

INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE



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By
William Bast
&
Paul Huson

**SECOND DRAFT
June 14th, 1985**

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FADE IN:

INT. MEDICAL CENTER - BLOOD DONOR FACILITY - NIGHT

CLOSE on a needle, as it punctures the skin of an arm and draws the first drops of fresh, whole blood. PAN with the dark red fluid as it travels through the clear plastic tube and flows into a container. PULL BACK TO REVEAL the Nurse as she tapes the needle to the arm of the young Woman reclining on a cot. In the b.g., we see several other Donors, also reclining on cots, also giving blood.

PAN to an Orderly as he pushes a cart down the aisle between the cots, collecting the containers of ruby-red, freshly donated blood.

INT. HEMATOLOGY LAB - NIGHT

The door of refrigeration vault swings open to reveal rack upon rack of similar transparent plastic containers. A lab Technician in a white smock reaches in and transfers six containers from one shelf to a small portable carrying case of the sort used to transport refrigerated organs for transplant. As he slams the case lid shut, we see a sign stenciled on its side: "WHOLE BLOOD - KEEP REFRIGERATED."

EXT. MEDICAL CENTER - NIGHT

CLOSE on the carrying case as it is heaved into the trunk of a car by the lab Technician. The trunk lid is slammed shut to reveal that the car is a Rolls Silver Cloud, with plates that read: "LDM".

WIDEN TO REVEAL a smartly uniformed Chauffeur, young, handsome, expressionless, as he tips his hat to the lab Technician, gets into the car, the windows of which have all been tinted dark, and drives off.

PAN with the Rolls as it swings into the main street, past a roadside marker identifying this as the "LEWIS D. MONT-ROSE MEDICAL CENTER".

INT. ROLLS - NIGHT

ANGLE on the back of the Chauffeur's head as he drives in silence, his eyes on the road, then PAN DOWN to a small television set. The hand of the unseen passenger in the back reaches forward INTO FRAME and switches it on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:-

We see that it is the well-manicured hand of a man, wearing a handsome 18th century gold signet ring on the little finger. As the picture flickers onto the screen, the hand moves OUT OF FRAME.

PUSH IN TIGHT on the TV screen to see a CLOSE SHOT of a TV newswoman, looking INTO CAMERA. She is KYLE PETERSON. In her mid-twenties, lively, intelligent and compellingly beautiful, she projects a somewhat misleading impression of child-like innocence and vulnerability. But far from a child, this is a mature woman with an incisive mind and a sharp wit, a woman very much in control. In keeping with her on-camera persona, her clothes are aptly stylish, her hairdo modish and upswept.

KYLE

Good evening. I'm Kyle Peterson
-- and this is 'Night Beat'.

ZOOM BACK to a LONG SHOT of the TV studio from which she is broadcasting, TO REVEAL that she is seated behind a desk on a dais, with the name of the show in large letters on a backdrop behind her. The THEME MUSIC comes in OVER this, with a sense of immediacy and urgency, and the show logo is SUPERIMPOSED: "NIGHT BEAT".

EXT. SKYWAY - NIGHT

The Silver Cloud streaks along the highway above the city streets. PULL BACK TO REVEAL the full sweep of the San Francisco skyline in the b.g., then PAN the glittering city to the large, full moon low on the horizon. PUSH IN TIGHT on full moon.

EXT. MONTROSE TOWER - NIGHT

TIGHT on full moon. TILT DOWN to the mighty highrise towering above the City on the Bay. Continue TILTING DOWN TO PICK UP the Silver Cloud, now passing through the formidable security gates and disappearing into a subterranean garage.

INT. TV STATION - STUDIO - NIGHT

ANGLE on Kyle as she speaks INTO CAMERA.

KYLE

From recent polls, it's clear to see that the Ferraro experience has not turned voters off the idea of women in politics...

INT. MONTROSE PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on a giant TV projection screen, showing Kyle in huge CLOSEUP as she speaks into camera.

KYLE

If anything, they seem to indicate that we can expect to see more women running for higher offices in coming elections...

PAN TO a shadowy figure, seated in an armchair facing the screen. The room around him is expensively decorated in the most modern design and illuminated by low-key spots -- right out of Architectural Digest.

MOVE IN on the television viewer as he stares at the screen, oblivious to everything but the image before him. Dressed in perfectly tailored tux, with the finest dress shirt and accessories, he appears to be in his early thirties. With his pale, handsome features, his trim athletic build, he could be a film star or a fashion model. He is neither. He is LEWIS D. MONTROSE (aka LOUIS DE ROUGEMONT), billionaire recluse.

KYLE (V.O.)

In closing, I'd like to thank Jean Kirkpatrick personally for allowing us into her home this evening...

PUSH IN TIGHT on Louis' eyes as he devours the image on the screen, darkly, inscrutably, penetratingly.

INT. TV STATION - STUDIO - NIGHT

CLOSE on camera lens, itself an eye, dark, inscrutable, penetrating. Reflected in it (if possible) is Kyle's image.

KYLE (O.S.)

Next week, Night Beat will be turning from women in politics to the private lives of the super-rich...

PAN the studio, with it's other cameras, its hushed crews working in synchronized silence, and HOLD on Kyle. Then, MOVE IN on her as she closes the show.

KYLE

(continuing)

In a five-part series, I'll be exploring the lifestyles of some of the world's most elusive and reclusive billionaires --

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KYLE (CONT'D)

-- and finding out what makes them tick.

(a smile)

That's right, I said billionaires.

INT. MONTROSE PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

ANGLE on TV projection screen as Kyle signs off.

KYLE

Until then, from all of us here on Night Beat, I'm Kyle Peterson, wishing all of you out there -- good night.

ANGLE ON LOUIS

as he switches off the television, then reaches for a wine glass and examines it closely, gazing into its ruby-red contents. Embraced within the exquisite etching of the Lalique glass is the elixir that sustains his life -- a life that has spanned centuries as a result of its magic. That something so basic could confer so much! He raises the glass to his nostrils, in the fashion of a true wine connoisseur, inhales delicately, reacts with pleasure. He takes a tentative sip, tastes it for a moment, rolling it on his tongue, savoring its bouquet, then swiftly, unexpectedly downs the rest in one parched swallow.

INT. TV STATION - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Hurrying from the studio, Kyle confers with her director, HARVE, on the run. Harve consults a sheaf of notes as he tries to keep up.

HARVE

Johnny wants you to okay the final cut on number three first thing Monday.

KYLE

Then you'd better reserve the studio to tape voice-over after lunch.

Kyle's secretary, LYNN, intercepts them.

LYNN

Did you order a car and driver tonight?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KYLE

No, why?

LYNN

There's a chauffeur waiting for you in Reception.

KYLE

Good. I was expecting him.

Both Lynn and Harve react, curious.

LYNN

It wasn't on your calendar.

KYLE

(cryptically; moving on)

It wasn't meant to be. See you in the morning.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Kyle rounds a corner into another corridor, Harve dogging her tracks, more than a little curious.

HARVE

Late date?

KYLE

You know me better, Harve -- all work and no play gets Kyle Peterson big numbers.

HARVE

So, what's all the mystery?

KYLE

I've got another billionaire on the hook. And this one's a lulu.

HARVE

Who is it?

KYLE

Sorry -- can't tell. Not yet, anyway.

HARVE

(skeptical)

Come on, Kyle. If this is really an interview, where's your camera crew?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KYLE

It's just a preliminary. Nothing's set for sure yet. But it looks good -- he contacted me. He's a little weird, though. He thinks he's...

(hesitates)

Well, never mind.

HARVE

Thinks he's what?

KYLE

(evasively)

Nothing. Probably just a little senile. But if I can nail him, he'll be my biggest catch yet. Wish me luck.

She pushes out the doors to the lobby, leaving him in the wake of her enthusiasm and mystery. He moves to the door and peeks through, curious.

HIS POV - LOBBY

Louis' Chauffeur greets Kyle, tipping his cap, then opens the street door for her. He follows her out.

BACK TO HARVE

watching them go, oddly disturbed, unsure why.

EXT. MONTROSE TOWER - STREET - NIGHT

The Silver Cloud streaks up a steep hill, then turns into the driveway of the highrise and stops before the massive security gates.

CLOSE on security CAMERA, mounted in a corner over the gates. It swivels with a mechanical WHINE until its lens focuses on the Rolls below.

ANGLE on gates as they slide open automatically. The car slips through and disappears down the ramp into the subterranean parking area. The gates close after it.

INT. SUBTERRANEAN GARAGE - NIGHT

The Rolls plunges into the deserted parking area beneath the building and pulls up in front of the elevators. The Chauffeur gets out and opens the door for Kyle and indicates the elevators.

AT ELEVATORS

Kyle steps to the public elevators and presses the "UP" button. The Chauffeur steps up behind her and touches her elbow. She reacts, startled, obviously tense. He directs her to a separate private elevator and inserts a special key into the lock. The doors slide open. Kyle steps onto the car.

INT. ELEVATOR CAR - NIGHT

Kyle steps aboard. The Chauffeur tips his cap politely, impassively, as the doors close on her. But the car doesn't start its ascent. She reaches for the button panel, but reacts, puzzled at finding none. She looks up at the floor indicator, which numbers 42 floors with a "P" at the top. She is startled by the SOUND of a mechanical WHIR and spins round to see another security CAMERA as it angles down at her to check her out.

Suddenly, the lights of the car dim and, with an electric HUM, a battery of ultra violet LAMPS briefly flood the elevator with their intense, purplish light, causing Kyle to shield her eyes. The elevator lights come back on and the car starts its ascent.

CLOSE ON FLOOR INDICATOR

as the floors flash by and the car comes to a stop at "P".

BACK TO SCENE

as the doors slide open -- but there is no one to greet her.

INT. MONTROSE PENTHOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Kyle ventures off the elevator. The doors slide shut behind her. She looks up the long, dark hallway, dimly lit with pools of light from spots concealed above. It is lined with superb paintings and exquisite sculpture. There is no one in sight.

LOUIS (O.S.)

Good evening.

She spins round, startled.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as she turns to see Louis standing in a pool of light, his face shadowed. She strains to see him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KYLE

Mr. Montrose?

He steps forward, revealing a smile, and extends a friendly hand.

LOUIS

We meet at last, Miss Peterson.

KYLE

(shaking hands)

Kyle, please.

LOUIS

Why not? I feel as though I already know you. But then, I suppose people are always telling you that.

(reacting)

Is anything wrong?

KYLE

Excuse me for staring, but you are the Louis D. Montrose?

LOUIS

The one and only. Why?

KYLE

Well, I've heard about you all my life. I assumed you'd be... older.

LOUIS

(an easy smile)

I am -- considerably.

KYLE

(indulgently; humoring him)

Ah, yes, of course. I was forgetting.

LOUIS

(indicating the way)

Shall we?

ANOTHER ANGLE

As they start down the long hallway, she ogles the impressive display of art treasures. A bit unnerved by this awesome man, she is determined to skirt some uncomfortable issue tactfully, by referring to it obliquely until he himself is willing to discuss it openly, or drop it altogether.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KYLE

This isn't at all what I expected.
Not after what you said on the
phone.

LOUIS

What did you expect -- cobwebs and
coffins?

KYLE

Well, that is the first thing that
comes to mind. Certainly not
high-tech and modern art. I've got
a feeling you were putting me on,
Mr. Montrose.

LOUIS

Not at all. I think I may shatter
quite a few of your preconceptions
this evening. I'm glad you accepted
my invitation.

KYLE

How could I refuse? This must be
one of the few interviews you've
ever given.

LOUIS

The first, in fact -- and probably
the last.

(indicating living
room)

I think we'll be comfortable in here.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kyle enters and reacts to the stunning room, as Louis
steps to the console and presses a button. Automati-
cally, the floor-to-ceiling drapes that cover the far
wall slide back to reveal a room-long plate-glass
window, beyond which we see a panorama of the city,
over which a full moon rides low in the night sky.
The spectacle is breathtaking.

KYLE

This is magnificent.

She turns to admire a painting, then reacts to the ar-
tist's signature. Louis never takes his eyes off her --
a fact of which she is fully aware and one that makes
her nervous.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KYLE

(continuing)

A Degas?

LOUIS

I got it for a song. From the artist. Edgar was just beginning to make a name for himself at the time.

KYLE

(a nervous smile)

I see we're really going to pursue this game.

LOUIS

I can't blame you for being skeptical. But try to reserve your doubts -- at least until you've heard my story.

KYLE

It isn't going to be easy.

(indicating)

Especially when I can see you in that mirror. If you're really... what you say you are, you're not supposed to have a reflection.

He looks to the mirror over the fireplace, where she indicates.

LOUIS

(dismissively)

Ah, that! You've been watching too many horror movies. That's just an old wives' tale -- like most of the others that have been concocted about us over the centuries. I think you'll find the truth is simpler...

(pointedly)

... and far more fascinating.

As she looks around, he opens a bottle of champagne that has been icing in a bucket on the coffee table. The cork pops loudly now, causing her to jump with a start. He smiles to see that she is far more nervous than her cool would reveal.

LOUIS

(continuing)

Champagne?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KYLE

Thanks.

He pours two glasses and hands her one.

LOUIS

(toasting)

To new friends -- and familiar
faces!

She drinks. He doesn't.

KYLE

You're not drinking.

LOUIS

I get no kick, as it were. I'm
afraid ordinary food and drink
does nothing for us. We just go
through the motions -- to be
sociable.

KYLE

What a waste of good champagne.

LOUIS

Not necessarily. It's really only
a matter of style, anyway. Isn't
that what life's all about?

KYLE

Seems to me it's more about survival
-- at least for most of us.

LOUIS

I seem to have solved that problem.

KYLE

I imagine you have -- considering
your millions.

LOUIS

Money is a boring subject. I was
talking about my nature -- my
lifestyle, as you might call it.
That's what we're here to discuss.

KYLE

(resignedly)

Okay -- if you insist.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KYLE (CONT'D)

But I have to tell you, you don't look any different -- from ordinary people, I mean.

LOUIS

Not in this lighting. In the harsh light of day, it would be another matter, of course. That's why the ultra-violet lamps in the elevator. Artificial sunlight would only affect one of us. I like to know who -- or what -- my visitors are.

KYLE

I see. Then, the bit about sunlight is one old wives' tale that holds true?

LOUIS

Yes, one. You could call us 'Night People.'

KYLE

That usually means something else, doesn't it?

LOUIS

Don't be too sure.

She reacts, considering, then dismisses it and sits on the sofa.

KYLE

I'm curious. Why did you decide to give this interview now -- and to me, in particular?

LOUIS

I'll get to that. But we should really start at the beginning.

Kyle takes a small cassette recorder from her purse, sets it on the coffee table in front of her and switches it on.

KYLE

Will this bother you?

Louis looks down at the machine, turning slowly, recording every word, every sound.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Consulting her prepared notes and questions, Kyle notices his hesitation.

KYLE

(continuing; reassured)
It's not for broadcast. Just my own personal use -- so I have a record of our conversation.

LOUIS

(a smile)
No problem.

KYLE

(into recorder)
Preliminary interview with Louis D. Montrose.

(from notes)

Your wealth has been estimated at well over a billion, Exactly how rich are you, Mr. Montrose?

LOUIS

I wouldn't know. You'd have to check with my accountants. But I thought we agreed -- we're not here to talk about my money.

KYLE

(patiently)
Then where would you like me to start?

LOUIS

At the beginning, of course. The reason for this 'elaborate' way of life -- this reclusive existence I lead.

KYLE

(sighs, giving in)
Okay, you win.
(for recorder)
Tell me, Mr. Montrose, were you always a... vampire?

During the following, MOVE IN CLOSE on Louis, as he begins his strange tale:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

Nobody is ever born a vampire. I was a young man when I was -- 'initiated.' The year was seventeen ninety-eight, and I was living with my family in Louisiana. In those days our name was de Rougemont, not Montrose -- and they called me Louis. We'd received a land grant and settled a large indigo plantation on the Mississippi -- not far from New Orleans, where we also kept several townhouses. Even then, you see, we were relatively comfortable. My father had just died -- suddenly and mysteriously -- as had my mother and younger brother only a year before. It was diagnosed as consumption, and naturally I took the doctor's word. Anyway, I, as sole surviving heir, stood to inherit everything...

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK: EXT. NEW ORLEANS CEMETERY - DAY

Accompanied by friends and neighbors, Louis watches as his father's remains are committed to the family crypt. He is appropriately dressed in deep mourning, wearing the style of the period now, but looking much the same age as in the previous scenes. Though bereaved, he seems less sophisticated and world-weary now, more youthful and innocent. As the service concludes and the mourners begin to disperse, a young couple and their child approach Louis.

CLOSER ANGLE

as handsome HENRI FRENIERE and his beautiful wife, BABETTE, step forward to console their friend. With them is their little daughter CLAUDIA, a child of no more than six, whose exquisite doll-like looks are a haunting reflection of her mother's. Henri grips Louis' arm reassuringly.

HENRI

Louis, my dear friend, what can I say? If there's anything...

LOUIS

(moved)

Thank you, Henri.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (CONT'D)

It's all so terribly baffling. So many deaths in so short a time. Poor Papa.

BABETTE

(compassionately)

Dearest Louis, I'm sure you know how sincerely we share your grief. Your loss is ours.

As Louis looks into her lovely, sincere face, we see that she is special to him -- perhaps that he even loves her in some secret corner of his heart.

LOUIS

Thank you, my dear Babette. Thank you, both. A man could ask no greater boon than friends such as you.

HENRI

My wife and I would be pleased if you would dine with us when you return to Pointe du Lac.

LOUIS

You're very kind. Perhaps next week. There's so much yet to be done here in New Orleans, so many legal details to...

CLAUDIA (O.S.)

Monsieur! Monsieur!

WIDEN as Louis looks down to see little Claudia tugging at his coattail, a posy of violets in her hand.

LOUIS

(a smile)

Ah, Claudia! But you promised to call me 'Uncle Louis.'

CLAUDIA

(proffering posy;
smiling shyly)

For you, Uncle Louis -- because you are so sad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS
 (accepting them;
 touched)
 Why, thank you, Claudia.
 (to parents)
 What a rare and precious child.

HENRI
 (picking her up;
 adoringly)
 A veritable jewel -- and a credit
 to her mother.

LOUIS
 Indeed...
 (looking at Babette)
 ... and so like her.

Babette flushes at the compliment -- and under his gaze --
 and lowers her eyes.

EXT. DE ROUGEMONT TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

A carriage stops in front of the impressive townhouse. The de Rougemont family lawyer, MONSIEUR PICARD, an elderly man with a cane, is helped from the carriage by PAUL LESTAT, a strikingly handsome young man of about Louis' age, impeccable dressed in black, whose eyes have a watchful, alert quality, like those of a cat or a wild creature. He rings the bell and the two men are admitted through the wreathed door by a uniformed Maid.

INT. DE ROUGEMONT TOWNHOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT..

CLOSE on three snifters, as brandy is poured into them.

LOUIS (O.S.)
 Your sympathy is much appreciated,
 Monsieur Picard. I know how fond
 you were of my father.

WIDEN, as Louis hands a brandy to each of his visitors.

PICARD
 Tell me, my boy, are you still
 planning to return to the university
 to resume your studies?

LOUIS
 Under the sad circumstances I've
 decided to abandon my hopes of a
 career in medicine.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Being the sole surviving de Rougemont,
I shall assume my responsibilities as
head of the...

(a touch of sad irony)

... 'family.'

(toasting)

To my father! May he rest in peace.

They drink, all except Lestat. Unseen by the other two,
he only pretends to drink, being vaguely repelled by the
brandy. An abstainer?

LOUIS

(continuing)

I take it you've completed your
assessment of my father's estate,
Monsieur Picard?

Picard gives Lestat a nod. Lestat produces some papers
from a portfolio and hands them to Louis.

PICARD

(as Louis scans it)

Those are the figures -- a not
inconsiderable fortune, my boy. And,
with continued prudent handling, you
can expect to double it. I daresay,
one day you may find yourself the
wealthiest man in the state of
Louisiana.

LOUIS

That is, indeed, excellent news,
monsieur. You've done a most
splendid job.

PICARD

The credit must go to my astute young
nephew. Since his arrival from France
and my retirement, Paul alone has
managed your father's affairs. And
worked tirelessly, I must add, often
late into the night.

LOUIS

In that case, M. Lestat, there will
of course be a substantial gratuity
-- in addition to your usual fee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

To continue in the de Rougemont service is all the gratuity I require.

LOUIS

Ah, there's the rub, I'm afraid I've given it much thought, gentlemen, and I've decided that from now on I shall take over the management and administration of all my family's estates -- personally.

Taken by surprise, Picard and Lestat exchange alarmed glances.

PICARD

You, yourself?

LOUIS

Please don't imagine that I under-value your help. But whereas my father lost interest in managing his own affairs after the loss of my dear mother and brothers, I feel no such disinclination. In fact, I relish the prospect. I'm rather good at figures, you know. So, I regret to say, I won't be requiring your services any longer.

INT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT (TRAVELING)

Picard tries to swallow his gall, while Lestat schemes silently beside him, as their carriage races through the streets.

PICARD

Rather good at figures, indeed! Headstrong young fool! What would his father say? Mark my words, a great fortune will be lost because of this folly.

LESTAT

Of course, he's not himself right now, is he? Once he gets over his sense of loss there's always hope he'll change his mind.

EXT. BROTHEL - NIGHT

From the SOUNDS of MUSIC and MERRIMENT that issue from the grand old house, everyone inside is having a grand old time. The door opens and three figures appear on the stoop -- a young man and two young ladies.

CLOSER ANGLE

to reveal that the young man is Louis. Elegantly attired and no longer in mourning, he bids the pretty ladies a good night, kissing each in her turn. Then, starting off up the misty street, swinging his walking stick jauntily and whistling a lively tune, he heads homeward.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL a shadowy figure in a dark cloak in the EXTREME F.G., watching him go. It is Lestat.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Wending his way home through the streets, Louis gradually becomes aware of the SOUND of FOOTSTEPS, following him in the mist.

LESTAT

dogging Louis' tracks.

LOUIS

pausing and glancing back. The FOOTSTEPS STOP. Louis resumes walking, quickening his pace.

LESTAT

quickening his pace, as well.

LOUIS

growing more and more apprehensive, fearing a robber, finally breaks into a run.

EXT. DE ROUGEMONT TOWNHOUSE - STREET - NIGHT

As Louis approaches his house, trying to outdistance his unseen pursuer, he approaches a dark alleyway. Lestat suddenly steps from its shadows -- in front of him!

LESTAT

Good evening, Monsieur de Rougemont.

Louis is startled at first, but instantly recognizes him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

Ah, Lestat! What a relief to see
a familiar face!

LESTAT

Is anything wrong?

LOUIS

I had the feeling I was being
followed.

LESTAT

One can't be too careful these days.

LOUIS

(realizing)

What brings you here in the middle
of the night?

LESTAT

We have business to conclude, you
and I.

LOUIS

At this ungodly hour?

LESTAT

No better time.

Lestat smiles sardonically. Louis looks at him blearily, then his eyes widen incredulously, as he sobers at what he sees.

CLOSE ON LESTAT

as his handsome face distorts from a smile into a demonic mask, his lips pulling back to reveal two extruding incisors, long and sharp as cobras' fangs.

BACK TO SCENE

Doubting his senses, Louis recoils and rubs his eyes. When he looks again, Lestat has fixed his gaze upon him with a frightening intensity.

CLOSE ON LESTAT'S EYES

wide, hypnotic, compelling, as they fix on their prey.

CLOSE ON LOUIS

Caught in their grip for an instant, he shakes free of Lestat's commanding will.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Louis turns to flee. But to his utter amazement, he finds Lestat inexplicably, instantly blocking his retreat -- now behind him! Again, Louis turns to run.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Again, he is instantly confronted by Lestat! Several times he attempts to escape, running this way, then that, but each time there is Lestat, confronting him. Finally, Louis darts into the alleyway.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ALLEYWAY

as Louis runs into Lestat again. This time, Lestat seizes him.

CLOSER ANGLE

Lestat fastens upon Louis' throat, sinking his fangs into the tender flesh.

INT. DE ROUGEMONT TOWNHOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on Louis' throat, featuring the two small punctures inflicted by Lestat.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

I don't understand. I simply
don't understand...

PULL BACK TO REVEAL the family physician, DR. BOYD, shaking his head in puzzlement over Louis' pale and delirious figure. A MAID, an aging family retainer, stands by, awaiting the verdict anxiously.

DR. BOYD

(continuing)

Just like the mother, just like
the father. The same symptoms,
the same rapid deterioration.
It's like some dreadful curse on
the entire family.

MAID

Is he...? Is he going to...?

DR. BOYD

(going)

Who can say? But it would be wise
to administer Last Rites at once.
I'll send for Father Galliard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He exits, as the old maid bursts into tears and moves to the bedside.

MAID

Oh, Master Louis...!

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - ANGLE AT DOOR - NIGHT

Dr. Boyd comes out of the bedroom, closing the door quietly after him and is startled when he turns to find himself confronting Lestat, who stands before him, a portfolio in hand.

LESTAT

His condition?

DR. BOYD

I fear he will not last the night.

LESTAT

Then, I must see him at once.

DR. BOYD

On no account can he be disturbed, Mr. Lestat.

LESTAT

I am his lawyer, Dr. Boyd. Would you rather he depart this life without signing his will?

DR. BOYD

Do what you must, then. But be quick about it.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lestat enters and crosses to look down at the semi-conscious Louis, as the old maid murmurs over her rosary beads.

LESTAT

(to maid)

Leave us, please.

MAID

But Dr. Boyd told me...

Lestat fixes his forceful gaze upon her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

Leave us!

She yields at once, going out quickly.

CLOSER ANGLE

as Lestat draws a chair up beside the dying man, rouses him from his stupor with a touch. Louis' eyes flicker open instantly, as if on command, reacting with instant terror at the sight of Lestat's face.

LOUIS

You! Dear God, such a terrible dream!

(tries to move;
weakly)

What has become of me? I feel so weak...

LESTAT

It was no dream. You are dying, Louis.

LOUIS

(alarmed)

Dying! What have you done to me?

LESTAT

Never mind. The important thing is that I have come to offer you life -- life everlasting.

LOUIS

I must be mad -- or dreaming still.

LESTAT

Not mad. Not dreaming. Listen! Very little time remains for you. Only by my sharing with you the life which flows within my veins can I draw you back from death. Don't try to understand. You cannot. Just believe me when I tell you this.

LOUIS

You are the one who's mad...

LESTAT

Fool! Do you see that clock?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT (CONT'D)

I tell you, unless you do everything
I say, you will be dead before the
hour has struck.

LOUIS

(deliriously)

Or perhaps you're the Devil?

LESTAT

Would you squander your last minutes
in idle speculation? Surely you
cannot doubt that you are dying.

Louis' breath begins to become labored.

LESTAT

(continuing)

You see? Already the struggle for
breath begins.

The mantel CLOCK starts to CHIME the midnight hour. Louis
reacts.

LESTAT

(continuing)

Before the hour has struck, Louis!

LOUIS

(gasping for air)

What -- what must I do?

Lestat deftly snicks open a vein in his left wrist with
the sharp, pointed forefingernail of his right hand and
offers the bead of blood to Louis, fixing his terrible
gaze upon him.

LESTAT

Drink!

Louis hesitates, unsure.

LESTAT

(continuing)

Drink or die!

LOUIS

You are the Devil!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

One taste! Hesitate now, and you
are beyond my help.

Louis fixes his eyes on the bead of blood.

HIS POV - CLOSE ON LESTAT'S WRIST

The blood drop now seems to shine with an eerie light,
like a glowing coal.

BACK TO SCENE

as the CLOCK continues CHIMING -- five, six, seven...
Lestat places a hand behind Louis' head and lifts it
suddenly till his lips touch the wrist.

LESTAT

Now!

CLOSE ON LOUIS

as his eyes widen with the first taste of Lestat's blood.
Then, opting for life, he draws upon the wound -- tenta-
tively at first, then thirstily, while in his ears the
SOUND of Lestat's HEARTBEAT throbs louder and louder,
mingling with the CHIMING of the CLOCK.

LESTAT

looking down at Louis, as he devours the life-giving fluid
from the vein. On Lestat's face, a look of supreme satis-
faction.

LESTAT

(softly)

Yes... yes... yes...!

END FLASHBACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MONTROSE PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Clearly intrigued, it takes Kyle only a beat to snap back
to the reality of the present and reassume her skepticism
and reporter's objectivity.

KYLE

And that's how it was done?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

That's how it's always done -- life for life.

KYLE

But the way I understand it, he gave you a choice.

LOUIS

Not much of a choice. For me, it was a matter of life or death. For Lestat, it was a matter of expedience. He wanted my estate. Knowing him as I do now, I'm sure he'd rather have let me die.

KYLE

What did it feel like, your... your...?

LOUIS

My transformation? Nourished for the moment by Lestat's life's blood, I felt myself reborn.

(reliving it)

At first it was wonderful, incredible. At first. I felt as though I'd never before truly perceived the world around me -- never seen it, felt it, heard it, with such intensity...

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK: INT. DE ROUGEMONT TOWNHOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on Louis as he wakens and looks about him.

LOUIS (V.O.)

When I opened my eyes, the world had changed...

HIS POV - LESTAT

watching him from the foot of the bed, then beckoning him toward the French windows across the room. Louis' perspective is now enhanced, intensified, all movement dream-like, his perceptions surreal, magical, fantastic. Through the eyes of a vampire -- which he has now become -- the night is no longer dark, but glows with an intensity of colors, sounds and textures.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (V.O.)

Lestat was standing at the foot of my bed. Before that moment, he had seemed pale to me. Now he seemed radiant, filled with abundance of life...

BACK TO SCENE

as Louis rises from his bed and joins Lestat at the window. Lestat flings open the windows, flooding the room with silvery moonlight, and indicates the moon to Louis.

LOUIS (V.O.)

And then I saw that not only Lestat had changed for me, but all things. I found myself immersed in the wonders of the night -- a world unknown to mere mortals...

LOUIS' POV - FULL MOON

magnified a thousand times, a vast, shimmering orb.

BACK TO LOUIS AND LESTAT

as Lestat now indicates something in the garden below.

LOUIS' POV - MONTAGE OF SHOTS:

- A spider's web, intensified, the dew glistening, trembling on its strands like diamonds;
- A night-blooming plant, its flowering opening to the moonlight, unfolding its petals, revealing its heart;
- A moth, emerging from its chrysalis, spreading its wings to display their splendor;
- A frog, its eyes agleam, motionless on its lily pad, then springing into the air, its lumpish form slowly elongating, streamlining, soaring;
- a fountain, its millions of drops falling in SLOW MOTION, each a glittering globe, each plummeting into the pond below, creating an ever-expanding crown on the surface;

OVER this, the SOUNDS of the night build, ending with the SPLASHING of the fountain, cascading with the roar of Niagara...

BACK TO SCENE

CLOSE on Louis, his face fixed in awe. Behind him, Lestat -- relishing in his rebirth.

END FLASHBACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MONTROSE PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Captivated, Kyle quickly seizes on the wrong parallel.

KYLE

Sounds like you were on quite a trip.

LOUIS

Trip?

KYLE

The kind you take on psychedelic drugs.

LOUIS

Not at all. Drugs distort reality. For us, reality is heightened, intensified.

KYLE

How long did it last?

LOUIS

From that moment on. It's a fundamental part of the vampire experience.

KYLE

You mean you actually see... me, for instance... like that? Right now?

Louis fixes his gaze on her intently, then smiles as if observing something of breathtakingly magical beauty.

LOUIS

At this moment, I perceive you as an exquisite play of light and color -- a creature fashioned out of fire and crystal, yet pulsing with vibrant life.

For a moment Kyle is swept up in the intensity of his mood, his words. Then, shaking herself loose:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KYLE

That's... amazing.
 (regaining composure)
 But you said the experience was
 only wonderful at first. What
 went wrong?

LOUIS

(suddenly grim at
 the memory)

I thought I'd died and gone to hell.
 To keep me from the prying eyes of
 friends, Lestat left word that I'd
 gone to the country to convalesce,
 after my miraculous recovery...

FLASHBACK: EXT. BAYOU COUNTRY - NIGHT

An open carriage careens through the night, Lestat at the
 reins, Louis at his side.

LOUIS (V.O.)

That very night, he drove me to
 Pointe du Lac, my family's
 plantation outside New Orleans...

EXT. POINTE DU LAC - NIGHT

Louis and Lestat drive up to the antebellum mansion and
 are greeted by the servants. Ailing and feverish, Louis
 is assisted into the house, while Lestat pauses a moment
 to appreciate its magnificence, then follows.

LOUIS (V.O.)

There, in privacy, he intended to
 teach me the art of surviving in
 my new world. If I had known then
 the horrors he would unleash, I
 might have... But I was too desperate
 and too ill to care...

INT. POINTE DU LAC - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on a fine dinner plate, as Lestat cuts into a piece
 of well-roasted meat, then slams down his knife and fork
 in disgust.

WIDEN as he shoves the plate away and addresses the BUTLER
 standing at his side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

I have no stomach for meat that is overcooked. In the future, make sure that everything is rare -- blood rare. Now, take this away! I've lost my appetite.

BUTLER

Yessuh!

He whisks the plate away and exits quickly, as Lestat gets up to take in the room. He moves about the exquisitely furnished 18th century room, running his hands over woodwork and panelling, his fingers over fabrics, ormolu, filigree with the delectation of a true connoisseur and Epicurean, savoring his new environment.

LESTAT

(to O.S. Louis)

You have no idea how good it is to feel at home again, Louis. One's environment is so important. How I detested that squalid little townhouse of my uncle's. This is far more to my taste.

ANGLE with him, as he moves the length of the long, candlelit table, which is set with the finest crystal and silverware and laid for an elegant midnight supper for two. Louis is seated at the other end, slumped in his chair, pale and drawn, fighting the intermittent spasms of pain that rack his body, trying to comprehend what has happened to him.

LESTAT

(continuing)

Isn't it ironic? How hard men strive to attain the things they treasure. Yet, when they finally acquire them, so little time remains to enjoy them.

CLOSER ANGLE, as he now hovers over Louis, observing his increasing discomfort.

LESTAT

(continuing)

This is not the case with us, of course, being blessed as we are with remarkable longevity.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT (CONT'D)

That is why the quality of life becomes even more important. And this, Louis...

(indicating the setting)

... this is quality.

He glances down at Louis' untouched food, almost amused.

LESTAT

(continuing)

Alas, there are certain limitations to our enjoyment.

(taunting)

What's the matter, mon ami? Gone off your food?

Maddened, Louis jumps up suddenly, despite his infirmity, and grabs Lestat by the lapels, propelled by his desperation.

LOUIS

Stop talking in riddles and tell me what you've done to me!

Lestat removes his hands from his lapels and forces Louis back down into his chair with enormous strength and no apparent effort.

LESTAT

(unruffled)

I've initiated you, Louis. I've made you a lifetime member of a most exclusive club. You might call us the Aristocracy of Hell. You and I are brothers now -- blood brothers.

LOUIS

How... 'brothers?'

LESTAT

It's quite simple. I've allowed you to partake of my life in order that I may partake of yours...

He indicates the surroundings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

(desperate; in pain)
 For pity's sake, Lestat, help me!
 Can't you see I'm racked with
 pains? I have a burning fever,
 and my very bones seem to crack.
 I need a doctor, man!

LESTAT

A doctor cannot help you.

Louis struggles to his feet and lurches for the door.

LOUIS

All right! If you refuse, I shall
 find help myself...

ANGLE AT DOOR

as Lestat appears, incredibly, in front of him, barring
 his way.

LESTAT

You don't need a doctor, mon ami.
 You need to feed.

EXT. BAYOU - AN ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

A small group of runaway slaves huddle around a campfire,
 eating a roasted fowl and murmuring amongst themselves.

LOUIS AND LESTAT

watching from the darkness of the perimeter.

LESTAT

(hushed)
 Runaway slaves. Perfect! Now --
 which shall we have?

THEIR POV - THE SLAVES

PAN the men, as they eat and discuss their fate quietly,
 fearfully, then HOLD on one strapping young black, JOBY.

BACK TO SCENE

as Lestat zeroes in on the lad.

LESTAT

Yes, he'll do very nicely. Strong,
 young, full of life...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He fixes his stare on the young man, his eyes as intent as a cobra's on its prey. Louis watches him, puzzled and afraid.

LOUIS

What're you doing?

LESTAT

Reeling in the catch.

JOBY

listening to the others while he eats. Then, unaware of the strange force working on him, he responds to Lestat's hypnotic powers and reaches for a water pail.

JOBY

I's gonna git some water.

He gets up and leaves the circle, moving off through the thicket.

LESTAT

reacting with a small smile of satisfaction, watches him go.

LESTAT

Good, good.

BAYOU BANK

Joby moves to the nearby bank, where he crouches to fill his pail.

LESTAT AND LOUIS

watching intently.

LESTAT

Now, Louis! Now's your chance!
Take him!

LOUIS

Take him?

LESTAT

His blood, you fool! Drink from
his veins, as I drank from yours!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis stares at him in horror, then backs off, crossing himself quickly.

LOUIS

Holy Mary, Mother of God! What manner of creature are you?!

LESTAT

(with contempt)

Cross yourself all you like! Do you think your silly superstitions have any meaning here? You are one of us now!

(impatiently)

Take him -- before it's too late!

JOBY

reacts to the SOUND of their loud WHISPERS, spinning around and searching the darkness, frightened.

JOBY

Who's out there?

LESTAT AND LOUIS

realizing he's heard them.

LESTAT

Damn!

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Joby draws his knife, peering into the darkness, poised for trouble.

JOBY

I hears you! I knows you're there!

But with supernatural swiftness, Lestat suddenly appears behind him, pinning Joby's arm behind him and forcing him to drop the knife. At the same time, he yanks Joby's head aside to expose his neck.

LESTAT

(to Louis)

Take him!

LOUIS

(appalled)

Never!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

Fool!

Baring his fangs, Lestat buries them in the young man's neck.

ON Louis, frozen in horror, as he reacts.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Lestat releases the lad, having drained him. Joby groans softly and slumps to the ground, as Louis looks on, aghast.

LESTAT

Quickly! Back to the house!

Lestat tries to lead Louis away, but Louis resists.

LOUIS

We can't just leave him to die!

LESTAT

He's already dead, you fool!
Hurry! The others are coming!

Lestat drags Louis off, as Louis looks back in horror at poor Joby.

ON Joby, lifeless. In his neck, two telltale puncture marks.

INT. POINTE DU LAC - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on Louis, curled up in a fetal position on the bed, his face covered with perspiration, teeth chattering, gripped by dreadful "withdrawal symptoms."

LESTAT (O.S.)

You sicken me!

WIDEN TO INCLUDE Lestat, considering him with contempt.

LESTAT

(continuing)

We are predators. We kill to survive and do it with detachment. Apply your delicate sensibilities to other things, but learn you are a killer. Kill with a conscience, if you must, but do it!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

I'll never commit murder. I'd rather starve first.

LESTAT

Oh, but you'll never starve. You will live on in torment as long as this world lasts. A thousand times the torment you experience now.

LOUIS

Dear Lord, is there no hope for me?

LESTAT

(off-handedly)

There is another way, of course. A poor substitute, but adequate.

LOUIS

For the love of God, show me! I am in agony!

LESTAT

(producing a document)

First, you must sign this.

He presents it to Louis, who forces himself to focus upon it. But at first glance, he realizes what it is.

LOUIS

Sign over to you everything I possess?

LESTAT

Little enough for all my trouble. I've endowed you with eternal life.

LOUIS

If I sign this, I am lost.

LESTAT

If you do not sign it, you are lost.

LOUIS

(asserting what's left of his strength)

No, Lestat. You never should've let me know how much you value my fortune.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (CONT'D)

I know now, as long as I control it,
you need me as much as I need you.

LESTAT

(unruffled; amused)

Good, Louis, very good. You're less
a fool than I took you for. Still,
there are more ways than one to skin
a cat, mon ami. But, for the moment,
we shall strike a truce. There's
plenty of time to settle this later
-- all the time in the world.

He reclaims the document from Louis. Louis groans in
pain.

LOUIS

Then for pity's sake, will you show
me the way to end this agony! But
there must be no murder!

LESTAT

Very well, if you must. But I will
need silence.

Louis stifles his groans, as Lestat cocks an ear like a
wild creature listening for its prey. His eyes widen,
and he smiles, detecting something outside.

LESTAT

(continuing)

Ah! You're in luck. Wait here!

With that, he steps out the French doors onto the balcony,
then leaps over the rail. Louis struggles to his feet and
follows him to the doors, where he looks out after him.

LOUIS

peers out into the darkened garden below, trying to spot
Lestat, afraid this is yet another wicked trick.

LOUIS

Lestat? Lestat?

Suddenly, instantly, Lestat appears behind him.

LESTAT

Here!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis spins around and gasps to see him dangling a live rat by its tail before him.

LESTAT

(continuing)

Don't look so horrified. You will have to live off such creatures -- until you come to terms with your nature. You can hardly call this murder.

He flicks his long, sharp forefingernail and prepares to bleed the rat, as he moves OUT OF FRAME. Louis averts his eyes in revulsion. The RAT SQUEALS O.S.

CLOSE ON A PORT GLASS

filled with ruby-red liquid.

WIDEN, as Lestat lifts it to his lips and takes a sip. He reacts with faint distaste.

LESTAT

It gets cold so quickly.

He thrusts the glass at Louis, but Louis hesitates.

LESTAT

(continuing)

Here -- drink!

LOUIS

I can't.

LESTAT

Drink it, I say! We have no time for this. It's almost dawn. Time to close shutters and seek our beds.

LOUIS

What matters that it's dawn?

LESTAT

The light. It would destroy you. I should let you burn. You would burn, you know. The daylight would consume the blood I've given you, in every tissue, every vein. If I didn't need you so badly, I wouldn't bother telling you. Here's your 'medicine.' Drink it or not, as you will. But I advise you -- close your shutters firmly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Leaving the glass on the table, he exits into an adjoining bedroom, closing the door after him. Trying to keep the spasms under control, Louis moves to the glass, drawn, yet repulsed by the idea of drinking its contents.

CLOSER ANGLE, as Louis considers the glass. Then, just as he seems about to reach out for it, a single ray of the rising sun illuminates it. Quickly, he looks to the French doors.

HIS POV - DOORS

The first rays of the rising sun filter through the trees and stream through the doors, their shutters still wide open.

BACK TO LOUIS

as he again considers the glass and tentatively reaches out one hand to take it. But the instant his fingers intrude into the sunbeam, the light singes them, raising a whisp of smoke. Flinching, he withdraws his hand with a gasp. Realizing the truth in Lestat's words, he rushes to the doors and slams the shutters shut in fear.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as he now moves to the glass, picks it up in trembling hands and puts it to his lips, then forces himself to drink. Downing the liquid in one gulp, he experiences almost instant relief from his pains and spasms. Then, instinctively wiping a dribble of blood from his chin, he looks at the red smear on his hand -- and is duly appalled. He turns and confronts his image in a full-length mirror. He moves closer, compelled by what he sees. Hesitantly, like a man with a scar he's afraid to look at, he draws back his lips to reveal a pair of sharp incisors similar to Lestat's, that have extruded serpent-like, in response to the taste of blood.

LOUIS (V.O.)

'What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' There I was, alone and undying, bound to another like myself, whom I hated, in a world of darkness and blood. And I loathed the thing I had become.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Filled with loathing for the creature he sees before him, Louis picks up a candlestick and hurls it at the mirror, shattering his image into a thousand fragments.

END FLASHBACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MONTROSE PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Louis turns from the window and meets Kyle's eyes, as she hangs on his words.

LOUIS

And that's how I became a vampire.

KYLE

Terrifying.

(takes a bracing
swig of her wine)

But tell me something -- if that's how it's always done, where did the first vampire come from?

LOUIS

Not Transylvania, if that's what you mean.

KYLE

No, the first vampire. You know, Adam and Eve. It had to start somewhere.

Louis moves to the window and considers the night sky, alive with brilliant stars.

LOUIS

I have a theory. It may be a bit far-fetched, but it's the best I've been able to come up with. And I've had a long time to think about it.

(indicates stars)

Somewhere out there. In a place devoid of light. Imagine some predatory parasite, sensitive to light, that thrives on blood. It invades the cellular structure of the human body, then sustains itself by manipulating the host.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (CONT'D)

There is little or no change to the personality of the host, only the periodic craving for blood, certain enhanced perceptions and powers -- and the longevity.

(rejoining her)

I have research teams working on the possibilities. But the answer is still years away, I fear. Perhaps light-years.

KYLE

And here I thought vampires slept in coffins -- with a handful of soil from their native lands or graves or whatever.

LOUIS

More old wives' tales.

KYLE

But the threat of sunlight?

LOUIS

Unfortunately, only too true. The sun is our greatest enemy.

KYLE

How did you explain it to your servants -- your nocturnal existence?

LOUIS

They were slaves. They asked no questions. -- At least, not to begin with.

KYLE

And -- living off human blood? Myth or truth?

LOUIS

Also true.

Fighting her growing acceptance of his tale, Kyle is clearly struggling to maintain her objectivity.

KYLE

In other words, you're asking me to believe that Lewis D. Montrose kills regularly in order to stay alive?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

No, not any more. In this day and age, there are blood banks, plasma and, as a last resort, laboratory animals. It's no more difficult than supporting a drug habit, I suppose. All it requires is money and ingenuity.

KYLE

And you seem to have plenty of both.

LOUIS

Of course, most vampires would insist there is no substitute for human blood -- fresh human blood.

KYLE

And you? Did you learn to kill... people?

LOUIS

(a grim reminder)

I never took to it. Lestat, on the other hand, took life greedily, cruelly, delighting in the pain and horror he inflicted on his victims. Helpless as a baby at first, I could only stand by and watch -- until the incident with my dear friends Henri and Babette Freneire...

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK: EXT. BAYOU COUNTRY - A CLEARING - NIGHT

CLOSE on a pair of dueling swords, as they are taken from a carrying case.

LOUIS (V.O.)

I had become aware of Lestat's growing interest in the movements of my friends for some months. His motives became more and more obvious to me...

WIDEN TO REVEAL young Henri Freneire and his adversary, a young Creole, preparing to duel each other. Their Seconds stand by, while their carriages wait in the b.g.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (V.O.)

(continuing)

The thought of seeing either of them perish at his hands was, of course, unthinkable...

PULL BACK SLOWLY TO REVEAL Lestat, watching from the shadows.

LOUIS (V.O.)

(continuing)

So I dogged his steps, watching him closely, under the pretext of learning the skills that he was still willing to teach -- at that point...

PULL BACK FURTHER TO REVEAL Louis, watching Lestat from behind a tree, while Lestat watches the duelists.

LOUIS (V.O.)

(continuing)

I know now that my pretense didn't fool him for one instant. He was playing cat and mouse as much with me as with his intended victims...

Lestat glances in Louis' direction, and Louis quickly ducks back out of sight, flattening himself against the tree.

DUELISTS

as they cross swords, salute each other and take their positions en garde.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Then, one July night, he found his chance. Henri had been hot-headed enough to challenge an insolent acquaintance of his to a duel -- some trifling matter of honor...

The two men begin to duel. Both are expert swordsmen, fencing with agility and deadly accuracy, but Freniere finally manages to gain the advantage and run his opponent through. He turns and leaves.

CREOLE

wounded and lying on the ground, he sees Freniere going, draws a pistol and takes aim at his back.

LOUIS

reacting in alarm.

LOUIS

(shouts)

Henri! Watch out! He has a pistol!

CREOLE

taking aim to fire. But suddenly Louis is on him, deflecting his aim. The GUN FIRES.

HENRI

turning, as the bullet hits him in the shoulder.

LESTAT

watching, his eyes instantly widening in expectation.

CLOSE ON HENRI'S HAND

clutching the wound, blood oozing through his fingers.

LOUIS

wrests the gun from the Creole and flings it aside. Then, leaving him to the Seconds, who have rushed up to help, he turns to his friend, concerned.

LOUIS

Henri...?

(reacting; alarmed)

Henri!

HIS POV - LESTAT

carrying Henri's unconscious body off into the bayou.

BACK TO LOUIS

quickly snatching up the Creole's abandoned sword and taking off after Lestat.

EXT. BAYOU - NIGHT

Louis runs through the bayou, searching for Lestat. Suddenly, he spots him, hovering over Henri's unconscious form.

LESTAT

his fangs fastened in Henri's neck, draining his blood. Instantly, Louis is on him, trying to pull him off. With the savagery of a beast whose meal has been threatened, Lestat turns from his feast, picks Louis up bodily and flings him away with superhuman strength.

LOUIS

lands against a tree, the wind taken from him. He recovers, looks at Lestat, dazed.

LESTAT

standing over Henri's dead body, his "feed" completed.

LOUIS

grabs up the sword in a blind rage and runs at Lestat to skewer him.

ANOTHER ANGLE

In SLOW MOTION, Lestat snatches the sword from Louis in his bare hands and snaps it in half like a matchstick.

LESTAT

And that is how I shall deal with you, if ever you try to thwart me again!

INT. FRENIERE MANSION - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on Babette, reacting to the grim news.

BABETTE

(controlling her emotions)

Is he... Is he...?

WIDEN TO INCLUDE Louis, hat in hand, the bearer of woeful tidings. A black Mammy stands by, herself in tears, holding a sleepy little Claudia.

LOUIS

I'm afraid so.

BABETTE

(stifles a cry)

Oh, dear God...!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

He won fairly -- but the coward
shot him in the back as he walked
away.

BABETTE

Oh, my poor Henri!

LOUIS

(with open arms)
My dearest Babette...

She goes to him for solace. He holds her comfortingly.

BABETTE

What will I do now? How shall we
manage?

LOUIS

Surely you know you can rely on
me.

BABETTE

Oh, Louis, I feel so lost. And
Claudia -- what's to become of her?

LOUIS

You have my word, no harm will come
to either of you.

BABETTE

(bursts into tears)
Oh, Henri... Henri...!

She runs from the room, sobbing.

CLAUDIA

(calling after her)
Maman! Maman!

Louis takes the child from her Mammy to comfort her.

LOUIS

It's all right, cherie. She'll
be all right.

CLAUDIA

Is my papa dead, Uncle Louis?

LOUIS

Yes, Claudia.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA
Will he go to heaven?

ON LOUIS

considering the question, with doubt in his own heart.

LOUIS
Of course he will, cherie. Of course he will.

END FLASHBACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MONTROSE PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on Kyle, as she fastens on this hint of romance and probes:

KYLE
I get the feeling that Louis de Rougemont might have been a little in love with Babette.

WIDEN TO INCLUDE Louis, himself caught up in the memory.

LOUIS
More than a little. I have only known one other love that was greater. But you must remember, she was the wife of a man I called my friend -- so, naturally, I kept my feelings to myself.

KYLE
Were you able to keep your promise -- to protect her from Lestat?

LOUIS
For a while. But we were beginning to have trouble with the slaves. More and more, there was talk of mysterious disappearances and deaths on the plantation. Our slaves were Africans -- come to us by way of Santo Domingo. They had brought their beliefs with them. Unlike our white neighbors, they knew about the 'undead.'...

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK: EXT. POINTE DU LAC - NIGHT

Louis rides up to the house and dismounts.

LOUIS (V.O.)
It wasn't long before they began
to connect the nocturnal prowlings
of their masters with the killings...

ENTRANCE

Louis climbs up the steps to the veranda and stops, alerted to someone lurking in the darkness. He walks silently along the veranda, then turns the corner. He stops, spotting someone.

HIS POV - BLACK OVERSEER

Unaware that he is being observed, the plantation seer, CALEB, peers in the library window, wide-eyed and aghast.

BACK TO LOUIS

as he steps forward out of the shadows.

LOUIS
Caleb, is that you?

Startled, Caleb spins round, shoots him one look, then runs off into the night. Puzzled, Louis moves to window and looks in at what Caleb was watching.

HIS POV - LESTAT (THROUGH WINDOW)

hoovering over a young black Maid, feeding.

BACK TO LOUIS

Furious, he turns and hurries off.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Louis bursts in, as Lestat looks up, wiping the girl's blood from his face fastidiously. He fails to notice drops still staining his shirtfront.

LOUIS
(enraged)
You madman! Are you that reckless?
Under our very roof! I want you
out of my house -- out of my life.
Tonight!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

I need hardly remind you, mon ami,
you're in no position to give me
orders. I am your master, and
you'd be wise not to forget it.

LOUIS

But you were observed! I beg you,
Lestat, the situation is fraught
with danger. The slaves are already
suspicious. There have been too
many deaths.

LESTAT

Luckily, you have a large fortune
-- and several other residences.
Now, perhaps you begin to understand
why I selected you.

LOUIS

I will not condone any more of this
horror!

LESTAT

You have no choice! You are one of
us now! Come, help me get rid of
the girl.

EXT. PLANTATION - CEMETERY - NIGHT

CLOSE on open marble sarcophagus-like tomb, containing
skeletal remains.

WIDEN, as Louis and Lestat lower the dead girl's body
into the coffin beside the skeleton, then with relative
ease, slide the heavy marble lid back into place.

CALEB (O.S.)

(shouting)

There they is! In the cemetery!

Louis and Lestat whirl around and look O.S.

THEIR POV - CALEB

leading a small band of slaves, carrying flaming torches
and farm implements to serve as weapons. They start swarm-
ing over a wrought iron fence that surrounds the cemetery.

BACK TO LOUIS AND LESTAT

LOUIS
Quickly! To the stables!

LESTAT
No! We shall lead them a merry
dance! Follow me!

They hurry off toward the bayou.

EXT. SWAMPS - NIGHT

Lestat runs through the swamp, leading Louis, nimbly picking a path between the bogs and mires with the assurance of night creatures.

CALEB AND THE MEN

in pursuit. Dividing his men into small groups, Caleb sends them off in different directions to search the area, then heads out alone.

LESTAT AND LOUIS

run across the swamp and pause to look back, standing on a solid rise of ground in the midst of a quagmire.

THEIR POV - TORCH

moving through the swamp toward them. Emerging from the moss-draped trees, Caleb raises his torch and peers into the darkness ahead, looking for the vampires. In his other hand, he carries a wicked-looking machete.

BACK TO LESTAT AND LOUIS

as Lestat laughs -- purposely -- to attract Caleb's attention.

CALEB

reacts, spots them and starts toward them, moving into the quagmire.

LOUIS AND LESTAT

as Louis realizes the danger Caleb's is in.

LOUIS
Stop, Caleb! Go back! Go back!

CALEB

hesitates, already knee-deep in the water. But in so doing, he begins to sink into the quicksand. He panics and tries to turn back, but it is too late.

LOUIS AND LESTAT

Louis runs to help Caleb, but can't reach the man's hand. Lestat drags him back as the man sinks into the mire.

LOUIS
(struggling)
Let me go!

LESTAT
(restraining him)
Don't be a fool! He was the only witness!

LOUIS
He must've told the others.

LESTAT
Who will believe their superstitious tales?

CALEB (O.S.)
Help! Help!

Louis looks back toward the drowning man in horror.

HIS POV - CALEB

struggling as he goes under.

BACK TO LOUIS AND LESTAT

as Louis, still reacting in horror, turns on Lestat.

LOUIS
Is there no limit to your evil?

LESTAT
Is the lion evil? The hawk? The jackal? Come, we must return to town. It'll be daybreak soon. We shall need horses.

LOUIS
We can't go back to Pointe du Lac.
We can never go back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

Fortunately, you have one friend left. I'm sure she won't let us down. Come!

As he leads Louis off, Louis glances back one last time.

SWAMP

No sign of Caleb now -- only a few last bubbles of air, then silence.

INT. FRENIERE MANSION - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on Babette, recoiling from her midnight visitors in revulsion.

BABETTE

Fiends! Monsters! How dare you come to this God-fearing house!

WIDEN TO REVEAL that she is still in her nightgown, having been rudely awakened, and carries a lamp. Louis and Lestat confront her, seeking horses.

LOUIS

Babette, I implore you...!

BABETTE

Stay away from me! I don't know what you've become -- but I know what you've been doing. The slaves are wild with stories.

LOUIS

Surely you don't believe them. I am your friend -- your protector.

BABETTE

(pointing at Lestat)
And what is he -- still stained with the blood of his last victim?

LESTAT

I, Madame? I am a dark angel -- an instrument of God's wrath. And we will have those horses -- or I will add your blood to these stains!

BABETTE

Get thee behind me, Satan!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And with that, she hurls the lamp at Lestat. But he dodges it, and it smashes against the drapes behind, igniting them.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Lestat is on her before she knows. He picks her up bodily and throws her across the room -- into the flames. She falls to the floor, a broken sparrow, obviously dead.

LOUIS

Babette!

Louis runs to her, but is driven back by the blazing holocaust that engulfs her. He beats at the flames, desperate to reach her. Lestat shrinks back, obviously terrified of the fire.

LESTAT

Leave her, you idiot!

But Louis persists, and Lestat is forced to drag him away and out the door.

INT. ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

Lestat tries to drag Louis outside, but Louis resists, struggling to go back.

LOUIS

Babette!

LESTAT

(restraining him)

She's dead, I tell you!

LOUIS

No! No!

LESTAT

Listen to me! The fire, it can destroy you -- as surely as the daylight!

LOUIS

I welcome it!

With that, he pulls away and starts back.

LESTAT

Fool!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Driven back by the heat, he turns and exits, leaving Louis to his fate.

LOUIS

trying to make his way back into the drawing room, but is driven back by the intense heat. Then:

CLAUDIA (O.S.)

Maman! Maman!

He spins round and looks to the top of the stairs.

HIS POV - CLAUDIA

standing at the top of the stairs in her nightie, clutching her favorite doll Minette, tears streaking her face, as flames lap at the staircase.

BACK TO LOUIS

Without a second thought, he is up the stairs, whisking the child up in his arms and carrying her out the door.

EXT. FRENIERE MANSION - NIGHT

Lestat drives a buckboard up, as Louis runs from the house with the child in his arms.

LESTAT

Leave her, Louis! There's no time!

CLOSER ANGLE, as Louis hands Claudia up to Lestat and climbs up beside him.

LOUIS

I'll not abandon her! She's coming with us!

Lestat considers the beautiful, sobbing little girl in his arms, then smiles a cat-like smile.

LESTAT

If you insist.

Instantly reading his thoughts, Louis reclaims the child protectively and looks Lestat straight in the eye.

LOUIS

(deadly)

I know what you're thinking. Never.
Never as long as I live.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lestat grins, then lashes the horses. The buckboard takes off into the night.

END FLASHBACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MONTROSE PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on Kyle, obviously unnerved by the tale, but determined to make light of it.

KYLE

If you're writing a novel, this is pretty good stuff...

WIDEN TO INCLUDE Louis, across the room at the fireplace.

KYLE

(continuing)

But I don't happen to be in the publishing business.

LOUIS

I'm not making this up. Every word is the truth.

KYLE

(losing patience)

Look, Mr. Montrose -- I've been trying to go along with this... this game of yours, but I came here for an interview. I want to know about the real Lewis D. Montrose, twentieth century billionaire. That's the man my viewers want to meet. I'm not here to listen to wild tales about Louis de Rougemont, eighteenth century vampire extraordinaire. Now, if you're not willing to cooperate, I might as well pack up and go...

But as she reaches to switch off her tape recorder, she accidentally knocks her champagne glass off the table.

CLOSER ANGLE, as Louis materializes instantaneously at her side and catches the falling glass before it hits the floor. Kyle reacts, dumbfounded.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

Don't worry about the champagne.
It won't spot.

He puts the glass back on the table and refills it.

KYLE

(a weak laugh)

Not bad. I don't know how you
did that -- but it was a pretty
clever stunt.

She downs the fresh champagne quickly, then stands as if
to go. Instead, she glares at him defiantly.

KYLE

(continuing)

Now -- see if you can catch this!

With that, she hurls the glass across the room at the
fireplace.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Louis is at the fireplace to catch the glass in his hand.

LOUIS

(not flippant; a
serious point)

That's love-thirty.

Kyle sinks to the sofa, weak at the knees.

KYLE

That's impossible. No one can do
that.

LOUIS

(evenly)

You just saw it.

KYLE

My eyes must be playing tricks on
me -- or else you put something in
this champagne. That's why you
didn't drink any.

He offers her the glass back, unflinching, intensely ser-
ious.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

(a serious challenge)

It's still your serve. Care to try again?

Kyle gathers her purse and tape recorder and gets up with as much cool as she can muster, then starts to edge toward the door, backing away as casually as possible, keeping her eye on him as she goes.

KYLE

Well, this has really been very interesting... but I think it's time for me to go...

ANOTHER ANGLE - AT THE DOORWAY

But when she turns to walk out, he is there -- and he is very close. She gasps aloud. He puts out an arm to block her way, his gaze hypnotically intense, his intention serious -- whether deadly or sexual would be hard to say.

LOUIS

Don't leave now. You'll miss the best part.

He reaches out to touch her, and Kyle faints.

CLOSE ON KYLE

lying on the sofa, unconscious, as a damp cloth is applied to her forehead. She stirs, and her eyes flicker open.

WIDEN TO INCLUDE Louis, ministering to her with concern.

LOUIS

Are you all right?

Remembering, her hand moves to her throat anxiously, exploring. He smiles, understanding.

LOUIS

(continuing)

You have nothing to worry about.

KYLE

(sitting up)

What the hell are you?

LOUIS

I've been trying to tell you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KYLE

How did you... how did you move
like that -- so fast?

LOUIS

You simply experienced a clash of
realities. In my reality, I moved
without haste. In yours, I moved
faster than your eye could see.
Like the wings of a hummingbird.
You see, time is not our master.
For me a year is but a day, an hour
but a moment. We race through the
centuries...

(a beat)

Would you like to hear more?

She studies this strange man, utterly serious now and with
a new element of fascination, then reaches into her purse,
takes out the tape recorder, places it on the coffee table
and switches it on.

KYLE

You and Lestat had just escaped to
New Orleans with the girl, Claudia.

MOVE IN to a TIGHT SHOT on Louis, as he resumes his tale,
almost transported by the memories of his lovely young
protegee:

LOUIS

Ah, Claudia! Lestat and I set up
house in town, with Claudia as our
ward. The lawyer Picard made all
the necessary arrangements after
her mother's tragic death. We
engaged a governess, Madame Duval
-- a spinster, newly arrived from
France -- to look after her during
the daylight hours. But in the
evenings, she was ours -- all ours.
If ever I have known happiness in
this state, it was during those
precious years, while Claudia was
growing from a child into a young
woman...

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK: INT. DE ROUGEMONT TOWNHOUSE - MUSIC ROOM - DAY

CLOSE on Claudia, now a radiant young lady in her early teens, an exquisite doll-like beauty not unlike Kyle Peterson herself. She is concentrating with the aloof poise of a ballerina; while a ballet piece is being played with distinct rhythm on the harpsichord O.S. The year is 1805.

WIDEN TO REVEAL that she is at the barre, being put through her paces by a strict Dancing Master, who taps out the rhythm with a staff, while a Harpsichordist provides the music.

LOUIS (V.O.)

How we doted on her! An endless stream of dressmakers, shoemakers, milliners came to the house to outfit her in the latest fashions. Dancing masters, music teachers, no expense was spared...

A SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1) EXT. PADDOCK - DAY - A Riding Master teaches Claudia the elegant techniques of riding sidesaddle;
- 2) INT. CONSERVATORY - DAY - A Painting Instructor encourages Claudia's efforts at painting a still life of flowers;
- 3) INT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY - A Music Teacher instructs Claudia in singing to the accompaniment of a flute;
- 4) INT. CLAUDIA'S ROOM - DAY - Claudia stands on a dressmaker's pedestal, while her Dressmaker pins and tucks a new frock for her;
- 5) INT. CLAUDIA'S ROOM - DAY - Claudia sits, examining the lathe, while her Bootmaker fits a new pair of boots to her trim young feet;
- 6) INT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY - The Music Teacher instructs Claudia in the delicate techniques of playing the harp;
- 7) INT. DRAWING ROOM - DAY - Claudia practices pouring and serving tea under MME DUVAL'S tutelage;
- 8) INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT - Claudia selects a cigar from a box held by Mme Duval, rolls it, listening, sniffs it, clips it, then, with a nod of approval from Mme Duval, presents it to her Uncle Louis, lighting it for him. Louis smiles at her adoringly;

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

- 9) INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT - Claudia embroiders on a frame by the fire. She pricks her finger with the needle, then sucks it quickly, unaware of Lestat's sidelong glance...

LOUIS (V.O.)

She filled my life with joy, my darkness with light. Even Lestat seemed to fall under her spell. For a time, he was almost... I was going to say, human. At least he was discreet in his nightly prowling and indulged in his blood-letting far from our happy house. As for me, I was content to survive on the blood of livestock and poultry. The routine seemed to work remarkably well -- for a while. I should've known it couldn't last -- but I was naive in those days...

INT. CLAUDIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on Claudia, slipping a lovely new frock over her head, and admiring herself with youthful joy in her mirror. She is now in her mid-teens and clearly a young woman. The year is 1808.

WIDEN TO REVEAL Mme Duval and a Maid dancing attendance on her. Noticing the indiscretion, Mme Duval quickly adjusts the girl's bodice to cover her cleavage more modestly. Then, to Claudia's delight, the TINKLE of the FRONT GATE O.S.

CLAUDIA

(excitedly)

They're home! They're home!

She turns to run out, but pauses briefly to look back in the mirror and -- making sure Mme Duval isn't looking -- quickly readjust her cleavage to reveal just a little bit more. Then, she runs out.

INT. ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

Claudia bounces gaily down the stairs and flings herself into the arms of her two handsome uncles. Lestat swings her around, making her giddy; Louis teases her, holding a velvet jewel box out of her reach, then allowing her to capture it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Opening the box, she goes into ecstasies over the bijou he has bought her, then allows him to put it on for her and examines it in the mirror, before honoring him with joyful kisses of appreciation.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Lestat and I kept to our rooms during the days, of course, only to emerge after sundown -- to re-enter the house and spend the evenings with Claudia...

CLAUDIA

Where're we going tonight? What's the surprise? Please don't tease! Tell me! Tell me!

Lestat turns to Mme Duval, who is standing on the stairs.

LESTAT

Has she finished her lessons, Madame?

MME DUVAL

Oui, monsieur.

LOUIS

Did she do her Latin?

MME DUVAL

(hesitantly)

Well...

Claudia clears her throat loudly and implores Mme Duval with her eyes.

MME DUVAL

(continuing; charitably)

... She did apply herself.

LOUIS

(teasing; dubiously)

Hm. What do you say, Lestat?

LESTAT

I always say -- virtue must be rewarded.

LOUIS

Right you are!

(producing tickets)

Then, we're off to the ballet!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA
 (hugging him; thrilled)
 Oh, Uncle Louis, Uncle Louis! I
 adore you!

ON Lestat, watching them, oddly satisfied.

EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

CLOSE on a theatrical poster, dated 1808, outside the Theatre Odeon: "M. et Mme. Alexandre Placide present their internationally famous Dancing Ballet, THE BIRD CATCHER, direct from Paris, France."

INT. THEATER - STAGE - NIGHT

A florid ballet of the period concludes to appreciative applause, as the curtain falls. M. and Mme. Placide step through the curtain to take their calls to cheers.

THEATER BOX

Louis, Lestat and Claudia applaud enthusiastically, a most attractive trio.

CLAUDIA
 Wasn't it wonderful! I've decided
 -- I'm going to be a dancer.

LESTAT
 It seems to me only last week,
 cherie, you were going to be a
 famous singer.

LOUIS
 And the week before that, a
 bareback rider in the circus.

CLAUDIA
 (a pretty pout)
 Tease, if you must. But I intend
 to do everything before I die.

Lestat shoots a quick look at Louis, who catches it, understands what he's thinking, defies him with his stare.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

CLOSE on an éclair, as Claudia sinks her fork into it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WIDEN, as she pops the morsel daintily into her mouth, while Lestat and Louis look on, trying to conceal their revulsion. But Claudia catches Lestat's shudder.

LESTAT

Disgusting!

CLAUDIA

You surprise me, Uncle Paul. I thought the French all adored their patisseries.

LESTAT

All the French never agreed on anything.

LOUIS

Except the Revolution. And those who didn't lost their heads.

LESTAT

Some of us managed to keep ours.

A WAITER comes by and offers to remove the untouched plate before Lestat.

WAITER

The dessert was not to your taste, monsieur?

LESTAT

The true gourmet eats with his eyes. I require only a morsel. You may take it sway.

WAITER

(to Louis)

And you, monsieur -- finished?

LOUIS

Yes, please.

The waiter takes their plates and withdraws.

CLAUDIA

But you barely tasted it.

LOUIS

I'm afraid it's too rich for me at this late hour.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

That's what you always say. And you never eat the suppers Mme Duval leaves you, either.

LESTAT

A charming woman, but hardly the best of cooks.

CLAUDIA

(lightly; amused)

Sometimes I think you two must live on air.

She laughs. Louis and Lestat enjoy the laugh with her.

EXT. DE ROUGEMONT TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

A carriage brings Claudia, Louis and Lestat to their door, and they enter the house, still singing and laughing.

INT. DE ROUGEMONT TOWNHOUSE - ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

Claudia bids Louis and Lestat a fond good night, kissing each on the cheek as she goes.

CLAUDIA

Thank you for a wonderful evening!
I adore you. I adore you both.

She runs upstairs.

CLOSER ANGLE, as Louis watches her ascend, his eyes adoring her, utterly captivated by her. Lestat moves to his side, observing his enchantment with the girl.

LESTAT

(into his ear)

Why don't you take her, Louis?
She's old enough now. Make her one of us. I'll show you how.

Louis turns on him, grim.

LOUIS

Why would I inflict this curse upon the only creature I love?

LESTAT

Would you rather watch her grow old before your eyes -- Grow old and die?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

Death might be preferable to this
living hell. At least it's natural.

LESTAT

(mocking him)

Natural! You still haven't embraced
your fate, have you? You'll always
be a disappointment. Don't be a
fool! Take her!

LOUIS

(firmly)

Not Claudia. Never Claudia.

INT. CLAUDIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on Claudia, kneeling beside her bed in prayer, sur-
rounded by her doll collection.

CLAUDIA

... and God bless Uncle Louis and
Uncle Paul, who have been so good
to me, and keep them from harm this
night and forever more. Amen.

WIDEN, as she jumps into bed, hugging her doll Minette,
and lets Mme Duval tuck her in.

CLAUDIA

(continuing)

I do love them so, Madame.

MME DUVAL

And they love you, ma petite.

(a loving kiss)

Sweet dreams.

She takes the lamp, and exits.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - NIGHT

Mme Duval comes out of Claudia's room with the lamp and
goes off to her own room.

PAN to Louis, watching her go from the shadows. He moves
to Claudia's door. Then, making sure the governess has
gone, opens the door a crack to peek inside.

HIS POV - CLAUDIA

She is asleep, an angel in repose.

BACK TO LOUIS

torn, yearning for her, but also fearing for her. Then, abruptly, he closes the door, as if to shut off his own evil thoughts.

LOUIS
(to himself)

Never!

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

CLOSE on a window. Outside, lightning cleaves the night sky, followed by a clap of THUNDER.

PAN to Lestat, going over the accounts, alone. He looks up, as Louis bursts in in a state of controlled apprehension.

LOUIS
Where is she?

LESTAT
(misunderstanding)
In bed with a fever -- where she's been all day.

LOUIS
(impatiently)
Not Claudia -- Mme Duval!

LESTAT
I suggest you look for her in her room.

LOUIS
She's not there. I've looked everywhere.

LESTAT
Perhaps she's gone out.

LOUIS
At night? Unescorted?

LESTAT
She must be somewhere in the house.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

The two men complete their fruitless search and converge to compare notes in hushed tones.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT
(uneasily)
Not a sign of her.

LOUIS
What did I tell you?

LESTAT
She must've gone out.

Louis looks toward the stairs that lead up to the attic.

LOUIS
The attic!

They hurry up the attic stairs.

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

CLOSE on a fold of skirt, protruding from under the lid of an old steamer trunk.

WIDEN, as Louis flings the trunk open to reveal the dead body of Mme Duval inside.

CLOSER ANGLE, as Louis bends close to examine her -- and discovers her throat punctured by telltale vampire bites. He turns on Lestat, who stands by with a lamp.

LOUIS
How could you? Here -- in this house!

LESTAT
(uneasily)
Why would I do anything so foolish?

LOUIS
It wouldn't be the first time!
(looking at body)
What can I tell her? She loved this woman as her own mother.

LESTAT
(evasively)
We'll think of something.

LOUIS
(snaps)
We'll think of something?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (CONT'D)

You'll think of something! This
is your doing.

(noticing something
about the body)

What's this?

He reaches for one of Mme Duval's hands.

CLOSE ON HAND

still clutching a bright yellow ribbon of silk, torn off
in her struggle for life. Louis extricates it carefully,
deliberately.

BACK TO SCENE

as Louis holds up the ribbon, putting the puzzle together
with dawning horror.

LOUIS

Claudia's hair ribbon...?

(realizing)

This wasn't your work, was it?

It was Claudia! She did this...

LESTAT

So it would appear.

LOUIS

(appalled)

You've taken her! You've done
to her what you did to me!

LESTAT

I did it for you, Louis. For us.
To keep her young. Now she's ours
forever.

LOUIS

(mounting fury)

I warned you about Claudia!

LESTAT

You're only upset because you didn't
get there first.

LOUIS

You filth!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis goes for Lestat. They struggle violently, as the storm rages outside. Lestat proves himself the more powerful, the more agile. But suddenly, motivated by rage, Louis finds his strength, picks up Lestat bodily and hurls him across the room.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Lestat lands on his feet, unperturbed, but duly impressed.

LESTAT

Congratulations, Louis! You've discovered your strength.

LOUIS

I'll tear you apart!

LESTAT

You'll have to catch me first!

Louis lunges at him, but Lestat isn't there and appears instantly somewhere out of reach to taunt him. Louis flies at him again, only to see Lestat disappear out the window onto the roof. He follows him out, undeterred.

EXT. ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

Louis comes out of the attic to find Lestat taunting him from the edge of the roof. All round them, the WIND HOWLS, LIGHTNING CRACKLES, THUNDER RUMBLES. Louis runs at him, intending to shove him off. But Lestat makes a sudden, bold, heart-stopping, flying leap to the next roof, leaving Louis teetering on the edge. Louis looks down in fear.

HIS POV - THE DROP

precipitous, four stories down to an alley.

BACK TO LOUIS

as he pulls back quickly, afraid of falling, then looks across to Lestat on the next roof, duly amazed at his feat.

LESTAT

taunting him from the next roof.

LESTAT

Go ahead, jump! Afraid you might hurt yourself?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT (CONT'D)

(laughs)

You see, Louis? You still have much to learn. And I'm the only one who can teach you!

He turns, laughing, then vanishes across the rooftops into the storm, swallowed up in a flash of lightning and a CLAP OF THUNDER.

ON LOUIS

reacting.

INT. CLAUDIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on Claudia, asleep in bed. Louis' hand gently caresses her lovely face.

WIDEN, as she awakens to see Louis, sitting beside her, tears welling in his eyes, his heart aching for her.

CLAUDIA

What's happened to me, Uncle Louis?
I feel so strange. Such terrible nightmares...

LOUIS

Don't be frightened, cherie.
Everything will be all right. I'll look after you.

CLAUDIA

(smiles wanly)
You look so sad.

LOUIS

I'll never forgive him. Never.

He gathers her up in his arms and holds her to him, vengeance burning in his eyes.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS SQUARE - NIGHT

Lestat walks across the square, holding Claudia's hand. She is now dressed to look like a young woman fallen on hard times. They stop, as Lestat spots a well-dressed older GENTLEMAN approaching through the mist.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (V.O.)

But there was nothing I could do --
nothing I was aware of at that point.
Claudia was his. Lestat had become
her Master and her mentor in the
fine art of nocturnal survival...

LESTAT

(indicating man)

There -- that one.

As he retreats to the shadows, Claudia sits on a park bench,
clutching her threadbare shawl about her shoulders and be-
gins to sob softly to herself.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as the gentleman's attention is drawn to the pathetic,
sobbing figure on the bench under the gaslight lamp. He
approaches her.

GENTLEMAN

My child?

(lifts her chin to
see her face)

You're far too pretty for so many
tears. What seems to be the
trouble?

CLAUDIA

Forgive me, sir. I am a stranger
in your city. I am penniless and
have no place to go. I have not
eaten in three days.

GENTLEMAN

Three days! Well, we'll soon remedy
that. I know a little cafe not far
from here that has excellent food.
Come, I'll take you there.

As he leads her off across the square, Claudia casts a
quick look back over her shoulder.

LESTAT

watching from the shadows. He tips his hat to her and
smiles, pleased. She has learned well, indeed.

EXT. SQUARE - STREET CORNER - NIGHT

The gentleman signals a carriage, then helps Claudia get in.

GENTLEMAN

(to DRIVER)

The Pontchartrain Cafe on Basin Street, driver.

The carriage drives off.

EXT. CAFE - NIGHT

CLOSE on street sign: "BASIN STREET".

WIDEN, as the carriage pulls up in front of the cafe. The driver waits a beat for his fares to get out. But when no one emerges from the cab, he calls to them over his shoulder.

DRIVER

Here we are, sir!

(no reply; after
a beat)

Pontchartrain Cafe, sir!

Still no reply. He climbs down from his seat and opens the cab door to investigate.

DRIVER

(continuing)

We're here, s...

(reacts, horrified)

Good Lord!

HIS POV - GENTLEMAN

slumped over in the back seat, completely drained and obviously dead. Claudia is nowhere in sight.

ZOOM IN TIGHT on the two telltale vampire punctures in his neck.

BACK TO DRIVER

as he reacts now to the SOUND of light FOOTSTEPS, running off up the street. He looks in their direction.

CLAUDIA

running up the deserted street and vanishing, swallowed in the mist.

END FLASHBACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MONTROSE PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kyle's curiosity is now greater than her fear, as she listens to the intriguing tale with more and more involvement -- drawn to the man now, as much as his story.

LOUIS

And so it went for a number of years -- Claudia learning from Lestat, as I had learned from him before, but proving a far more willing pupil than I. Yet how jealously he guarded his secrets -- how grudgingly he doled them out to us, as if he feared we might learn too much.

KYLE

What do you mean -- Claudia was a more willing pupil?

LOUIS

Where I shunned human blood, Claudia had no such qualms...

FLASHBACK: EXT. NEW ORLEANS PARK - NIGHT

ANGLE on a Policeman of the period, whistling a happy tune, while he walks his beat on a foggy night. (It is now around 1820, and the fashions have changed accordingly.)

CLAUDIA

in her waif's outfit, bent over the body of a bearded Gentleman on a park bench, looks up at the O.S. SOUND of WHISTLING, fresh blood on her lips. Alerted, she abandons her feed and runs off into the fog.

LOUIS (V.O.)

You see, Lestat had taken her when she was too young to have developed any serious moral scruples...

POLICEMAN

stops whistling and reacts to the O.S. SOUND of Claudia's retreating FOOTSTEPS. Straining to see through the fog, he makes out the figure slumped on the park bench just ahead and moves to investigate.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Whereas I, who had once contemplated a career in medicine, had already developed a profound respect for human life...

CLAUDIA

as she runs away. Suddenly, Lestat appears, grabs her by the hand and runs with her, ducking into a tunnel.

LOUIS (V.O.)

... too profound for my own good,
as Lestat never ceased to remind
me...

POLICEMAN

examining the body on the bench, discovers that he is dead. He blows his whistle after the escaping murderer, signalling her to stop, then hurries after her.

TUNNEL

Their FOOTSTEPS ECHOING in the dark, dank tunnel, Claudia and Lestat run toward the light at the far end. At the SOUND of the police WHISTLE, Lestat turns back to find the Policeman on their heels. He flies at the man to take him.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Also by taking her so young, he
had cheated her of almost every
faculty a vampire needs in order
to survive -- chiefly, strength...

CLAUDIA AND LESTAT

Reaching the end of the tunnel, Claudia finds herself trapped by an iron-barred gate closing it in. She tries desperately to bend the bars apart, while Lestat takes the Policeman in the b.g., but she hasn't the strength for the task. Leaving his victim, Lestat runs to her, pushes her aside and bends the mighty bars apart for her. Claudia slips through the opening; he follows her through; they escape into the swirling fog.

END FLASHBACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MONTROSE PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Louis continues his narrative:

LOUIS

But in time I began to understand
Lestat's purpose. He was determined
to keep both Claudia and me in the
dark, determined that we would never
know what manner of creatures we were.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Thus, he would ensure his hold over us.

KYLE

Do you mean to say, you didn't even know you were vampires?

LOUIS

At the time, we'd never heard of such a thing.

KYLE

But your special... powers? Didn't you know how to use them -- instinctively?

LOUIS

Everything had to be learned. We were fledgling nightbirds, trying desperately to find our wings. Our only example was Lestat, who would tell us nothing. Yet, he himself seemed capable of the most extraordinary feats. I had seen him freeze victims in their tracks...

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK: INT. A BEDROOM - NIGHT

From the shadows of a New Orleans bedroom of the period, Lestat wakes a sleeping young Woman and draws her from her bed, across the room to him, where she delivers herself, entranced, into his deadly embrace.

LOUIS (V.O.)

I had seen him draw them to him, as a magnet draws iron, simply with the power of his will...

EXT. A HIGH BUILDING - NIGHT

CLOSE on Lestat, as he crawls with spider-like ease over the damp stones of a crumbling old building.

LOUIS (V.O.)

I had seen him scale towering heights with an ease that seemed to defy gravity -- and not the slightest concern for his own safety...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PULL BACK TO REVEAL that Lestat is not climbing the wall, but actually descending, head first, to the ground.

EXT. A PARK - NIGHT

A terrified young Man backs away from the snarl of Lestat, fangs bared for the attack. He stops in his tracks, turns, and is shocked to find Lestat not in his path behind him. He turns to run off another path, finds Lestat blocking his escape there, as well. As he turns in a circle, desperately seeking an avenue of escape, he finds himself surrounded, as in a half-circle by a ring of Lestats, perhaps six or eight, all laughing at him mockingly, all closing in for the kill.

LOUIS (V.O.)

I had seen him confound his victims with a bravura display of speed that reduced them to helplessly fluttering moths, caught in his deadly web...

END FLASHBACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MONTROSE PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Louis continues.

LOUIS

And I suspected there was more, more he was keeping to himself. Perhaps powers I myself could command. I grew desperate to know -- what I was, where I came from, what hope there might be for poor Claudia and me. So, behind his back I began my search, my quest for knowledge -- the knowledge that would set us free. But where to begin...?

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK: EXT. MONASTERY - DUSK

ESTABLISH a remote monastery, somewhere outside New Orleans. The BELLS TOLL vespers, as the Dominican monks file into the chapel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (V.O.)

The library of a Dominican monastery
provided my first major breakthrough...

INT. MONASTERY - LIBRARY - NIGHT

CLOSE on an ancient tome (Calmet's "Dissertation on
Vampires"), open to a page with an engraving depicting
a vampire being staked in his coffin.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Who better than the Dominicans,
former agents of the Inquisition, I
reasoned, to take an interest in the
origins and habits of creatures of
darkness, such as I.

WIDEN TO REVEAL Louis poring over the book among the musty
archives.

LOUIS (V.O.)

(continuing)

At first glance Abbé Calmet's
'Dissertation on Vampires' seemed
to be the key to everything we were
looking for...

Alerted by the SOUND of someone approaching, he closes
the book quickly, snuffs out his candle and shrinks into
the shadows.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as a Dominican Monk appears, carrying a lamp. He pauses,
smelling the scent of the freshly extinguished candle
wick. Raising his lamp, he looks about curiously. There
is no one in sight -- but the window is open. Shutting
it, he shrugs and shuffles off to his reading.

INT. SECOND NEW ORLEANS TOWNHOUSE - LIBRARY - NIGHT

CLOSE on Claudia, looking up from the old book in amaze-
ment.

CLAUDIA

It says here that we're known as
vampires!

WIDEN TO INCLUDE Louis, reading over her shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

(continuing; reading)

Vampire: A Magyar or gypsy word,
meaning 'undead' or 'living dead.'

(reacting)

That's ridiculous! We're not dead.
And we don't live in graves, either.
Look here...

LOUIS

(reading)

'How to detect a vampire: They
cast no shadow or reflection...'

CLAUDIA

(dismissively)

Nonsense! This book is no help at
all.

LOUIS

No, listen... 'A vampire is frightened
by fire and daylight.' That's
certainly true. '... may be repelled
by the crucifix, garlic flowers or
wolfsbane...'

(reacting)

Garlic? I would never have known.

CLAUDIA

And there's a crucifix right over my
bed.

LOUIS

On the other hand, wolfsbane is
aconite, a deadly poison.

CLAUDIA

Then it would affect anyone who ate
it.

LOUIS

The question is, would it kill us.

CLAUDIA

Let's not experiment, shall we?

(reading)

'A vampire may pass through small
spaces -- keyholes or gaps under
doors -- as a cloud of mist or dust
notes...' I only wish I could.
Wouldn't that be fun?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

Perhaps that's how our speed appears to them. But look here... 'The vampire possesses mesmeric or magnetic powers. It may freeze or draw a victim, as a snake does a bird or rabbit.'

CLAUDIA

I've seen Lestat do that often enough.

LOUIS

(reading)

'If the vampire isn't found and rendered harmless, it may kill off all the members of a family, then start on the inhabitants of a village and its animals...'

(realizing; bitterly)

Precisely what Lestat did to my hapless family.

CLAUDIA

(reading on)

'Nor can men deliver themselves from these attacks, unless they dig the vampire up from its grave, drive a sharp stake through its body, cut off its head and tear out its heart, or else burn the body to ashes.'

(shudders; appalled)

Oh, Louis, how awful!

LOUIS

(perceiving hope for redemption)

But don't you see? It means we're natural creatures, not supernatural. If we can be killed by any of these means, we must be a part of nature, not evil demons conjured up by Satan. At least, about that Lestat wasn't lying.

CLAUDIA

(with excitement)

I don't care about any of that. The important thing is that there are others like us. There must be! We're not alone!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

Yes, but where are they? Aside from Lestat, I've never set eyes on another -- 'vampire.'

(slams book shut;
hands it to Claudia)

There's so much more we must know before we can be free. We must find the answers! We must!

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Lestat enters unexpectedly, wearing a dashing outfit. Instantly, Claudia hides the book behind her. Louis moves to cover her from Lestat's view.

LESTAT

I don't like these new fashions at all. The collars are most uncomfortable. What do you think?

He does a turn for them, then notices that they are not at ease.

LESTAT

(continuing; suspicious)

What are you two up to? What're you hiding behind your back, Claudia?

CLAUDIA

Nothing -- just a book.

LESTAT

Give it to me.

Reluctantly, she hands him the book, casting a quick glance at Louis. One look at it, and Lestat understands instantly what's been going on. His face clouds with anger.

LESTAT

(continuing)

Where did you get this?

LOUIS

It's time for some answers, Lestat.

LESTAT

Answers?

LOUIS

Where are the others?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

What others?

LOUIS

How did we come into being?

LESTAT

You know very well. I created you.

LOUIS

How? I know there's more to it than the mere exchange of blood.

LESTAT

Why do you need to know these things? You should be content just as you are.

CLAUDIA

It gets so lonely, just the three of us. We yearn for company.

LESTAT

(irritably)

Ungrateful child! You ought to be thankful that I gave you everlasting youth. Look at you! You're already a mature woman -- yet, still you look like a girl. And so you shall, long after any mere mortal has turned to dust.

LOUIS

If you don't tell us what we need to know, we'll find others like us who can.

LESTAT

Imbecile! They'd see you coming a mile off and destroy you. Vampires are killers. They're not to be trusted. They're lone predators and jealous of their territory. When you do find two or more together, it's for safety only. Even then, one will be the master, the others slaves -- as you are with me.

LOUIS

Then there are others!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

(excitedly)

Oh, please, Uncle Paul -- take us to them! Let us meet them! I want friends! I want a family!

LESTAT

(impatiently)

We are your family! I am your master! That is all you need to know!

LOUIS

No! If anything were to happen to you, we wouldn't know how to survive. We must know everything -- and now!

LESTAT

(angrily)

I have warned you before, Louis, don't push me too far!

LOUIS

Never forget, Lestat, you still need me.

LESTAT

Need you? I need no one! Do you think I've been idle all these years?

LOUIS

I'm fully aware of your pathetic embezzling. But at this moment, my only concern is Claudia's happiness and our survival. Now I say you will do this! If not for me, you will do it for Claudia! Or, so help me, it will be the worse for you!

LESTAT

No one threatens me! Be glad I made you what you are! Or I shall take back the gift I gave you and break you into a thousand pieces!

With that, he flings the book into the fire. Claudia bursts into tears and runs from the room.

LOUIS

Claudia!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He starts after her, but Lestat restrains him.

LESTAT
(deadly earnest)
Remember, mon ami -- I am her
master. She belongs to me!

Louis pulls free of Lestat's grip, then exits after
Claudia. Lestat looks back to the fireplace.

CLOSE ON THE BOOK

going up in flames.

EXT. SECOND NEW ORLEANS TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Claudia returns home and enters the house. The year is
1840.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

Claudia enters and removes her hat and coat. She glances
into the sitting room, then the library, but sees no one.
She goes upstairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - NIGHT

Claudia moves down the hall, but hears a NOISE O.S., as
she passes Lestat's room. She pauses to listen at the
door, which is ajar. Puzzled, she pushes it open.

INT. LESTAT'S ROOM - NIGHT

Seated on the floor before a trunk at the foot of the bed,
apparently going through its contents, Louis looks up,
startled, as Claudia enters.

CLAUDIA
(reacting)
What're you doing in Lestat's room?

LOUIS
Looking for answers.

CLAUDIA
Are you mad? He'll kill you if he
catches you.

LOUIS
Don't worry. He's gone out. Look
-- I think I've found something.

CLOSER ANGLE

as Claudia joins him. He produces a handwritten paper, yellow with age and written on stationery withered at the top.

LOUIS

It's in French. A letter from Paris, dated seventeen ninety-four. Listen...

(translating)

'My dear Baron Lestat...'

CLAUDIA

(reacting)

Baron?

LOUIS

(continuing reading)

'...I regret to inform you that I cannot send you any proceeds from the sale of your land, as the Revolutionary Government has confiscated your family estates. I am pleased, however, to say that all the members of our little circle have managed to escape the zeal of Madame La Guillotine. I trust you are finding the charmingly naive inhabitants of the New World suitable to your taste. I remain your obedient servant, Santiago Molero.'

CLAUDIA

Then, Lestat's descended from the aristocracy.

LOUIS

And you see what this implies? There are others -- and they're in Paris.

CLAUDIA

But this was written over thirty years ago.

LOUIS

He says they escaped.

(resolved)

We must go to France!

They look at one another, both instantly aware of the impossibility.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA
 (disheartened)
 He'll never let us go. Will he?

LOUIS
 (honestly; defeated)
 No.

CLAUDIA
 (miserably)
 Oh, Louis -- Why did it have to be
him, and not you?

LOUIS
 I wanted to spare you.

CLAUDIA
 Spare me? An eternity with you?

LOUIS
 That was my mistake. It will
 torment me the rest of my days.
 Now you are his. I have lost you
 forever. Oh, my darling Claudia...

CLAUDIA
 I love you, Louis.

He takes her in his arms and kisses her, tenderly
 fortigly at first, then intensely, passionately.

CLAUDIA
 (continuing)
 Why couldn't it have been you? I
 hate him! I hate him!

As she clings to him fiercely, he cannot see the dangerous
 thoughts that she is entertaining.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

CLOSE on a velvet box, as Lestat flips open the lid to
 reveal an exquisite pair of diamond cufflinks inside.

CLAUDIA (O.S.)
 Happy birthday, Uncle Paul!

WIDEN, as Claudia kisses Lestat's cheek, while he admires
 the gift. Louis stands by, watching.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT
They're exquisite, cherie. Thank
you.

CLAUDIA
I picked them out, but they're
really from both of us.

LESTAT
Thank you, Louis.

LOUIS
It's nothing, really.

CLAUDIA
Exactly how old are you, Uncle Paul
Lestat slips the cufflinks on.

LESTAT
I stopped counting after the first
hundred years.
(admiring links)
I shall wear these to the theater
tonight.

CLAUDIA
Oh, I forgot to tell you. We're
not going.

LOUIS
Not going?

CLAUDIA
I have a special surprise for Uncle
Paul. Something I arranged all by
myself.

LESTAT
Now what're you up to, you wicked
girl?

CLAUDIA
You'll see. Come along.

She leads him by the hand out the door and across the
hall to the parlor doors.

INT. HALL - AT PARLOR DOORS

Claudia slides the doors open to reveal the volumptous
figure of a beautiful young Woman, reclining on a sofa,
half undressed and seemingly dozing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA
For you, Uncle Paul. My special
gift.

LESTAT
She's delectable.

CLAUDIA
I had to ply her with cognac while
she waited. I'm afraid she may
have had a little too much. But
she's paid for and all yours.

Lestat moves into the room and approaches his sleeping
victim, as Claudia closes the doors again, turns and
smiles to herself, relishing her secret.

LOUIS
(observing her)
What are you up to?

CLAUDIA
Wait and see.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

CLOSE on playing cards, as Claudia takes a trick.

WIDEN TO REVEAL Claudia and Louis pass the time over a
game of cards, tensely waiting. They look at each other
in silence at the O.S. SOUNDS of Lestat's LAUGHTER, while
he indulges his debauchery with the whore in the parlor,
then continue their game. After a silence, during which
only the SOUND of the grandfather CLOCK can be heard TICK-
ING, there is a sudden SCREAM from the young WOMAN in the
parlor. It is followed by a dreadful silence, during
which Claudia grows extremely tense and bites at her lip
-- as if awaiting the outcome.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as the parlor doors open abruptly. Lestat appears from
within, the young Woman's blood still smearing his mouth
and shirt front. But instead of pleasure, his face is a
mask of horror and fury. He lurches into the study and
confronts them, clutching at his throat.

LESTAT
(croaks)
I've been poisoned! Her blood...!
You're trying to kill me...!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He lurches toward them, then pitches to the floor, convulsed, in the throes of an agonizing death. Then abruptly, he falls still, eyes staring, sightlessly. Louis quickly bends down and feels his pulse.

LOUIS

There is no pulse.
(looks up at her)
How?

Claudia produces a small blue apothecary's bottle from her pocket.

CLAUDIA

Wolfsbane. Aconite. I poisoned the girl's drink with aconite. It was already in her blood.

EXT. BAYOU - SWAMPS - NIGHT

Louis poles a flatboat through the swamp. Then, with Claudia's help, he slips the sheet-wrapped bodies of Lestat and the prostitute into the murky water with a SPLASH that ECHOES through the bayou.

EXT. ROAD - CART - NIGHT

With Louis at the reins and Claudia at his side, they drive back to town along a deserted bayou road.

LOUIS AND CLAUDIA

drive along in silence for a moment.

LOUIS

Evil begets evil. Now we are no better than he was.

CLAUDIA

He was a monster. We should've done it sooner. I say, good riddance!

Louis looks at her, disturbed by her ruthlessness.

CLAUDIA

(continuing)
Why do you look at me like that?

LOUIS

You've changed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

Of course I've changed. You just haven't noticed. I may look the innocent, but inside this girlish body there's a grown woman -- a woman with a mind of her own.

(with new verve;
excitement)

And this woman wants to go to Paris.

LOUIS

(taking whip from
holster)

Then to Paris she shall go!
(lashing horses)

Ya! Ya!

The horses take off at a full gallop, racing them through the woods.

INT. THIRD NEW ORLEANS TOWNHOUSE - PARLOR - NIGHT

Now dressed for travel, Claudia searches under the dust sheets that cover the furniture, anxiously looking for something she has lost. Louis enters, checking the time on his pocket watch.

LOUIS

Claudia, please! The ship sails at midnight.

CLAUDIA

I'm not going until I find her. She's my lucky doll. I won't leave without her.

LOUIS

Oh, very well!

He starts to help her search.

CLAUDIA

If we can't touch the passengers, how're we going to feed on board?

LOUIS

I've laid in a supply of livestock. If that runs out, I'm afraid we'll have to live off rats.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

(finding doll)

Here you are, my darling Minette!
You naughty girl!

LOUIS

(teasing fondly)

Who's not a child any more?

(embracing her)

My adorable little Claudia...

But suddenly, they freeze at the terrible SOUND of thunderous POUNDING at the front door.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as they rush into the entry hall to see the blade of an axe tear through the panelling of the front door. Then, with a might kick, the door falls -- revealing Lestat. His face and clothes still soiled and muddy from the swamp, he is very much alive and now clearly bent on revenge. Louis and Claudia, frozen in horror for an instant, quickly retreat into the parlor again, as he lunges for them with the axe.

PARLOR

Louis snatches a fireplace poker to defend himself as Lestat comes at him, and parries the blow. Fighting with deadly vampire strength and speed, they battle fiercely, Lestat quickly gaining the upper hand, then knocking the poker out of Louis' hands -- and leaving him defenseless.

CLAUDIA

looking about desperately for something, anything, to use as a weapon. She spots the sewing basket and runs to it.

LOUIS AND LESTAT

Louis exerts superhuman strength and manages to wrest the axe from Lestat unexpectedly. He swings wildly and strikes at Lestat's head. He misses, but lops off Lestat's left hand with the mighty blow. Bellowing like an enraged bull, Lestat wrests the axe from Louis with his other hand and is about to cleave Louis' skull with it, when his eyes suddenly widen in surprise and horror. He slumps forward onto the floor, a long, slim, deadly sewing shears protruding from between his shoulder blades. Claudia stands behind him, having dealt the final blow.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Louis gathers himself up, panting from the exertion, and looks at Lestat's still body. Claudia looks on, trembling.

CLAUDIA

Is he dead?

LOUIS

This time we'll take no chances!

With that, he takes a lamp from the table and hurls it at the wall. Instantly, the fire engulfs the adjacent drapes and spreads rapidly, as Louis grabs Claudia and carries her out in his arms.

TILT DOWN to Claudia's doll Minette, lying on the floor, her pretty little face melting as the fire licks at her lacy dress.

PAN to Lestat, surrounded by fire, as the fingers of his right hand twitch. Then, slowly and with effort, his arm begins to move and the hand gropes behind his back, trying to reach the sewing shears protruding from between his shoulder blades. Then, almost about to touch them, the arm goes limp and falls to the floor.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL the room, engulfed in raging flames all around him.

EXT. CLIPPER SHIP - NIGHT

The passengers file aboard for the voyage to Europe, while stevedores load luggage and supplies on board.

EXT. DECK - NIGHT

Claudia and Louis stand at the rail, looking at the red glow that illuminates the night sky over the city, anxious and impatient for departure, plagued by doubts.

CLAUDIA

How could he possibly have survived? The poisoning... the drowning -- he should've been dead.

LOUIS

(baffled)

I don't know. Obviously there's still a lot we have to learn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

Perhaps you should've gone back --
to make sure this time.

LOUIS

Fire, Claudia! We can't survive
fire. Tha's one thing we know
for sure. He said so himself. No,
this time we're free of him, my
dear, sweet, worried angel. Free
of him forever!

Louis takes her in his arms and kisses her, a reflection
of the distant fire paints them red.

END FLASHBACK.

DISSOLVE:

INT. MONTROSE PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on the tape recorder, still turning.

KYLE (O.S.)

But what about your plantations --
your properties?

WIDEN TO REVEAL that she is now deeply engrossed in the
tale, more relaxed, more engaged, as he recounts the story.

LOUIS

I left their management in the hands
of a new and even more able lawyer
than Picard.

He pours her more champagne.

KYLE

What happened when you got to Paris?
Did you find any more vampires?

LOUIS

(a cryptic smile)

We settled down in an apartment on
the Boulevard des Capucines, where
we lived lavishly.

KYLE

(wistfully)

Mm -- Paris in the nineteenth
century! I can't think of a better
time in a better place.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

(reacts; a wistful
smile)

Funny, that's just what Claudia
said. She was in her element.
We were alive again -- in love
with Paris and each other...

FLASHBACK: INT. PARIS APARTMENT - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

PAN the Parisian apartment, sumptuously furnished in the style of the period. Piano music fills the room -- the romantic strains of Offenbach's "Barcarole", from the "Tales of Hoffman". PICK UP Claudia, at the piano, wearing an exquisite gown of the period. MOVE IN CLOSE, as she plays, while a breeze gently blows the curtains, and the light from the candelabra washes her in golds. Louis ENTERS FRAME, tenderly kisses her neck and shoulder, until she turns from her playing, puts her arms round his neck and draws him down till their lips meet in a full embrace.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Louis and Claudia make love tenderly, exquisitely, on an Empire period bed -- canopied like a pavillion, with gilded swans and draped from ceiling to floor in nacrous, billowing white silk, resembling the Empress Josephine's great bed at Malmaison. The MUSIC swells and reaches its lush climax. Then, silence.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on pommade jar, as Claudia dips her fingers into the white makeup.

WIDEN, as she applies the pommade to her face, a while later. Like an actress before her mirror, she is making herself up for her role -- the tattered waif -- whitening her face, painting gaunt shadows under her eyes, finishing off with a cloud of powder.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as she rises and throws a tattered shawl round her frail shoulders, assessing the overall look in the full-length mirror. Louis watches her from the bed.

LOUIS

What about the tickets for the
opera?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

You can still go.

LOUIS

It won't be the same. Let me come with you.

CLAUDIA

You know that's impossible. I have to be alone.

LOUIS

Lately it seems we spend less and less time together. I begin to wonder if you've found someone else.

CLAUDIA

You're jealous?

LOUIS

Of the ground you walk on.

CLAUDIA

How silly you are! With whom could I possibly share myself, but you? We've yet to meet another like us in all of Paris.

LOUIS

Forgive me. I am obsessed.

She smiles and kisses him lovingly.

CLAUDIA

I love you.

She exits.

EXT. PARISIAN STREET - LATIN QUARTER - NIGHT

Positioned on a bench in the light of a street lamp, Claudia plays her lost waif role, as a Parisian Gentleman approaches. But he passes her by with hardly a glance. Half desperate with hunger now and trembling, she gets up and moves a few paces after him.

CLAUDIA

(faintly; after him)

Monsieur... monsieur...!

But he is gone into the night. Claudia slumps against a doorway. But then something across the way catches her eye. Curious, drawn, she moves off to investigate.

EXT. DOLL SHOP - NIGHT

Claudia stares in the window, which is a wonderland of marvelous dolls of the period. One in particular stands out and captures Claudia's fancy -- one very much like the one she left behind in New Orleans, her lucky doll Minette. As she gazes at the doll wistfully, the proprietress, a warm, maternal sort of woman named MADELEINE appears in the window and, seeing Claudia's fascination with the doll, smiles at her understandingly. She reaches for the doll and picks it up, then motions Claudia to enter the shop.

ON Claudia, as she looks at the woman uncertainly, then smiles back.

INT. DOLLMAKER'S SHOP - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on a primitive photo of a pretty little girl, handsomely framed in silver.

MADELEINE (O.S.)

She would've been just about your age...

WIDEN TO REVEAL Claudia sitting beside Madeleine on a sofa in the back parlor of the doll shop. The room serves as Madeleine's workroom. All around hang dolls in various stages of creation. They line the shelves and peer down from every shadowy corner.

CLAUDIA

You must've loved her very deeply.

MADELEINE

(fighting tears)

After my husband was killed in the war, little Denise was all the family I had left. Then she, too, was taken from me.

CLAUDIA

I know what it's like to be without a family.

MADELEINE

Since then, I've been alone -- except for my dolls, of course.

CLAUDIA

(moves around, admiring them)

They are so beautiful -- so lifelike.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

Just having them around must be like having a family in a way.

MADELEINE

They're pretty to look at and they pay the rent, but they are little comfort. You see, once I have finished making them, they no longer need me.

CLAUDIA

How I would love to make dolls such as these. Could you teach me? I'm very good at painting and sewing.

EXT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

Gargoyles gaze down sightlessly from the towering Gothic edifice onto the deserted approach to the entrance. A dark figure ENTERS FRAME in the f.g. -- Louis. He pauses to consider the cathedral an instant, then starts for the entrance.

INT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

Vast and deserted. His FOOTSTEPS ECHOING hollowly on the stone floor, Louis moves along the shadowed side aisle and transepts, examining the marble tombs and sarcophagi, crypts, memorial plates and stones laid into the walls and floor.

CLOSER ANGLE, as he pauses, reacting with sudden interest to a particular memorial plaque. His eyes widen with excitement.

HIS POV - WALL PLAQUE

It reads: "BARON PHILIPPE LESTAT, 1578 - 1623".

TILT DOWN further, past several Baronesses and other Lestats, then HOLD on "BARON JEAN-PIERRE LESTAT, 1658 - 1721". The stone below is blank, as if awaiting inscription.

BACK TO LOUIS

reacting to his find.

EXT. SEINE EMBANKMENT - NIGHT

It is late and the embankment is deserted except for Louis, a lone figure walking along the river bank, mulling his discovery.

LOUIS

as he pauses, takes a pair of opera tickets out of his pocket, considers them sadly, then tosses them into the Seine, then turns and starts along the embankment.

A DARK FIGURE

The dark figure of a man watches Louis from the street level above. We cannot see his face. He starts to follow him, moving along the sidewalk above, as Louis moves along the embankment below.

LOUIS

becomes aware, senses someone above following him. He stops, turns and looks up.

HIS POV - EMBANKMENT WALL

No one is in sight at the top now.

BACK TO LOUIS

as he resumes walking. But after only a few paces, he now becomes aware of the SOUND of FOOTSTEPS dogging his heels. He looks back.

HIS POV - THE DARK FIGURE

suddenly behind him, stalking him.

BACK TO LOUIS

as he picks up his pace, puzzled, quickly trying to decide on a strategy.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Louis reaches an impasse, where a bridge arch blocks the way. Suddenly, he turns to confront his pursuer... The dark figure stops in the shadows some feet away.

LOUIS

If it's my money you're after,
you'll have to take it by force.

The dark figure steps forward a few paces into the light, revealing himself to be a tall, muscular Spaniard, with dark, deadly eyes and a thin, hungry face. He is elegantly dressed -- too elegantly for a thief. His name is SANTIAGO MOLERO.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANTIAGO

I'm after more than money, Monsieur de Rougemont.

LOUIS

(reacting)

You know me?

SANTIAGO

We've been aware of you for some time...

(significantly)

... brother.

LOUIS

(realizing)

Then -- there are more of us!

SANTIAGO

Considerably more.

LOUIS

(elated)

We've come so far to find you. Can we not be friends?

Louis extends a hand.

SANTIAGO

There are no friends for you here!

With that, he bares his fangs and flies at Louis unexpectedly.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Using all the vampire speed and dexterity he has learned, Louis does his best to fight off his vicious opponent. But Santiago proves more than his match, and suddenly hurls Louis against the embankment wall, then pounces on him.

CLOSER ANGLE, as Santiago produces a long, lethal stiletto and tries to drive it into Louis' heart. But Louis stays his hand with all his strength, fighting for his life.

SANTIAGO

(straining; determined)

The heart... The steel must penetrate the heart... precisely...!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then, as Louis' strength ebbs and the blade point is about to enter his chest at the heart, Santiago's eyes widen in surprise, as he is lifted bodily off Louis into the air.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as another, smaller YOUNG MAN, also dressed in evening clothes and wearing a top hat lifts Santiago bodily and hurls him into the Seine in one easy movement. He then turns to Louis, readjusting his disarranged clothes and dusting himself off, as Louis gathers himself up.

YOUNG MAN

Are you all right?

LOUIS

Thanks to you, monsieur.

CLOSER ANGLE as the young man, whose finely chiseled features are obscured by his hat and the shadows, produces a calling card and presents it to Louis.

YOUNG MAN

Come to us tomorrow night, then. No one will harm you. Not even he...

(indicating Santiago)

I give you my word.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as to Louis' amazement, the young man climbs up the steep embankment wall and vanishes nimbly as a cat.- Then, Louis looks to the river.

HIS POV - SANTIAGO

emerging from the river, half drowned, and crawling up the stairs to the opposite embankment.

ON Santiago, as he catches his breath and looks across the river, his eyes filled with thwarted rage, then hurries off into the night.

LOUIS

as he looks at the calling card in his hand.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT - SALON - NIGHT

CLOSE ON the young man's calling card. It reads: "THEATRE DE VAMPIRES". It gives an address and, in the lower right-hand corner, the name of the manager: "A. BARBERINI".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA (O.S.)
I knew it! I knew it!

WIDEN TO REVEAL Claudia dancing about ecstatically.

CLAUDIA
(continuing)
Oh, Louis, I'm so happy! At last
we've found them! At last! I can
hardly wait for tonight!

LOUIS
Under the circumstances, I'm not
sure you should go.

CLAUDIA
Not go! How can you say that?

LOUIS
Remember Lestat's warning? Vampires
are killers and jealous of their
territory! And after what happened
last night, it could be dangerous.

CLAUDIA
But he gave you his word, the young
man who saved you! Oh, Louis, don't
spoil it! This is why we came to
Paris. This is what I've been waiting
for all these years.
(kisses him)
Please...?

LOUIS
(melts)
How can I refuse?

CLAUDIA
(hugging him gleefully)
Oh, Louis, I do love you so!
(starting off)
Now, I must pick something special
to wear...

ANOTHER ANGLE

as she starts for the bedroom to select her ensemble.
Louis puts the card on the desk, then turns to notice
something lying on the sofa -- the doll from the doll-
maker's shop window. He picks it up, studies it, as
Claudia turns in the doorway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

101.

CLAUDIA
(torn)
Do you think the white lace or the
taffeta?

LOUIS
This looks very much like Minette.

CLAUDIA
Yes, I thought so, too. Perhaps
she'll bring me luck, as well.

LOUIS
Where did you get it?

CLAUDIA
(a coquettish smile;
teasing)
An admirer.

With that, she disappears into the bedroom, leaving
Louis to wonder.

EXT. PARIS STREET - NIGHT

On a street in a different district, a carriage pulls up
in front of a handsome townhouse. Santiago gets out,
carrying a small wooden box, and enters the house.

INT. SANTIAGO'S HOUSE - SALON - NIGHT

CLOSE on wooden box, as the lid is lifted to reveal a
beautifully carved, life-size ivory hand inside.

WIDEN TO REVEAL Lestat, his face completely concealed
behind a sculpted mask, as he takes the ivory hand from
the box to examine it. In place of his missing left hand,
he wears a crude iron hook, typical of the period. San-
tiago stands by, waiting for his reaction.

LESTAT
Exquisite!

He starts to unscrew the hook and replace it with the
new and more esthetically pleasing prosthetic device.
During this:

LESTAT
(continuing)
Why didn't you finish him off?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANTIAGO

Barberini intervened -- and
Barbarini's word is law here in
Paris. My hands are tied now.

LESTAT

(considering them)

But mine are not.

(shows them off)

You did well, Santiago.

SANTIAGO

It looks almost real.

LESTAT

Doesn't it?

Then, to Santiago's surprise -- and distaste -- Lestat presents the ivory hand for him to kiss. Santiago hesitates at the indignity of complying, but Lestat stares him down, his eyes glaring through the mask with mesmerizing intensity. However, when Santiago moves to comply, Lestat worsens the humiliation by lowering the hand and forcing Santiago to kneel in order to kiss it, thus reminding him of his subjection. They are clearly master and slave.

EXT. THEATRE DE VAMPIRES - NIGHT

ESTABLISH the entrance, with audience of ordinary Parisians filing inside.

CLOSE ON poster of a penny-dreadful vampire with outstretched arms and cloak resembling bat wings, ready to close on the naked shoulders of a mortal female victim. It advertises tonight's offering: "FEAST OF BLOOD".

INT. THEATER - STAGE - NIGHT

A Grand Guignol-like masque is in progress. It concerns the Vampire's seduction and killing of a beautiful young girl, all mimed in the exaggerated fashion of the day. Under "Death's" direction, a Vampire seduces, then mesmerizes a girl, feeds on her and drains her. She dies in his arms, as the curtain falls.

The audience applauds enthusiastically.

THEATER BOX

Watching from their box, Claudia and Louis join in the applause.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Wearing a breathtakingly stunning gown of white lace, Claudia is ecstatic, not so much for the performance, but for the discovery.

CLAUDIA

Listen to them, Louis! They think it was only a play. Did you see? He actually took her! Oh, Louis, we've found them! There really are others!

LOUIS

(indicating stage)
They're taking their bows.

STAGE

The curtain parts and the actors step out to take their bows. "Death" steps forward with his scythe and whips off his skull mask to reveal himself to be Santiago. The audience cheers and jeers.

BOX

as Louis reacts and calls Claudia's attention to Santiago.

LOUIS

That's him -- the man who attacked me.

STAGE

as the slim young "Vampire" -- who seems to be the star of the show, judging from his reception -- steps forward to take his bow, his face now more fully illuminated by the footlights.

LOUIS (O.S.)

And that's the one who saved me.

Removing his tricorne hat with a flourish, the "Vampire" bows deeply.

CLOSE ON "VAMPIRE"

as "he" straightens again, allowing a cascade of raven hair to fall about "his" shoulders, to reveal that "he" is, in fact, a strikingly beautiful, sensuous woman, company manager, The Contessa ALIDA BARBERINI.

BOX

As Louis reacts, astounded by the revelation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA
(equally amazed)
Louis, it's a woman!

LOUIS
So it is!

He raises his opera glasses to his eyes to see more closely.

ALIDA (THROUGH THE OPERA GLASSES)

as she again straightens from a deep bow and revels in the adulation of her audience. Then, she turns her face directly INTO CAMERA. ZOOM IN TIGHT on her violet eyes.

LOUIS (O.S.)
And what a woman she is!

INT. THEATER - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Louis and Claudia enter the stage door, conducted by a gaunt USHER, who has brought them around after the show.

CLAUDIA
How do I look, Louis?

LOUIS
I think you have never looked more beautiful than you do in that dress.

USHER
Right this way, please...

ANOTHER ANGLE

As they make their way through the hectic backstage, Claudia virtually eats up the scene (and the promise of vampires) with her greedy young eyes.

LOUIS
(to usher)
By whose invitation are we here?

USHER
Alida asked for you.

CLAUDIA
Alida?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

USHER

Contessa Barberini -- our principle attraction and founder of this theater...

He indicates.

THEIR POV - ALIDA

on stage, having a word with Santiago, who has not as yet changed out of his costume, the proverbial white shroud and skull mask of "Death." She however, is now gloriously attired in the latest Parisian fashion for women and more beautiful than ever. Around them, the last of the set is cleared by members of the theatrical company and banquet tables set up, laden with food and champagne (mainly for the unsuspecting mortals among them -- invited to be victims later on, perhaps -- and any unexpected intruders who might happen by.)

BACK TO SCENE

as Louis stares at Alida, utterly rivetted by her extraordinary beauty. One glance, and Claudia perceives that he is already taken with the lady.

ALIDA AND SANTIAGO

as she cautions him in a low, deadly tone.

ALIDA

... But he must not be harmed. Is that understood?

SANTIAGO

Perfectly. But, let me remind you, I am not the master of his destiny.

ALIDA

If anything should happen to him, I shall hold you personally responsible.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Santiago moves off, oddly uneasy, his gaze drifts anxiously, surreptitiously to the flies above the stage, while Alida turns to greet her visitors.

ALIDA

Ah, Monsieur de Rougemont and Mlle Freniere! How good of you to join us!

SANTIAGO'S POV - FLIES

A shadowy figure is making his way along the catwalk overhead, toward the center of the stage area. It is Lestat, his face still covered by the full mask, and now wearing a cloak.

BACK TO SCENE

as Santiago moves off. Louis kisses Alida's hand.

LOUIS

Contessa Barberini...

ALIDA

Please -- this is the theater. No formality here. Everyone calls me Alida.

LOUIS

Then you must call us Louis and Claudia.

Alida beckons to the three nearest members of the company, two beautiful Beardsley-esque women, ESTELLE and CELESTE, and an aging character actor, JEAN-BAPTISTE.

ALIDA

I'd like you to meet some of the members of our little troupe. This is Estelle... and Celeste... and this is Jean-Baptiste...

(aside)

... by far our finest character actor.

As each is introduced, they nod courteously, but without any sign of warmth or extension of friendship.

ALIDA

(continuing; with a sweeping gesture)

And these are the other members of our little family...

Louis and Claudia look at the faces of the vampires around them.

PAN the faces -- actors, actresses, stagehands, wardrobe mistresses, etc. -- as they stare at the intruders with a curiosity bordering on hostility.

BACK TO ALIDA, LOUIS AND CLAUDIA

ALIDA

Welcome to the Theater of Vampires
-- our little world, our sanctuary!

LOUIS

You're very gracious. But tell me,
how did you know our names?

ALIDA

Did you imagine your presence here
in Paris has gone unnoticed all this
time? There's been much curiosity
about you two -- unfortunately, not
all of it friendly, as you've already
discovered.

CLAUDIA

Do you mean to say that you all live
here -- in the theater itself?

ALIDA

We find it far the most economical
way -- and in the theater, economy
is all.

SANTIAGO

(joining them)

It also provides for our mutual
protection -- and for our kind,
security is all.

ALIDA

Ah, Santiago -- our 'Grim Reaper'
and company manager.

SANTIAGO

(bows; kisses Claudia's
hand)

Santiago Molero, at your service,
mademoiselle.

Claudia reacts, as if the name is vaguely familiar.

CLAUDIA

Monsieur.

ALIDA

(to Louis)

And I believe you two have already
met.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

So we have.

The two men exchange barely cordial nods.

ALIDA

(cautioning)

Under this roof, we are all friends.

SANTIAGO

To be sure. But, if you'll excuse me, I'll rejoin you in a moment. I should like to change into something more... festive.

He turns and goes off, casting a quick, worried glance toward the flies again as he goes.

FLIES

CLOSE on ivory hand, then WIDEN TO REVEAL Lestat, as he inches along the catwalk and positions himself above the center of the stage, then looks down.

HIS POV - LOUIS

chatting with Alida and Claudia, directly beneath.

LOUIS, CLAUDIA AND ALIDA

LOUIS

I don't understand. What has Santiago against me? I've done nothing to him.

ALIDA

We are all wary of intruders. They can mean trouble. Still, you have nothing more to fear from Santiago. He knows I will not tolerate any more violence. I could've brought him before the Tribunal but he's popular with the others -- and I'd rather not have him challenge my authority. Best to let sleeping dogs lie. If there's more to this, rest assured I'll find out.

LESTAT

slowly raises his masked gaze from the stage floor to something that hangs suspended over the stage in front of him.

HIS POV - CHANDELIER

TILTING UP from the stage to the massive Medieval wrought-iron chandelier, with several long, lethal-looking spiked finials pointing downward from beneath it.

BACK TO LESTAT

as he focuses on the iron linked chain that supports the chandelier and concentrates, his masked eyes fixing, staring intently at the object of his will.

CLOSE ON CHAIN LINK

Tightly closed, it suddenly cracks open a fraction of an inch under the force of his willpower.

CLAUDIA

as her eyes widen instantly, almost as if reacting by sixth sense to the opening of the link.

WIDEN TO INCLUDE Alida and Louis, who is obviously distracted by her beauty and her words, and is not aware of the imminent danger that Claudia has sensed.

ALIDA

In any case, the only real crime among us is turning on one's master, as you must know. Here, that's a capital offense...

LOUIS

(reacts; covers quickly)

Yes -- of course. As well it should be.

CLOSE ON LESTAT

as he focuses his eyes on the link with fierce intensity, then smiles as he gets the desired effect.

CLOSE ON LINK

as it opens another fraction of an inch abruptly.

CLAUDIA

reacting once again. This time she looks around the room quickly, as if searching for the source of the danger she senses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALIDA (O.S.)

But then, I'm sure it's the same
where you come from. By the way,
where do you come from?

CLAUDIA'S POV - VAMPIRES

PAN their faces as they chat and move about, casting quick,
furtive glances at Claudia and Louis from time to time.
Any one of them could be guilty of any mischief.

LOUIS (O.S.)

America.

ALIDA (O.S.)

Ah, but America is such an enormous
place. Surely you can be more
specific?

HOLD on Santiago, as he returns to the scene, having doffed
his "Death" shroud and mask, and glances automatically up
to the flies, not realizing that he is being observed.

BACK TO CLAUDIA

watching him. She follows his upward glance, then reacts,
instantly alarmed by what she sees.

HER POV - THE CHANDELIER

swaying ominously overhead.

CLOSE ON CHAIN LINK

as it suddenly yawns open fully.

CLAUDIA, LOUIS AND ALIDA

Reacting instinctively, in SLOW MOTION, Claudia shoves
Louis out of the way. Simultaneously, Alida also looks
up and reacts.

THEIR POV - CHANDELIER

plummets downward.

BACK TO SCENE

Claudia, Louis and Alida barely manage to move out from
under the mighty iron chandelier, as it descends in SLOW
MOTION and imbeds its finial spikes deep into the hard-
wood floor -- exactly in the spot where Louis was stand-
ing. Shouts and screams, as the others spread, as well.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Claudia clings to Louis, still trembling with fear. The others are all murmuring excitedly among themselves. Alida moves to the chandelier to examine the cause, then signals for silence.

ALIDA

It's all right, everyone! Calm down! It was only an accident. A weak link, it would appear...

(glares at Santiago;
then looks to Claudia
and smiles)

We can all be grateful that the child saw it in time.

CLAUDIA

trembling in Louis' arms. Her eyes look up to the flies overhead.

HER POV - CATWALK

There is no one in sight on the catwalk now -- only the piece of broken chain swaying rhythmically high above.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on Claudia's new doll, as Claudia frets with its ribbons.

WIDEN TO REVEAL that she is watching Louis from the bed, as he preens in front of the mirror, dressing to go out.

CLAUDIA

She's dangerous. Every time we're with her, I can feel the hostility.

LOUIS

Don't be silly! If Alida meant me harm, why did she save me from Santiago?

CLAUDIA

It's not you. It's me. She wants me out of the way. I can read it in her eyes.

LOUIS

Why would she want you out of the way?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

Because she wants you for herself!

LOUIS

(teasing)

Ah, I see! Now it's my angel's turn to be jealous.

CLAUDIA

Oh, do be serious, Louis! Don't you see? Why did she question us so closely about our backgrounds? Do you really think that falling chandelier was an accident? Or that Santiago automatically attacks every newcomer? I tell you, there's something behind all this. She's up to something!

LOUIS

(going to her;
placating)

My darling Claudia, put your heart at rest. Alida means nothing to me. But we need her as an ally. She's the oldest and the most powerful of them all. She can give us the key to everything -- everything we need to know -- everything Lestat refused to teach us.

CLAUDIA

At what price, Louis? At what price?

LOUIS

(growing impatient)

Whatever the price, we must survive!

He grabs his cloak and starts for the door. She appears in front of him, barring his way.

CLAUDIA

You'll fall in love with her. You'll leave me! I know you will!

LOUIS

(impatiently)

Then you don't know me very well. Now let me go!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

Don't go, Louis! Don't see her!

LOUIS

You're behaving like a jealous school girl! Now let me pass! This is quite enough!

CLAUDIA

No! I won't let you leave!

He pushes past her to the door.

CLAUDIA

(continuing; sobbing)

Go to her, then! See if I care! But don't say I didn't warn you!

Louis slams out. Claudia buries her face in her doll, sobbing.

EXT. ALIDA'S CHATEAU - NIGHT

ANGLE ON a lighted window in the highest tower of a turreted chateau somewhere outside Paris. The rest of the chateau is dark, its windows boarded up, as if abandoned or deserted. It is a wild and windy night.

PULL BACK TO INCLUDE Louis and Alida, their cloaks whipped by the wind, standing outside the gates, looking at the impressive estate. A sign on the gate reads: "NO TRESPASSING". Beneath her cloak, Alida is dressed androgynously again, in trousers and boots.

ALIDA

My secret retreat. None of the others know about it.

LOUIS

It looks deserted.

ALIDA

It is -- except for the tower.

LOUIS

How do we get up there?

ALIDA

The usual way. Why do you think I dressed in this fashion tonight?

EXT. CHATEAU - TOWER WALL - NIGHT

ANGLE DOWN at Alida, scaling the wall with graceful cat-like ease. Louis stands at the foot of the wall, looking up in wonder. Alida pauses and looks back down at him.

ALIDA
Aren't you coming?

LOUIS
I can't. I -- I don't know how.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as she rejoins him.

ALIDA
What's the trouble, Louis? Still earth-bound? You carry with you too many mortal fears. You haven't yet accepted what you are. Only three things can destroy you now, aside from the rays of the sun -- fire, the piercing of your heart and physical dismemberment. So, you see, it wouldn't matter if you did fall. No harm would come to you. You are immortal. Look into my eyes and say it.

He looks deeply into her eyes, as they lock on his.

LOUIS
I am immortal.

ALIDA
Now believe it.

He looks into her eyes and, for the first time, allows himself to believe in the reality of his immortality.

LOUIS
(a revelation)
I am immortal...

ALIDA
(a smile)
Come!

ANOTHER ANGLE - ANGLING DOWN

Cautiously at first, but with increasing confidence, Louis follows her up the wall.

INT. CHATEAU - TOWER ROOM - NIGHT

Louis and Alida stand facing each other in front of a huge ornate mirror. Behind them we see the room reflected: palatial tapestries, a vast gilded bed, lit by myriad candelabra. She is now naked. He has shed his cloak, and she is undressing him. As she does, she speaks, slowly, sensuously, while caressing his smooth skin, kissing his muscular chest.

ALIDA

For us, the power of the will is all-important. Through the will, and the will alone, we dominate lesser beings. It is our most powerful weapon, a force that cannot be thwarted. But you must know the secret...

(touches him between
the eyes)

Here. When you focus your will, it must come from here. And it must say, 'Beware!' But first you must let me enter your mind. To release the power.

She looks into the mirror, her eyes fixing on him. He looks into the mirror, as well, and their gazes lock.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

LIMBO SHOT (SPECIAL EFFECTS)

Their images remain the same, but suddenly they appear to be two vast figures alone in a swirling universe of roiling energies, fire and cloud, their gazes locked.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

BACK TO SCENE

Louis and Alida are standing as they were, before the mirror.

ALIDA

Now! Shatter it!

Louis frowns in concentration. A moment, then the MIRROR SHATTERS into a thousand pieces under the impact of his new will.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANGLE ON BED

Louis and Alida make love like wild creatures, passionately, voraciously, almost carnivorously. There is no tenderness here, only carnality.

ANGLE ON HEARTH

Spent, Louis and Alida lie on a fur rug before a blazing fire, entwined in each other's arms.

LOUIS

Why have you shared these secrets with me?

ALIDA

Because I want you to survive.

LOUIS

Is my survival so important to you?

ALIDA

I have waited three hundred years for you.

LOUIS

I'll never leave Claudia.

ALIDA

We shall see.

EXT. DOLLMAKER'S SHOP - NIGHT

ESTABLISH the little shop again, with Parisians walking past the window, with its display of exquisite dolls.

INT. DOLLMAKER'S SHOP - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Claudia is sitting on Madeleine's lap, fondling her new doll, as Madeleine rocks her gently, humming a French lullaby.

CLAUDIA

Aren't you happy with me, Madeleine?

MADELEINE

Happy? Each night I look forward to your visits with more joy than I have ever known.

CLAUDIA

Then why do you seem so sad?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MADELEINE

Because I have begun to think of you as my own little girl -- my Denise, returned to me.

CLAUDIA

But that should make you happy.

MADELEINE

It should. But I am tormented by the fear of losing you -- the thought that one day you, too, will go away, and I will be alone again.

CLAUDIA

It needn't come to that. I know a way that we could be together forever and ever.

Madeleine stops rocking and considers this adorable, loving child, gravely for an instant.

MADELEINE

Why do your words frighten me?

CLAUDIA

There's nothing to fear. You need but trust me.

MADELEINE

(searches her eyes;
then:)

Tell me what I must do.

CLAUDIA

Not here. Come with me.

EXT. APARTMENT HOTEL - NIGHT

Louis hurries up the street and enters the building. He carries several gayly wrapped gifts in his arms.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT - SALON - NIGHT

Louis enters and flings off his cloak, secrets his gifts with happy anticipation. But even as he does, he becomes aware of the SOUND of Claudia's sobbing. He looks around the darkened room, then reacts to the horror he sees.

LOUIS

Claudia...?

(reacting)

Good grief!

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Claudia looks up to him from the sofa, where she kneels beside Madeleine's semi-conscious form. She is sobbing, and her mouth is smeared with Madeleine's blood. There are punctures in Madeleine's neck to attest to her feeding. Louis moves to her, appalled by the sight.

CLAUDIA
(pathetically)
Help me, Louis! Help me!

LOUIS
What is she doing here?

She thrusts her own slashed wrist out for Louis to see. Her blood still seeps from the wound.

CLAUDIA
I tried to transform her, but I don't know how. I'm too weak. Help me, Louis. She's dying. I don't want her to die. Do it for me, Louis. Make her one of us.

LOUIS
Why this woman? What is so special about her?

CLAUDIA
She loves me -- like a mother. She sees in me the daughter she lost. I need her, Louis. I need someone.

LOUIS
You have me.

CLAUDIA
(accusingly)
Do I?

Louis averts his eyes in guilt. Madeleine groans, delirious.

LOUIS
You know I have sworn never to pass on this curse.

CLAUDIA
Please! You know how to do it now. Alida has taught you, hasn't she?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS
(reluctantly)

Yes.

CLAUDIA
Then, make her one of us! Give
her to me! I beg you, Louis --
if you love me, give her to me!

Torn between his revulsion for the act and his love and
compassion for Claudia, Louis finally succumbs.

CLOSER ANGLE, as he sits on the sofa beside Madeleine
and bends low to speak to the semi-conscious woman.

LOUIS
Madeleine, can you hear me? Is
it your wish to be with Claudia
forever?

MADELEINE
(delirious)
Claudia? Yes... oh, yes...!

Deftly opening a vein in his own wrist, he presses it
to Madeleine's mouth, his eyes burning into hers with
the full intensity of his new-found will.

LOUIS
Then -- drink!

Madeleine taste's the life-giving elixir and almost in-
stantly responds, clutching his wrist to her mouth hun-
grily, sucking at it more and more greedily..

ON Louis, as he throws his head back, clearly agonized
by what he is doing, clearly in torment.

LOUIS
(continuing)
Now I am truly dammed.

EXT. APARTMENT HOTEL - NIGHT

A dark and mysterious carriage drives up and stops out-
side the building. Santiago steps from the shadows of
a doorway and moves to the carriage.

CLOSER ANGLE

as Lestat, masked as usual, steps from the carriage to
greet him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

Are they up there? All three?

They look to a window on an upper story.

THEIR POV - THE WINDOW

Soft lights glow inside the French windows. Outside them is a balcony.

BACK TO SCENE

SANTIAGO

For the past hour.

LESTAT

And the others?

SANTIAGO

(indicating O.S.)

Waiting for my signal. But first, I'd like your assurance that I'll have some reward, if I help you in this scheme of yours.

LESTAT

Never fear. If all goes well, you will inherit Alida's position as head of the Paris circle, and I -- I will have my Claudia.

SANTIAGO

And what of him -- your protege?

LESTAT

What Louis has done to me is a capital offense. When he stands trial, the Tribunal can reach but one verdict -- extermination. Now, come! Let us lose no more time!

INT. PARIS APARTMENT - SALON - NIGHT

CLOSE on Madeleine, as she lies on the sofa, now breathing deeply in the profound sleep of the newly-created Undead.

PAN to Louis and Claudia. He is seated in a chair by the fire, with Claudia curled up in his lap, cuddling her doll and humming to herself. Louis is depleted and despondent, having broken his solemn pledge.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

I love you, Louis. I know how painful it was for you. But you did the right thing. This is what we always wanted. This is the beginning of our family.

She kisses his cheek. He studies her sweet, vulnerable face, then kisses her. She responds, returning his love in a long, sensual kiss. Then, suddenly, abruptly, Louis reacts, as if alerted to some danger, and looks toward the door.

CLAUDIA

(continuing)

What is it?

LOUIS

Someone's coming.

CLAUDIA

It's only that artist and his friends in the next apartment.

His vampire senses now fully operative, he stands and looks to the door.

LOUIS

No. We're in danger.

With that, the door to the suite flies open, and Santiago and several of the vampires from the theater rush in to confront them.

LOUIS

(continuing; to
Claudia)

Quickly! The window!

They rush for the French windows, but find their escape blocked by several other vampires, including Estelle, Celeste and Jean-Baptiste. They retreat back inside the room, the vampires advancing from every direction, backing toward the sofa, where Madeleine wakes and looks around, her eyes wide with confusion, then focusing on the door to the suite. Reacting to what she sees, she screams. Claudia spins round and reacts, as well.

LESTAT

standing in the doorway, literally filling it, an imposing figure of evil. In one dramatic gesture he whips off the mask that covers his face, to reveal its purpose: half of his face has remained hideously scarred from the fire in New Orleans.

LOUIS AND CLAUDIA

reacting, aghast.

CLAUDIA

Louis! It's him!

LOUIS

(reacting; aghast)

Lestat!

LESTAT

as he savors their reaction in his moment of revenge.

LESTAT

Take them away!

EXT. THEATER OF VAMPIRES - NIGHT

ESTABLISH the theater, now closed and dark.

ANGLE DOWN to a barred window at street level, then PUSH IN TIGHT on the bars.

INT. THEATER - SUBTERRANEAN CELLARS - NIGHT

Louis, Claudia and Madeleine are herded along a dark cellar corridor by their vampire captors, past a barred window and down steep stairs to the cells below. They are led by Santiago, who carries a lantern. Their FOOTSTEPS ECHO in the dungeon-like cellar.

SANTIAGO

Our people escaped Madame la Guillotine by hiding down here beneath the theater during the Terror. You'll find it very secure. No daylight can penetrate -- no sounds get out.

INT. CELL - NIGHT

It is solid stone, windowless, with a massive steel door. Louis, Claudia and Madeleine are thrown inside by Santiago.

LOUIS

What is to become of us?

SANTIAGO

You're to be brought before the Tribunal and tried for the one crime for which there is no pardon -- the attempted destruction of your own master.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He slams the great door shut and turns the KEY in the lock, leaving them alone with only the lantern. Madeleine retreats to a dark corner, doubled up, the victim of her first unsatisfied hunger pangs, whimpering in bewildered terror.

LOUIS AND CLAUDIA

She huddles close to Louis, clinging to her doll.

CLAUDIA

(marvelling)

After all these years -- Lestat.

LOUIS

(bitterly)

He's indestructible.

CLAUDIA

But he should be dead, Louis. The scissors!

LOUIS

They can't have pierced his heart. And that's the way, isn't it -- through the heart?

CLAUDIA

But did you notice his hand? It's made of ivory.

LOUIS

At least that proves dismemberment is effective.

CLAUDIA

It should've been his head we cut off!

LOUIS

(exploring cell)

We've got to get out of here.

CLAUDIA

(locking around)

There is no way but the door.

Louis moves toward the door.

LOUIS

Let me try.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He focuses on the lock, reaching one hand out to touch it with two fingers, and exerts all his new-found vampire will upon it. With the dull SOUND of THUNDER, it trembles under the force of his will, but refuses to open. Finally spent by the effort, Louis throws himself at the door and beats his fist on it in frustration.

LOUIS
(continuing)
Damn you, Lestat! Damn you!

EXT. THEATER - STREET - NIGHT

In the eerie light of pre-dawn, a Lamplighter works his way up the street, extinguishing the gaslights.

INT. THEATER - CELL

CLOSE ON the lantern, its candle low and guttering.

WIDEN TO INCLUDE Louis, asleep on a bed of straw. Claudia is curled up with her doll nearby, Madeleine in the corner. Louis stirs at the SOUND of the KEY turning in the lock, followed by FOOTSTEPS outside the door retreating, then silence. Cautiously, he moves to the door to investigate. Listening first, he tries the door. It opens. He ventures a look outside.

INT. CELLAR CORRIDOR

Louis peeks out of the cell tentatively. There is no one in sight.

INT. CELL

Louis ducks back inside and quickly rouses Claudia.

LOUIS
(whispering)
Claudia? Claudia, wake up!

CLAUDIA
What is it?

LOUIS
(hushes her)
The door -- someone's opened it.
We can escape.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

Be careful, Louis. It could be another of Lestat's tricks.

LOUIS

What would Lestat have to gain by letting us go?

CLAUDIA

If we stand trial, there's always a chance we might get off. But if we're caught trying to escape, they'll kill us.

LOUIS

I'm sure this was Alida's doing. She's trying to help us.

CLAUDIA

I don't trust her.

LOUIS

It's our only chance. Quickly now! It's almost sunrise.

INT. CELLAR CORRIDORS

Louis leads the way through the labyrinth of corridors, with Claudia behind clutching her doll, and Madeleine in tow.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Passing a recessed doorway, Madeleine notices something. She tugs at Claudia's sleeve.

MADELEINE

Claudia, look!

Claudia stops and looks where she indicates.

THEIR POV - THE DOOR

It is ajar, with the faint, pre-dawn light coming through from a courtyard outside.

BACK TO SCENE

as Claudia calls ahead to Louis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

(hushed)

Louis! A door to the outside!
This way!

She and Madeleine dart out the door, as Louis starts back, hurrying after them. But just as he reaches the door, it SLAMS shut in his face with a reverberating ECHO. He tries the door, but finds it locked and immovable. He beats on it.

LOUIS

Claudia! Claudia! Open the door!

EXT. COURTYARD - DAWN

Claudia struggles to get the door open, but finds it locked from her side as well.

CLAUDIA

I can't! I can't! It's locked!

INT. CORRIDOR - DAWN

Desperate and frustrated, Louis tries to exert his will on the locked door, but suddenly he is startled by the SOUND of Santiago's LAUGHTER, ringing out in the darkness behind him.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as he spins around to find himself confronted by Santiago, Estelle, Celeste, Jean-Baptiste and the other vampires. He makes a lunge for Santiago, but Santiago parries it with his own, more powerful will, abetted by the others, all exerting their wills on Louis, literally pressing him back against the wall and holding him immobile.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAWN

Claudia beats in vain at the solid door.

CLAUDIA

Louis! Louis!

Madeleine reacts to something O.S. in alarm and tugs at Claudia's arm.

MADELEINE

Claudia! Look!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Claudia turns and looks to where she points. On the wall adjacent to where they stand, a patch of sunlight. Horrified, Claudia spins round and looks up at the opposing wall of the courtyard, from which direction the sun shines.

THEIR POV - THE SUN

just cresting over the rim of the opposite, eastern wall.

BACK TO THE WOMEN

as they shrink back toward the farthest, darkest corner of the courtyard.

CLAUDIA

(cries out)

Louis! Help us! Louis! The sun!

INT. CORRIDOR - DAWN

Restrained by the vampires, Louis listens helplessly to Claudia's cries.

LOUIS

(to Santiago)

For pity's sake, open the door!
They'll perish out there!

Santiago's response is only a laugh.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAWN

Backing into the darkest corner, Claudia and Madeleine look about frantically for some avenue of escape.

THEIR POV - COURTYARD

PAN the enclosed courtyard. Its walls are high and sheer, its windows all barred with iron. There is no way out.

BACK TO THE WOMEN

They shrink back from the now-encroaching sunlight, as it inches lower and lower down the wall next to them with terrifying swiftness. Madeleine wails in horror. Claudia looks down to where the poor woman stares at her own foot.

CLOSE ON FOOT

Caught in the first rays of the sun, wisps of smoke rise from her burning flesh.

CLAUDIA AND MADELEINE

as they cringe back from the fast-encroaching sunlight.

CLAUDIA
 (a cry of despair)
Louis! Louis! Help us! Help us!

INT. THEATER - WARDROBE ROOM - DAWN

Alone among the costumes of the theatrical wardrobe room, Lestat stands at the barred window at the far end, looking down into the courtyard below. MOVE IN on him, as he cranes to see the two women just below, making sure they can't see him. Claudia's CRIES for help grow more and more desperate.

CLAUDIA (O.S.)
 Somebody! Anybody! Help us!

HIS POV - CLAUDIA AND MADELEINE

directly beneath the window, cringing back from the sun's ever-encroaching rays, clawing at the wall in vain to scale it.

CLAUDIA
 Oh, why have I no strength!

BACK TO LESTAT

watching them without emotion.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAWN

Inexorably, the sun threatens to engulf the two women.

CLOSER ANGLE, as Claudia abandons her doll and, in a last, frantic effort to escape the sun's rays, jumps up to try and grasp the bars of the window behind which Lestat is watching them, unseen. But she isn't quite able to grab hold. Even if she could, the bars would not be wide enough for her to pass through. She falls back to the ground, as Madeleine reaches out to her, shrieking, her body and face already smoldering and shriveling.

INT. STAGE - DAWN

Alida, alone and unseen on the deserted stage, closes her eyes, as if to shut out the terrible CRIES, waiting for it to be over.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAWN

Still paralyzed by the combined wills of his captors, Louis is forced to listen in horror as the two women's SCREAMS reach a chilling crescendo. Then -- silence. Realizing what has happened, Louis cries out in anguish from the depths of his tortured being.

LOUIS

Claudia!!!

SANTIAGO

(to the others)

Take him away and lock him up!
The Tribunal convenes at sunset.

INT. CELL - NIGHT

CLOSE on Louis, his face streaked with tears, sitting against a wall, staring into space, his world destroyed. He looks to the door at the SOUND of the KEY in the lock.

WIDEN, as Alida enters and moves to him. She speaks in hushed, anxious tones.

ALIDA

Quickly! It's almost sunset. I have a carriage waiting. We must leave before the others wake.

LOUIS

Leave me.

ALIDA

Don't be a fool. They'll be coming for you within the hour.

LOUIS

Why did they spare me?

ALIDA

Because they knew they'd have to deal with me, if anything happened to you. Only the Tribunal supercedes my authority. But once they convict you, I'll be powerless to save you.

LOUIS

What do I care? They've taken away my reason for living.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALIDA

Would you allow them to go unpunished?

The word rings clear for Louis, meaningful.

LOUIS

(reacting)

What do you mean?

ALIDA

Come with me! I'll show you.

INT. CORRIDOR - SUNSET

Moving swiftly, Alida leads Louis through the labyrinth.

ANOTHER ANGLE

As they pass the door through which Claudia and Madeleine vanished into the courtyard, Louis stops. He tries it. It opens. Alida turns back, but he has slipped outside.

EXT. COURTYARD - DUSK

CLOSE on Claudia's doll.

PULL BACK TO INCLUDE heaps of ashes, a tangle of clothing, wisps of hair, as Louis picks the doll out of the debris and considers it tenderly. His fingers tighten about it, and he presses it tenderly to his breast, as he looks to the darkening sky.

LOUIS

(savage determination)

They will pay for this.

Alida appears behind him from within. The courtyard has once again been plunged into semi-darkness, as the night descends on the world.

ALIDA

If it's revenge you want, we must move quickly -- before they wake.

She hurries back inside. Louis hurries after her.

ANGLE on the debris of ashes and clothing. TILT SLOWLY UPWARD to the barred window above. Louis has not noticed that the bars have been bent apart -- wide enough for someone small, someone Claudia's size, to pass through perhaps.

INT. THEATER - STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on a large, litre can, clearly marked: "LAMP OIL -- DANGER!" as the storage room door flies open to illuminate it.

WIDEN, as Alida holds the door, while Louis grabs up the can and hurries out. She follows him off.

INT. THEATER - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Obsessed with his lust for revenge, Louis douses everything in sight with the inflammable oil -- curtains, flats, drops, costumes, etc. Then, backing toward Alida at the stage door, he casts a burning lamp into the wings. Instantly, the flames leap up, engulfing everything.

ALIDA

(reacting to
someone O.S.)

Louis! Look out!

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Louis spins around to find himself confronted by Santiago, his "Death" character scythe raised high, poised to strike Louis down.

SANTIAGO

This is how we repay treachery,
Alida, my lovely!

He swings the scythe at Louis in SLOW MOTION.

ALIDA

quickly exerts her vampire power, pointing two fingers and focusing her invincible will on him.

SCYTHE

As if possessed of a life of its own, it twists round in Santiago's grip and whirls out of his hands, falling to the floor, all in SLOW MOTION.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Louis snatches up the scythe, swings it around wildly and in one mighty blow, lops off Santiago's head. Louis drops the scythe, gaping at the horror of his own deed. Alarmed at the fire, now raging out of control around them, Alida runs to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALIDA
Louis! The fire!

She drags him out the stage door.

ANGLE ON FIRE

as it engulfs the entire backstage area.

INT. THEATER - UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR

Estelle and Celeste come running out of their room, only to find themselves confronted by a wall of fire. They back off, shrieking, their gowns catching fire.

INT. STAIRCASE

Several other vampires come running down the stairs, only to find the fire consuming the staircase. It collapses in flames.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL

Jean-Baptiste runs to the barred window and starts to bend the bars apart. But before he can get them wide enough to escape through, his clothes catch fire, and he runs off screaming and flailing at them.

INT. STAGE

The entire stage is a blazing inferno now, curtains, flats, catwalks, etc. collapsing, crashing down in flames.

EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

The fire rages inside, its roar punctuated by the horrible dying SCREAMS of the trapped vampires within.

ANGLE ON BUGGY

parked across the way. Alida and Louis watch the conflagration from their buggy; Louis is at the reins. Beside him, Alida holds Claudia's doll.

LOUIS
(with grim
determination)
And now for Lestat!

ALIDA
He's inside. In there with the
others.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

(reliving the despair)

It was as if a part of me had been torn away. Nothing seemed to matter any more. At first I blamed my despair on the loss of Claudia. But gradually I began to realize it was more than that. The void that was engulfing me is the ultimate destiny of all vampires. You see, the compulsion that drives us eventually suffocates our entire existence in a cloak of numbness, until we feel nothing. Nothing but hunger. Like the shark, we seem to have been put on earth solely to feed the hunger within us. Did you know -- most vampires die by their own hand? Not out of self-loathing, as the moralists would prefer, but out of despair.

KYLE

(empathizing;
quoting)

'Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, creeps on in this petty pace from day to day...?'

LOUIS

(acknowledging;
completes quote)

'... To the last syllable of recorded time.' Shakespeare knew, didn't he? Immortality has its price.

KYLE

(looking for hope)

But you chose to live on. There must've been some reason. Alida?

LOUIS

(recalling)

Ah, yes -- the ever-resrouceful Contessa Barberini. After we left Paris, time ceased to exist for me in any meaningful sense.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Years passed. Decades. We traveled the world -- Egypt, Greece, Asia. Finally, Italy. Alida hoped it would revive my spirits if she showed me the place of her birth -- both mortal and immortal -- Venice...

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK: EXT. VENICE - NIGHT

ESTABLISH the eternally romantic city of canals. The time is now the late 1920's, the height of twentieth century "decadence," the Jazz Age.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

depicting the following scenes, as described by Louis:

LOUIS (V.O.)

For a while, she delighted in sharing the treasures of the city with me -- its churches, its palaces, its canals, places that were for her still living memories. But when they failed to penetrate my indifference, she tried to beguile me with the more bizarre entertainments indulged in by the decadent of the period, who flocked there from all corners of the world -- sexual orgies, opium dens, transvestite balls. And so it went, Alida trying to distract poor Louis, and Louis steadfastly refusing to be distracted. Then, during Carnival, something happened that neither of us could've anticipated. Not even Alida, who was never taken by surprise. I don't think she even suspected it was possible...

EXT. VENICE - ALLEYS - NIGHT

Dressed impeccably in evening clothes of the period, Louis wends his way home alone through the deserted maze of back alleys, canals and bridges that make up Venice.

LOUIS

moving through a dimly lit alleyway, gradually becomes aware of the SOUND of light FOOTSTEPS following him. He stops and turns to look back.

HIS POV - THE ALLEY

There is no one in sight -- only a stray CAT that MEOWS and scampers off.

BACK TO LOUIS

as he continues on his way.

A BRIDGE

Louis starts across the bridge, then stops, his vampire senses alerted, telling him someone is watching, spying on him. He spins around.

HIS POV - NEXT BRIDGE OVER

There, wearing her familiar waif's costume -- updated appropriately for the period -- is Claudia, staring at him.

BACK TO LOUIS

reacting.

LOUIS

Claudia...?

HIS POV - THE NEXT BRIDGE

In a whisp of fog, she's gone.

BACK TO LOUIS

as he races across the bridge and down the alley ahead, then darts down a side alley.

SIDE ALLEY

Louis runs up the alley, then stops, looking ahead.

HIS POV - GIRL'S FIGURE

her white dress disappearing around a corner.

BACK TO LOUIS

as he rounds the same corner to find -- nothing. He runs in the direction that the girl went off.

EXT. A PIAZZA - NIGHT

Louis emerges from the labyrinth of alleys to find himself in a deserted piazza. He turns, looks everywhere. But Claudia is nowhere in sight. Only the lonely SOUNDS of Venice at night.

LOUIS

wondering. Was she real or merely a figment of his tortured imagination? Then, convinced he is deluding himself, he shrugs and walks off into the night, once again the victim of despair.

INT. A PALAZZO - BEDROOM SUITE - NIGHT

CLOSE on Alida, putting on her makeup in front of a mirror. She pauses, looking at someone O.S.

ALIDA

You haven't said a word since you got back. What happened while you were out?

WIDEN TO REVEAL that she is seated at her dressing table, getting ready for the Carnival Ball, Louis is brooding at the window that looks out over the Grand Canal.

LOUIS

Nothing.

ALIDA

Don't lie to me, Louis. I know you too well.

LOUIS

I'm just tired of being on the run.

ALIDA

We're not on the run. We're merely seeing the world.

LOUIS

Then, why did you have me change my name?

ALIDA

A simple precaution, darling. You should've been doing it all along. Like changing addresses. You don't suppose for one instant that I really am a Barberini, do you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

Sooner or later, somebody'll put it together. That the Lewis Montrose who's been escorting the infamous Contessa Barberini around the world is really Louis de Rougemont -- notorious vampire-killer.

ALIDA

Who's to put it together? Lestat is dead. They're all dead. Nobody survived.

LOUIS

Nobody we know of.

ALIDA

They would've come forward long ago. Besides, nobody would dare lay a hand on you, while you're under my protection.

LOUIS

And I wonder how much longer that will last.

Their eyes meet and lock in a challenging stare in the mirror.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Alida stands, does a fast model's turn, showing off her Erte-style "Queen of the Night" costume, and puts her black jeweled half-mask over her eyes, striking a pose.

ALIDA

Well, how do I look?

LOUIS

Devastating.

ALIDA

Why aren't you getting ready?

LOUIS

You go on without me.

ALIDA

After all the trouble I went to getting you this lovely costume?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALIDA (CONT'D)

(indicating costume
laid out on bed)What's the matter? Don't you
like it?

LOUIS

As with everything you do, it's
perfect. I just don't feel like
going, that's all.

ALIDA

(cajoling)

Please, darling? What's the Queen
of Night without her Prince of
Darkness?

LOUIS

I'm sorry -- I can't face all those
people.

She considers him closely, trying to divine the real
reason. He averts his eyes, as if trying to hide from
her insight.

ALIDA

Don't shut me out, Louis.

LOUIS

I'm not shutting you out.

ALIDA

Yes, you are. You're drifting away
from me. It's her, isn't it? You're
still pining away for her.

LOUIS

Am I?

ALIDA

That's why you're not coming along.
You want to stay here and feel sorry
for yourself. She's dead, Louis.
Gone. You might as well forget her.

LOUIS

(flares)

This has nothing to do with Claudia.
(more controlled)
I told you -- I'm not in the mood.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALIDA
(impatiently)
You're never in the mood. For
anything.

LOUIS
No one is asking you to stick
around.

ALIDA
(stung)
I asked for that, didn't I?

LOUIS
Sorry. Guess I'm not fit company
for anybody tonight.

ALIDA
(cajoling)
Come on, Louis -- let's not have
a row. It's Carnival. Everybody's
happy. This ball is the event of
the year. You don't want to miss
it, do you?

LOUIS
Maybe I'll catch up with you later.

ALIDA
(curtly)
Oh, all right! Sit here and mope,
for all I care!
(grabbing her cape
and going)
I'm going to have some fun for a
change!

She slams out.

LOUIS
(after her)
Alida...

But she's gone. He looks to the costume laid out on
the bed for him and sighs, resigned.

EXT. VENICE - CANAL AND STREET - NIGHT

CLOSE on Louis' black "Lucifer" half-mask... to match
Alida's.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The guests consist of a mix of mortals and vampires, come together from all over the world, all wearing outlandish Carnival costumes. The vampires are distinguished by the smart stylishness of their costumes. All wear masks. On the dance floor, couples are madly engaged in a wild Charleston.

ALIDA

The center of attention, she does a jazzy Charleston with another guest, obviously rich and very handsome, but definitely not a vampire -- yet. The dance ends. Alida's laughter is cut short, as she notices someone O.S.

HER POV - STAIRCASE

Louis arrives and comes down the steps, pausing to survey the scene. Alida appears at his elbow.

ALIDA

I knew you'd come.

LOUIS

You see? I can't resist you.

ALIDA

If only that were true!

The orchestra starts playing a tango, the familiar strains of "Jealousy."

ALIDA

(continuing)

How appropriate! They're playing our song. Dance with me?

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Louis dances a fantastic tango with Alida. Put to shame by their exhibition, the other dancers clear the floor to give them space.

CLOSE ON LOUIS

as he spins her round and bends her back. But he suddenly loses a beat, when his eye is caught by something O.S. that throws him momentarily.

HIS POV - CLAUDIA

entering the ballroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She pauses on the stairs to watch the dancers, not recognizing them. This time, there is no mistaking her -- she is wearing the gorgeous white lace gown that she wore to the first night at the Theater of Vampires in Paris. But her face is disguised by a white half-mask.

BACK TO LOUIS

as he quickly recovers and continues the dance.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as the dance ends. The guests applaud the couple, who are quickly swamped by admirers and flatterers. Louis cranes to see Claudia over their heads.

HIS POV - THE STAIRCASE

Claudia is no longer there.

BACK TO LOUIS AND ALIDA

as Louis looks around anxiously. The next dance begins -- a foxtrot. As the other guests disperse to dance, a handsome young man sporting a black mustache under his half-mask and wearing only a rumpled tuxedo, in lieu of a costume, steps up to Alida. His name is HOWARD, and he speaks with an American accent.

HOWARD

Not bad, kiddo! Not bad at all!

ALIDA

(surprised)

Howard, is it really you -- here in Venice?

HOWARD

You mean the mask didn't fool ya?

ALIDA

I'd have spotted you anywhere, darling. It's the tennis shoes. They're a dead give-away.

(to Louis)

Lewis, I'd like you to meet a new friend of mine -- another rich American, as a matter of fact. Lewis, this is Howard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As the two men shake hands, Louis looks about for a sign of Claudia, distracted.

HOWARD

Hiya, Louie!

LOUIS

How're you doing, Howie?

Louis reacts, spotting Claudia O.S.

HIS POV - CLAUDIA

standing by the open doors to a balcony. She seems to be looking for someone. But as she turns, she spots Louis looking at her, recognizes him instantly, then turns and flits outside onto the balcony.

ALIDA (O.S.)

Howard's just wild about flying.
Aren't you, Howard?

HOWARD (O.S.)

What're you gonna do when you own
the company, right?

BACK TO SCENE

ALIDA

He's promised to take me up for
a spin sometime.

HOWARD

You fly, Louie?

LOUIS

No -- but I do a little climbing.
(anxious to go)
Would you excuse me. There's
something I've got to take care
of.

He goes off. Alida looks after him, curious and a bit troubled.

HOWARD

Come on, kid -- teach me how to
trot.

He spins her onto the dance floor.

LOUIS

hurrying out the doors onto the balcony.

EXT. PALAZZO - A BALCONY - NIGHT

Louis comes out to find Claudia at the rail, looking out over the canal. The balcony is deserted, except for them. He moves to her. She tenses.

LOUIS

I knew it was you. I knew it all along. I knew I wasn't mistaken.

She turns, plays the stranger.

CLAUDIA

I don't know what you're talking about. Whoever you are, I wish you'd leave me alone.

He whips off his mask. She turns and hurries off toward the door.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Louis is in front of her, barring her way, then whips off her mask. It is, indeed, Claudia -- more beautiful than ever.

LOUIS

Why do you run from me?

CLAUDIA

I'm afraid.

LOUIS

(incredulous)

Afraid of me? But I love you. I've never stopped loving you.

CLAUDIA

(torn; afraid)

And I love you. It's Alida I fear. If she finds out I'm still alive, she'll try to destroy me again.

LOUIS

(taken aback)

Alida? Surely you mean Lestat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

No, Alida! She and Santiago together. If it hadn't been for Lestat, I'd have died in that courtyard with Madeleine.

LOUIS

(amazed)

Lestat saved you?

CLAUDIA

At the last minute -- as he was planning to all along. Santiago was clever, you see -- too clever. He conspired with both Lestat and Alida -- with Lestat for your death and my life, with Alida for your life and my death. But he underestimated Alida. Once she had you, what did she care about the trail of destruction she left behind?

Their nervous conversation is suddenly interrupted by the momentary intrusion of noisy revelers, who dance in a line, conga-style, onto the balcony, then back out again.

CLOSER ANGLE

as Louis pulls Claudia aside into the shadows of a corner.

LOUIS

None of it makes any difference, now that I have you back.

They kiss, but Claudia breaks away, looking about apprehensively.

CLAUDIA

Be careful, Louis. Lestat is here.

LOUIS

In Venice?

CLAUDIA

Here -- at the ball.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

Then it's not safe for either of us. Alida's inside, as well. Come on...!

CLAUDIA

Where to?

LOUIS

We're getting out. We're leaving Venice.

They hurry inside.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

The dance floor is crowded with madcap revelers, all dancing a wild Charleston.

ALIDA AND HOWARD

going at it fast and furiously.

LOUIS AND CLAUDIA

as he leads her through the crowd and out the nearest exit.

ALIDA AND HOWARD

as the dance ends. They fall into each other's arms, utterly spent, happy but exhausted.

ALIDA

That was terrific, Howard! I'm exhausted!

(looking around)

Where's Louis, I wonder?

EXT. DOGE'S PALACE - DOCK - NIGHT

Louis and Claudia get into a waiting motor launch with the help of the Boatman. The launch starts up and pulls away, speeding up the canal.

PAN BACK to the palace entrance and PICK UP the figure of a man dressed in a Harlequin costume, as he races down the steps toward the dock.

ZOOM IN FAST, as he stops, ripping off his mask to reveal that it is Lestat. He watches the motor launch speed off, his scarred face set grimly.

EXT. GRAND CANAL - NIGHT

The motor launch speeds up the canal, away from the ducal palace.

INT. MOTOR LAUNCH - PASSENGERS' COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Louis and Claudia are locked in a long, hungry, passionate kiss.

LOUIS

I don't know how I've lived so long without you.

CLAUDIA

I thought you were dead. Lestat told me you'd died in the theater fire.

LOUIS

(a bitter edge)

Funny -- that's what Alida said happened to Lestat. But where have you been all this time?

CLAUDIA

He took me to St. Petersburg at first. But when the Revolution came, we fled to Vienna.

LOUIS

The one place Alida never wanted to go. I wonder if she knew?

CLAUDIA

It wouldn't surprise me.

LOUIS

And you've been living in Vienna ever since?

CLAUDIA

If you can call life with Lestat living.

LOUIS

Why did you stay with him?

CLAUDIA

Where else could I go? What else could I do?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

You forget, I didn't know anyone but you and Lestat. I needed him -- I needed someone. You know I can't survive on my own. But always, secretly, I hoped in my heart that somehow you'd escaped the fire and were alive. That somehow, one day, you'd find me. Then, on our first night in Venice, I went alone to the Piazza San Marco -- and there you were.

LOUIS

(embracing her)

Oh, my darling -- I'll never leave you again!

They kiss.

EXT. LOUIS' PALAZZO - DOCK - NIGHT

The motor launch glides up to the dock, and the Boatman jumps onto the dock to tie it off.

CLOSER ANGLE

as Louis steps ashore, turning back to Claudia.

LOUIS

Stay here -- out of sight. I won't be long. I just need my passport and some documents.

He turns and enters the palazzo.

CLAUDIA

Hurry, my love!

EXT. LOUIS' PALAZZO - STREET-SIDE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Alida hurries through the streets and enters the palazzo from the street side.

INT. LOUIS' PALAZZO - FOYER - NIGHT

Alida hurries in, flings aside her cape, looks around.

ALIDA

(quietly)

Louis?

There is no response. She hurries up the stairs.

INT. LOUIS' PALAZZO - LIBRARY - NIGHT

CLOSE on fireplace, as crumpled papers are thrown into the fire to be consumed in flames.

WIDEN TO REVEAL Louis, hastily destroying his discarded past, going through papers and documents from this desk, consigning them to his pockets or the fire, according to their importance.

ALIDA (O.S.)

Going somewhere?

ANOTHER ANGLE

as he turns to see her in the doorway. She enters and considers the scene.

LOUIS

I'm leaving.

ALIDA

Where're we going?

LOUIS

You're not going anywhere.

ALIDA

Traveling light, I see.

LOUIS

I can make better time that way.

ALIDA

What could be so pressing, I wonder?

LOUIS

I've found Claudia.

ALIDA

(stunned)

That's impossible. She's dead.

LOUIS

Your plan failed. She managed to escape alive.

ALIDA

You're lying! I saw her ashes.
We both did!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

That was only Madeleine. Lestat rescued Claudia at the last minute. She's here, in Venice -- and I'm taking her away.

He pockets his passport and starts for the door. Alida intercepts him, clearly worried for the first time that she will actually lose him.

ALIDA

No, Louis -- please! I couldn't go on without you.

LOUIS

You'll manage. You're a survivor, Alida. I'd say three hundred years more than qualifies you. It's the rest of us I worry about.

ALIDA

I knew what I was doing was wrong -- that I might lose you if you ever found out. But I was willing to risk everything, because I loved you. Don't you understand? I have always loved you. Even before I found you.

LOUIS

Love? There is no love with creatures like you -- only hunger and possession.

ALIDA

If you leave me, I'll have nothing. You're everything to me.

LOUIS

If that's true, I pity you. I know what life is like without love. Now, it's a lesson you can learn.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as he turns to the door, only to find her there, barring his way.

ALIDA

I won't let you go!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

There's nothing you can do to stop me.

ALIDA

I wouldn't be too sure.

LOUIS

Even if you could, you'd still have nothing. Whatever love I had for you has turned to loathing. Now, let me pass.

She fixes him with her eyes, exerting her vampire will on him in a desperate attempt to overcome his resolve.

CLOSE ON LOUIS' EYES

as he engages her will, returning the powerful stare in kind, fighting power with power.

CLOSE ON ALIDA

as she begins to tremble, her own power clearly under a terrible strain.

CLOSE ON LOUIS

as he lets loose the full force of his power, motivated by his love for Claudia.

LIMBO SHOT (SPECIAL EFFECTS)

Louis and Alida, suspended in a surreal landscape of the mind, their mighty wills interlocked, battle for dominance while the heavens explode around them. A final flash of lightning and CLAP of THUNDER as we...

CUT TO:

ALIDA

Her hands reach up and seek her choker, as if she is being strangled. She clutches at it, shaking uncontrollably now, and rips it off, gasping for air. And with that, breaks the spell.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Alida slumps against the wall, spent. Louis steps past her and opens the door.

(CONTINUED)

BACK TO LESTAT

Too late. Lestat has seen him. He smiles to himself, then hurries inside with Claudia.

EXT. ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

Louis leaps across to Lestat's roof.

LOUIS

searches for a way inside, then spots a turret window and starts to bend the bars apart, applying all his strength.

INT. LESTAT'S PALAZZO - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on Claudia, unconscious. Lestat ENTERS FRAME and kisses her gently on the lips.

WIDEN, as she wakes, horrified to see him, and shrinks back from his hideous face.

LESTAT

Listen to me, Claudia, and listen carefully. There isn't much time. At this very minute, your lover is out there. He's coming to take you away from me. If you go, know this -- you will be the cause of his destruction.

CLAUDIA

You can't scare me, Lestat. I know all your tricks.

LESTAT

This is no trick, believe me. Under Alida's protection, he was safe, anonymous. But once exposed, he'll be fair game again. There won't be a place on earth he can hide. We'll hunt him down, we'll find him, we'll destroy him.

CLAUDIA

(terrified)

No!

LESTAT

Yes! So, you see, you hold his life in your hands. The choice is yours. If you go with him tonight, you'll be his death.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA
And if I stay?

LESTAT
He'll go free.

CLAUDIA
And what's to become of me?

LESTAT
You'll be mine.

CLAUDIA
Forever?

LESTAT
Forever.

ON Claudia, as the full significance of the word hits her.

INT. PALAZZO - A STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Louis descends the stairs cautiously, listening, sensing. He ventures into a corridor.

INT. PALAZZO - A CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Louis moves along the corridor, listening from room to room, searching for Claudia.

CLOSE on a scimitar, hanging on a wall. Lestat's hand ENTERS FRAME and removes it.

LOUIS

moves to the head of the grand staircase that leads down to the main floor, his back to CAMERA.

LESTAT (O.S.)
Looking for something, Louis?

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Louis spins around to find Lestat confronting him with the deadly scimitar poised to slice off his head. He flies at Louis, but Louis is able to side-step and avoid the blow. They grapple for the weapon, fall and tumble together down the stairs.

INT. ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

A large marble hall, one side leading to the street entrance, the other to the canal water gate.

The two men struggle for the scimitar, but it clatters across the marble floor. Lestat is on it in a flash and turns on Louis with it. Louis looks around desperately for something with which to defend himself and seizes a battle-ax trophy from over a table.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as the two men engage in a ferocious battle.

CLAUDIA

comes running down the stairs, but stops, horrified at the sight of Louis and Lestat fighting.

LOUIS AND LESTAT

As Lestat raises the scimitar to strike Louis, Louis lands a blow with his ax that sends the scimitar flying from Lestat's grasp.

SCIMITAR

It falls on the steps that lead down to the canal waters, where a gondola can be seen moored. Over the wide water gate entrance hangs a spiked-toothed portcullis, that can be lowered by a chain attached to a crank-wheel at one side.

LOUIS AND LESTAT

Louis has Lestat pinned down and raises the ax to cleave Lestat's head.

CLAUDIA

panics.

CLAUDIA

(shouts)

No, Louis!

LOUIS AND LESTAT

Distracted, he looks to Claudia. In that instant, Lestat grabs him by the leg and hurls him away with all his might.

LOUIS

hurls through the air, crashes against an opposite wall and falls to the ground, stunned.

LESTAT

grabs a lethal dagger from a sheath in his belt and flies at Louis.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Lestat raises the dagger to plunge it into Louis' heart, but Claudia flies at him and tries to stay the blow. But Lestat flings her aside with a tremendous force.

CLAUDIA

is hurled against the water gate wall and falls onto the steps that lead down to the water, at the opposite side of the gateway from where the scimitar lies, making it well out of her reach. Recovering, she looks back toward the men and reacts.

CLAUDIA

No!

HER POV - LESTAT AND LOUIS

as Lestat plunges the dagger into Louis' breast.

BACK TO CLAUDIA

as she screams and averts her eyes. But instantly, she is dazzled by a shimmering light that nearly blinds her. Shading her eyes, she tries to make out its source.

HER POV - THE CANAL

the dazzling light is being reflected off the surface of the canal water.

BACK TO CLAUDIA

as she reacts instantly. Dawn! She looks quickly toward the horizon -- off to one side!

HER POV - LAGOON

The sun is just rising above the horizon across the lagoon, its first rays already playing on the water ripples.

BACK TO CLAUDIA

reacting in horror -- and fascination.

LOUIS AND LESTAT

Lestat hovers over him, panting, waiting for the first signs of Louis' disintegration. Instead, Louis' eyes flicker open and focus intently on Lestat, as he reaches up with both hands and pulls the dagger from his own breast. Horrified, Lestat backs off, then shoots a quick glance toward the water gate.

HIS POV - SCIMITAR

still lying at the other side of the water gate on the top step.

BACK TO LESTAT AND LOUIS

as Lestat runs to fetch the scimitar. Louis sees what he's up to, then looks quickly to something above Lestat.

HIS POV - PORTCULLIS

its iron spikes poised directly over Lestat, as he reaches for the scimitar.

BACK TO LOUIS

as his eyes dart to the chain at the side and focus intently on it.

HIS POV - PORTCULLIS CHAIN

taut, holding the portcullis in place.

ZOOM IN FAST on one link. It snaps. The crank wheel instantly starts to unreel with a loud NOISE.

LESTAT

reacting to the SOUND, looks up and reacts in terror at what he sees.

HIS POV - PORTCULLIS

falling directly down on him in SLOW MOTION, its spikes closing like the teeth of some monstrous beast.

LOUIS

wincing at the sight of Lestat's grotesque destruction.

LESTAT

Pinned by the portcullis, one of its spikes driven directly through his heart, he begins to crumble into dust, as the centuries take their toll.

LOUIS

watching, appalled. Then, recovering, he looks across the other side of the gateway. But Claudia is no longer there. He looks around for her.

LOUIS

Claudia? Claudia...!

Then, it hits him, and he looks through the portcullis and reacts.

LOUIS

(continuing; shouts)

Claudia!

HIS POV - CLAUDIA (THROUGH BARS)

standing in the gondola, poling it directly out toward the lagoon.

BACK TO LOUIS

as Louis clutches at the great iron bars and shouts to her:

LOUIS

Claudia, come back! We're free!
We're free!!

HIS POV - CLAUDIA

But she does not hear his shouts, does not look back, as the gondola takes her farther and farther out into the lagoon.

BACK TO LOUIS

as he tries in vain to bend the bars apart. But they prove too mighty for him. He turns and runs off.

INT. LESTAT'S PALAZZO - LOGGIA - DAWN

Louis races the length of a loggia that is lined with latticed windows, looking out each as he runs past.

LOUIS

Claudia!! Claudia!! Claudia!!

He stops and stares through the stone lattice work of a window midway along the loggia, trapped inside, unable to get out to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KYLE

It didn't have to end like that.
It didn't.

WIDEN TO INCLUDE Louis, himself shaken by the memory.

LOUIS

I don't think it could've ended
any other way for Claudia. It
was that -- or an eternity with
Lestat.

KYLE

Yes, it could. It could've had
a happy ending.

LOUIS

You still think it's only a
fairy tale?

KYLE

(genuinely)

No. Not any more. But why did
you tell me all this? You can't
really want everything on this
tape made public.

LOUIS

Of course not. I'm afraid you
couldn't, even if you wanted to.

Reacting suspiciously, Kyle rewinds the tape a bit, then
plays it back.

KYLE'S VOICE

(on tape)

'It didn't have to end like that.
It didn't.'

(long pause)

'Yes, it could. It could've had
a happy ending.'

(a pause)

'No. Not any more...'

She switches off the tape, then looks at him, puzzled
and somewhat apprehensive.

KYLE

You're not on this tape. Not one
word.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KYLE (CONT'D)

(afraid of the answer)

Why did you really bring me here?

LOUIS

(dissembling)

I wanted to unburden myself. I
wanted somebody to know.

KYLE

I don't believe you. You could've
picked anybody for that.

(realizing)

You were going to... take me...
weren't you?

LOUIS

Yes. I've been watching you for
a long time. The idea appealed
to me. But you can relax. I've
changed my mind.

KYLE

Why?

LOUIS

Reliving it all tonight, I find
I'm just as appalled by myself --
by what I am -- as I ever was.
I still can't bring myself to
take a human life. I'm sorry I
brought you here. I've wasted
your time -- but I have spared
your life. You'd better go now.
It'll be light soon.

She hesitates, staring at him, almost as if unsatisfied by his answer, reluctant to go. Louis seems torn, tormented, struggling against something inside himself, something perhaps too strong for him to control.

LOUIS

(continuing; sharply,
almost vicious)I said go! Before I change my
mind again.

He turns away, gripping the back of a chair, as if to steady himself, hold himself back, trying to conceal his powerful emotions from her. Kyle gathers her gear up, starts for the door, then turns back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KYLE

I... I'm sorry I doubted...

LOUIS

(without turning)

Just go!!!

Reluctantly, she turns and starts down the long corridor, as Louis stands rigidly gripping the chair, his face a portrait in anguish, listening to the SOUND of her FOOT-STEPS retreating out of his life.

TILT DOWN to his hands TO REVEAL that the steel tubing of the high-tech frame has bent under the power of his intense grip.

INT. CORRIDOR AND FOYER - NIGHT

Kyle steps to the elevator doors and presses the "DOWN" button. As she waits, she looks at the tape recorder, still in her hand. Something seems to compel her, and she presses the "PLAY" button. The tape starts.

KYLE'S VOICE

(on tape)

'It didn't have to end like that.
It didn't...'

She turns off the recorder abruptly, then looks up, startled by the sudden opening of the elevator doors.

INT. LIVING ROOM - PRE-DAWN

Louis watches the first light of dawn begin to break over the city, then turns to the console, presses a button and looks to the fireplace.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as a panel upon which the mirror is hung, slides to one side electrically, revealing a large portrait in a recessed niche behind. Painted in the style of Renoir, it is quite obviously a portrait of Claudia at her most beautiful. In this particular painting, posed as she is, with her hair up as it is, her resemblance to Kyle is astonishing. Louis moves to the fireplace and gazes up at her lovely face, a man in profound pain.

LOUIS

(to painting)

Goodbye, my own sweet loving
Claudia.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (CONT'D)

To have loved you and lost you three times is more than I can bear...

But he stops short, startled by the SOUND of the drapes beginning to close. He spins round to see them closing electrically, shutting out the first rays of sunlight as they break over the horizon. Instantly, he whirls round to see Kyle, standing at the console, her finger on the button that controls the drapes. They look at each other in silence for an instant, then she looks at the painting, moves to it, obviously now understanding everything.

KYLE

Why didn't you tell me?

LOUIS

I meant to. But in the end I couldn't.

(joining her)

I spotted the similarity the first time I saw you on television. Your looks, your personality, even some of your gestures... It was uncanny, almost as though she'd been reborn. But I had to be sure, I had to meet you, talk to you in person. It was important for you to know everything -- everything about me, about Claudia. You see, the choice had to be yours. At least, that was my original intention.

KYLE

Why didn't you go through with it?

LOUIS

I thought I'd made a kind of peace with myself. But I guess I haven't. Since that time in Paris, when I initiated Madeleine, I have never transformed another human being. How could I possibly pass this curse onto anyone -- much less you, of all people? You're so much like her. Earlier, when I saw you holding that doll, I thought my heart would break.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kyle glances at Claudia's doll, now lying on the sofa, and picks it up, considering it, her fingers gently tracing its delicate features.

KYLE

But you said yourself, it's not a curse anymore. You don't have to kill to survive.

LOUIS

(reacts; considers her closely)

Why did you come back?

KYLE

How can you ask? Do you have any idea how you made it all sound? The passion... the romance? My God, you were talking about things most people won't ever experience -- things they can't even begin to understand. Why, if you were to offer anyone a chance like that -- a chance to see and feel with such intensity -- a chance to live forever...!

LOUIS

What're you saying?

KYLE

(taking the plunge)

Let me share your life!

LOUIS

After everything I've just told you?

KYLE

Because of everything you've just told me.

LOUIS

You'd be willing to live your life in a world of darkness?

KYLE

What do I care about darkness? Life doesn't stop at night anymore. It goes on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

What about your family -- your friends?

KYLE

I have no family to speak of. And as for friends -- I never seem to have time for them, anyway.

LOUIS

You'd give up everything -- your job, your career?

KYLE

Louis, you've forgotten what human existence is like -- how grubby, how brief! You don't even understand the meaning of your own story -- what it means to a mortal like me -- the promise of everlasting life!

LOUIS

(tempted for an instant, then:

No. I can't. I won't.

KYLE

Think what you're doing! You missed the chance the first time -- with Claudia. Now you're doing the same thing all over again. Don't make the same mistake twice!

He looks at her, clearly torn.

KYLE

(continuing)

Give Claudia one more chance -- one more chance in me.

He considers her for a moment, then looks up at Claudia's portrait, then finally back at Kyle. Then, without a word, he sweeps her up in his arms and carries her off to the bedroom, still clutching Claudia's doll.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Louis carries Kyle in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The room is bathed in soft, glowing indirect lighting. It is almost replica of the Parisian apartment, featuring the magnificent Empire canopied bed, identical to the one in which Louis and Claudia made such exquisite, passionate love so many, many decades ago.

CLOSER ANGLE, as Louis gently places Kyle on the bed and bends to take a long, lingering kiss. Then, fixing his eyes on hers, he prepares to initiate her. She trembles, frightened, yet expectant.

KYLE

Will it hurt?

LOUIS

Only a little.

KYLE

Will I die?

LOUIS

Never.

Slowly he moves his lips close to her neck, as she bares it for him, her eyes filled with the expectation of eternity.

TILT DOWN the length of her arm, flung loosely over the edge of the bed and HOLD on Claudia's doll in her clasp. Her fingers relax and the doll falls silently to the floor, as we...

FADE OUT.

THE END