems genuinely regretful. But Claudia pulls Louis out.

**INT. DARKENED CORRIDORS AND THEATRE - NIGHT**

Louis and Claudia feel their way through darkened corridors, trying to find their way out.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

The place was dark as we left, a darkness that confounded even Claudia. And as we blundered through it, again came the thought: I have wronged Lestat, I have hated him for the wrong reasons.

Suddenly a light comes on. They see they are in the empty theatre. Santiago stands on the stage, under a candle.

**SANTIAGO**

How did you wrong him?

Louis is stunned.

**LOUIS**

You read my thoughts?

**SANTIAGO**

You said a name -

**LOUIS**

A name I don't want to say again.

**SANTIAGO**

I seemed to recognize it...

Other vampires appear behind him.

**SANTIAGO**

There is but one crime among us  
vampires here.

He looks at Claudia.

**SANTIAGO**

You should know, who are so  
secretive about the vampire who  
made you.

Claudia laughs.

**CLAUDIA**

Boredom!

**SANTIAGO**

It is the crime that means death to  
any vampire. To kill your own kind!

**CLAUDIA**

Aaaah! I was so afraid it was to be  
born like Venus out of the foam, as  
we were! Come Louis, let's go!

**EXT. HOTEL SAINT GABRIEL - NIGHT**

Claudia and Louis enter the Lobby.

**CLAUDIA**

I loathe them! I can't stand the  
sight of them! Stupid bourgeois  
Parisians, all dressed in black  
like some private club! I've  
searched for them the world over  
and I despise them!

**LOUIS**

What danger?

**CLAUDIA**

I can feel it from them! They want  
to know who made us, what became of  
him. They have their rules, their  
idiotic rules!

They come to their room, enter.

**INT. HOTEL ROOMS - NIGHT**

Louis closes the door behind him. Claudia paces.

**LOUIS**

Do you think I would let them harm you?

**CLAUDIA**

No, you would not, Louis. Danger hold you to me.

**LOUIS**

Love holds you to me. And we are in danger, not you.

**CLAUDIA**

Love?

She smiles at him. A strange, sad, adult smile.

**CLAUDIA**

You would leave me for Armand if he beckoned you.

**LOUIS**

Never.

**CLAUDIA**

He wants you as you want him. He's been waiting for you. He wants you for a companion. He bides his time that place. he finds them as dull and lifeless as we do.

**LOUIS**

That's not so.

**CLAUDIA**

Do you know what his soul said to me without saying a word? When he put me in that trance...

**LOUIS**

So you felt it too!

**CLAUDIA**

Let him go, he said. Let him go.

She touches his face.

**CLAUDIA**

Is that what I should do Louis? Let  
you go? My father? My lover? My  
Louis, who made me?

There are tears in her eyes. Louis lifts her up in his  
arms.

**LOUIS**

He can protect us, Claudia.

**CLAUDIA**

You really believe that?

**EXT. DOLL-SHIP - NIGHT**

Claudia, staring at the dolls. We see Madeleine inside,  
painting a doll. She sees Claudia and smiles and waves.

**INT. THEATRE - NIGHT**

Louis, sitting alone in the box, as the curtains draw  
back, to show Santiago as death, as before. Louis takes  
advantage of the darkness to slip away.

**INT. ARMAND'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Armand opens the door to Louis' knock.

**ARMAND**

I was waiting for you...

**LOUIS**

Listen to me.

He follows Armand into the room.

**LOUIS**

Claudia is dear to me. My...  
daughter.

**ARMAND**

Your lover.

**LOUIS**

No, my beloved, my child.

**ARMAND**

If you say so. You are innocent.

**LOUIS**

I'm not innocent. But I'm afraid.  
She feels she's in danger from the  
others.

**ARMAND**

She is.

**LOUIS**

But why?

**ARMAND**

I could give you reasons. Her  
silence. Her youth. It's forbidden  
to make so young, so helpless, that  
cannot survive on its own.

**LOUIS**

Then blame the one who made her...

**ARMAND**

Did you kill this vampire who made  
you both? Is that why you won't say  
his name? Santiago thinks you did.

**LOUIS**

We want no quarrel with him.

**ARMAND**

It's already begun. If you want to  
save her, send her away.

**LOUIS**

Then I leave too.

Armand smiles.

**ARMAND**

So soon? Without any of those  
answers you so longed for?

**LOUIS**

You said there were none.

**ARMAND**

But you asked the wrong questions.  
Do you know how few vampires have  
the stamina for immortality? How  
quickly they perish of their own  
will.

**LOUIS**

We can do that?

**ARMAND**

You would never give up life. If the world were reduced to one empty cell, on fragile candle, you stay alive and study it. You see too clearly. You see too much.

**LOUIS**

That's what the one who made me said.

**ARMAND**

How he must have loved you.

Armand suddenly grips Louis close to him.

**ARMAND**

Louis, I need you more than he ever did. I need a link with this century. The world changes. We do not. Therein lies the irony that ultimately kills us. I need you to make contact with this age.

Louis laughs bitterly.

**LOUIS**

He? Don't you see? I'm not the spirit of any age! I'm at odds with everything and always have been! I'm not even sure what I am!

Armand smiles.

**ARMAND**

But Louis, that is the very spirit of your age. The heart of it. You fall from grace has been the fall of a century.

Louis is stunned.

**LOUIS**

And the vampires of the Theatre?

**ARMAND**

Like moths around the candle of the age. Decadent, useless. They can't reflect anything. But you do. You

reflect its broken heart.

Louis is speechless.

**ARMAND**

Are these not the answers you came for?

**LOUIS**

(softly)  
Yes... My God...

**ARMAND**

A vampire with a human soul. An immortal with a mortal's passion. You are beautiful, my friend. Lestat must have wept when he made you -

**LOUIS**

Lestat! You knew Lestat!

**ARMAND**

Yes I knew him. Knew him well enough not to mourn his passing.

Armand stands. He takes Louis by the arm, leads him towards the back wall.

**ARMAND**

But you must go now. You must get her safely out of Paris.

He opens a hidden door in the wall.

**ARMAND**

No-one else knows of this door. When you knock you will find me waiting...

**EXT. THEATRE DES VAMPIRES - NIGHT**

Louis, in the street outside, as the door closes behind him.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

I felt a kind of peace at last. I had found the teacher which Lestat could never, I knew now, have been. I knew knowledge would never be withheld by Armand. It would pass

through him as through a pane of  
glass. And I knew Claudia must  
leave me...

**INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT**

Louis enters. There is unfamiliar scent in the air, a  
doll sitting by the mirror. Louis looks in the mirror  
and sees...

**MADELEINE**

The doll-maker, resplendent in green taffeta, sitting  
like a Madonna with Claudia on her lap. Claudia's arms  
are wound round her neck. The contrast between mortal  
woman and immortal child is plain.

**CLAUDIA**

Madeleine... Louis is shy.

Madeleine rises and comes towards Louis. She draws back  
the lace fringes round her throat, so he can see the  
two marks there. She says softly, dreamily.

**MADELEINE**

Drink.

Louis turns away. Claudia speaks, icy, from the bed.

**CLAUDIA**

Do it Louis. Because I cannot do  
it. I haven't the strength. You saw  
to that when you made me.

Louis turns to Madeleine.

**LOUIS**

You haven't the vaguest conception  
under God of what you ask!

**MADELEINE**

Au contraire, monsieur, I have.

Louis pushes her away. Claudia screams.

**CLAUDIA**

You have found your new companion,  
Louis! You will make me mine!

Louis grips Madeleine and shakes her.

**LOUIS**

How do we seem to you? Do you think us beautiful, magical, our white skin, our fierce eyes? Drink, you ask me! Have you any idea of the thing you will become?

**CLAUDIA**

Your evil is that you cannot be evil! And I will suffer for it no longer!

**LOUIS**

Don't make me, Claudia! I cannot do it!

**CLAUDIA**

Yet you could do it to me! Snatching me from my mother's hands like two monsters in a fairy-tale! Couldn't you have waited? Six more years and I would have had that shape! And now you weep! You haven't tears enough for what you've done to me.

She points to Madeleine

**CLAUDIA**

You give her to me! Do this before you leave me!

She begins to weep, sobbing like a child.

**CLAUDIA**

Oh God! I love you still, that's the torment of it. But you know I must leave you Louis...

**LOUIS**

Yes...

**CLAUDIA**

And who will care for me my love, my dark angel, when you are gone?

Louis looks at Madeleine

**LOUIS**

You promise to care for her then?

**MADELEINE**

Yes...

**LOUIS**

And you know what you ask for?

She wraps her arms around Claudia.

**MADELEINE**

Yes.

**LOUIS**

What do you think she is,  
Madeleine? A doll?

**MADELEINE**

A child who can't die...

Her finger clutches a locket around her neck, Louis touches it, opens it.

**THE LOCKET**

A picture of a young girl, Claudia's age, wistful, beautiful.

**LOUIS**

(softly)

And the child who did die?

**MADELEINE**

My daughter...

Louis takes her chin in his hand, gently.

**LOUIS**

Look at the gaslight. Don't take  
your eyes off it. You will be  
drained to the point of death, but  
you must stay alive. Do you hear  
me?

**MADELEINE**

Yes!

Louis pulls her to him and starts to drink her blood.

**EXT. HOTEL BALCONY - LATER**

Louis on the balcony, weakened terribly. A breeze blows

on the gauze curtains behind him, through which we see...

SILHOUETTES of Madeleine and Claudia. Madeleine her arms outstretched, now a vampire, a long moan of pain coming from her. Claudia comes through the curtains, alarmed.

**CLAUDIA**

(whispers)

Louis!

Louis speaks without turning.

**LOUIS**

She is dying. It happened to you too, but your child's mind can't remember.

**CLAUDIA**

But if she dies...

**LOUIS**

It's only mortal death.

He turns to look at Claudia.

**LOUIS**

Bear me no ill will, my love. We are now even.

**CLAUDIA**

What do you mean?

**LOUIS**

What died tonight inside that room was not that woman. It will take her many nights to die, perhaps years. What has died in that room tonight is the last vestige in me of what was human.

She takes his hand.

**CLAUDIA**

Yes father. At last. We are een.

He bends down and kisses her. He looks up, at the wafting curtains. He sees -

**MANY VAMPIRE SHADOWS**

Silhouetted, coming closer.

**CLAUDIA**

Looks up and screams.

**THE CURTAINS**

Are ripped aside. The vampires of the Theatre surge through.

**ESTELLE**

Time for justice, little one.

The vampires close on them as Louis struggles, Claudia's scream pierces the night air.

**INT. CORRIDOR OF THEATRE DES VAMPIRES - NIGHT**

In a press of vampires, Louis, Claudia and Madeleine are forced down the dark corridor. Into -

**THE BALLROOM**

Vampire chaos, as they are dragged through. Louis struggling like a demon.

**LOUIS**

Armand! Get me Armand! he wouldn't countenance this -

**SANTIAGO**

You can make no demands here!  
Buffoon! Bastard -

Santiago strikes Louis to the ground. As he struggles to his feet, he sees the vampires part around a figure coming through. He gasps at the sight of -

**LESTAT**

Dressed beautifully, but horribly scarred now, from the fire as well as the earlier stabbing. Lestat is confused, ancient, teetering, reaching for Santiago's shoulder to steady himself.

**LESTAT**

Louis...

**SANTIAGO**

Is he the one?

Lestat shakes his head.

**LESTAT**

No, the child. The child was the one...

**SANTIAGO**

All the murderers!!!

**LOUIS**

You are alive, Lestat! It can't be murder! Tell them how you treated us...

Lestat reaches out to Louis.

**LESTAT**

No... You come back to me Louis...

**LOUIS**

Are you mad???

**ESTELLE**

The sentence is death! To all of them!!!

**LESTAT**

Only the girl - it was the girl -

The sound of something being dragged through the crowd. Horrible echoing, scraping -

Lestat grips Santiago.

**LESTAT**

You promised me - I could take him back to New Orleans - Louis - there's something I must tell you - about that night - that night I met you -

He stares around him, confused. The scraping gets louder.

**LOUIS**

You let her go, Lestat - you let

her free - and I'll come back with  
you -

Santiago grabs Louis by the neck.

**SANTIAGO**

Death for the others. For you  
eternity in a box -

We see now what caused the scraping. A huge metal  
coffin being dragged through the vampires. Claudia  
screams.

**SANTIAGO**

Walled in a dungeon. Your only  
company will be your screams...  
Perhaps it will take centuries...

The vampires grab Louis. They force him towards the  
coffin. Lestat struggles with them.

**LESTAT**

He's coming home with me - you  
promised -

**SANTIAGO**

(laughing)  
We promised nothing!

Louis struggles fiercely as he is forced into the  
coffin. Claudia weeps.

**LOUIS**

They've fooled you, Lestat! You  
must reach Armand! Armand has the  
power!

Louis, struggling in the coffin. Then the lid is forced  
down, huge locks closed over it.

**INT. COFFIN**

Louis, in the smallest imaginable space. Beating his  
forehead against the metal.

**EXT. COFFIN**

Claudia, throwing herself on the coffin, crying. She is  
dragged away. Vampire hands drag the coffin across the  
stone floor.

**INT. COFFIN**

Louis, forehead pouring with blood, being thrown this way and that. The coffin is lifted, upside down, Louis' head crashes off the floor.

**EXT. COFFIN**

Is thrust into a niche in the wall. Bricks being placed over, mortar trowelled on.

**INT. COFFIN**

Louis upside down. Sounds of bricks and mortar. Then terrifying, unearthly scream pierces the coffin, striking to his very soul.

**LOUIS**

Claudia!!!

He loses consciousness.

**BLACKNESS**

**INT. COFFIN**

Louis sleeps, upside down. Sound of bricks being broken, thrown aside. Then of locks breaking.

Louis opens his eyes. The lid opens. He sees -

**ARMAND**

Above him, reaching down to take his hand.

**ARMAND**

Hurry. Don't make a sound.

Louis gets out, into a vast long catacomb. Louis runs to the end of it, steps through a broken brick wall.

**LOUIS**

Where is she? Where's Claudia?

**ARMAND**

Follow me - that way - through my cell -

He points to his cell at the end of the passage, the foot of the steps. Sound of rain beyond the door.

**LOUIS**

Not without Claudia. Where is she?

**ARMAND**

I can't save her.

**LOUIS**

You can't believe I'd leave without her. Armand! You must save her! You have no choice.

**ARMAND**

Louis, I can't save her. I will only risk losing you -

Louis runs up the stone stairs. It leads to the ballroom. He enters.

Estelle stands far off, looking at him coolly. She lifts the stage skull mask and laughs softly behind it. A male vampire slumps in a chair staring softly at Louis.

Silence. Indifference.

Louis sees Lestat sitting in a far corner. he rushes up to Lestat, who looks up at him, confused. He's holding something crumpled, made of cloth.

**LESTAT**

You'll come home with me Louis? For a little while... until I am myself again.

**LOUIS**

**CLAUDIA!!!**

Louis turns round and round in rage. Passive still faces. A door bangs open and shut.

Louis looks again at Lestat. He snatches the cloth from Lestat's hand. We see it is a small torn bloodstained dress. Claudia's dress.

The door bangs again. Estelle laughs. Rain gusts into the ballroom.

Louis goes to the door, holding the dress. Armand

approaches, trying to pull him away, but Louis shrugs him off. He draws nearer and nearer and stairs at -

**INT. BRICK AIRWELL**

On the stones lie Claudia and Madeleine, burn to ashes, in each other's arms, like the corpses of his wife and daughter in the New Orleans graveyard, embracing each other.

Only Claudia's blond hair and Madeleine's red hair remain unburnt.

Louis looks up at the walls of this airwell, many stories to the sky. He cries out in agony.

Santiago appears behind him, staring. Louis roars in horror and attacks Santiago, scattering the ashes into the rainy wind. Claudia's golden locks fly up into the wind, they whirl around the warring figure.

Armand appears, drags Louis free, pulls him screaming from the airwell, into the ballroom, towards the exit.

Claudia's hair is sucked up by the wind through the airwell, towards the night sky.

**EXT. NOTRE DAME DOOR - NIGHT**

Louis is slumped against the stone wall. Armand stands beside him like a guardian angel.

**ARMAND**

I couldn't prevent it.

**LOUIS**

I don't believe you. I do not have to read your soul to know that you lie.

**ARMAND**

Louis, they cannot be brought back. There are some things that are impossible, even for me.

**LOUIS**

You let them do it.

Louis climbs to his feet.

**LOUIS**

You held sway over them. They  
feared you. You wanted it to  
happen.

**ARMAND**

Louis, I swear I did not.

**LOUIS**

I understand you only too well. You  
let them do it, as I let Lestat  
turn a child into a demon. As I let  
her rip Lestat's heart to pieces!  
Well I am no longer that passive  
fool that has spun evil from evil  
till the web traps the one who made  
it. Your melancholy spirit of this  
century! I know what I must do. And  
I warn you - you saved me tonight,  
so I return the favor - do not go  
near your cell in the Theatre Des  
Vampires again.

**EXT. THEATRE DES VAMPIRES - DAWN**

Wet and deserted, the streets around the theatre are  
quiet.

**CLOSEUP - CLOCK**

Chiming five a.m.

**CLOSE ON LOUIS**

Looking at the paling sky. He is in an alleyway,  
outside of Armand's cell. He has a huge keg with him.  
he finds the door unlocked. He enters.

**INT. CELL**

Empty. The hearth is cold. The old coffin is gone.  
Louis silently closes the door to the passage and  
blocks it with an immense bar. He goes in the other  
door.

**INT. THEATRE**

Louis hurls kerosene all over the stage, the curtain, the sets, the seats below. He grabs the scythe from the playlet. He walks out. Dribbling a trail of kerosene behind him.

#### **INT. STAIRS**

Louis walking rapidly down, leaving the trail of kerosene. He creeps quietly into the -

#### **BALLROOM**

Leaking kerosene from the cask. He splashes over the coffins that gleam in the dimness.

Then he strikes a match and heaves it into the kerosene. Everything bursts into flame. The trail of kerosene roars into fire through the ballroom over the coffins and up the stairs. We hear EXPLOSIONS of fire from above.

#### **LOUIS**

Shudders all over, fighting the morning weakness. He readies the scythe, like the grim reaper.

#### **ESTELLE**

Rises from her burning coffin, screams and tries to run through the fire but Louis slashes her down with the scythe and she goes down screaming, her dress in flames.

#### **ESTELLE**

Stop him. It's morning. The sunlight. Stop him.

Others rise, choking in the smoke. Screams from everywhere. They are burning.

Louis backs up the stairs to the -

#### **DUNGEON**

He can see there a thin pale light under Armand's bolted door. Suddenly -

## **SANTIAGO**

Comes at him from behind. Louis turns. Santiago rushes him in a blur. Louis swings the scythe, too fast to see what he himself is doing. Santiago's head streaming blood flies through the air.

The body drops, flapping its arms.

SCREAMS come from everywhere.

Another vampire rushes burning towards Louis. He decapitates him in turn. Then he staggers into Armand's cell, and bars the door the connects it to the ballroom behind him. He staggers to the outer door. There is a thin strip of daylight, beneath the door, blinding him. He throws it open, and staggers into the daylight.

## **EXT. THEATRE DES VAMPIRES - DAWN**

Louis staggers out of the burning theatre, into the thin daylight. Great gusts of smoke cover the street. He staggers through the daylight, weakening, about to fall, when through the clouds of smoke comes -

## **A MAGNIFICENT HEARSE**

As in a dream, driven by Armand's human boy. The door of the hearse opens. Through the curtains enclosing the interior, we see Armand. He reaches a hand out to Louis and pulls him inside.

The hearse vanishes through the smoke, leaving the spectacle of the burning theatre.

## **EXT. THEATRE DES VAMPIRES - TWILIGHT**

The gutted Theatre and ballroom, the roof collapsed, exposed to the evening sky. The life of Paris goes on around it, oblivious.

## **INT. LOUVRE - NIGHTS LATER**

It is already a museum by this time and Louis and Armand, fancily dressed and composed, walk through it. They stop by a Gericault - The Wreck of the Medusa.

**LOUIS**

You didn't even warm them, did you?

**ARMAND**

No.

**LOUIS**

And yet you knew what I would do.

**ARMAND**

I knew. I rescued you, didn't I?  
From the terrible dawn.

**LOUIS**

You were their leader. They trusted  
you.

**ARMAND**

You made me see their failings,  
Louis. You made me look at them  
with your eyes.

He looks at Louis affectionately.

**ARMAND**

Your melancholy eyes...

**LOUIS**

What a pair we are. We deserve each  
other, don't we?

**ARMAND**

We are a pair, and that's what  
counts.

Armand and Louis walk slowly through the Louvre  
together. Camera follows them for a while, then comes  
to rest on a sunrise by Turner.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

We left Paris shortly after. For  
years we wandered. Greece, Egypt,  
all the ancient lands. Then, out of  
curiosity, perhaps, boredom, who  
knows what, I took him home, to my  
America...

**INT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT**

A deco cinema of the twenties. Louis and Armand,  
dressed in the style of the period walk down the aisle

through the crowded seats.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

And there, a technological wonder  
allowed me see sunrise, for the  
first time in two hundred years...

On the screen, Murnau's "Sunrise", in black and white.  
We see a montage of sunrises, from a whole range of  
movies, in black and white.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

And what sunrises! Seen as the  
human eye could never see them. We  
would sit in the dark, night after  
night among nameless humans,  
entranced with the miracle of  
light. Silver at first, then as the  
years progressed in tones of  
purple, red and my long-lost  
blue...

The SUNRISES continue, in color now, and the  
backgrounds in them change to the fifties.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

And in time parted. We had become  
so alike, we both wanted the  
certainties of loneliness once  
more.

The lights come up in a different theatre. Louis  
sitting there, alone, in a half empty theatre, dressed  
in the clothes of the fifties. He rises, exits with the  
others.

**EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREET - NIGHT**

Cars rushing by, twentieth-century madness. Louis  
emerges from the theatre, walks through the streets.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

I had returned to new Orleans. As  
soon as I smelt the air, I knew I  
was home. There was sadness there,  
rich, almost sweet, like the  
fragrance of jasmine. I walked the  
streets, savoring it like a long  
lost perfume...

**EXT. GARDEN DISTRICT - NIGHT**

Louis walks past the many Greek Revival Mansions.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

And then on Prytania Street, only  
blocks from the Lafayette cemetery  
I caught the scent of death and it  
wasn't coming from the graves...

CAMERA PANS OVER white-walled Lafayette cemetery and  
its surrounding mansions.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

The scent grew stronger as I  
walked. Old death. A scent too  
faint for mortals to detect.

Louis sees rats darting across the street. They rush  
into a great overgrown garden surrounding a ruined  
mansion. No lights.

Louis stops at a rusted gate. He forces it open and  
enters -

**A VERITABLE JUNGLE**

Of overgrown rose and oak tree and wisteria. he sees a  
faint glimmer of light coming from a distant glass  
window of a huge Greek Revival house. He approaches  
then he sees -

**OLD SHRIVELLED CORPSE**

Of a man, long dead and dried up, snagged in the thorny  
rosevines.

**LOUIS**

Looks around. Walks on. Sees another corpse, almost  
nothing but bones, sinking into the wet earth, the  
roots of an oak overgrowing it.

He looks up at the distant light.

He passes a third corpse, caught in wisteria and rose  
vine, only bones and clothes.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

They were like the doomed princess caught in the thorny vines of Sleeping Beauty's castle. I knew what it meant. A vampire had lured them here, but had been too weak to get rid of them.

Louis sees dead rats lying near the steps.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

It spelt weakness, madness, the behavior of a dying animal that pollutes its own lair.

Louis treads carefully on the rotted steps. He moves along the porch. More dead rats. He sees through the floor-length window into rooms lined with stacked books. Virtually walled with them. Water seeps down from the ceiling, gleaming as it streaks over the books. The floors of the splendid rooms are bare, except for a rotten French chair by a dead fireplace. A single mirror reflecting the moon.

Dead rats.

He moves along the porch to the parlor windows. The candle flickers inside. He sees -

**HIS POV**

Lestat lying on the floor. He is gaunt to near starvation. All his scars are gone, but he is almost a skeleton and his eyes are enormous in their sockets. His clothes are rags. Blond hair beautiful, as always.

**MALLOY'S ENTRANCES FACE SUPERIMPOSED OVER**

**MALLOY (V.O.)**

Lestat escaped the fire!

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

He hadn't even been there. And all those years I thought he was dead.

**BACK TO LESTAT**

One tiny candle stands beside him. He reads an early comic, from the turn of the century. Without turning his head, he speaks.

**LESTAT**

I'm so glad you're here Louis...  
I've dreamed of your coming...

**LOUIS**

Don't try to speak... it's  
alright...

**LESTAT**

I didn't mean to let them do it...  
that Santiago, he tricked me...

**LOUIS**

That's all past, Lestat.

**LESTAT**

Yes. Past... she should never have  
been one of us...

He turns and looks at Louis. Old, fearful, broken.

**LESTAT**

Still beautiful Louis. You always  
were the strong one.

**LOUIS**

Don't fear me, Lestat. I bring you  
no harm.

**LESTAT**

You've come back to me, Louis?  
You've come again to me?

Louis shakes his head. A series of police sirens go by,  
piercing the night sky. A helicopter goes overhead. Red  
flashes illuminate his face. Lestat shivers, covers his  
ears. He's terrified. Louis touches him, calming him,  
until the lights pass over.

**LOUIS**

It's only a siren...

**LESTAT**

I can't bear it Louis! The machines  
out there, that fly and that roar!  
And such lights! They make the  
night brighter than the day!

**LOUIS**

And they frighten you?

**LESTAT**

You know I love the dark. But  
there's no dark anymore.

**LOUIS**

It's false light, Lestat. It can't  
harm you...

**LESTAT**

If you stayed with me Louis, I  
could venture out... little by  
little... become the old Lestat.

Louis shivers. He releases him.

**LOUIS**

I have to go now Lestat...

**LESTAT**

You remember how I was, Louis.. the  
vampire Lestat...

**LOUIS**

Yes. I remember...

Lestat shivers.

**LESTAT**

I tried to tell you Louis... that  
night in Paris... when I first came  
to you... no-one can refuse the  
dark gift, Louis... not even you.

**LOUIS**

I tried...

**LESTAT**

And the more you tried, the more I  
wanted you... a vampire with your  
beautiful, suffering human heart.  
And how you suffered... I need your  
forgiveness, Louis.

**LOUIS**

You have it...

Louis walks slowly away from him. Lestat turns back to  
his candle, his magazine.

**LESTAT**

You'll come back, Louis... take me  
out... little by little... and

maybe I'll be myself again...

A bluebottle buzzes by him. His hand shoots out and grabs it, squeezes the blood.

**LOUIS**

(whispering)

Yes, Lestat...

**ON LOUIS**

As he walks through the decayed house. His eyes are expressionless.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

And my story ends there. But in fact it ended a long time ago, with Claudia's ashes in that theatre. My love died with her. I never really changed after that. What became of Lestat I have no idea. I go on, night after night. I feed on those who cross my path. But all my passion went with her yellow hair. I'm a spirit with preternatural flesh. Detached. unchangeable. Empty.

**INT. ROOM. SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT (PRESENT)**

Malloy, staring at Louis.

**MALLOY**

No... it can't end like that...

**LOUIS**

But it has. There is no more to tell.

**MALLOY**

But you talk about passion, about longing, about things I'll never know in my life! It's still inside you, in every syllable you speak! And then you tell me it ends like that? Just empty?

**LOUIS**

It's over, I'm telling you...

**MALLOY**

You need a new passion, Louis, a new reason to feel... what a story you've told, you don't understand yourself.

Louis looks at the cassettes on the table.

**LOUIS**

Do what you want with it. Learn what you can. Give the story to others.

Malloy rises.

**MALLOY**

You have another chance, Louis. Take me! Give me your gift, your power...

Louis is slowly horrified, then outraged and angry.

**LOUIS**

Is this what you want? You ask me for this after all I've told you?

**MALLOY**

If I could see what you've seen, feel what you've felt I wouldn't let it end like this! You need a like to the world out there, a connection... then it won't end like this...

He stares at Louis.

**MALLOY**

You need me.

Louis turns away.

**LOUIS**

Dear God. I've failed again, haven't I?

**MALLOY**

No...

**LOUIS**

Don't say anymore. The reels are still turning. I have but one chance to show you the meaning of

what I've said.

He looks at the boy. Then suddenly grabs him, lifts him off the floor, bares his terrifying fangs and brings them to his throat. Malloy screams, in involuntary terror.

**LOUIS**

You like it? You like being food  
for the immortals? You like dying?  
Is it beautiful? Is it intense?

Malloy, now terrified, whispers

**MALLOY**

No... please...

Louis drops him.

**LOUIS**

Thank God.

Malloy, falls on the floor, terrified. When he looks up, Louis has vanished.

**MALLOY**

Louis... Louis...

He looks up at the tape. It is still turning.

**MALLOY**

Holy shit...

He shakes his head. He gets up, and with shaking fingers gathers his tapes. He runs out of the room.

**EXT. STREET OUTSIDE - NIGHT**

Malloy running for his car, a convertible. He leaps in and screeches off through the night.

**EXT. STREETS - NIGHT**

Malloy whips the car through the tiny streets, in sheer, unfocused terror.

**MALLOY**

Jesus...

**EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - NIGHT**

Malloy driving with streams of traffic over the bridge. He breathes deeply, to calm himself. He takes a tape from his pocket, and with still shaking hands, sticks it in the deck.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

(tape)

1791. That's when it happened. I was twenty-four. Younger than you are now.

Suddenly a bony hand shoots out from the back seat, pulls his neck backwards -

**LESTAT**

Sinks his teeth in his neck.

**MALLOY'S HANDS**

On the wheel, shaking, shuddering, losing their grip.

**MALLOY'S EYES**

Bulging, as the life drains out of him. Lestat sucking him like a rat.

**THE WHEEL**

Swinging free of Malloy's dying hands.

**THE CAR**

Veers wildly into oncoming traffic.

**LESTAT**

Drinks regardless.

**A TRUCK**

Coming towards them, about to crush the car.

**LESTAT'S BONY HAND**

Grabs the wheel, jerks it as he drinks.

**THE CAR**

Misses the truck by inches.

**LESTAT**

Throws Malloy to one side, climbs into the front seat.

The tape is playing.

**LOUIS (V.O.)**

(tape)

My invitation was open to anyone.  
Sailors, whores, thieves. But it  
was a vampire that accepted...

**ON LESTAT**

At the wheel, the corpse of Malloy in the passenger seat. He smiles. We can see the blood renewing him.

**LESTAT**

Dear Louis... will I ever forget?

**EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - NIGHT**

Lestat drives on, the car a tiny speck against the bridge, the sea, the sky beyond, with the first fingers of light spreading through it.

**OUT**

**FADE**

**THE END**