

TRUE BLOOD - PILOT EPISODE



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"STRANGE LOVE" PILOT

by

Alan Ball

Based on the Southern Vampire Novels
by Charlaine Harris

REVISED
November 12th, 2006

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INT. CADILLAC ESCALADE - NIGHT.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD: We're barreling down a TWO-LANE ROAD through the woods, a little faster than is comfortable - or safe. Illuminated only by HEADLIGHTS, which play tricks with SPANISH MOSS hanging from tree branches. No other cars are on the road. "Y'ALL'D THINK SHE'D BE GOOD 2 ME" by C. C. Adcock blares on the STEREO.

INSIDE THE CAR: A handsome FRAT BOY (21), sits in the passenger seat, a little buzzed. All-American, but with that particular wild streak certain privileged Southern boys have. He's hot, and he knows it.

His 20-year-old SORORITY GIRL date is driving, also buzzed, her free hand reaching for his crotch. She's pretty in a conventional way, has a dazzling smile and a flawless body. The kind of woman who will marry well. If not Frat Boy, then someone just like him. As she unzips his jeans:

FRAT BOY
(mock surprise)
The hell are you doing?

SORORITY GIRL
I'm bored.

FRAT BOY
(grins)
You get bored pretty easily.

SORORITY GIRL
Only with you, darlin'.

She reaches inside his pants and he leans back, really enjoying this, until he spots

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD: A PORTABLE ELECTRIC SIGN on the side of the road reads **WE HAVE TRU BLOOD.**

FRAT BOY
Holy shit.

EXT. GRABBIT QUIK - NIGHT.

A CONVENIENCE STORE on a two-lane state road in Northern Louisiana. A used DODGE and a newer GM PICKUP in the parking lot. No other buildings nearby. The PORTABLE ELECTRIC SIGN is planted out front.

SORORITY GIRL'S WHITE CADILLAC ESCALADE drives past, SCREECHES to a halt. Backs up and PULLS INTO THE PARKING LOT.

NAN FLANAGAN (O.C.)
We're citizens.

INT. GRABBIT QUICK - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT.

CLOSE ON A PORTABLE TV SCREEN: *ANDERSON COOPER is interviewing a pale, conservative-looking SPOKESWOMAN. The more she looks like Ann Coulter, the better. Media-savvy, she speaks rapidly, with authority. SUPERIMPOSED beneath them, along with the CNN LOGO: NAN FLANAGAN, American Vampire League.*

NAN FLANAGAN
We pay our taxes. We deserve basic civil rights like everyone else.

ANDERSON COOPER
But doesn't your race have a sordid history of exploiting and feeding off innocent people? For centuries?

NAN FLANAGAN
Three points. Number one: Show me documentation. It does not exist. Number two: Doesn't your race have a sordid history of exploitation? We never owned slaves, Anderson, or detonated nuclear weapons. And most importantly, point number three: Since the Japanese perfected synthetic blood, which satisfies all our nutritional requirements, there is no reason for anyone to fear us. That's why we decided to make our existence known. We simply want to be a part of mainstream society.

ANDERSON COOPER
Yes, but... aren't you technically dead?

NAN FLANAGAN
(laughs)
I'm here, aren't I?

ANGLE ON a CLERK, watching, the slightest of smiles on his face. He's part Asian, part psycho; razor sharp cheekbones and long, limp black hair. He looks flat out evil. He shoots a contemptuous glance at

ELSEWHERE IN THE STORE, a pudgy GOOD OLE BOY (40s) stands at the COLD DRINK SECTION, staring at the contents of the refrigerated case, unable to make a decision.

A BELL RINGS as the DOOR OPENS and FRAT BOY and SORORITY GIRL ENTER, LAUGHING, high.

SORORITY GIRL

Hey. You have Tru-Blood? For real?

FRAT BOY

You get vamps in here? I didn't even think we had any in Louisiana.

The Clerk eyes them coldly, like he wants to kill them both and is just considering different ways do it.

CLERK

(indecipherable accent)

You didn't know that New Orleans is a mecca for vampires?

SORORITY GIRL

(fascinated)

Oh... so the Anne Rice books are right.

CLERK

Hardly.

FRAT BOY

Seriously, New Orleans? Even after Katrina? Didn't they all drown?

CLERK

Vampires cannot drown. Vampires do not breathe.

(then, malevolent)

We actually like the water. When it is warm.

Frat Boy and Sorority Girl are suddenly frozen with fear.

So is Good Ole Boy in the cold drinks section.

FRAT BOY

(quietly)

Dude. No harm intended. We're just a little drunk.

CLERK

(smiles)

Nice. I could use a cocktail.

He leans toward them, feral. Evil. Now they're terrified.

Good Ole Boy starts inching toward the door.

Then the Clerk LAUGHS - a dorky, juvenile laugh.

CLERK (cont'd)
(Southern accent)
Score! I totally had you guys.

SORORITY GIRL
That's not funny.

Frat Boy is angry, then smiles.

FRAT BOY
No, Kelly, it is kind of funny.

SORORITY GIRL
Mike!

FRAT BOY
(to Clerk)
Hey, do you pick up a lotta chicks
that way? Fangbangers?

GOOD OLE BOY (O.C.)
(Southern accent)
I didn't think it was funny.

The three kids throw him a dismissive glance.

FRAT BOY
We don't care what you think.
(to Clerk, lowly)
Dude. Do you know where we can
score any V-juice?

SORORITY GIRL
Gross, Mike, no way! I knew this
girl who knew this girl who did
vamp blood during Greek Week and
she like, clawed her own face off.

FRAT BOY
(to Clerk)
No seriously, I'll pay good money.

GOOD OLE BOY
Okay, you two need to leave.

FRAT BOY
Fuck you, Billy Bob.

GOOD OLE BOY
(pleasant)
Fuck me? I'll fuck you, boy. I'll
fuck you and then I'll eat you.

He smiles, and a pair of sharp FANGS extend, with the barely audible CLICK of bone sliding into place. It's as if someone just loaded a weapon.

Now the others are petrified. Sorority Girl grabs Frat Boy and they scramble out, jump into their car and PEEL OFF.

The Clerk is frozen with fear. Good Ole Boy moves toward him slowly, puts a SIX PACK on the counter. BOTTLED BLOOD. The LABEL reads **TRU-BLOOD. O positive.**

GOOD OLE BOY (cont'd)
You ever pretend to be one of us
again and I'll kill you. Got it?

He pulls an AMERICAN EXPRESS CARD out of his wallet. Shaking, the Clerk starts to ring him up.

MAIN TITLES

EXT. MERLOTTE'S - NIGHT.

A cozy-looking ROAD HOUSE. NEON BEER SIGNS in the windows, a FULL PARKING LOT. A tall but simple NEON SIGN reads

MERLOTTE'S BAR & GRILL

We HEAR Mary Chapin Carpenter singing "DOWN AT THE TWIST AND SHOUT."

INT. MERLOTTE'S - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT.

The MUSIC and CONVERSATION are LOUD as we MOVE THROUGH THE PREDOMINANTLY WHITE CROWD of rural Louisiana folk. We FIND a thirtyish MAN, a few pounds overweight, sitting with his WIFE and TEENAGE SON. As we MOVE TOWARD HIM, he looks up at us and we **HEAR HIS THOUGHTS, treated to sound HOLLOW AND SURREAL:**

MAN (V.O.)
*...I'm just going to have one beer
tonight Jesus one beer that's
all...*

REVERSE ANGLE on **SOOKIE STACKHOUSE (25)**, blonde, fit and tan. Pretty but wary. Life has left scars on her - scars we may not be able to see but can somehow tell are there. She smiles sympathetically at him as she puts a BEER down in front of him, then puts down a BASKET OF FRIES in front of

The Man's WIFE. Carefully made up. The wrong haircut for her face. We **HEAR HER THOUGHTS, treated to sound HOLLOW AND SURREAL [as will be all THOUGHTS WE HEAR, from here on]:**

WIFE (V.O.)

*...better not gripe about me eating
fries not after what I did for him
last night...*

BACK ON SOOKIE, wishing she wasn't hearing these people's thoughts. Puts a BURGER down in front of

Their TEENAGE SON. Smart, restless, slightly androgenous. He's thinking

TEENAGE SON (V.O.)

*...I cannot wait to get the hell
out of this podunk town...*

BACK ON SOOKIE, sympathizing with him.

SOOKIE

*Make sure you do, and before it's
too late, because every year you
wait? You just get more and more
stuck here. Believe me, I know.*

All three of them stare up at her, surprised. The Teenage Son's face goes white.

Sookie, deeply embarrassed to have revealed herself this way, can't get away from the table fast enough.

SOOKIE (cont'd)

I'll get yall some ketchup.

REVERSE TRACKING ON SOOKIE as she spins and walks away from the table. We start to HEAR A CACOPHONY OF THOUGHTS, from every single person in the bar. Sookie stops walking, closes her eyes. Takes a deep, calming breath. The DIN OF OTHER PEOPLES' THOUGHTS FADES AWAY. Satisfied, Sookie opens her eyes, gives herself a little smile as SHE WALKS OUT OF FRAME.

INT. SUPER SAVE-A-BUNCH - SHREVEPORT - NIGHT.

A WAL-MART type warehouse store. **TARA THORNTON (26)**, wearing a royal blue SMOCK over her jeans and tank top, leans against a column, bored. Tara is African-American, smart, impatient and beautiful - but she'll be damned if she'll let you see it. A snooty matronly SHOPPER approaches in a flurry of Laura Ashley and frosted hair.

SHOPPER

Excuse me. I'm looking for that thick, translucent plastic sheeting, the kind they hang in front of the doors of walk-in refrigerators?

Tara stares at her.

TARA

Uh... we don't sell that here.
(helpful)
You could try Home Depot.

SHOPPER

(irritated)
I tried them already, they sent me here. I cannot believe you don't have that stuff, I don't even know what it's called.

TARA

Sorry.

SHOPPER

You're supposed to have everything.

TARA

Well, we don't have that stuff, that you don't even know what it's called.

SHOPPER

(doesn't like Tara's attitude)
Your website says this is the most well-stocked store in five parishes. I just drove over an hour from Marthaville.

TARA

Uh-huh. Does our website have a phone number?

SHOPPER

I suppose it does, but -

TARA

So it never occurred to you, before you drove an hour, to pick up the phone and call us to see if we stocked whatever the hell it is that you're looking for?

SHOPPER

Well, I think if a business chooses
to classify itself as -

TARA

How old are you?

SHOPPER

I don't see how that's -

TARA (CONT'D)

You gotta be at least forty,
right? Old enough to know
that you can't trust most of
what you read, especially in
an ad.

SHOPPER

It was not an ad, it was a website.

TARA

Why didn't you just find it online
and have it delivered to your
house? Or were you just looking for
an excuse to wear those ugly
clothes?

A beat.

SHOPPER

I'd like to speak to your manager.

TARA

Fine.
(bellows)
Waylon!

As she pulls her smock over her head:

TARA (cont'd)

Trust me, you are not getting me
fired. I am quitting. You were just
the fucking catalyst, and for that,
I ought to thank you.

SHOPPER

You are a very rude young woman!

TARA

Oh, this ain't rude. This is
uppity.

A blue-smocked, white STORE MANAGER approaches. Tara hands
him her smock, then SLAPS his face.

TARA (cont'd)
(goes ghetto)
That's for patting my ass too much.
I'm 'on' get my baby's daddy, who
just got outta prison, to come and
kick your teeth in.

STORE MANAGER
(scared)
Jesus, Tara, please don't --

TARA
Oh my God, I'm not serious, you
pathetic racist! I don't have a
baby!

As she walks away, furious:

TARA (cont'd)
Man! I know yall have to be stupid,
but do you have to be that stupid?

INT. MERLOTTE'S - NIGHT.

"SOULFUL GARAGE" by Southern Culture on the Skids plays on the STEREO. Sookie leans against the bar, checking her orders. Behind the bar, **SAM MERLOTTE (30)** mixes drinks. Sam is small but strong, with strawberry blonde hair and blue eyes that immediately put you at ease. He moves his head in time to the music as he works; this is a man who likes his job. A PHONE behind the bar RINGS; Sam picks it up.

SAM
Evenin', Merlotte's... hey, Tara...

Sookie shoots him an apologetic look.

SAM (cont'd)
Yeah, she's right here...

As he hands the phone to her:

SOOKIE
Sam, I'm so sorry, she knows not to
call me at work -

SAM
(a smile)
Sookie. It's okay. You don't abuse
the privilege, like Arlene does.

ARLENE FOWLER, a waitress with flaming red hair, rushes by with a tray laden with FRIED FOOD. Arlene's in her early forties and she's in complete denial about it.

ARLENE
I heard that.

SAM
Well, I wish you would hear that.

ARLENE
Oh please, Sam. I have kids!

And she's gone.

SOOKIE
(into phone)
This had better be an emergency.

INT. TARA'S MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT.

INSIDE Tara's meticulously maintained 1985 MERCEDES-BENZ 280. Tara drives, pissed, "OVER YOU (BUMP MIX)" by Vallejo blaring on her STEREO.

TARA
(into her cell phone)
It is. I just quit my job.

Intercut as necessary with Sookie at Merlotte's:

SOOKIE
Again?

TARA
I can't work for assholes!

SOOKIE
Well, I'm glad you can afford to be so picky, Miss Say-hello-to-the-rest-of-us.

TARA
Oh shut up. Sam is not an asshole, and he's totally in love with you.

SOOKIE
(shocked)
Tara! He is my boss.

TARA
Jesus, Sookie. You need to lighten up.

SOOKIE

You know I hate when you use the J-word. I have to go!

TARA

I'm coming there right now, I need a Margarita. A big one.

SOOKIE

Bye!

She hangs up as another waitress approaches the bar. This is good time girl **DAWN GREEN (29)**, an attractive brunette who doesn't expect too much out of life and is quite pleased with what she gets.

DAWN

(to Sookie)

Mack and Denise Rattray are just about to sit down in your section.

Sookie's face darkens; this all she needs tonight. Sam notices.

SAM

Come on, Sookie, don't let 'em get to you. They're not worth it.

Sookie smiles a very weak, very fake smile at

Her POV: MACK and DENISE RATTRAY slide into a booth. They're somewhere between 30 and 50, hard-living, aggressive. Denise is wearing an ill-advised halter and short shorts. Mack spots Sookie, smiles back, waves. He looks like he might be crazy.

BACK ON SOOKIE: Her lifeless smile remains, but her shoulders drop visibly.

JUMP TO:

INT. MERLOTTE'S - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT.

ON SOOKIE, holding her pad, trying to be cheerful.

SOOKIE

What can I do for yall tonight?

ON MACK, smiling up at her, thinking

MACK (V.O.)

- wrap your sweet lips around my
slim reaper that's what you can do -

ON SOOKIE, revolted, but struggling to not show it.

MACK (cont'd)
(eying her suggestively)
How 'bout we start with a pitcher
of Bud.

SOOKIE
(avoiding his eyes)
Aaaaaall rightie. Anything else?

She glances at

ON DENISE, staring at her flatly.

DENISE
Onion rings. With mustard.

DENISE (V.O.)
*- God she's pathetic like a
dog that's been kicked too
many times -*

*

Sookie looks back at her, hurt, then:

SOOKIE (cont'd)
(too perky)
Coming right up.

She turns and practically runs from the table. Mack watches her ass as she goes.

DENISE
I think she's retarded.

INT. MERLOTTE'S - SERVICE ALLEY/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT.

MOVING THROUGH THE KITCHEN, PAST ARLENE, on her cell phone, sneaking a smoke:

ARLENE
Honey, if Rene tells you you're too
young to watch a scary movie on
HBO, then I'm siding with him...
(then, irritable)
I know he is not your father. But
your father does not want to live
with us any more, remember?

We FIND **LAFAYETTE REYNOLDS** at the grill. Lafayette's in his 20s, African-American, solidly built, not in the least bit feminine, even though he's wearing LIPSTICK and EYE SHADOW, subtly and rather artfully applied. Under his WHITE COOK'S APRON, he's in club wear. He almost dances as he cooks, moving loosely to music only he can hear.

THROUGH AN OPEN PASS-THROUGH: Sookie appears in the service alley, clips her ORDER to a line, unhappy.

SOOKIE

Onion rings. And if you drop a few on the floor, that's fine with me.

LAFAYETTE

(flirty)

Sookie, you looking all Jessica Simpson, with that tan, that pink lipstick. You got a date?

SOOKIE

(not in the mood)

No, I do not have a date. When I wear makeup, I get bigger tips. I get even bigger tips when I act like I don't have a brain in my head.

Lafayette LAUGHS. He's probably high.

LAFAYETTE

Yes, girl, that is it. These damn rednecks are suckers for packaging.

SOOKIE

Because otherwise they're all scared of me.

LAFAYETTE

They ain't scared of you, honey, they scared of what's between your legs.

SOOKIE

(dead serious)

Lafayette, that's nasty talk. I won't listen to that.

Arlene has finished her phone call.

ARLENE

Do you even know what's between a woman's legs, Lafayette?

Dawn appears in the service alley next to Sookie.

LAFAYETTE

I know that every man, whether he is gay or straight or George fucking Bush, he is terrified of the pussy.

DAWN

What the hell are we talking about?

SOOKIE

(shocked)
Lafayette!

*

ARLENE

Oh, please. Everybody is not gay. And not everybody wants to have sex with you.

LAFAYETTE

You would be surprised, Arlene. People you know. That's all I'm saying.

DAWN

Well, I don't want to have sex with you.

ARLENE

Me neither. And I don't think Sookie does either.

SOOKIE

No. I'm sorry, Lafayette, but I do not.

LAFAYETTE

(laughs)
Yall bitches do not know what you're missing.

DAWN

No, honey, you don't know what you're missing.

INT. MAUDETTE'S APARTMENT - AT THE SAME TIME - NIGHT.

CLOSE ON A TV SCREEN: MTV's "NEXT."

WIDE ANGLE. **MAUDETTE PICKENS**, a trashy-looking young woman of 26, lays naked on her vinyl sofa, as a naked athletic MAN kneels before her, his back to us, his face buried between her legs.

FROM THE SIDE, OVER HER THIGH: We can see the Man's eyes looking up at Maudette as he goes down on her; his eyebrows jump up and we HEAR his muffled LAUGH. He's in heaven.

This is Sookie's brother **JASON STACKHOUSE (28)**. His good looks and mischievous grin get him into a lot of trouble, and most of the time get him out of it as well.

ON MAUDETTE'S FACE, her head thrown back. She YELPS a couple of times.

Jason suddenly pulls back, stares at something on her inner thigh that fascinates him. He frowns, looks up at her.

JASON

What is this?

MAUDETTE

Oh! It's just - mosquito bite.

INSERT ON MAUDETTE'S INNER THIGH: Two clear PUNCTURE WOUNDS, on their way to being completely healed.

JASON

(creeped out)

You had sex with a vampire?

MAUDETTE

Okay, once. I went to that vampire bar in Shreveport, he picked me up.

(off his look of distaste)

Look, I was broke, and he paid me a lot of money.

Jason leans back, studies her. It's unclear what he's thinking.

JASON

You a hooker, Maudette?

MAUDETTE

No! I was just really broke at the time.

JASON

'Cause I don't pay for it. Never have, and never will.

MAUDETTE

Well, I don't charge for it neither! He offered me a thousand dollars to bite me, what was I going to do, say no to a thousand dollars?

A beat.

JASON
What was it like?

MAUDETTE
(shivers)
Scary. But hot.

JASON
I read in Hustler, everybody should
have sex with a vampire at least
once before they die.

MAUDETTE
Once was enough for me. He was too
rough. I mean, I like to be rough,
sometimes, but...

JASON
(intrigued)
You do?

MAUDETTE
Sure. Why not? It's not going to
kill me, and if it does, well then
I won't care, will I?

She says this with such an unpleasant mix of resignation and
cynicism that Jason stares at her, wondering how he ever
found her attractive... until:

MAUDETTE (cont'd)
I videotaped it. With the vampire.
Wanna watch?

OFF JASON, nervous about what he might see, but knowing that
he wants to see it. We HEAR "HANDCUFFED TO A FENCE IN
MISSISSIPPI" by Jim White.

INT. MERLOTTE'S - NIGHT.

Tara sits at the bar, depressed, nursing a MARGARITA. Sam is
making drinks for Sookie, who waits at the service area.

TARA
My life sucks.

SOOKIE
Tara, don't you be feeling sorry
for yourself. That's just lazy.

TARA
But why can't I keep a job?

SOOKIE

Maybe because you can't keep your
mouth shut.

TARA

Bitch, who asked you?

As Sam places the drinks on Sookie's tray:

SAM

How you doing, Sookie?

SOOKIE

Well, I've had better nights. But
I've had worse nights too.

SAM

Anything I can do to improve this
one for you?

Sookie looks at him, caught off guard. He smiles warmly and frankly at her, having finally worked up the nerve to maybe show her his true feelings. The moment is suddenly charged, and then...

ON SOOKIE, feeling something, something big, something unexpected. As we swiftly CIRCLE AROUND HER, MUSIC AND CONVERSATION FADE, replaced by A MIX OF PEOPLE'S THOUGHTS, which is more subdued, calmer, sounds further away.

Sookie instinctively turns around and steps into

CLOSE ON SOOKIE, looking at

HER POV: The FRONT DOOR IS JUST CLOSING. Either somebody just left or they just came in.

BACK ON SOOKIE, wondering why she just felt such a jolt of excitement. Behind her, Sam is watching something, alert. MUSIC AND CONVERSATION FADE BACK IN, and Dishwalla's "UNTIL I WAKE UP" starts just as SOOKIE'S EYES WANDER OVER TO...

HER POV: Seated in a booth semi-shrouded in darkness is a strangely handsome MAN. This is **BILL COMPTON**. He's 166, but looks 30. Dark hair, dark eyes. Old-fashioned sideburns. Rugged, but with an air of refinement. He's looking straight at us.

ON SOOKIE, staring at Bill, B.G. MOVING SLOWLY behind her.

CLOSER ON BILL, observing her. His expression doesn't change - no smile, no leer, nothing. There's something unnaturally calm about him. It's unsettling, but also sexy.

Sookie quickly turns around, excited.

SOOKIE

Oh my God. I think Merlotte's just got its first vampire.

SAM

(quietly, eyeing Bill)
I think you're right.

SOOKIE

Can you believe it? Right here in Bon Temps? I've been waiting for this to happen ever since they came out of the coffin two years ago!

She grabs her tray and heads off. We LINGER ON SAM, his face a mixture of concern and sadness.

ON SOOKIE, walking toward us, secretly thrilled.

Her POV: MOVING TOWARD BILL, who watches us, eerily calm.

SLOWER MOTION ON SOOKIE, realizing suddenly how handsome he is, and wondering at how comfortable she feels with him looking at her...

MOVING CLOSER TO BILL, his stillness seeming like a deeply centered confidence, nothing darker.

ON SOOKIE, ramping back into real time as a nervous LAUGH escapes her, she's so damn excited.

MOVING CLOSER STILL TO BILL. He almost smiles at Sookie's obvious enjoyment, then...

There's a momentary FLASH OF REGRET in his eyes, the whites of which are really white.

Sookie arrives at his table, trying not to be giddy.

SOOKIE (cont'd)

Hi, what can I get you tonight?

BILL

Do you have any of that synthetic bottled blood?

His voice is deep and rich, yet soft and still, with a slight Southern drawl. Sookie is surprised at the effect it has on her, but doesn't dislike it.

SOOKIE

No, I'm so sorry. Sam got some a year ago, but nobody ever ordered it, and it went bad. You're our first. Vampire.

BILL

(the slightest of smiles)
Am I that obvious?

SOOKIE

Oh, I knew the minute you came in.
(then, looking around)
I can't believe nobody else around here seems to.

BILL

(nods toward Sam)
He does.

ON SAM, looking back at Bill as if to say, "I'm watching you."

SOOKIE

Oh, don't worry about Sam. He's cool. I know for a fact he supports the Vampire Rights Amendment.

BILL

How progressive of him. Perhaps I will have the chance to count him as a friend.

A moment, as they just look at each other. A strange peace seems to exist between them, which Sookie may have never felt before, although she doesn't know why it's there.

SOOKIE

Oh! Can I get you... well, is there anything else you drink?

BILL

Actually, no. But you can bring me a glass of red wine so I'll have a reason to be here.

SOOKIE

(a goofy laugh)
Well, whatever the reason, I'm glad you are.

She smiles; he actually smiles back.

MACK (O.C.)

Don't mind Sookie none, Mister.
She's crazy as a bedbug.

Sookie turns beet red, as Mack Rattray leans over the back of the adjoining booth. Bill watches her closely, observes her reaction.

SOOKIE

(embarrassed)

I'll just get your wine for you -

She walks away, working to mask how upset she is. Bill turns to watch her go, wishing she hadn't. Behind him, Mack Rattray leans further over the back of the booth, extends his hand.

MACK

I'm Mack Rattray, this here's my
wife Denise.

DENISE

Hi!

Bill remains completely focused on Sookie for several beats before turning back to the Rattrays.

BILL

Good evening.

And for the first time, we see some real darkness in him.

INT. MAUDETTE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

FROM BEHIND THE COUCH: Jason and Maudette's bare backs are visible; she's draped on his shoulder. FLOATING UP we can see ON THE TELEVISION they're watching: *Maudette is naked, HER HANDS BOUND to a large HOOK in the ceiling above her, as a hairless, sinewy VAMPIRE with multiple TATTOOS fucks her from behind, running his hands up and down her body like a virtuoso harpist on speed. He moves with superhuman power and grace, reveling in the erotic drama being created.*

ANGLE ON JASON, seated in front of the TV, watching, mesmerized. Maudette licks his neck randomly. Jason glances up at:

His POV: The HOOK in Maudette's ceiling, a big industrial hook apparently installed for just such a purpose.

Jason's eyes wander back to the TV.

ON THE TV: *The Vampire's face comes into view, his open mouth revealing first FANGS, then an obscenely long TONGUE which he extends lewdly. He drags his fangs across the surface of Maudette's neck, which clearly frightens her. Which he clearly enjoys.*

CLOSER ON JASON, as Maudette goes for his crotch and drops OUT OF FRAME. He lets out a ragged breath as the unseen Maudette starts to blow him; he's turned on, but feels like he shouldn't be.

CLOSE ON THE TV: *The Vampire drags his fangs across Maudette's breast and LOOKS AT THE CAMERA darkly. Sticks his tongue out again and HIS EYES ROLL AROUND IN THEIR SOCKETS UNNATURALLY; he's a hideous satyr, consumed by exhibitionist lust. This image should be deeply disturbing, vicious and insane.*

CLOSE ON JASON, trying to reconcile his deep repulsion at the video with his arousal by Maudette's oral skills. It's a struggle.

INT. MERLOTTE'S - NIGHT.

Slim Harpo's "STRANGE LOVE" plays as Sam tends bar. Sookie leans against the bar, next to Tara who's working on her second Margarita. They're watching:

THE RATTRAYS HAVE JOINED BILL AT HIS TABLE. Denise keeps pushing her hair back, exhibiting her bare neck, acting overtly flirtatious. Bill is clearly responding, as he can't take his eyes off her, and when he speaks, we glimpse his extended FANGS.

SOOKIE

What a bitch!
(skeeved)
You really think she'll let him
bite her?

TARA

Oh yeah. Don't you know how many
people are having sex with vampires
these days? And sometimes, those
people disappear.

SOOKIE

(sure of it)
No. He's not like that.

TARA

Okay, you spoke to him for like a
minute.

(MORE)

TARA (cont'd)

You don't know how many people he's
sucked the blood out of over the
last however many centuries he's
been alive.

SOOKIE

But he's so not scary...

TARA

Oh sweet Jesus in heaven, Sookie,
do not go getting any ideas this is
Mr. Right! He is a vampire!

SOOKIE

But the synthetic blood has
everything they -

SAM

(quietly)

Are you willing to pass up all your
favorite foods and spend the rest
of your life drinking SlimFast?

A beat. Sookie knows he's right, but...

SOOKIE

I want to know what the hell those
Rattrays are up to.

She grabs her tray and heads off.

INT. MERLOTTE'S - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT.

The Rattrays seems to be doing their best to seduce Bill.

DENISE

- I mean, people have always
discriminated against me -

MACK

Oh boy, have they ever.

DENISE

- because I just never felt like
being what society wanted me to be,
you know?

MACK

Me neither. Me neither.

DENISE

So we know what it's like for you.

Sookie shows up at their table abruptly, intent on interrupting whatever is going on.

SOOKIE
Can I get yall anything else?

Bill, Mack and Denise look up at her, startled. Bill seems glad to see her; the Rattrays do not.

SOOKIE (cont'd)
Mack?

Mack give her a steely smile.

MACK
I'm fine.

MACK (V.O.)
Get the hell out of here.

SOOKIE (cont'd)
O-kay, then! How about you, Denise?

Denise just leans back and looks at the ceiling, not even paying attention to Sookie, thinking:

DENISE (V.O.)
*- big guy so he's probably got
eleven or twelve pints in him holy
shit that's almost two hundred
ounces -*

ON SOOKIE, realizing.

DENISE (V.O.) (cont'd)
*- bet we could get five hundred an
ounce in Dallas -*

SOOKIE
(abruptly)
I'm going to bring yall a free
round of beer, okay? Don't you go
anywhere.

Mack glares up at her; Denise ignores her, too wrapped up in her thoughts.

MACK (V.O.)
The hell is your problem?

DENISE (V.O.)
*- finally pay off those
goddamn credit card bills -*

Sookie gives Bill a pointed look before she heads off; he watches her go, bewildered.

ANGLE ON THE BAR: Tara has nodded off, her head on the bar. Sam is nowhere to be seen. Sookie rushes up, shakes her.

SOOKIE (cont'd)
(whispering)
Tara! We have to stop them!

TARA
(disoriented)
Stop who? Why?

Sam returns from the storeroom, carrying a case of liquor.

SOOKIE
The Rattrays! They're going to
drain him and sell his blood! We
have to stop them!

Sam eyes her, concerned. As does Tara.

TARA
No we do not. We do not have to get
anywhere near that vampire.

SOOKIE
(stares at her)
Wow, you are a real bigot, you know
that?

TARA
(offended)
I know that people who hang with
vamps always get sucked right out
of the real world somehow, even if
they remain alive.

SOOKIE
I'm very disappointed in you, Tara,
you and your small-mindedness.

Sookie turns, is horrified to see

BILL'S BOOTH IS EMPTY.

SOOKIE (cont'd)
Shit! I have to do something -

SAM
Sookie. A vampire can take care of
himself, I promise you.

Sookie looks at him, not so sure. Suddenly turns and rushes
out the front door.

Sam and Tara trade a look. Sam sighs, unties his apron.

SAM (cont'd)
You know how to tend bar?

TARA
No.

SAM
(hands her the apron)
Fake it.

EXT. MERLOTTE'S - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS.

People have started home, so the parking lot is not quite so crowded. Still, there's a fair number of cars.

Sookie scans the lot, sees nothing. Takes a breath, exhales slowly. Closes her eyes. Focuses. We HEAR - faintly -

*DENISE (V.O.)
- so thick like molasses DAMN
this'll bring a pretty penny -*

Sookie's eyes pop open, and she looks toward the far end of the parking lot, at the edge of the woods. Knows that's where she needs to go.

FOLLOWING SOOKIE as she quickly but stealthily moves toward the edge of the lot. She stops when she spots A LENGTH OF HEAVY CHAIN in the back of a pickup. Decides to take it, taking great pains to be as quiet as possible.

INT. MAUDETTE'S APARTMENT - AT THE SAME TIME - NIGHT.

Maudette stands, her hands once again bound to the hook in the ceiling above her, as Jason fucks her from behind. He's excited, definitely into this.

JASON
You like this? You like it rough?

MAUDETTE
Yeah -

JASON
You like to be punished?

MAUDETTE
Mmm -

JASON
Yeah. You're a sick little vampire fucker, Maudette Perkins. Aren't you ashamed?

MAUDETTE

Oh yeah -

JASON

You like that? You like to fuck a
dead man? You disgust me -

Maudette MOANS and writhes; disgusting other people is
apparently a big turn-on for her.

MAUDETTE

Yes. Yes.

JASON

Too bad I don't have any fangs,
huh? Rip your throat out.

OFF JASON, fucking her savagely, what few inhibitions he has
now gone completely. Discovering a dark streak inside
himself. And liking it. His HANDS START TO ENCIRCLE HER NECK.

ANGLE ON THE LENS OF A VIDEO CAMERA, in the shadows. A tiny
GREEN LIGHT indicates it's filming.

EXT. MERLOTTE'S - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT.

CLOSE ON BILL, lying back on the grass, his FANGS EXTENDED,
his mouth opening and closing silently, helplessly. PULLING
BACK, we see his hands, feet and neck are all bound with
lightweight but strong SILVER CHAIN, and he's lying at the
edge of the woods. Mack is on one side of him, yanking a
cruel-looking LEATHER TOURNIQUET tightly around his arm, just
above the elbow. Denise kneels at Bill's other side, fixing a
new VACUTAINER to the NEEDLE she's stuck into his forearm.
Three full VIALS OF BLOOD are already on the grass beside
her.

MACK

Hurry.

DENISE

I told you we should have taken him
home.

MACK

Too dangerous.

ON BILL, suddenly spotting

His POV: SOOKIE KNEELS BEHIND A CAR, silently twisting the
chain around her wrist. SHE MAKES EYE CONTACT WITH HIM, nods
slightly..

BACK ON BILL, watching her intently, his eyes steady.

ON SOOKIE: It's now or never. She stands, moves quickly and stealthily from behind the car, and before Denise can even finish looking up at her -

SHE BRINGS THE CHAIN DOWN HARD, ACROSS MACK'S HEAD AND BACK.

Mack CRIES OUT, drops the tourniquet, and stumbles forward, onto Bill. Quickly scrambles off him and turns to face Sookie, his eyes blazing.

MACK (cont'd)
You crazy bitch - !

AND HE PULLS A NASTY-LOOKING KNIFE FROM HIS BOOT.

Sookie glances down at it, then glances over at

Denise is too busy SWITCHING OUT VACUTAINERS to be of much help. But her eyes are shooting holes of hate toward Sookie.

SOOKIE STARTS TO SWING THE CHAIN. Mack lunges at her, and she jerks back; he SLASHES at her arm, missing by mere inches. On its recoil, THE CHAIN WRAPS AROUND MACK'S NECK TIGHTLY, pulls him to his knees, as if by magic. His knife drops.

ON SOOKIE, surprised. And grateful.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT.

CLOSE ON A WOMAN'S STARTLINGLY BLUE EYES, watching the whole scene from the nearby woods.

ANGLE OVER THE BLUE-EYED WOMAN'S SHOULDER, THROUGH THE TREES: Mack reaches for the heavy chain around his neck, making choking noises. Pulls the chain from Sookie's grip.

EXT. MERLOTTE'S - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT.

ANGLE ON DENISE, eyeing the knife as she deftly clips a new Vacutainer into place. SHE LUNGES FOR THE KNIFE, but...

SOOKIE BEATS HER TO IT. Grabs the knife and steps back, brandishing it as if she has any idea what to do with it.

CLOSE ON BILL, suddenly becoming aware of something, of a presence nearby. He twists his head toward the woods.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT.

THE **BLUE-EYED WOMAN** QUICKLY RETREATS INTO THE WOODS. We never got a clear look at her face, but we do see the SPARKLY 1960S COCKTAIL DRESS she's wearing as she nimbly sprints off through the darkness.

EXT. MERLOTTE'S - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT.

Mack struggles, unable to get the chain from around his neck. Denise stands and moves toward Sookie, livid.

DENISE

This is not your business, you stupid cunt.

SOOKIE

(holding knife steadily)

Now see, that just proves how low-rent you really are.

DENISE

Do you have any idea who you are messing with? You do not want to be on my bad side.

SOOKIE

I'm not sure you even have another side, you cheap Christmas trash.

Denise reaches for the VIALS OF VAMPIRE BLOOD. Sookie jabs toward her with the knife.

SOOKIE (cont'd)

Uh-uh. That doesn't belong to you.

DENISE

I will kill you for this.

SOOKIE

Get. Out. Now.

A standoff. Denise considers fighting her, but Sookie does seem confident and more than willing to inflict serious damage on Denise should she attempt it. Denise finally grabs Mack by the chain around his neck and drags him toward their beat-up RED SPORTS CAR.

DENISE

This ain't over.

Still holding the knife, Sookie drops to her knees and deftly unwraps the silver chain around Bill's neck, hands and ankles. She's unsettled to see

FINE LINES BURNT INTO HIS SKIN, RED and WET, where the silver was. SMOKE rising from these cuts. We HEAR the Rattrays' CAR START UP.

ON SOOKIE, even more unsettled, when

BILL'S CUTS START TO HEAL in front of her eyes.

SOOKIE

Wow.

Her face is suddenly illuminated by CAR HEADLIGHTS, and she looks up at

THE RATTRAY'S CAR IS BARRELING RIGHT TOWARD SOOKIE AND BILL.

Thinking quickly, she moves around to his head and reaches under his arms.

SOOKIE (cont'd)

(adrenaline surging)

Push with your feet -

SHE YANKS HIM BACK TOWARD THE WOODS WITH ALL HER MIGHT; he pushes with his now unbound feet and THEY FALL BACK BEHIND THE TREE LINE just as

THE RATTRAYS' CAR SPEEDS BY, DANGEROUSLY CLOSE. Swerves to avoid hitting a tree just in time, then is gone. A DOG BARKS.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT.

Sookie has to take a couple of moments to catch her breath. Bill moves, brings his now unbound wrists up to his chest, smoke trailing from them. Whatever he's been through, it's obviously still painful.

SOOKIE

Oh, you poor thing, I am so sorry I didn't get here faster...

He looks up at her, his expression unreadable.

SOOKIE (cont'd)

You'll feel better in a minute, right?

He doesn't answer, just keeps struggling to move. Sookie is suddenly embarrassed for him, seeing him so weak like this.

SOOKIE (cont'd)
Do you want me to leave?

BILL
(hoarse)
No.

She smiles, pleased he wants her to stay. Until -

BILL (cont'd)
They might come back, and I can't
fight yet.

Sookie frowns, not liking this. Just then...

A COLLIE trots up and looks at both of them, sniffs around,
highly alert.

SOOKIE
Well, hey there, dog.

The Collie wags its tail, licks her face. Approaches Bill,
BARKS once or twice, not unfriendly, then suddenly runs off.

BILL
He's checking on you.

SOOKIE
That's just some old dog that hangs
around the bar sometimes. He must
live nearby.

BILL
Oh, no doubt.

He struggles to sit up. Instinctively, Sookie reaches to help
him, but he pulls back from her. Hurt, she turns around to
give him some privacy.

SOOKIE
I guess you're not too happy about
being rescued by a woman.

BILL
(not easy for him)
Thank you.

ON SOOKIE, now irritated. She gets an idea. Takes a breath,
closes her eyes and listens. The NIGHT SOUNDS FADE, get a
little fuzzy, then are replaced by...

NOTHING.

Sookie opens her eyes and GASPS, realizing -

SOOKIE
I can't hear you!

BILL
(louder, over-articulated)
Thank. You.

Sookie turns to him, excited. Without thinking, takes his face in her hands, looks into his eyes, concentrating deeply. He is clearly surprised by this.

SOOKIE
No, I can hear you, but I can't...

She relaxes completely, closes her eyes. Again, nothing. She smiles, deeply happy, suddenly understanding why she feels the way she feels around him. Opens her eyes, still smiling.

SOOKIE (cont'd)
My goodness.

A beat, as they regard each other.

BILL
Aren't you afraid to be out here
alone with a hungry vampire?

SOOKIE
Nope.

But she does quickly put some distance between them.

BILL
Are you assuming that since you
came to my rescue, you're safe?
Vampires often turn on those who
trust them. We don't have human
values, you know.

SOOKIE
A lot of humans turn on those who
trust them too. I'm not a total
fool.

She's found the fine SILVER CHAIN that was wrapped around him earlier; she quickly entwines it around her neck and looks back at him, a little smug. He sits up quickly, just to let her know how much he has already recovered.

BILL

You have other, very juicy
arteries. There's one in the groin
that's a particular favorite of
mine.

SOOKIE

(sharply)

Uh-uh. I won't listen to nasty
talk. You might be a vampire but
when you talk to me you will talk
to me like the lady that I am.

Bill eyes her, surprised, apparently unaccustomed to being
told what to do. A trace of a smile floats on his face.

BILL

(re: vials)

Would you like to drink the blood
they collected?

SOOKIE

(ew)

No.

BILL

I understand it make humans feel
more healthy and improves their sex
life.

SOOKIE

I'm as healthy as a horse and I
have no sex life to speak of, so
you can just keep it.

BILL

(testing her)

You could always sell it.

SOOKIE

(insulted)

I wouldn't touch it.

He stands abruptly, crosses to her, looks at her closely,
which is a little unsettling for her.

BILL

(curious)

You're different. What are you?

SOOKIE

(nervously)

Well, I'm Sookie Stackhouse, and
I'm a waitress. What's your name?

BILL

(after a beat)

Bill.

Sookie can't help it; she LAUGHS out loud.

SOOKIE

Bill?

Bill clearly doesn't appreciate her LAUGHTER, but after the nerve-wracking events of the past few minutes, she needs a release.

SOOKIE (cont'd)

I thought it might be Antoine, or
Basil, or Langford, maybe, but
Bill?

(a hoot)

The vampire Bill! Oh my.

Her LAUGHTER gradually runs its course. An awkward beat.

SOOKIE (cont'd)

So silver, huh? I thought that only
affected werewolves.

(off his raised eyebrow)

I'm not implying werewolves exist,
I mean, that's just what you always
see in the movies.

BILL

(stiffly)

I would appreciate it if you didn't
share this information with anyone.
We don't like for our weaknesses to
be public knowledge.

SOOKIE

Oh. Okay.

(abruptly)

Well, see ya, Bill, I gotta get
back to work.

She stands, shoots him a smile, then turns to go.

EXT. MERLOTTE'S - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT.

Sookie emerges from the woods, a little worse for wear.
Looking up, she spots

Sam stands in the parking lot, worried; he's obviously been looking for her. When he sees her, his face is flooded with relief.

SAM

Sookie, thank God. You okay?

SOOKIE

I'm fine. And for your information,
not all vampires can take care of
themselves.

She passes him, heads back toward the bar. He lingers,
looking out at

His POV: THE WOODS, dark and still and EERILY QUIET.

INT. MERLOTTE'S - LATER - NIGHT.

The place has thinned out considerably. We HEAR "I SHOULD GET UP" by Teddy Thompson.

Tara is still behind the bar. Sam comes out of the kitchen,
joins her.

SAM

Thanks for helping me out tonight,
Tara.

TARA

Yeah, how much are you going to pay
me?

SAM

Um, twenty bucks?

TARA

Sam. How can you expect me to work
here for twenty bucks a night?

SAM

I don't expect you to work here.
And you covered tonight for only
what, an hour? At the most.

TARA

Yeah, but Sam. If I did work here -

SAM

It would only be a matter of time before you went off on somebody, and I don't want to drive my customers away.

TARA

I only go off on stupid people.

SAM

Most of my customers are stupid people.

TARA

Yeah, but I could help you keep an eye on Sookie, cause something tells me that girl is messing with trouble with a capital T.

Sam's eyes meet hers. She's serious.

TARA (cont'd)

And she means too much to both of us, to let anything happen to her.

They keep looking at each other, then Sam frowns. Grabs a worn MIXING GUIDE from under the bar, hands it to her.

SAM

Be here tomorrow at six. And learn this on your own, I don't have time to train you.

TARA

Sam. I was mixing whiskey sours for my mama when I was in first grade. It's just like riding a bicycle.

Jason enters, crosses to the bar, agitated.

JASON

Hey, Sam. My sister here?

Sam has already poured him a DRAFT BEER.

SAM

No, she just left.

JASON

Damn. Okay. It'll wait.

Tara smiles, softer, more vulnerable in his presence. She waits for him to acknowledge her; when he doesn't:

TARA

Hi, Jason.

JASON

(without looking at her)

Hey.

Now she's pissed.

TARA

Uh, my name is Tara? I went to high school with your sister? I used to spend the night at your house for like, years?

JASON

(mystified by her hostility)

I remember you.

TARA

Uh, you better remember me.

Jason stares at her, trying to remember if there's anything he should remember. DAWN APPEARS, counting her tips.

DAWN

(to Jason, flirty)

Hey stranger.

JASON

(pleased to see her)

Dawn!

He spontaneously hugs her; she hugs him back tightly. There's obviously history here, but no hard feelings. They break the hug, but their faces remain close. Tara watches them like she's watching TV.

JASON (cont'd)

How've you been? You look great.

DAWN

I've been fine. Partyin'.

JASON

So you're not mad at me?

DAWN

Why would I be mad at you?

JASON
For not calling, you know. The usual.

DAWN
(a laugh)
Jason. I had no expectations about you, none whatsoever. I'm not an idiot.

JASON
(flirting)
No, you are kind of an idiot.

DAWN
(flirting back)
And you are a pathetic bastard.

JASON
Hey, what time you get off work?

DAWN
Well, what do you know? I get off right now.

Jason grins, amused by her directness.

JASON
You want to go somewhere?

DAWN
Yeah. I want to go home. G'night!

And she walks away, leaving him frustrated and intrigued, which of course is exactly what she wanted. He watches her go out the front door, a rakish grin on his face.

TARA
Oh my God. You are a huge parody of yourself, and you don't even know it.

Jason stands, slaps a bill on the bar. He didn't even hear her.

JASON
Great seeing you, Tara. Good luck.

And he heads out himself.

TARA
Good luck? Good luck with what?

INT. SOOKIE'S HONDA CIVIC - NIGHT.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD: We're driving down a TWO LANE ROAD through the woods, illuminated only by HEADLIGHTS, just like at the beginning. We HEAR "SWEET AFTON" by Nickel Creek.

ON SOOKIE, driving, turning the events of the night over in her mind. Remembering the peace she felt in Bill's presence.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD: We turn off the main road, down a SINGLE LANE GRAVEL ROAD. The middle of nowhere.

EXT. OLD STACKHOUSE PLACE - NIGHT.

In the middle of a clearing, surrounded by wood on all sides, stands an OLD HOUSE, built in the mid-nineteenth century and added to haphazardly over the years. WHITE CLAPBOARD SIDING, TIN ROOF, SCREENED PORCH. It manages to be ramshackle, quaint and warm all at once. Aside from the YELLOW BUG LIGHT at the door, there's a SINGLE LIGHT ON UPSTAIRS. Then a MOTION DETECTOR FLOODLIGHT COMES ON AS Sookie's YELLOW HONDA CIVIC pulls up and parks next to the 1976 BEIGE FORD GRENADA out front. Sookie gets out and heads toward the front door.

INT. OLD STACKHOUSE PLACE - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT.

MOVING UP AND ACROSS FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS lining the stairwell - Sookie and Jason's SCHOOL PICTURES throughout the years; Jason as a boy in a LITTLE LEAGUE UNIFORM; Sookie as a girl in a TUTU; Sookie and Jason as kids in HALLOWEEN COSTUMES; high school GRADUATION PHOTOS of both of them standing with an OLDER WOMAN IN HER LATE SIXTIES... only one with their PARENTS, taken when Sookie was about six and Jason nine.

SOOKIE ENTERS FRAME, climbing the stairs. We FOLLOW HER up to the second floor hallway. She RAPS on a door, then opens it and we follow her into

INT. OLD STACKHOUSE PLACE - ADELE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT.

A small room, but warm and cheerful. **ADELE HALE STACKHOUSE (75)** sits up in a queen-sized antique SPINDLE BED, reading a ROMANCE NOVEL. She wears a long sleeve cotton nightgown and her hair is completely white. A plush, satisfied-looking CAT is curled up on the bed. Adele's crinkly eyes light up when she sees Sookie enter.

SOOKIE
Hey, Gran.

ADELE
(closes her book)
Hi, honey.

Sookie sits on the side of the bed, pets the Cat.

SOOKIE
Hey, Tina.
(then, to Adele)
Guess what happened tonight?

ADELE
(hopeful)
You got a date?

SOOKIE
Uh, no. A vampire came into the
bar.

ADELE
(interested)
Ooooh! Did he have fangs?

Sookie smiles grimly.

SOOKIE
He did. But most of the time, they
stayed retracted.

Adele sits up, intrigued.

ADELE
Did he bite anybody in the bar?

SOOKIE
Oh, no, Gran! He just sat and had a
glass of red wine. Well, he ordered
it, but he didn't drink it. I think
he just wanted some company.

ADELE
Wonder where he stays.

SOOKIE
He wouldn't be likely to tell
anyone that.

ADELE
No, I guess not.
(then)
Did you like him?

SOOKIE

(a beat)

I don't know. He was real interesting.

But she did like him, and Adele sees that, smiles.

SOOKIE (cont'd)

Well, I'll let you get to bed -

ADELE

Okay, sweetie. I was just staying up 'til you got in.

Sookie kisses her on the cheek, then stands.

SOOKIE

Come on Tina -

The Cat jumps off the bed and follows Sookie out. Adele TURNS OFF THE BEDSIDE LAMP.

INT. OLD STACKHOUSE PLACE - SOOKIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Another small room, furnished with Sookie's bedroom furniture from childhood: white-painted CHEST OF DRAWERS, VANITY, and a DOUBLE BED, in which Sookie lies sleeping, her face lit by the moonlight streaming through the OPEN WINDOW. Tina sleeps curled up against her. An unexpected BREEZE RUSTLES the curtains, waking Sookie up.

After a beat, Sookie gets up crosses to the window, looks out.

Her POV: Bill Compton stands in the clearing below, looking up at her.

Sookie steps back from the window, taken aback. Stands absolutely still for a moment, then grabs her robe and heads out of the room.

EXT. OLD STACKHOUSE PLACE - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT.

Sookie comes out the front door and down the steps, but Bill is nowhere to be seen. As she turns, looking for him, we CIRCLE HER and then

HE'S RIGHT NEXT TO HER, as if out of nowhere, startling her.

SOOKIE

Oh! Hello...

Bill smiles. Starts to unbutton his shirt. Sookie, much to her surprise, starts to undo her robe.

SOOKIE (cont'd)
(a little embarrassed)
Huh. I never thought I would be
having sex with you - at least not
so fast...

Bill's smile widens, and HIS FANGS EXTEND.

BILL
Who said anything about sex?

Sookie quickly pulls her robe closed tight.

SOOKIE
Now, see, that really ticks me off.

Sookie gives him a hard look - and then starts SCREAMING her head off -

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. OLD STACKHOUSE PLACE - SOOKIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

CLOSE ON SOOKIE'S EYES as they POP OPEN.

She sits up in bed, unsettled by her dream. She glances at the window, gets up and closes it. Climbs back into bed and as her head drops toward the pillow...

EXT. OLD STACKHOUSE PLACE - DAY.

SAME ANGLE: Sookie's head drops down on the back of a folding ALUMINUM CHAISE. She's in a white strapless two-piece bathing suit, coated in suntan lotion. She settles in, lets out a long contented sigh. "DYNAMITE" by Brenda Lee plays on the BOOM BOX next to her chaise. We HEAR a car approaching on the gravel drive. Sookie looks up, squints at

A BLACK DODGE RAM PICKUP TRUCK with a CUSTOM PAINT JOB and oversized TIRES rumbles into view, stops. The door opens and Jason hops out, wearing a KHAKI SHIRT and PANTS, his county road workers uniform. WORK BOOTS, a sheathed KNIFE strapped to his belt, along with a CELL PHONE. He strides toward Sookie purposefully. Sookie sits up, puts on a pair of SUNGLASSES.

JASON
How come you didn't tell me you
beat up the Rattrays last night?

SOOKIE

I haven't even seen you since then!

JASON

Where's Gran?

SOOKIE

Hanging the laundry out back. And keep your voice down, I don't want her to know about any of this.

JASON

Hoyt Fortenberry couldn't wait til I got to work this morning to tell me all about it.

SOOKIE

Hoyt Fortenberry? How the heck does he know?

JASON

He went over to the Ratts last night to buy some weed, and Denise drove up like she wanted to kill somebody, she was so mad. It took both Hoyt and Denise to get Mack into the trailer, and then they had to take him to the hospital in Monroe!

SOOKIE

Uh-huh. Did Hoyt tell you Mack came after me with a knife?

Jason's eyes blaze, then he lets out a low WHISTLE.

JASON

Son of a bitch. You want me to kick his ass for you?

SOOKIE

I already took care of that, thank you.

JASON

What were you doing messing with him anyway?

SOOKIE

Well, did you know that in addition to dealing drugs, the Ratts also happen to be vampire drainers?

(off his surprised look)

(MORE)

SOOKIE (cont'd)

Yep. One of my customers last night was a vampire, and they were draining him out in the parking lot. I couldn't have that.

Jason eyes her darkly.

JASON

Sookie. You don't want to get mixed up with vampires. Trust me.

SOOKIE

Oh, shut up. Even if you don't want a vampire for your best friend, you can't let trash like the Ratts drain them. It's not like siphoning gas out of a car. They would have left him in the woods to die.

JASON

So what? He's already dead.

SOOKIE

That's not his fault!

Jason eyes her, suddenly worried.

JASON

What's he look like?

SOOKIE

Handsome. Sort of old fashioned? Like from a movie on T-C-M.

JASON

Bald-headed?

SOOKIE

No, he has really nice hair.

JASON

Tattoos?

SOOKIE

(ew)
None that I could see.

ADELE (O.C.)

Jason?

Adele comes around the side of the house with an empty laundry basket, happy to see her grandson. Wishing she saw him more often.

ADELE (cont'd)

Sakes alive, boy, where have you
been keeping yourself?

Jason allows her to hug him tightly, kisses the top of her
head.

JASON

Hey, Gran. How's my girl?

ADELE

You're all sweaty. Want some iced
tea?

JASON

I would love some.

Sookie rolls her eyes as Adele and Jason walk toward the
house.

INT. OLD STACKHOUSE PLACE - KITCHEN - LATER - DAY.

Sookie and Jason are seated at the table, eating CHICKEN-
FRIED STEAK, MASHED POTATOES and BEANS. Drinking ICED TEA in
old-fashioned tall glasses. We can HEAR ADELE CHATTING ON THE
PHONE in another room.

JASON

(re: Sookie's steak)
You want the rest of that?

SOOKIE

(stares at him)
Yes.

JASON

Okay, just asking. I mean, if you
are going to wear that suit, you
might want to start watching what
you eat.

Sookie has to LAUGH at his transparent attempts at
manipulation. Adele enters, clicking off the phone.

ADELE

(re: phone call)
That was Everlee Mason. Guess who
they found strangled to death in
her apartment last night? Maudette
Perkins.

ON JASON, suddenly subdued. Silent, unreadable.

SOOKIE

Oh my lord!

ADELE

She didn't show up for work and wasn't answering her phone, so her boss called Bud Dearborne, and he rode over and got the manager to let him in, and they found her.

SOOKIE

I graduated from high school with Maudette!

ADELE

Can you believe it? A murder in Bon Temps?!

JASON

Well, why are you surprised? Now that we got ourselves a vampire.

Sookie turns to him, irritated.

SOOKIE

Just because he's a vampire doesn't mean he's a -

JASON

(a tad too sharply)

Oh, come on. Fangbangers go missing all the time in Shreveport, and New Orleans.

JASON (CONT'D)

They never find them, but everybody knows -

ADELE

What's a fangbanger?

JASON (CONT'D)

- the vampires are killing them and then disposing of the bodies.

SOOKIE

A vampire groupie. Women and men who like to get bitten.

ADELE

My stars.

SOOKIE

(to Jason)

Maudette was a fangbanger? How do you know that?

A beat.

JASON

(angry)

I don't know, Sookie! The way that
you just - know things, sometimes.

Sookie glares at him. She hates him for acknowledging her telepathic powers, and she also knows that he doesn't share them. Adele gives Jason a sharp look: he looks away, shamed. Suddenly checks his watch. Stands and washes his hands in the kitchen sink.

JASON (cont'd)

There's also hookers that specialize in vampires, they drink Tru-Blood to keep their supply up, and they keep a bodyguard there in case the vamp gets too frisky.

(off their looks)

I read that in a magazine.

SOOKIE

(baffled)

Maudette was a prostitute?

JASON

(you idiot)

No, she just liked to have a good time! She wasn't a pro!

ADELE

Goodness. I wonder how much one would charge for something like that?

JASON

A thousand bucks.

SOOKIE

See, now that just makes me sick.

ADELE

I know. What kind of cheap soul could ever -

SOOKIE

No, it makes me sick they're getting a thousand bucks to just lay there and do nothing, while I bust my ass for ten bucks an hour plus tips.

JASON

(drying his hands)

I don't think they just lay there.
I think they're expected to, you
know. Participate.

SOOKIE

Ew.

Jason glances at her, and she sees his eyes filled with...
guilt? Fear? He quickly looks away. Sookie stands, crosses to
him, grabs his hand, tries to look into his eyes. He yanks
his hand away, furious.

JASON

(yells)

Don't you try that with me,
goddamnit! I'm your brother.

ON SOOKIE, shaken by his anger.

JASON (cont'd)

I gotta get back to work.

And he's out the back door as fast as he can go. An awkward
beat. Adele starts to clear the table, pretending like
nothing just happened; Sookie joins her.

SOOKIE

Poor Maudette.

ADELE

I know. Terrible, just terrible.

And they start washing the dishes in silence.

OFF SOOKIE, wondering if it's possible a vampire could have
had something to do with Maudette's death, and if so, which
vampire. Or if it was even a vampire at all.

EXT. ROAD WORK SITE - DAY.

ORANGE CONES, DETOUR SIGNS. ROAD WORKERS in DAYGLO ORANGE
VESTS go about the work of repaving yet another TWO-LANE
COUNTY ROAD. A variety of headwear: PLASTIC HELMETS, wide-
brimmed STRAW HATS, a couple of DOO-RAGS. A STEAM ROLLER
FLATTENS ASPHALT, DRIVES OUT OF FRAME, REVEALING JASON, on
his CELL PHONE. He's stripped down to his T-shirt in this
heat, over which he wears a DAYGLO YELLOW VEST with the
RENARD PARRISH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT LOGO on it. He's
nervous, jittery.

JASON

Come on, Dawn. I'm having a really bad day.

INT. DAWN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS - DAY.

Dawn, her hair wet and wearing just a towel wrapped around her, sits on the edge of her bathtub, shaving her tan, shapely legs.

DAWN

Not my responsibility!

Intercut as necessary with Jason at the Road Work Site:

JASON

Didn't we have a good time together? Don't you want to have that again?

DAWN

Jason, honey. I hate to break this to you, but you are not the only source of a good time for me.

JASON

No, but I'm the best one.

DAWN

(laughs)
Oh my God! You are so egotistical!

JASON

(laughing)
But I'm hot.

His LAUGH fades when he spots:

A RENARD PARRISH SHERIFF'S PATROL CAR pulls onto the shoulder on the other side of the road, STOPS; A CONSERVATIVE BLUE SEDAN PULLS IN BEHIND IT. DOORS OPEN and TWO MEN get out, one from each car: **SHERIFF BUD DEARBORNE** and Bon Temps Police **DETECTIVE ANDY BELLEFLEUR**. Bud Dearborne is in his fifties, fit and tough, with a mashed-in bulldog face and a cowboy hat. Andy's in his late thirties, built like a boxer, a perpetual scowl on his rugged face. He wears a short sleeve shirt and a tie.

DAWN

So am I.

JASON
(eyeing Bud and Andy)
Oh, I know. That's why I'm on the
phone with you.

DAWN
("exasperated")
Okay, I give up. Meet me after work
tonight.

JASON
I gotta go, I'll call you back.

He clicks off the phone.

EXT. ROAD WORK SITE - CONTINUOUS - DAY.

Jason squints at Andy and Bud as they approach him.

JASON
(nods)
Sheriff Dearborne. Andy.

BUD
Afternoon, Jason.

ANDY
Jason.

No hands are shaken. A beat.

ANGLE ON LAFAYETTE REYNOLDS, shoveling gravel. He wears no
makeup today and he's pulled the top part of his jumpsuit
down to the waist. With his DOO-RAG and powerful torso, he
looks like a gangsta rapper. He's also watching Jason with
the Sheriff and Andy, wondering what's up.

BACK ON JASON, ANDY and BUD.

JASON (cont'd)
Something I can help you with?

BUD
You know Maudette Perkins?

JASON
Sure, I know her. I buy gas at the
Grabbit Quik, she works there
during the day.

ANDY
How would you characterize your
relationship with Maudette?

JASON

Relationship. I didn't have a relationship with her. I barely knew her.

BUD

So you know she was murdered last night.

JASON

Uh, no. Wow. I mean, yeah, I did know that, my grandmother told me at lunch. Somebody called her.

Bud and Andy eye him impassively.

ANGLE ON TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE WORK CREW, watching Jason being questioned. These are his buddies **RENE LENIER** and **HOYT FORTENBERRY**, both in their late twenties. Rene is smaller than Jason, dark and wiry; Hoyt is one of the most indistinct people you ever saw.

RENE

(Cajun accent)

What's up with Jason and the law?

HOYT

Maybe they think he knows something about Maudette.

Rene looks at Hoyt, then looks back at Jason, concerned.

BACK ON JASON, ANDY AND BUD.

ANDY

Did you ever visit Maudette at her apartment?

JASON

Me? No.

BUD

Ever?

JASON

No, I can do a lot better than Maudette, believe me.

He LAUGHS; Bud and Andy do not.

ANDY

You weren't there last night?

JASON

Uh... okay, yeah, I was there last night -

ANDY

Then why didn't you say so?

JASON

Well... because I know she got killed. And I thought it would look bad, me having been at her apartment.

BUD

Well, it does look bad, Jason.

ANDY

It looks real bad.

JASON

(spills)

Okay, look, I hooked up with Maudette last night, and we had sex. That's all.

ANDY

How would you characterize the sex?

JASON

How would I characterize it? It was okay.

ANDY

Nothing out of the ordinary?

JASON

Well...

A beat. Jason avoids looking at them.

ANDY

Because we've already seen the videotape.

Now Jason closes his eyes.

ANDY (cont'd)

You didn't know she was taping it?

JASON

(quietly)

No, but I should have.

He opens his eyes again, his world crashing around him.

BUD

You need to come with us, Jason.

JASON

Yeah, yeah, just - let me tell Rene
to take over -

Bud nods. Jason crosses to Rene and Hoyt, as if in a dream. Lafayette is standing close enough to hear the following:

JASON (cont'd)

Hey, Rene, I gotta go into town for
a while, you'll take over?

RENE

Yeah, yeah. Everything all right?

JASON

Yeah! No, it's nothing to worry
about. Everything's fine.

(then)

Don't tell my sister, okay?

HOYT

(concerned)

What'd you do, Jason?

Jason looks at him, his face suddenly filled with sadness, then turns and walks away. Bud opens the back door of the patrol car and Jason gets inside.

OFF RENE, HOYT, LAFAYETTE and other members of the ROAD CREW, watching as the patrol car pulls away.

INT. OLD STACKHOUSE PLACE - SOOKIE'S BEDROOM - DUSK.

Sookie sits at her vanity, putting on her makeup, in her waitress uniform. She seems miles away. We suddenly FLASH ON

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CORRIDOR - 1999 (FLASHBACK) - DAY.

17-YEAR-OLD SOOKIE walks down the hall by herself, her shoulders hunched over, trying to be invisible. Three popular CHEERLEADERS stand at their lockers. As Sookie passes them, she glances over at

Her POV, SLOWING DOWN: The girls glance at us as we pass by them. Two look away, one's eyes remain on us and WE HEAR

CHEERLEADER (V.O.)

*- don't stare at me you creepy
little bitch of a freak can you
hear me you suck Sookie Stackhouse
you suck like a goddamn Hoover can
you hear me -*

ON SOOKIE, IN SLO MO, looking back at her, unable to mask the hurt on her face...

BACK ON THE CHEERLEADER, IN SLO MO, LAUGHING. It's 18-YEAR-OLD MAUDETTE PERKINS.

ON SOOKIE, RAMPING INTO REAL TIME, as she walks away from us.

INT. OLD STACKHOUSE PLACE - SOOKIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - DUSK.

Sookie shakes it off, focuses on her makeup. Adele appears at the door. They smile at each other, Adele comes in and sits on the bed. Their eyes meet in the mirror, another smile. Sookie waits for Adele to speak. Finally:

SOOKIE

What's up, Gran?

ADELE

Oh, I was just wondering how old you think the vampire is? The one you met last night.

SOOKIE

I have no idea. Why?

ADELE

Well, do you think he might remember the War?

SOOKIE

The Civil War? Could be.

ADELE

Oh, if he does, I would love to have him come speak to the Descendants of the Glorious Dead. You think he might want to?

SOOKIE

I think he might have a hard time showing up at the Public Library at noon on Thursday.

ADELE

We could have a special meeting. At night. Or he could just talk to me, and I could tape his recollections. I'm sure the other members would find it so interesting.

SOOKIE

(smiles)

I'll ask him the next time he comes in to Merlotte's. If he comes in.

OFF SOOKIE, in the mirror, applying mascara, not sure whether she wants him to come or not.

EXT. MERLOTTE'S - NIGHT.

The parking lot is starting to fill up. We HEAR "BAR EXAM" by The Derailers.

INT. MERLOTTE'S - BAR - CONTINUOUS

TARA is behind the bar, in jeans and a tank top, as usual. She consults her MIXING GUIDE as she makes drinks. Lafayette emerges from the kitchen. He's wearing makeup again, color coordinated with the form-fitting GREEN LACE SHIRT he wears under his apron. Tasteful GOLD HOOPS in his ears. He looks hot.

LAFAYETTE

(spots Tara)

What are you doing here?

TARA

I work here.

LAFAYETTE

Oh no you do not.

TARA

Oh yes I do too, you ugly bitch. And you need to make peace with that.

LAFAYETTE

Then Sam has lost his mind, because you should not be allowed to work in any situation where you have to interact with actual people.

TARA

(rolls her eyes)

That is so not true.

A white male CUSTOMER sits, SNAPS HIS FINGERS at her.

TARA (cont'd)

(sharp)

Do not snap at me. I have a name,
and that name is Tara, and isn't
that funny, a black girl being
named after a plantation?

A beat. The Customer LAUGHS nervously.

TARA (cont'd)

No it's not funny at all. In fact,
it really pisses me off that my
mama was either stupid or just
plain mean. Which is why you better
be nice to me if you want a drink
tonight.

The Customer stares at her, slack-jawed, then...

CUSTOMER

(mumbles)

Sorry, ma'am.

TARA

(satisfied)

Okay.

Lafayette suppresses an urge to laugh. Barely. Tara glares at him.

TARA (cont'd)

You look like you run a massage
parlor in Bangkok and your name is
Jade Tigress.

LAFAYETTE

Yeah, well, you just look like
Buckwheat.

(then)

Hey, you know if Sookie found out
anything about her brother getting
arrested this afternoon?

TARA

(shocked)

Jason got arrested? For what?

LAFAYETTE

I'm not sure. But Maudette Pickens
did just get murdered...

TARA

(a laugh)

Are you serious? Jason would never kill anybody. And he can do a hell of a lot better than Maudette Perkins.

A beat.

LAFAYETTE

(grins)

You still have a thing for him.

TARA

(she does)

I do not! That boy is too damn stuck up for me.

LAFAYETTE

That boy is sex on a stick, no matter how stuck up he is.

TARA

Don't you have something to fry?

Lafayette LAUGHS, heads back into the kitchen, as "BAR EXAM" ends and segues into "WHOEVER SAID IT WAS EASY" by Wayne Toups.

INT. MERLOTTE'S - SERVICE ALLEY - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT.

ANGLE ON SOOKIE, a shocked expression on her face.

SOOKIE

Arrested?! For what?

Sookie stands next to Dawn in the service alley; they're doing waitress things.

DAWN

(not wanting to bring up
Maudette's murder)

I don't know -

Lafayette passes through on his way back to the kitchen.

LAFAYETTE

Sorry about your brother, Sook.

SOOKIE

(angry)

How come everybody knew about this before I did?

LAFAYETTE

Well, I was there, I saw 'em cart
him off.

DAWN

And I was complaining to Arlene
about Jason hanging up on me when
we were making a date and never
calling me back, and she told me
what happened.

SOOKIE

Arlene? How does she know?

DAWN

I guess she heard about it from
Rene.

Sookie grabs her tray and starts out.

DAWN (cont'd)

Besides, we figured you just...

She trails off. Sookie stops, turns to her.

SOOKIE

(an edge)

I just what?

An awkward beat.

DAWN

(tactfully)

Well, I mean... you didn't just
know already?

SOOKIE

(furious)

I am not psychic!

She storms out of the service alley. Dawn raises an eyebrow
at Lafayette.

INT. MERLOTTE'S - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT.

Arlene is curled up with Rene Lenier on one side of a booth;
Hoyt Fortenberry sits across from them. They're all a little
drunk. As Arlene empties a pitcher of beer in Rene's mug:

ARLENE

I cannot believe I'm in here on my night off, just pouring my hard-earned money back into Sam Merlotte's pocket.

Sookie approaches the table, upset.

SOOKIE

What happened to my brother, Rene?

RENE

Aw hell, I promised him I wouldn't tell you -

SOOKIE

What happened?

HOYT

(helpful)

Oh, uh, well, Bud Dearborn and Andy Bellefleur came out and asked him some questions and then they put him in the back of the squad car.

SOOKIE

(frowns)

So you don't even know for a fact that they arrested him?

RENE

Well, they didn't cuff him or anything -

ARLENE

(drunk)

Sookie, I am so sorry.

SOOKIE

For what? Y'all are already acting like Jason's guilty of killing Maudette, and we don't even know what they were talking to him about!

She's loud enough that everyone in the vicinity turns and looks at her:

SOOKIE (cont'd)

Bud Dearborne just made a mistake, that's all!

HOYT

(helpful)

Oh yeah. Has to be. Jason's a real stand-up guy.

SOOKIE

(stares at him)

No, he's not, Hoyt. He's selfish, egotistical and he's a complete horndog. But he's not a killer.

She turns and storms back toward the bar. Joseph Arthur's "STUMBLE AND PAIN" starts under

REVERSE DOLLY ON SOOKIE as she walks toward us then - SUDDENLY STOPS. OVER HER SHOULDER, we can see -

BILL COMPTON HAS JUST ENTERED. Sookie feels his presence -

She turns slowly, their eyes meet. He moves toward an empty booth. She moves toward him.

Practically everyone in the restaurant is watching, including Sam and Tara from behind the bar.

ON SOOKIE, as she slides into the booth across from Bill. She's HEARING A CACOPHONY OF THOUGHTS right now, unable to shut them out due to her heightened emotional state.

BAR PATRONS (O.C.)

*- bet that's the vampire she saved -
/ - what kind of good Christian
girl would - / - that whole
Stackhouse family is nothing but
trash always had been - / - maybe
that vampire is the one that killed
Maudette -*

Sookie closes her eyes, trying to shut out the din. Bill reaches across the table, PUTS HIS HAND ON HERS and

THE SOUND OF PEOPLE THINKING CUTS OFF ABRUPTLY, COMPLETELY.

Sookie relaxes, opens her eyes, smiles. Bill is wearing the slightest of smiles himself.

BILL

Good evening, Miss Stackhouse.

People try not to watch, but they don't try very hard.

SOOKIE

Your hand is cool.

BILL

Yes. I'm afraid I'm not as warm as the men you must be accustomed to.

SOOKIE

What men?

A little embarrassed, she withdraws her hand.

SOOKIE (cont'd)

What can I get for you tonight?

Bill says nothing, just leans forward and eyes her intently. She stares back at him, unafraid.

BILL

What are you?

SOOKIE

I told you. I'm a waitress.

BILL

No. You're something more than that. You're something more than human.

SOOKIE

(laughs)

I beg your pardon!

The entire place is watching them - Sam, Tara, Arlene, Rene, Hoyt, Lafayette, Dawn - but Sookie and Bill both seem completely unaware of the attention.

BILL

Sookie.

He says her name as if he's turning it over in his mouth, tasting it.

BILL (cont'd)

It's an unusual name, Sookie. Is it short for something else?

SOOKIE

Nope. Just plain Sookie.

BILL

Well, just plain Sookie... may I call on you sometime?

SOOKIE

Call on me?

BILL

May I come to visit you at your home?

SOOKIE

Oh. Well...

She looks down at the table. A beat. It suddenly seems as if a lot hangs on her answer. Sookie feels everyone's eyes on her, then she looks up at Bill, at his dark eyes, dark, placid pools of silence, then...

SOOKIE (cont'd)

Well, sure. My grandmother would love to meet you.

(remembering)

Oh! That reminds me - listen, can I talk to you after work? I have a favor to ask you.

BILL

Of course. After all, I am in your debt.

He doesn't sound particularly happy about this.

SOOKIE

Not a favor for me! For my grandmother. If you'll be up - well, I guess you will be - would you mind meeting me at the employee door at the back of the bar when I get off at, probably around one thirty?

BILL

I'd be delighted.

A beat. Sookie smiles like a teenager: innocent, oblivious, not a care in the world.

ON SAM, at the bar, leaning forward as if trying to hear their conversation, even though he's all the way on the other side of the room.

BILL (cont'd)

You realize that every person in this establishment is staring at us right now.

SOOKIE

Oh, they're just staring at me
because my brother is in some sort
of trouble with the police.

(then, worried)

Bill, did you know Maudette
Perkins?

BILL

I did not.

(then)

And they're staring because I'm a
vampire and you are... mortal.

SOOKIE

Oh, who cares what they think?

BILL

I want to make my home here, so I
do. I will see you at one thirty.

He slides out of the booth with grace, nods slightly to her,
then turns and walks out of the bar. As soon as he's gone -

ON SOOKIE, as the DIN OF EVERYONE ELSE'S THOUGHTS floods into
her consciousness, LOUDER THAN EVER:

BAR PATRONS (O.C.)

*- even crazier than I thought she
was - / - wonder if it's true what
they say about sex with vampires -
/ - won't be surprised if she turns
up dead just like poor Maudette -*

Her EYES CLOSE, then POP OPEN when -

SAM GRABS HER BY THE ARM. Pulls her out of the booth and
toward the kitchen The entire restaurant watches.

INT. MERLOTTE'S - SAM'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT.

Sam pulls Sookie inside, shuts the door and turns to her,
angry.

SAM

Sookie, you are being a very stupid
girl!

SOOKIE

(indignant)

Who asked you? I can take care of
myself.

SAM

Really? I don't think so. Mack
could have seriously cut you up
last night -

SAM (cont'd)

- and now you're setting up a
date with a vampire? What, do
you have a death wish?

SOOKIE

How do you know what Mack
would have done? And how do
you know what I -

SOOKIE

(angry)

No, I do not have a death wish! I
just happen to think judging an
entire group of people by the
behavior of a few individuals
within that group is morally wrong.

SAM

(with finality)

Well, I won't let you put yourself
and the bar in danger. I won't do
it.

A beat.

SOOKIE

(her lip quivering)

Am I fired?

SAM

(what?)

No! But next time you think someone
is being harmed in our parking lot,
pick up a phone and call the
police, do not go out there alone
like a goddamn vigilante!

Sookie bursts into tears. Sam's face crumples; he can't stand
having hurt her. He pulls her to him, hugs her.

SAM (cont'd)

Aw, *cher*. Don't you know I couldn't
stand to lose you -

ON SOOKIE, HEARING HIS THOUGHTS:

SAM (V.O.) (cont'd)

- so warm - want you - smell so
good - love -

But SAM'S THOUGHTS SOUND DIFFERENT FROM EVERYONE ELSE'S:

There's a deep bass RUMBLE under everything, almost like AN ANIMAL GROWLING. And the words come only in snippets, shreds.

Sookie pulls back from him, stares him in the eyes, her hands on his arms.

SAM (V.O.) (cont'd)
- love you - want -

Before Sookie can respond, Tara comes through the door.

TARA
Sookie! Are you out of your everloving mind? That vampire wants you for dinner.

SOOKIE
I -

TARA
I won't let you just walk into his trap, no ma'am. Over my dead body. You mean too much to me.

Sookie stares at her, at a loss, then HEARS:

TARA (V.O.) (cont'd)
- Jason would never actually hurt someone not Jason not beautiful Jason adorable -

SOOKIE
(rolls her eyes)
Oh for heavens' sake, Tara. Jason is never going to care about you the way you care about him!

Tara stares at her, astonished - then erupts:

TARA
(furious)
You - you made a promise you would - you stay out of my head!

ON SOOKIE, as both Sam's and Tara's thoughts invade her brain.

<i>SAM (V.O.)</i>	<i>TARA (V.O.)</i>
<i>- poor Sookie - hard for her - burden - I could - easier - wish - let me -</i>	<i>- you don't know maybe Jason will get shook up by this whole Maudette business and want a <u>real</u> woman -</i>

SOOKIE

(loses it, screams)

Oh shut up, both of you! And stop
bossing me around. I am a grown
woman, and I am the one who decides
what I do, not either one of you.

She stomps out, SLAMMING the door behind her. Sam and Tara
look at each other; finally Sam shrugs.

EXT. MERLOTTE'S - LATER - NIGHT.

Only a handful of cars in the parking lot. The NEON BEER
SIGNS in the windows GO OUT.

ANGLE ON THE EMPLOYEE DOOR IN THE BACK, as it opens and
Sookie emerges with her purse. Expecting to find Bill...

But he's not there. She stands there for a moment, not
knowing what to do, then Sam emerges from the Employee Door.

SAM

Sookie.

SOOKIE

Sam.

A beat.

SAM

You want me to wait with you until -

SOOKIE

Go home, Sam.

A beat.

SAM

Good night.

He walks across the small rear parking lot to a MOBILE HOME,
set on a concrete block base, with a small grass YARD and a
neat HEDGE. Sam unlocks the door, goes inside, and shuts it.
The PORCH LIGHT GOES OUT.

Sookie smiles, pleased with her independence. Her smile fades
as she thinks about what she's learned about Sam tonight.
Checks her watch. Looks around, suddenly starting to feel not
sure of herself. Walks around the edge of the building...

ANGLE ON THE FRONT OF THE BUILDING, as SOOKIE APPEARS,
looking out at

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Her POV: The MAIN PARKING LOT, silent and now completely empty, except for

A BEAT UP RED SPORTS CAR.

ON SOOKIE, recognizing the car, just before

A DARK SHAPE SLAMS INTO HER FROM BEHIND, knocking her OUT OF FRAME -

ON SOOKIE'S FACE as it HITS THE ASPHALT -

WIDER, as TWO SETS OF FEET wearing BOOTS start to KICK HER VICIOUSLY. With the intent to kill. She instinctively curls up into a fetal position -

ON SOOKIE'S FACE, contorted in pain -

CLOSER, as she suddenly SPITS BLOOD THROUGH HER TEETH, and then we

BLACKOUT.

We HEAR Angela Strehli, Lou Ann Barton and Marcia Ball singing "IT HURTS TO BE IN LOVE" over

END CREDITS.