



Written by Rolin Jones

Inspired by the Novel of Anne Rice

FADE IN

Music and a title card.

OVERTURE

Slow. Maddeningly slow, YAYOI KUSAMA'S AFTERMATH OF OBLITERATION OF ETERNITY surrounds the title card.

The overture for season one plays.

Elegant.

Beautiful.

Terrifying.

The word OVERTURE recedes, replaced slowly by the words...

INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE

SMASH TO BLACK

An Advertisement for an Internet Seminar Series - PRACTICUM.
Zippy graphics, sharp edits, archival footage assembled to
sell you a storied career.

DANIEL MOLLOY (V.O.)

There's stories out there that need to be
told. There's shit out there that's, you
know...wrong. People need to know about it.

Graphics/Footage regarding a San Francisco Chronicle series
written by a young, side-burned Daniel Molloy on Kaposi's
Sarcoma and the beginnings of the AIDS epidemic.

DANIEL MOLLOY (V.O.)

That's the job. And it's not a complicated
job other than how it'll mess with your
life, I mean, don't...don't kid yourself.

Graphics/Footage on a LA Times series on California Blackouts
and Enron written by a middle-aged Daniel Molloy.

DANIEL MOLLOY

It's not a friend-making endeavor.

TITLE OVER BLACK: **MEET YOUR PROFESSOR.**

INT. STAGED OFFICE - DAY

DANIEL MOLLOY, mid 60's, slight, with a massive no-bullshit
chip on his shoulder addresses the camera directly. Chyron:
Daniel Molloy, Investigative Journalist.

DANIEL MOLLOY

The News used to be a bunch of guys who
look like me, huddled around a long desk at
a page one meeting...deciding what the news
was.

(holds up a cell phone)

This little fucker ended that. And that's
mostly a good thing.

TITLE OVER BLACK: **TWO-TIME PULITZER PRIZE WINNER - SAN
FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, LOS ANGELES TIMES, THE GUARDIAN**

DANIEL MOLLOY (V.O.)

The news cycle now, it turns ninety percent
of the work into click bait and that page
one meeting...

BACK TO STAGED OFFICE

DANIEL MOLLOY

I mean I could walk into the Times right now with a semi-automatic and not hit one reporter.

(to someone off-camera)

That the kinda thing you're looking for?

TITLE OVER BLACK: IN HIS FIRST EVER ONLINE CLASS

Images of all his books including HATRED AND ASHBURY.

DANIEL MOLLOY (V.O.)

I've been fired from three papers, hired back at two of them, third got gobbled up by Knight Ridder, so to be clear here...

BACK TO STAGED OFFICE

DANIEL MOLLOY

I'm a god damn reservoir of do's and don'ts. It's your money.

INT. STAGED OFFICE BULLPEN - DAY

Daniel Molloy seated at a table talking to a couple of JOURNALISM STUDENTS.

DANIEL MOLLOY

In this class we're gonna ask hard questions. We're gonna have the difficult conversations, you feel me?

Images and archival footage of a Time interview with Slobodan Milosevic, a Rolling Stone interview with Steve Jobs.

DANIEL MOLLOY (V.O.)

You can get by with a vocabulary of seven hundred words if you're a good listener.

BACK TO STAGED BULLPEN

DANIEL MOLLOY

Your sources are your sherpas. Your editor is your priest. Honesty is not a tactic.

TITLES OVER BLACKS FILLING UP THE SCREEN: INVESTIGATIVE RESEARCH. SEEKING SOURCES AND DOCUMENTS. VERIFYING INFORMATION. PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW. JOURNALISM'S FUTURE.

DANIEL MOLLOY (V.O.)

Type up your story, edit your tape, your stream, whatever it is, but hold it up like a mirror...to the *etherized* democracies of the world...cause who else it gonna do it?

BACK TO STAGED BULLPEN

DANIEL MOLLOY

You still want this fucking job? (laughing)
I'm Daniel Molloy and this is my Practicum.

TITLE OVER BLACK: **www.PRACTICUM.COM. LIFE IS THE CURRICULUM.**

CUT TO:

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - DAY

POP of Molloy Clicking around the TV. Pandemic. Pandemic.
Guys-making-swords-reality-show. Pandemic.

POP of Molloy on the phone, looking at some medical forms. A subtle but unmistakable shake in his right hand.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT BUILDING, LOBBY - DAY

Molloy getting his mail from the lobby. There's a few days worth of it and a package with no return address or postage. He looks out of the front door window. No one on the street.

BACK TO APARTMENT

Molloy doing a puzzle- Bruegel the Elder's "Fall of the Rebel Angels" half done. We see what looks like a small scar on his neck through his unbuttoned collar.

POP of Molloy cooking for himself. Noise comes from outside. He's looks at the clock- 7pm. Annoyed, he goes out to his balcony- it's the neighborhood applause for essential workers. He claps *twice* then heads back to his cooking.

POP of Molloy going through his mail. He picks up the package with no return address. He's about to open it, when the phone rings. He sets down the package and goes to his phone. WE STAY WITH THE PACKAGE.

MOLLOY (O.C.)

Thanks for getting back to me, Doc. Yeah,
I'm scheduled to come in Friday...but...
right?! Let's get closer to the Covid! Who
thinks that's a good fucking idea?!

He comes back into frame and begins opening the package.
Music creeps in underneath.

MOLLOY (CONT'D)

...uh-huh...uh-huh...Uh-huh...

Cassette tapes (labeled 9/4/76, bound by a rubber band) and a letter are inside the package. He scans the letter.

MOLLOY (V.O.)
...I gotta call you back.

He abruptly hangs up the phone. He puts down the letter and looks at the cassette tapes.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Molloy, wearing a mask, walks down the hall. He knocks on a door of his NEIGHBOR. He asks her if they have a cassette player. The Neighbor shakes her head, closes the door. Molloy starts walking back to his apartment. He stops, turns around and his Neighbor is in the hallway calling out to him...her TWEENER son comes out holding a retro-cassette player.

BACK TO MOLLOY'S APARTMENT

Molloy sits at his puzzle table, puts a cassette tape in the player. Takes a moment, then presses play. We hear a little hiss then some room noise. Then the voice of a young man.

VOICE OF YOUNG MOLLOY
So, it's on now...Um...okay...first question...You weren't always a vampire, were you?

Molloy is shook. Memory as sledgehammer.

VOICE OF MAN WITH CREOLE ACCENT
No. I was a thirty-three year old man when I became a vampire.

VOICE OF YOUNG MAN
How did it come about?

VOICE OF MAN WITH CREOLE ACCENT
There's a simple answer to that. I don't believe I want to give simple answers. I think I want to tell the real story.

He stops the cassette, tries to slow his breathing. He picks up the letter, starts reading as a haunted melody emerges from the music, a river supporting a now-familiar voice...

LOUIS (V.O.)
Dear Mr. Molloy. I hope this letter finds you safe and thriving...if such a thing as thriving were a possibility in this bleak hour...

EXT. HIGH ABOVE THE PERSIAN GULF - NIGHT

Wind. Darkness. The lights of Dubai's Palm Jumeriah invade the frame, slowly revealing their fantail shape.

LOUIS (V.O.)

I have been following your career with some interest since our last meeting. Please allow me to congratulate you on all your successes--those professional...and those personally redemptive.

EXT. ROYAL MEYDAN BRIDGE - DAWN

Gliding down the center line, undulating waves of blue electric light on both sides, a CARAVAN of BENTLEY MULSANNES pierce the frame and speed along.

LOUIS (V.O.)

The passage of time and the frailties that accompany it have provided me...perspective ...and I suspect the same might be for you as well. I am hoping health and pride won't deter you from the following proposal...

EXT. SHEIKH ZAYED ROAD - EARLY MORNING

A canyon of bright and beautiful lights, following the CARAVAN from above and behind.

LOUIS (V.O.)

In a week's time. In a setting of my choosing. We revisit the project boyish youth prevented us from finishing...

INT. BENTLEY MULSANNE, MIDDLE CAR - EARLY MORNING

A DRIVER, and SECURITY DETAIL wearing gloves and pandemic masks in the front seat. Molloy in the backseat, listening to one of the cassette tapes, making notes in a legal pad. He wipes a little nervous sweat that has formed on his temple.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Forty-four years and thousands of miles removed from the room we shared in San Francisco, I offer...

EXT. DUBAI HIGHRISE BUILDING - MORNING

Scaling the facade of glass windows- little peeks into the waking hours of Dubai professionals and their families.

LOUIS (V.O.)
For your journalistic pleasures...
my full attention and my life's story.
Shall we try it again, Daniel?

Settling on the top floor- an ornate balcony wrapped around half. Windows taller than those in the rest of the building.

LOUIS (V.O.)
All affinities, Louis de Pointe Du Lac.

The music ends.

CUT TO:

The face of LOUIS DE POINT DU LAC.

Black. Beautiful. The 33-year-old face of a 146-year-old soul. The skin smooth as if sculpted from Ceylon ebony. The eyes, brilliant green looking down on his nervous guest intently...like flames in a skull.

MOLLOY (O.C.)
I told my editor I was meeting with the,
uh, most dangerous man in the world. I gave
him two guesses. Bezos. Putin. He thinks
I'm in Praskoveevka.

LOUIS
...You've grown old, Daniel.

INT. DUBAI PENTHOUSE - DAY

Daniel Molloy seated on a mid-century sectional- his computer, the cassette tapes, and legal pad out on a table separating him from Louis. Artifacts of a life richly lived (curated with exquisite taste and historical curiosity) are displayed throughout the room. A young man, RASHID sits in the deep background his head buried in a tablet. There are floor-to-ceiling windows deeply tinted so while it's clearly day out, it feels like the dead of night presently.

MOLLOY
Yeah, well...Mortality's a heavy fucking drum.

Louis holds up a copy of Molloy's book, "Hate and Ashbury".

LOUIS
I wasn't sure you remembered me. Your book makes no mention of our prior meeting.

MOLLOY

Gritty memoir. Drugs. Humiliations. Self-pity kind of stuff. Mention someone like yourself in one of those, readers tend to call bullshit.

LOUIS

I see.

Molloy picks the cassette tapes taps them on the table.

MOLLOY

These helped.

But then he also pulls down his turtle neck down to reveal a sizable, traumatic scar on his neck.

MOLLOY (CONT'D)

This too.

A loaded moment between the two. Louis sets down the book, looks at Molloy's hand tremor.

LOUIS

You've had some health concerns of late?

MOLLOY

Whole planet's having a moment I'd say.

LOUIS

You have MS, Daniel.

MOLLOY

(annoyed)

Yeah. And you've got your own hangar at the airport, privileges on the Royal Meydan Bridge and zero presence online.

LOUIS

(to Rashid)

I've hit a nerve.

MOLLOY

I know the Emiratis are big on privacy and that's probably important for you, but I gotta ask, what's it cost a month, this haven't-aged-in-half-a-century, killer-views-in-all-directions anonymity?

LOUIS

Quite a lot.

MOLLOY

Only my doctor and my family know I'm sick. I don't dig the one-way hack.

(MORE)

MOLLOY (CONT'D)

Here's another question. That's the sun out there, where's your coffin?

Louis looks to Rashid who types on his tablet and the tint on one of the windows disappears. Louis walks over to the window exposing a shaft of sunlight.

LOUIS

One hundred and forty-six years of sunlight has fortified something of an arrogant streak in me. Why play slave to a mediocre star when you can afford not to?

Louis's sticks his hand in the sunlight. LOUIS'S FLESH BEGINS TO BURN. Louis absorbs the pain as Molloy watches. Once Molloy's seen enough Louis looks at Rashid, who restores the tint to the window.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

I have to be very careful whom I let in.

Louis hits rewind on his cassette player.

MOLLOY

And it didn't end well the last time, so forgive me if I'm a little nervous.

Molloy presses stop, presses play.

ANGRY VOICE OF LOUIS

This...after all I've told you...is what you ask for?

VOICE OF YOUNG MOLLOY

(half slurring)

You don't know what human life is like. You've forgotten, man. You don't even understand the meaning of your own story.

(sounds of a table being
knocked over, screaming)

Nooooo! Stop!

The ATTACK ON TAPE IS HORRIFYING. We stay on Molloy's face as he hear his BEGGING AND SCREAMING. It's quite chilling and goes on a touch longer than it should when SUDDENLY LOUIS TRANSPORTS HIMSELF ACROSS THE ROOM, and hits the stop button. Molloy tries to hide his fear as Louis towers over him.

LOUIS

You were disrespectful.

MOLLOY

...I was a junkie.

LOUIS

You were not worthy of my story then.

MOLLOY

Maybe the story wasn't worth telling. It's all there, hire a transcriber, I don't do puff portraiture anymore...

LOUIS

And yet you got on a plane with an auto-immune disease in the middle of a pandemic.

Louis walks back to his chair.

MOLLOY

...That's my voice but I barely remember any of it. I ask all the wrong questions. There's contradictions in your story I don't follow up on.

LOUIS

Yes.

MOLLOY

The few good questions I do ask, you steamroll over them. It's not an interview. It's a fever dream told to an idiot.

LOUIS

Yes.

MOLLOY

I haven't spoken to my editor in two years. I'm whoring myself online. You stroked my ego. What's it matter why? I'm here... What's changed for you?

LOUIS

The world. The circumstances. Me...I've changed.

Louis sits down. Molloy takes a moment.

MOLLOY

A do-over?

LOUIS

Truth and reconciliation.

Molloy opens up his laptop, sets up a mic unit.

MOLLOY

I ask the questions. You answer the questions. We use the old tapes to verify facts and ferret out delusion, yeah?

(MORE)

MOLLOY (CONT'D)

Anything that can't be verified I send to my researcher.

Rashid stands up, walks over to the sectional.

RASHID

No third parties.

MOLLOY

I write it. You get to see it before it goes to print. I get the final edit.

RASHID

That's not the agreement you signed on the tarmac.

Molloy connects the mic unit to the laptop, looks at Rashid.

MOLLOY

And I do my best work one on one.

LOUIS

(to Rashid)

Would you see to Mr. Molloy's room. Have chef prepare a meal for him. I think it best we start when *our boy* has had a rest.

MOLLOY

And I'm not your *boy*. I'm an old fucking man and I'm ready to record now if you are.

Louis looks to Rashid. Rashid exits the room. Molloy hits a button on the laptop. The Recording has begun. Molloy starts flipping through his legal pad.

MOLLOY (CONT'D)

This is Daniel Molloy. It's 10:08 in the morning, April 14th, 2020. I'm in the penthouse apartment of the Al Seef Towers, sitting across from Mister...

He gestures to Louis.

LOUIS

Louis De Pointe Du Lac.

MOLLOY

So...how long have you been dead, Mr. Du Lac?

Louis laughs.

EXT. SKIES ABOVE NEW ORLEANS, 1904 - EVENING

The camera is a balloon with a suicidal puncture, dropping through cloud cover onto turn-of-the-twentieth-century New Orleans. Louis's laughter merges with memory.

LOUIS (V.O.)

The year was 1904, the fall of the fifth year of my father's passing and the fall of the fifth year as the executor-in-charge of the De Point Du Lac Family Trust.

MOLLOY (V.O.)

The eldest son...

Past the Vieux Carre into the neighborhood just north...

LOUIS (V.O.)

The *favored* son and a sizable trust to oversee as a consequence - capital accrued from plantations of indigo and sugar and the blood of men who looked like my great-grandfather but did not have his standing. But then forty years of Jim Crow and the electrified light of a new century had vanquished any idea of a Free Man of Color. So it followed the only place in New Orleans a gentleman of my complexion could do a righteous business was a neighborhood called Storyville.

EXT. STORYVILLE STREETS - NIGHT

Bacchanalia on Basin Street. Bars, clubs, brothels, street hustlers, shoebox bands, voodoo priests, pickpockets, stray cats and cayoodles, tourists and townies passing silhouetted whores in the doorways making comefuckme eyes.

MOLLOY (V.O.)

That was the old red light district, yeah?

LOUIS (V.O.)

And it's all gone now. Misguided housing projects knocked about by Katrina's vengeance...but back in the day it was the center of sin and infamy.

A BLONDE-HAIRED MAN steps into frame (we do not see his face yet) His clothes are finely tailored but decades out of fashion eliciting the occasional double take.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Thirty eight blocks of regulated drinking, gambling and gluttonous whoring and all were welcome provided you had more than a picayune in your pocket. Sailors on leave from their ships. Husbands on leave from their vows. Strangers in the strangest land imaginable...

The Blonde Man flips through a blue book (a guide book to the Brothels and prostitutes of Storyville.) We are about to see his face when a car horn honks and the camera picks up a Buffum Roadster turning the corner.

MOLLOY (V.O.)

Right...so as the honorable executor of the family's estate you were in what business exactly, Mr. Du Lac?

INT/EXT. BUFFUM ROADSTER - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE ON Louis driving. Just as beautiful as we've seen him only now with a conked hairdo and without the vampiric eyes, a sterling silver walking stick in the passenger seat.

LOUIS (V.O.)

You could say I managed and operated a diversified portfolio of enterprises.

MOLLOY (V.O.)

Slumlord, Loan Shark, Pimp as I recall.

LOUIS (V.O.)

The product was desire, and it came in as many forms as there were ways to move it.

EXT. IBERVILLE STREET - NIGHT

Louis turns the car north onto Iberville street, slowing down in the face of foot traffic. A decidedly darker, rougher street lined with shotgun Cribs slinging hootch, hop and the Fairer Sex. Life-Weary Prostitutes on porches flashing tongue, tits, and twat to hairy, horny or hammered Johns walking the streets and sidewalks.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Mine was a volume business. Of the two dozen sporting houses on Iberville Street, I owned eight of them. Modest in proportion to the venues on Basin Street- what they lacked in size and elegance they more than made up for in efficiency and reputation.

A Cartoonishly Obese Bouncer, **FINN O'SHEA** sees Louis and immediately walks an envelope of cash over to the car.

FINN

Here go, Mr. Du Lac.

LOUIS

You ain't hiding any bills in them fat fucking rolls of yours, are you?

FINN

No, boss.

Louis drives on.

LOUIS (V.O.)

I was, admittedly, a rougher thing then. Or I presented that way at the very least.

People pass admiring the car, others tipping their hat in knowing respect to Louis.

LOUIS (V.O.)

You had to if you wanted to survive. You couldn't look weak on Iberville Street.

ONCLE VERVAIN, a young Voodoo Priest, comes up along side.

ONCLE VERVAIN

Bonswa, Louis Du Lac.

LOUIS

Oncle Vervain, how do?

ONCLE VERVAIN

Bad spirits lettin' loose.

LOUIS

That so?

ONCLE VERVAIN

I's you, I'd ride this fine auto-carriage back on home. Papa Legba's done turned his back on the tenderloin tonight.

PEG-LEG DORIS, hobbles out into the middle of the street, stops in front of Louis's car.

PEG-LEG DORIS

Mr. Du Lac!

Louis pulls the brake. Peg-Leg Doris comes around to the passenger's side.

LOUIS

Damn, Doris. Gonna lose your one good leg running out like that.

PEG-LEG DORIS

Mr. Du Lac, sir, we got bad trouble at 17.

ONCLE VERVAIN

What I tell you?!

Louis closes his eyes, exhales.

INT. IBERVILLE CRIB, NO. 17, BEDROOM - EVENING

Blood on the floor and walls. A drunk, moaning middle-aged man, **ALDERMAN FENWICK**, sits in nothing but a bloody nightshirt, holding the top of his head with one hand and a bottle of wine in the other. Two more empties on the floor.

ALDERMAN FENWICK

(inebriated)

I apologize, I apologize, I apologize.

BRICKTOP (O.C.)

Uh-huh.

BRICKTOP WILLIAMS, a curvy wonder of Haitian descent and no. 17's best earner sits on the end of a stripped bare bed, stained sheets near her feet, a wooden bat in hand.

ALDERMAN FENWICK

I only wanted to show you my love.

BRICKTOP

Fuck you.

Louis breaks through the throng of Working Girls staring from the door frame. Louis surveys the room, covers his nose.

LOUIS

What happened?

ALDERMAN FENWICK

The cunt hit me!

BRICKTOP

Oh, I'm a cunt now. Minute ago I'm his love.

LOUIS

Alderman Fenwick?

Fenwick moans.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
You hit an Alderman?!

Fenwick raises the bottle for a drink and in doing so, lets his other hand fall, producing A SMALL GEYSER OF BLOOD!

LOUIS (CONT'D)
God damn it, Bricks!

Louis runs over and covers the blood with his own hand GETTING SOME BLOOD ALL OVER HIS HANDS AND SHIRT!

LOUIS (CONT'D)
What I tell you about bringing a bat in here?!

BRICKTOP
Mafugga done stuck it in my shit box!

ALDERMAN FENWICK
I did no such thing.

BRICKTOP
Lucky I didn't have my gun under the bed.

Fenwick moans.

BRICKTOP (CONT'D)
Gave him a chance to pull out. He kept on fucking, so I gave him a little squirt of my catfish dinner for going there.

Louis places Fenwick's hand back on his head, takes the bottle from him.

ALDERMAN FENWICK
(so drunk)
This is...isa slander.

BRICKTOP
(to Louis)
Don't believe me, check his dick.

LOUIS
Who the fuck you talking to? I ain't checking no man's...

She hikes up Fenwick's night shirt. There's shit all over his dick. Louis takes three disgusted steps back.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Ahhhhhhh, God Damn!

BRICKTOP

All kind of hoes on this block do it. Hell, I mighta said yes if you asked. But I don't care who you is. You put a dick in an asshole without asking, that's against Jesus. Fuck you.

The Working Girls in the doorframe laugh it up.

LOUIS

What y'all laughing at? This man's gonna shut us down! Someone go fetch Doc Johnson.
(to Bricktop)
And you! Get some clean water and a towel.

Bricktop grabs the water basin and slams the door behind her. The Alderman's hand slips off again. ANOTHER BLOOD SQUIRT! Louis runs back and puts both of Fenwick's hands back on his head without touching the nightshirt or the soiled D.

ALDERMAN FENWICK

Get your hands off me nigger!

LOUIS

(simmering)
You gonna make me regret my vote if you repeat yourself, Mr. Fenwick.

Fenwick opens his eyes wide.

ALDERMAN FENWICK

...I know you.

LOUIS

Louis Du Pointe Du Lac, sir. Trying to save your life.

ALDERMAN FENWICK

Pointe Du Lac. Yes. I know you!

LOUIS

Ain't a nigger. Negro. Or Colored. I'm native Creole, Mr. Fenwick.

ALDERMAN FENWICK

Forgive me. Made a series of unfortunate choices tonight I have...Soooo much wine.

LOUIS

Don't worry none, we gonna keep this here tween us. Got a good doctor on the way.

Bricktop returns with the water and towel. Fenwick looks up.

ALDERMAN FENWICK
Ms. Williams. Isn't she a vision?

LOUIS
...My best earner.

BRICKTOP
I ain't cleaning his dick.

The door opens up again. It's the Finn, covering his nose.

FINN
Jesus Mary.

LOUIS
Got a situation here, Finn.

FINN
Got another back at 22. Man acting the
maggot, driving away business.

LOUIS
Ain't that what I pay you for?

FINN
It's...the citizen priest.

Off on Louis, not happy about this night at all.

INT. IBERVILLE CRIB, NO. 22 - NIGHT

PAUL DE POINTE DU LAC, Black, late 20's, slightly overweight,
stands holding a Bible over a **WORKING GAL** (who's trying to
get it on with a John) preaching with a fanatical intensity.

PAUL
Do you not realize, sister, your body is
part of Christ the Lord.

WORKING GAL
Second time this month and I...

Louis (with walking stick) and Finn enter.

PAUL
When you take that body and
enjoin it in harlotry, you
are defiling the Lord. You
take up with Satan and deny
your victory with Christ
Jesus.

WORKING GAL (CONT'D)
Don't give two moons if he's
your brother, Mr. Du Lac, I'm
gonna knock his skull in da
Ponchartrain!

FINN
Permission, Boss?

LOUIS

Yes, please!

Finn GRABS PAUL ROUGHLY AND RACES HIM OUTSIDE! Paul drops his Bible shouting as he's pulled outside.

PAUL

He shall come again to judge the living and the dead at whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies...

Louis points his walking stick at the Piano Player in the corner, who starts playing again. Louis hands the Working Girl five dollars.

LOUIS

(to the John)

On the house.

He leans down and picks up the Bible.

EXT. IBERVILLE CRIB, NO. 22 - CONTINUOUS

Paul is sitting in the street shouting up at Finn a good ten feet from him. A crowd has gathered to watch.

PAUL

...into everlasting fire. This is the Catholic faith which must be believed or you cannot be saved!

FINN

Can't keep coming here like this, lad. Bad for business.

Louis throws the Bible at Paul's feet.

LOUIS

Take your book back home, tell Mama not to wait up.

PAUL

What's that blood on your shirt?

LOUIS

None of your fucking business.

Paul gets up in Louis's face. A crowd begins to gather.

PAUL

What Wickedness is it tonight, brother?

LOUIS

You're not helping me here, Paul.

PAUL

Oh, but I am.

(whispers in Louis ear)

The Lord told me to come, Louis. In my head, like a family of birds, many voices, but also one voice.

LOUIS

Ain't saying it a second time.

Paul tries to walk past him, but Louis turns him around and BOOTS HIM IN THE BACK! The crowd roars approval. Paul gets up, walks back to Louis.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

I'm having a fucking night, okay? I can't have your foolish-

PAUL PUNCHES LOUIS. The crowd roars. LOUIS PULLS THE TOP OFF HIS WALKING STICK EXPOSING A LONG, SHARP KNIFE. HOLDS IT TO HIS BROTHER'S CHEST! The crowd quiets down.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Get the fuck on home. Else I bleed ya like a kochon, brah.

Paul backs off.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Did I want to pull a knife on my brother? Of course, not. But as I alluded to before, you couldn't look weak on Iberville. You never knew who was watching.

The camera pushes into the crowd onto that fashionably dated Blonde-Haired Man we were following before, only now we see his face- LESTAT DU LIONCOURT- brilliant gray incandescent eyes stare intently at Louis.

EXT. DU LAC MANSION, GARDEN DISTRICT - MORNING

Parasol'd foot traffic. The St. Charles Streetcar passes.

PAUL (V.O.)

He pulled his knife on me, Mother.

LOUIS (V.O.)

You were disrupting Mother's business interests.

INT. DU LAC MANSION, DINING ROOM - MORNING

A portrait of Louis's father looks down on the Du Lac family eating a breakfast of beignets and rice calas, sunlight pouring in through the windows. Servants serving FLORENCE DE POINTE DU LAC, early 50's and GRACE DE POINTE DU LAC, 22, who look through a book of wedding dress designs while the brothers Du Lac have at it.

PAUL

Do you hear that Mother? He's made you a madame!

GRACE

Oh Paul...

PAUL

We are profiting from the damnation of souls!

FLORENCE

Let's not fuss on the particulars.

The argument continues under the Louis/Molloy interview.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Mornings with my family followed a pattern that year. My mother consumed herself with preparations for my sister's wedding while Paul confused the dining table with a pulpit none of us would recognize.

PAUL

We should tithe all of it to St. Mary's, before this house falls in on us.

LOUIS

And that's why Daddy put me at the head. If it was you sittin' here we'd be tarring roofs and sleeping it off on a dirt floor.

PAUL

But we'd be right with Christ.

FLORENCE

A temporary situation until Louis can find more respectful business.

PAUL

If Daddy was alive we'd still be in sugar cane.

LOUIS

If Daddy was alive you'd still be locked up in that hospital in Jackson.

FLORENCE

Louis! I'll not have that talk.

GRACE

A month from my wedding day and what do I dream about more than anything? Dancing in my husbands arms? Children running in the yard? No. I dream of what a quiet breakfast might feel like.

PAUL

The man's a Baptist. No respect for the trinity.

FLORENCE

Paul...

PAUL

He's gonna make your daughter jump a broom.

GRACE

I'm sitting right here.

PAUL

Plenty of brooms down the street at the Mayfair Sisters home.

Louis starts laughing.

GRACE

He's calling me a witch, Mama.

FLORENCE

Paul De Pointe Du Lac! You walk that back!

EXT. GARDEN DISTRICT STREETS - DAY

Louis smiling, walking alongside an intense, chatty Paul.

MOLLOY (V.O.)

Your brother sounds like a pain in the ass.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Fragile, stubborn, sinfully indulged. I had promised our father on his deathbed to look after him. But when Paul's mind was right, he was no burden. Point of fact, I loved him more than anyone on earth. And our daily stroll to St. Mary's was the measure of a good day started.

PAUL

He's a snake. An invader.

LOUIS

She's given her heart to the man, whatcha want me to do about it?

PAUL

Roll him up in a carpet and stick him on a train.

LOUIS

Don't sound very Christian to me.

PAUL

I'll make him a tin of biscuits for the journey.

LOUIS

And how you figure he gonna butter them biscuits stuck in a carpet roll?

PAUL

Shoulda thought of that 'fore he made a run at our sister.

They turn on the corner of First and Chestnut past the Mayfair Manor. **KATHERINE, MARY BETH & CARLOTTA MAYFAIR**, 60's, 30's, 20's out on the front porch fanning themselves.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(head down, quiet)

Watch out now. Don't look 'em in the eye.

LOUIS

Morning Ms. Mayfair, Mary Beth, Carlotta.

PAUL

Invite the devil in why don't ya?

LOUIS

Devil come looking like Mary Beth, I'm gonna hold the door open.

INT. ST. MARY'S ASSUMPTION - DAY

FATHER MATTHIAS, 60's, Caucasian, polishing the pews along with his Parochial Vicar. Paul heads to the confession booth.

FATHER MATTHIAS

Good morning, Paul.

PAUL

Good for you maybe.

FATHER MATTHIAS

Morning, Louis.

LOUIS

Pews got a good shine. If it wasn't beneath you, I'd send shoes your way.

FATHER MATTIAS

Nothing is beneath me, son.

Paul entering the confession booth.

PAUL

I'm ready, Father!

Father Matthias nods to his Vicar, who nods back and makes his way to the confession booth.

FATHER MATTIAS

I want to thank the family for last Sunday's donation.

LOUIS

Baby-sitting money, Father. Church calms him down some.

FATHER MATTIAS

(re: the donation)

Yes, well...we're always here for him. And the money goes a long way.

PAUL

(loudly)

I want Father Matthias, please and thank you.

They look back at the booth, the Vicar steps out, shrugging.

LOUIS

(loudly)

Ain't got nothing to confess to anyhow. Wasting a good man's time.

FATHER MATTIAS

Be right there, Paul.

He turns back to Louis.

FATHER MATTIAS (CONT'D)

Haven't seen you in confession of late, Louis.

Louis smiles.

FATHER MATTIAS

You know you can always come here if you're in need, Louis.

EXT. IBERVILLE STREETS - EVENING

Louis drinking from a flask and slowly driving south towards the brighter lights of Basin Street.

LOUIS (V.O.)

I had left the church for some time then. My business and my raised religion were at odds, and unlike my brother I wasn't willing to surrender my years as a red-blooded son of the South for wafers and absolution.

Various Madames walking envelopes to hand off to Louis. Peg-Leg Doris shows off her one good leg for Louis.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Now I did not engage with anyone under my employ, it's important your readers understand that.

MOLLOY (V.O.)

They'd expect no less from the executor in charge of the Du Lac Family Trust.

A couple of no good kids run off with Peg-Leg Doris's wooden leg. She's *hoppin'* mad.

LOUIS'S DRIVER'S SIDE POV - The Two-Story dazzler, Fair Play Saloon. Well-Dressed Men Of Stature and various Merry-Makers out on second floor balcony.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Opportunity to observe the competition was the delusion I clung to. For although my clubs were mere blocks down the street, Mr. Molloy, they might as well have been on the moon when compared to the Fair Play Saloon.

EXT. FAIR PLAY SALOON - EVENING

Louis parks, takes one last swig, combines the money out of the envelopes into a fat roll, grabs his walking stick and the camera follows him across the street and into the club...

MOLLOY (V.O.)

The place to be, yeah?

LOUIS (V.O.)

The convergence of wealth and power in the tenderloin which boasted a particular hothouse flower I too often longed for.

INT. FAIR PLAY SALOON - EVENING

MISS CAROL, an elegant mature woman comes up and greets a slightly inebriated Louis.

LOUIS

Is Miss Lily working tonight, Ms Carol?

MISS CAROL

Ms. Lily's at her table. She has an admirer at the moment but the engagement has not yet been made. A Sazerac, Mr. Du Lac?

LOUIS

That'll do fine, Miss Carol.

Louis makes his way through the crowded first floor. A long bar along a wall, Working Girls in shades of white, black and octoroon roaming the floor to a syncopated Ragtime Band flooding the room with music.

LOUIS (V.O.)

It was palace of opulence and splendor and catered to an almost exclusively Caucasian Clientele, which helped me separate the locals from those...

Dirty looks from a Table of Conventioneers.

LOUIS (V.O.)

...visiting from other Southern States.

ANGLE on **JELLY ROLL MORTON** fronting the band on the piano

LOUIS (V.O.)

The music was lively. A young man named Ferdinand Joseph LaMothe on the piano.

BACK TO DUBAI PENTHOUSE

MOLLOY

Jelly Roll Morton.

LOUIS

One in the same. Testing you, Daniel.

MOLLOY

Whatever gets your rocks off, Louis.

BACK TO THE FAIR PLAY SALOON

Louis climbs the stairs just as the FatJolly **THOMAS "TOM" ANDERSON** descends.

LOUIS (V.O.)

On my ascension to meet Ms. Lily, I passed the owner of the establishment, a Mister Thomas "Tom" Anderson.

TOM ANDERSON

Private game this Friday if your date book is empty, Louis.

LOUIS

Can do, Mr. Anderson. Can do.

LOUIS (V.O.)

A gentlemen member of the Louisiana House of Representatives and a man who would figure prominently in the destruction to come.

He makes his way to LILY, a singular beauty, at a table overlooking the band on the receiving end of a charm assault by Lestat.

LESTAT

(in French)

...And he said, will you tell me how you killed them all? Only the impossible can do the impossible.

LILY

I don't know much what you're saying, but it sure sounds nice.

LOUIS

Only the impossible can do the impossible...Miss Lily.

He kisses Lily's hand, turns to Lestat- whose eyes glow, his gaze and broad smile momentarily throwing Louis off.

LESTAT

Bonsoir Monsieur. You speak French.

LILY

(covering for Louis)

We speak all sorts of tongues here in Nawlins.

LESTAT

I know it's a wonder to walk the streets and hear so many languages!

LOUIS

(breaking the spell)

Hard table to get. How'd you manage it?

LESTAT

How'd you manage to get yourself through
the front door?

LOUIS

(a look)

'Scuse me?

LESTAT

(all smiles)

I mean it as a compliment! You must be an
exceptional man of your race to have
privileges here.

LILY

Louis here has a small empire of his own
down the street. That gets him privileges.

Lestat starts laughing.

LOUIS

Something funny about that?

LESTAT

(trying to stop laughing)

Well...yes...Your name's Louis...Of course,
it's Louis!

LOUIS

I didn't get ya name, fella.

LESTAT

Je suis de'sole'...Je m'amuse trop en
prive'.

Lestat pulls a calling card from his coat, hands it to Louis
who reads the gold-leaf lettering - Lestat Du Lioncourt.

LESTAT (CONT'D)

I know who you are, sir! You're the man who
made me buy a townhouse in the Quarter! I
owe you everything! Please, join us!

Lestat grabs an unused chair from a nearby table and sets it
up for Louis.

LOUIS

I know sometimes *exceptional men of my*
race, we all look alike to you people, but
I didn't sell you no townhouse.

LILY

Just sit down, Louis.

Louis sits.

LESTAT

Let me explain. New to the new world I am.

LOUIS

(re: Lestat's suit)

That explains the clothes.

Lestat bristles. Lily tilts her head at Louis.

LESTAT

19th-Century man at heart, yes...Making his transatlantic journey by ship, planning very carefully on settling myself upriver.

A WAITER comes by with Louis's drink.

WAITER

Your Sazerac, sir.

LESTAT

Put that on my account. Thank you. And two more for us. And another round for the musicians, whatever they want. Ils sont toujours oubliés.

Who the fuck is this guy, Louis thinks.

LESTAT (CONT'D)

Where was I?

LILY

You were on a boat.

LESTAT GIVES LILY A LONG KISS. The balls on this fucker.

LESTAT

So I'm out on the Crescent coast floating past your village when I hear music playing and the shadows of men and women dancing by the water's edge. Such life to this music! Like the young man plays right now.

Lestat gazes over the rail. The camera pushes down on Jelly Roll's as Lestat talks.

LESTAT (CONT'D)

Melody with the right thumb, sounding a harmony above the notes with the fingers of the right hand. Almost out of tune, do you hear that, that's because he's playing a diminished 5th above the melody. But on the base side of it major and minor sixths in the bass, instead of tenths or octaves! Extraordinaire! Revolutionnaire!

LOUIS

We jus' call it stridin' here.

LESTAT

Stridin'! Sazeracs! All these new words!
New sights! New Tastes! Oh THE FOOD! I
disembarked for the music but then there
was THE FOOD!

LESTAT BEGINS TO SLYLY GROPE LILY as he pontificates about
New Orleans cuisine.

LOUIS (V.O.)

I couldn't believe it. Staring me down as
his hands went wandering the seams of Miss
Lily's dress.

BACK TO DUBAI

LOUIS

I wanted to take the end of my cane and
slit his throat with it.

MOLLOY

Why didn't you?

LOUIS

I couldn't move. My body was seized with
weakness. My mind fogged over. His eyes.
His gaze...it tied a string around my
lungs. I found myself immobilized.

BACK TO THE FAIR PLAY SALOON

Lestat nibbling on Lily's ear and neck. Louis trying to
breathe, his hand gripping his walking stick in anger.

LESTAT

And the women! All shades of skin- white,
black, cinnamon. I have emptied a bank
vault sampling, I must say. But it wasn't
until a few nights later...

(in French, to Louis)

When I watched a man pull a knife out of
his walking stick and pressed the blade to
his brother's breastbone. I said to myself-

(loud to Lily, in English)

Lestat, unpack your trunks, you've found a
home!

LILY

What'd he say just now?

LOUIS
(shaking it off)
A little more than he shoulda.

LESTAT
...I had planned, Monsieur, to make a new life in Saint Louis. It was to be my destiny. And now I know I was right! Only it turns out the Saint is not a city, but a handsome man with a most agreeable disposition.

LILY
(grabbing Lestat's cock
under the table)
You're his destiny, Louis.

LESTAT
Destined to be very good friends.

Miss Carol arrives at the table.

MISS CAROL
The Orient Room is available for the next few hours, Ms. Lily.

Louis takes out his roll of cash and lays out half of it on the table. Lestat smiles, takes out a larger wad and sets it next to Louis's.

LILY
Now boys...do fight over me.

Louis peels off all on his bills. Miss Carol and Lily share an 'oh my' look. Lestat reaches into another one of his pockets, pulls out another wad of dollars, betters Louis's stack, takes a ring off his finger and sets it on top of his stack. Miss Carol looks to Louis. He's out.

MISS CAROL
(taking the money)
The Orient room is yours for the evening, Monsieur.

Lestat rises and takes Lily's hand.

LESTAT
(to Miss Carol, Re: Louis)
Please get my friend here anything he wants.

The waiter brings Lestat and Lily their drinks as they saunter off to the Orient Room.

LESTAT (CONT'D)
(shouting back)
Wonderful meeting you. I do hope I run into
you again, *Louis*.

BACK TO DUBAI

Louis now holding Lestat's calling card, badly faded from a
century of exposure.

LOUIS
Emasculation and admiration in equal
measure. I wanted to murder the man and I
wanted to be the man.

He hands the card to Molloy.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
I had come there for Lily but I left
thinking of only him.

EXT. DU LAC MANSION, BACKYARD - DAY

A PHOTOGRAPHER is taking pictures for a joint family portrait
of the De Pointe Du Lac's and the FRENIERE FAMILY. **LEVI
FRENIERE** and Grace are holding hands in the center. **MOTHER
FRENIERE** and Florence (neither thinking the other's child is
worthy) on prominent chairs. FATHER FRENIERE and Louis
standing next to them. **BABETTE** and Paul beside them and the
extended families out from there. Everyone trying to stay
still to let the camera complete the exposure.

LEVI
So I'm rowing the boat out the middla' Lake
Salvador. She's talking about her Phyllis
Wheatley Club and I'm saying uh huh and
yes, ma'am...

GRACE
Sweating through his church suit.

LEVI
I was not.

GRACE
Sweating so hard I think I'm gonna have to
undo my hat and bail us both out the boat.

Everyone laughs. The Photographer steps out from behind his
stereo lensed camera.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Both families will need to stand still for
the best result.

MOTHER FRENIERE

If I have to hold this smile any longer
it's gonna freeze permanently.

BABETTE

Is that a promise or a threat, Mama?

More laughs. Louis bends to take a look at who said that.

LEVI

I lay down the oars in the boat, I get down
on one knee, she don't see it coming.

GRACE

I knew exactly what he was doing.

LEVI

I reach into my pocket. Nothing there. I
left the ring box at the dock with my shoes
and socks! Had to row back to do it proper.

A polite laugh.

PHOTOGRAPHER

The picture blurs when you move.

The families shake it off. Get ready to pose again.

PAUL

Perhaps God made you forget the ring box
because you hadn't asked my mother for
permission.

LOUIS

Here he go. Look out Levi!

MOTHER FRENIERE

Tradition says you ask the Father for
permission.

FLORENCE

Would have been welcomed, nonetheless.

LOUIS

If daddy heard anyone wanted Grace, he'd be
happy as a dog with two tails...

GRACE

Look who's thirty-three and hugging a
pillow? Babette, both my brothers are free
if you got standards low to the ground.

MOTHER FRENIERE

I think one Freniere Du Lac coupling is
enough for the year.

FLORENCE

Were you smiling when you said that, Mrs. Freniere? I know I was when I heard it.

BABETTE

Whose family's crazier you think?

LOUIS

Can't say, but I know they're both ugly.

The two laugh. Paul watches. The photographer throws his hands up.

INT. ST. MARY'S ASSUMPTION, CONFESSIONAL - DAY

We are on Father Matthias's side of the box as a stirred-up Paul takes his time confessing.

PAUL

(through the latticework)

If she has children with this man, he won't baptize them until they are "of the faith." I could have a niece or nephew who won't be baptized until they were six or seven, and they do it by dunking 'em in the river. How can I *not* curse this man?

EXT. ST. MARY'S ASSUMPTION - DAY

Louis, waiting in the doorway for his brother, smoking a cigarette. Uncle Vervain passes by carrying his Voodoo gear.

ONCLE VERVAIN

Sak pase, Louis.

LOUIS

Uncle Vervain. Where you off to?

ONCLE VERVAIN

Down to the Vieux Carre, lift some paper off the tourists.

LOUIS

You got the gris gris for me?

ONCLE VERVAIN

What's the occasion?

LOUIS

Card game with the high cats.

Uncle Vervain takes out a pouch of cornmeal, SPRINKLES OUT A CIRCLE OF IT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STEPS.

ONCLE VERVAIN

Step inside the circle. You be good.

He starts walking. Louis walks down to the circle, stands just outside it, calls out to Uncle Vervain.

LOUIS

I just gotta step in it?

ONCLE VERVAIN

That's all. Bondye fe san di!

Louis steps inside the circle.

LOUIS

(shouts)

I'm good?

ONCLE VERVAIN

(shouts)

You good!

Louis turns around sees Paul staring down at him in his cornmeal circle.

LOUIS

Don't say shit.

INT. FAIR PLAY SALOON, FIRST FLOOR - NIGHT

Louis nods to Jelly Roll at the piano then walks up the stairs as Lily and a John make their way down. Lily gives him a little touch with her free hand as she passes. He smiles.

INT. FAIR PLAY SALOON, SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Louis walks down the hallway to the sound of good fucking, he knocks twice on the door. We see an eye at the peephole then hear something metallic slide and the door opens.

INT. FAIR PLAY SALOON, CARD ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A CLUB GOON lets Louis into the smoke-filled room, resets a metal wedge behind him. A high stakes card game is going on. Seated around the card table among the Bourbon'd BUSINESS MEN are Tom Anderson, Alderman Fenwick and Lestat...with **ICEBOX EDITH**, a severe looking German, on his lap.

TOM ANDERSON

My friends in the police tell me there's a outbreak of fever in town.

(MORE)

TOM ANDERSON (CONT'D)

Unfortunates living near the wharf mostly.
Still, very peculiar they say.

Louis exchanges his cash for poker chips with the Goon.

ALDERMAN FENWICK

Peculiar how?

TOM ANDERSON

Each one the same, small wounds on the body
but upon examination, entirely devoid of
blood. It's their theory a new kind of rat
has come ashore.

LESTAT

Of the six foot variety? We call those
bureaucrats in France.

They all laugh. Louis joins the table.

TOM ANDERSON

Gentleman you all know, Louie Du Lac. Louie
let me introduce you to Mr. Lestat Du
Lioncourt...

LOUIS

We met already, Mr. Anderson, sir.

LESTAT

In front of a florist, wasn't it? We both
wanted the last bouquet of lilies they had
in the shop window.

EDITH

(droll)

I hate flowers.

LOUIS

My mama had to settle for azaleas.

(Re: Icebox)

See you done moved on from lilies yourself.

Louis gets dealt in.

TOM ANDERSON

Aren't you going to ask the Alderman how
his head is, Louie?

LOUIS

(looking at Fenwick)

Now why would I do that, Mister Anderson,
sir?

TOM ANDERSON

Just as I told you, Mr. Fenwick, a most discrete Negro.

ALDERMAN FENWICK

Would that his doctor had same standards.

TOM ANDERSON

Louie's always been a good boy. Always reliable.

LOUIS

And you've always been fair to me, Mr. Anderson, sir.

TOM ANDERSON

See Mr. Lioncourt, there are all kinds of coloreds here in New Orleans.

(gesturing to Louis)

There's the Creole, that is, negroes of high character. Then there's niggers...And then there's the low Irish!

Everyone laughs except for Lestat.

LESTAT

I do not understand this humor.

ALDERMAN FENWICK

It's a joke.

EDITH

I hate jokes.

LESTAT

In France, it is the force of a man's character, his intellect, his actions, that make his status. But this must be the joke of a more sophisticated nation.

ALDERMAN FENWICK

Yes, well, we'll be happy to educate you.

They lay down their cards. Fenwick wins the hand. Lestat has, by far, the worst hand.

TOM ANDERSON

Your hand is incomprehensible, Mr. Lioncourt.

LESTAT

Oh, yes. I'm terrible at cards. Did I not mention that to everyone?

He laughs and everyone follows. Lestat pulls out another handful of bills, hands them to Edith.

LESTAT (CONT'D)

Fraulein, would you mind getting me more of these money chips?

As the dealer shuffles a new deck and the table gets excited to take more of the Frenchman's money, Lestat winks at Louis and the table begins bidding.

TIME CUT

Rounds later, cigars smaller, bottles emptied, winnings accrued with Tom Anderson accruing best.

TOM ANDERSON

Louie, did you know Alderman Fenwick here recently purchased the title and deed to number 48 Liberty Street.

LOUIS

That's an empty lot, ain't it, Sir?

TOM ANDERSON

A privy for the destitute at the moment. A blight and an eyesore for the district.

ALDERMAN FENWICK

Mr. Anderson believes it could make a fine sporting house.

TOM ANDERSON

I recommended the Alderman find a managing partner before he commits his money. I recommended he think of you, Louie.

LOUIS

Very kind of you, Mr. Anderson, sir.

ALDERMAN FENWICK

What do you think of the location?

LOUIS

Ain't Basin Street, but throw up enough of them Edison bulbs up on the facade, get a good margin on the alcohol, a no-nonsense madame to keep the girls clean...I reckon a man could make a good sum, yes sir, Mr. Fenwick, sir.

TOM ANDERSON

I recommended he cut you in for ten percent.

LOUIS

All respects, Mr. Anderson, sir, you proposing ten percent for all the work?

ALDERMAN FENWICK

Fifteen?

Tom doesn't like how this is going. Changes tactics.

TOM ANDERSON

There's capital investment and there's labor. Both have their place at the table, wouldn't you agree, Mr. Lestat?

LESTAT

...I can only speak of my experience which is, I'm sure, different in my country...

POV LOUIS - As Lestat pontificates, everything goes quiet and except for Lestat's voice in Louis's head.

LESTAT (V.O.)

These men look down on you. As a Frenchman I find it appalling how men like yourself are treated in this country.

Louis looks around, sees no one can hear what Lestat's saying to him. Louis shakes his head and the sound returns.

LESTAT

I came to my wealth honestly and at a great sacrifice I might add.

The dealer deals. Louis picks up his card. Doesn't help his two pair of Jacks and nines. And again the sounds goes out.

LESTAT (V.O.)

Ten percent, fifteen percent? Do you not know your value? Do you suffer these indignities for some larger purpose?

Lestat makes a bet and stares at each man as they make theirs. ONE BY ONE, LESTAT MESMERIZES EVERYONE AT THE TABLE save for Louis.

LESTAT (V.O.)

And do you think two pair will win the hour?

THE MEN SIT THERE, DANGLING LIKE MARIONETTES! EDITH IS ABOUT TO DROOL ON LESTAT'S JACKET, HE NUDGES HER AND SHE DROPS TO FLOOR. Lestat reaches over and grabs the jack from Tom Anderson's hand and tosses it to Louis, looks him right in the eye...

LESTAT

I believe there's great opportunity in this city. But to seize it I'll need protection from the wolves.

Louis tosses Lestat a card, Lestat puts it back in Anderson's hand. Lestat knocks on the table and everyone slowly wakes. Edith wonders how she got on the floor.

LESTAT (CONT'D)

...This is all to say, and forgive me Mr. Du Lac for my bias, where is the business if there is no capital? It does not exist.

Lestat shows his hand. Everyone shows their hands. Louis wins the pot with his Full House. Edith climbs back up onto Lestat's lap.

LESTAT (CONT'D)

Did you have yourself a fall, Fraulein? Here's a chip for you trip!

Lestat tucks a poker chip in her cleavage, smiles at Louis.

PRE-LAP the charming metronome of Scott Joplin's "The Rag Time Dance"(Yitzhak Perlman Arrangement please!) as we watch Louis and Lestat tear through town and time.

EXT. JACKSON SQUARE - EVENING

The camera pushes in on Louis and Lestat sitting on a bench, reading newspapers under lamplight, people-watching and debating one another.

LOUIS (V.O.)

He wouldn't tell me how he did it. His trick to make the world stop. In time, Louis. Patience, Louis. Ask me next week, Louis.

MOLLOY (V.O.)

You started hanging out.

LOUIS (V.O.)

He was in love with my city and wanted to know everything he could about it.

BACK TO DUBAI

MOLLOY

You played docent to the gentleman vampire.

LOUIS

He had not revealed his vampire nature yet. He was simply a worldly man I could confide my struggles to.

MOLLOY

Yeah but...you didn't have a clue?..I'm assuming you only met at night?

LOUIS

It's New Orleans, Mr. Molloy. Days are for sleeping off the previous evening's damage.

MOLLOY

The perfect cover for a vampire.

LOUIS

You're racing ahead again, Mr. Molloy. Let the tale seduce you, just as I was seduced.

MOLLOY

(holding up his hands)
...Plow forth, humble narrator...

INT. IMPORT/EXPORT SHOP - NIGHT

The camera pushes past furniture, mirrors, objects d'art- the best of them with tags on them, a DEALER'S ASSISTANT trying to catch up to the DEALER and Louis and Lestat who is pointing at anything that catches his eye. Point. Tag.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Money would arrive wired from France and the shopkeepers who would normally close at sunset were happy to accommodate him. He ransacked the import houses to furnish his townhouse.

INT. VIEUX CARRE, CHARTRES STREET - EVENING

The camera pushes through a throng of folks on Chartres Street towards the shop window of a Gentleman's Clothing Boutique where Louis and SALESMAN are trying to convince Lestat why Homburg hats, arrow shirt collars, silk four in hand ties and two-toned spectators shoes 'suit' him.

LOUIS (V.O.)

He drained the vintners of their finest bottles for a wine cellar. Ravaged the booksellers of their oldest volumes for a library. And with a little encouragement updated his wardrobe to the fashion forward trends of the season.

INT. ANIMAL MARKET - EVENING

Louis and Lestat (in his new duds) walking through a most unsanitary courtyard shop. Dogs, cats, turtles, peacocks, ducks, all caged up or tied down or roaming free.

LOUIS (V.O.)

One night I remember vividly, Lestat had professed a want of a pet. We found an animal market and Lestat took to the most wretched creature in there.

A chained **BLACK MASTIFF CHARGES, AND NEARLY BITES LESTAT'S FACE OFF!** The **GRUBBY KEEPER SWATS THE DOG WITH A CUDGEL!** The dog retreats but continues to bark and growl uncontrollably.

LOUIS (V.O.)

The dog had clearly been abused and continued to be abused by the proprietor. It was an utterly hopeless purchase.

Lestat pulls out his billfold.

EXT. TUJAGUE'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The camera pushes towards Louis and Lestat in the middle of a meal The Mastiff, stares up at Lestat on the side.

LOUIS

One week passes, and there we were dining on seven courses at Tujague's, the very same beyond-help Mastiff obediently staring up at its God!

LESTAT TAKES A LAMB CHOP OFF HIS PLATE AND BALANCES IT ON THE BRIDGE OF THE MASTIFF'S NOSE. The Mastiff watches Lestat finish his course, never once moving. Lestat looks at the dog, nods once and the Mastiff **DEVOURS THE CHOP!**

LOUIS (CONT'D)

I was executor-in-charge of the De Point Du Lac Family Trust but Lestat was a Master of whatever space he occupied.

INT. OPERA BOX - NIGHT

The camera pushing in on Louis and Lestat in their own private opera box. Lestat draping his arm over the back of a leaning forward Louis- completely taken with his first opera.

LOUIS (V.O.)

I was being hunted. And I was completely unaware it was happening.

LESTAT LOOKING INTENTLY AT THE VEIN ON LOUIS'S NECK. Holding himself back.

INT/EXT. BUFFUM ROADSTER - DAY

Louis at the wheel, Grace in the passenger seat. City side slowly giving over to the country side.

GRACE

Levi's invited Mother to come live with us after the wedding.

LOUIS

You gonna put our mama and his mama on the same porch? Good luck with that.

GRACE

It's only for a bit before we get our own roof. Mama doesn't wanna be by herself.

LOUIS

She got me. She got Paul.

GRACE

Paul needs constant attention, and you ain't home barely but for breakfast.

LOUIS

I come home nights.

GRACE

You come home *some* nights. Out catting at with some white man I hear.

LOUIS

He ain't white, he's French.

GRACE

Oh that's a new kind of white, is it? French white?

LOUIS

He different...Never met anyone like him.

GRACE

Got money too, I hear.

LOUIS

You hearing a lot lately. Me and him talking about some business.

GRACE

Invite him over for dinner. Mother loves a European.

LOUIS

I'm gonna tell Levi, you fishin' for a richer man.

GRACE

(hitting him)

Don't deny your sister. I wanna meet this French White.

A moment.

LOUIS

...Paul crawled up on my bed last night, wept for good near an hour. Ain't takin' to you leavin'.

GRACE

Levi told me of a place over in Gretna. Takes in men like Paul. It's not a crazy persons house like in Jackson, it's...

Louis pulls over, stops the car.

LOUIS

How'd that work last time, huh? He come out worse than before. Nu-uh. That's our blood, sis. Gretna. Hell no.

GRACE

I worry. I worry so much about him.

LOUIS

Worry on things you understand. Worry about being a bride. Worry about furnishing up your new home.

He nods to the beautiful country home behind her.

GRACE

Louis...?

LOUIS

Five rooms, three baths. Got a little pond around the back with catfish, bluegill for that country-ass negro you fell dumb for.

He pulls a deed out of his coat. Hands it to her. Ownership rights to Levi Freniere and Grace De Point Du Lac.

GRACE

...You got me a house?

She hugs half the air out of him.

LOUIS

Think I was letting our Daddy look down at his baby girl taking up in a room with a bunch of Baptists, come on now...

She hops out of the car and runs towards the house, losing her hat halfway there.

GRACE

I got me a house!

INT. DU LAC MANSION, DINING ROOM - EVENING

Family dinner, servants bringing a second course. Florence, Grace and Levi on one end.

LEVI

I can't thank you enough, Mother Du Lac. It was likely a year before I'd have the means for a house.

FLORENCE

Every young family needs a little nest to start off right, wouldn't you say, Mr. Lioncourt?

REVEAL Lestat sitting next to Louis and across from an agitated Paul.

LESTAT

Oui, Madame. My mother, she gave me every advantage in life as a young man. My first Mastiff. First flintlock rifle, the means to make my way to Paris.

GRACE

Mr. Lioncourt, are you a mama's boy?

LESTAT

My mother's boy...My mother's...man. We are very close, Mademoiselle.

PAUL

It was Louis that purchased the house, Levi. It's Louis who controls the money.

LOUIS

(to Levi)

Pay no attention.

PAUL

And I don't know who gave you the right to call our mother your mother.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

She's not your mother yet and will never be your scientific mother!

FLORENCE

Paul, you're being rude.

PAUL

Making conversation with the extra chairs.

LESTAT

I do love this bouillabaisse.

Paul makes a quiet bird squawk.

LESTAT (CONT'D)

The sauce, Madame...C'est bon.

FLORENCE

We call it Gumbo, Mr. Lioncourt. And the sauce, that there's Roux. Okra, fat and a bit a patience to boil.

GRACE

Not that mama would know, she hadn't seen a stove in ten years.

Everyone laughs. There's an edge to Paul's laughter.

LESTAT

We had a gumbo the other night, didn't we, Louis? Right after the Opera.

GRACE

You got Louis to an Opera?

LESTAT

Iolanta.

LOUIS

About some blind princess didn't know she was a princess. My stomach got grumbling, left halfway through.

PAUL

What exactly is the nature of your relationship with my brother, Mr. Lioncourt?

All heads turn to Paul.

LESTAT

Your brother and I have been discussing a few investment opportunities.

PAUL

(tapping his head)

The birds asked me to ask you. I wasn't being rude.

Lestat turns his attention away from Paul.

LESTAT

Monsieur Freniere how did you come to propose to this delightful woman next to you.

LEVI

Well that's good yarn there...

PAUL

Are you one with Christ, Mr. Lioncourt?

LOUIS

How 'bout you shut the fuck up?

FLORENCE

Louis!

LESTAT

It's alright, Louis, Madame...The birds speak for him.

Lestat turns slowly toward Paul.

LESTAT (CONT'D)

I came to know Christ in a monastery. I wanted to be a priest. Just like you did, Paul.

Paul's face - how did he know that.

LESTAT (CONT'D)

And under the guidance and discipline of the monks who lived there I memorized both Testaments, the writings of Assisi, Aquinas, Erasmus, all the greats. My father, a vulgar man, didn't think much of this education and so he and my brothers

Lestat stares at Paul, who begins to FALL UNDER LESTAT'S MESMERIZING GAZE!

LESTAT (CONT'D)

...conspired to pull me out, lock me away where between beatings, starvations and the failure of Christ to intercede in the beatings and starvations, I slowly forgot the Testaments, Assisi, Aquinas, Erasmus, all of it.

Louis looks to Paul who's beginning to drool some.

LOUIS

Stop.

LESTAT

(in French)

And so to answer your boring question, Mr. Du Lac, there is an ocean between Christ and myself.

LOUIS

(in French)

Assez!

LESTAT

(angry, in French)

I hope that satisfies the birds perching in your mind's cage!

Louis slams a fist down on the table. Stands up. Everyone at table is taken aback.

LOUIS

Don't do that shit here. Not with my family you understand?!

Lestat's anger retreats. He takes in the whole table.

LESTAT

I am cursed with my father's temper at times. The rudeness is now mine.

FLORENCE

(side-eye to Louis)

That's alright.

Louis sits back down. She rings the bell.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

It's the humidity here does that sometimes, Mr. Lioncourt.

Servants return to clear the plates.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

We'll get some dessert in us, a little ice wine. And Levi here can tell us again how he won my joy child's heart.

EXT. VIEUX CARRE STREETS - EVENING

Louis and Lestat walking down the Rue Royale, sharing from Louis's flask.

LESTAT

I fear your family has taken permanent offense at me.

LOUIS

When Paul ain't picking at his plate, he's picking a fight...If I had your tricks I'da done the same.

LESTAT

You must envy him.

LOUIS

The boy thinks God speaks to him through birds in his head. How you figure envy?

LESTAT

The liberty he has with his thoughts... however misshapen they might be, your brother has no shame sharing them.

LOUIS

You saying I got shame?

LESTAT

The lie about leaving the opera house early? You were near weeping when the curtain fell. Why hide that from your family?

LOUIS

Don't everyone need to know what I do.

LESTAT

Dishonesty breeds dishonesty.

LOUIS

They sit in judgement. Paul's the only one'll say it to my face, but I know Mama and Grace think it too. Daddy ran our sugar business into the swamp before he passed. We was four months...*four months* from going bankrupt if I didn't move things!

LESTAT

You don't have to defend yourself to me, Louis. I know what you go through to keep your family ignorant in their comfort.

LOUIS

Ain't easy the work I do. Noting but broken souls around me. And the ones that ain't broke is greedy. Makes a man bone tired.

Louis takes a long swig from the flask.

LESTAT

Drink up my good man..The Earth's a savage garden.

LOUIS

Got that fucking right.

LESTAT

Saint Louis of the Vieux Carre.

Louis laughs. A moment between the two.

LOUIS

You did good getting off the boat when you did. Saint Louis is dull as dishwater.

LESTAT

Yes, I feel quite at home here.

They stop in front of 1132 Rue Royale, Lestat's townhouse.

LESTAT (CONT'D)

Shall we have a nightcap?

ONCLE VERVAIN (O.C.)

Bon-swa-ray, Louis Lu Lac!

Louis and Lestat turn around to see Oncle Verain creeping down the street with his Voodoo gear.

LOUIS

Oncle! Get on here, got someone you need to know. Nawlins voodoo meet European voodoo. Lestat this is Oncle Vervain.

Lestat extends his hand. Oncle shakes it, stops still when he sees Lestat's eyes.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Blood's got powers we ain't never seen round here.

Oncle Vervain drops Lestat's hand, turns to Louis.

ONCLE VERVAIN

(in Haitian)

I know blood...This man has none.

LOUIS

(In Haitian)

This my friend. Come on, now.

Lestat and Oncle Vervain in a stare down. Louis tries to break the tension.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

I owe you for the gris gris, Oncle.

Louis offers Oncle a couple dollars.

ONCLE VERVAIN

Can't take that, brah.

LOUIS

Good luck broke my way, Oncle. Go on now.

Oncle Vervain doesn't take it, turns right around from where he came, muttering a prayer of protection to Papa Legba.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Fuck you, too.

(to Lestat)

More money for me.

LESTAT

Join me upstairs?

He looks back at Oncle Vervain one more time, tilts his empty flask over.

LOUIS

Nah. Probably had enough for the night.

Gotta make my rounds back on Iberville...

LESTAT

Oh, but you must. I have a gift for you.

PRE-LAP the sound of a music box.

LOUIS

...what kinda gift?

LESTAT

A flower.

He gestures to the second floor balcony, where Lily is standing, waiting for him.

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UPS of the spinning cylinder of a grand format music box. Hands unbuttoning buttons. Curtains being pulled. Hands unbuttoning a corset cover. A champagne bottle popping.

INT. LESTAT'S TOWNHOUSE, MAIN PARLOR - NIGHT

A nervous Louis sits on a couch as Lestat pours champagne into coupes by the bar. The Black Mastiff at his side. Lily finishes unbuttoning her dress across the room.

LOUIS

Nice music box you got here.

LESTAT

It's one of few things I brought over from the continent.

LOUIS

What's the tune playing?

LESTAT

Beautiful, is it not? A young violinist I knew composed it. A boy of infinite beauty and sensitivity.

Lily unclasps the busk of her corset. Exposing her small breasts and beautiful skin. Lily takes out her pot of rouge and applies it to her nipples. Lestat comes up from bar and lowers the coupe in front of Louis.

LESTAT (CONT'D)

I believe that's for the lips, Ms. Lily.

LILY

Mr. Du Lac likes it this way. Don't ya, Louis?

Louis takes a drink.

LESTAT

(Re: lipstick applied)

I stand corrected.

Lestat places a hand on Louis shoulder. They watch as Lily unties her petticoat. It falls to the ground near her dress, leaving her with nothing but a pair of pantaloons.

LOUIS

Miss Carol know you're here, Lily?

LESTAT

I can assure you the Fair Play has been handsomely compensated for the evening.

LILY

Sent a six-horse carriage to pick me up. Felt like the Queen of the Quarter coming down Royale.

Lily reaches down and...oh my...these are crotchless pantaloons...slips her finger inside her pussy.

LESTAT

And there's the crown jewel.

She slowly walks over to Louis as Lestat counters to the couch across from Louis, he points to the Mastiff who leaves the room. Lily sits next to Louis, kissing his cheek, his ear, taking off his collar.

LESTAT (CONT'D)

Nothing to be nervous about. The curtains are closed. The servants have been sent home. Even the planets and stars are blindfolded.

Lestat drinks from his coupe. Lily begins undressing Louis.

LOUIS

You like to watch then, do ya?

Lestat drinks from his coupe. Lily begins undressing Louis.

LESTAT (V.O.)

I've been watching you some for time now, Louis. From river to lake, lake back to river, every bright boulevard, every dark alleyway, looking for my companion heart.

LOUIS

How you do that?

LESTAT (V.O.)

(taking off his collar)
Do what?

LOUIS

Get in my head like that?

LESTAT (V.O.)

(unbuttoning his shirt)
Such a pretty head.

Lily goes down on Louis as he locks eyes with Lestat. Lestat watches Louis and Lily go at it. Lestat begins pleasuring himself, then joins the two of them. They overwhelm Lily with attention. They kiss the sides of her body- her breasts, her thighs. She falls back against Lestat's chest and he grabs her wrist as Louis enters her and begins fucking her. She struggles to free her hands. Lestat lets one of them go and she grabs Louis's ass, thrusting him harder inside her. And while he thrusts, Lestat holds Louis's face with his hand. Louis gives the hand one kiss and is suddenly, unnerved, knocks Lestat's hand out of the way, continues fucking Lily. Lestat lets go of Lily and grabs her for himself, seating her on his lap and onto his cock. He slowly spins her around and she grabs Louis's cock, lures him back into her body. She lifts herself off of Lestat and sets between the two of them, stroking both their cocks as they stare at the other.

Lestat pushes Lily from between the two of them, up against the back of the couch without breaking his stare with Louis. He places his hand on her stomach and she has a massive orgasm. Her body falls limp and now there is just two.

Louis. Lestat.

They kiss. A long passionate kiss. Music swells.

They go at it hard. They fight for dominance with each other. **SLOWLY, TWO OF LESTAT'S TEETH RETRACT, REPLACED BY TWO FANGS! LESTAT BITES DOWN ON LOUIS'S NECK! LOUIS IS FRIGHTENED AND MANAGES TO STAND UP, BUT LESTAT DOESN'T LET GO OF HIS GRIP! LOUIS STUMBLES A BIT, LESTAT GOING WITH HIM EACH STEP!**

SLOWLY LOUIS GIVES IN, LEANS INTO THE PAIN AND PLEASURE OF IT ALL. LESTAT BRINGS LOUIS UP ON HIS TIP-TOES, BLOOD BEGINNING TO SEEP FROM AROUND LESTAT'S MOUTH AND LOUIS'S NECK. SLOWLY, THE TWO LIFT A FEW INCHES OFF THE GROUND! THEY FLOAT THERE, SUSPENDED IN CARNAL EUPHORIA UNTIL LOUIS'S BODY BEGINS TO VIBRATE AND SHUDDER. LESTAT BRINGS THEIR FEET BACK DOWN TO THE GROUND. LOUIS CLIMAXES.

BACK TO DUBAI PENTHOUSE

Louis, deflecting, protecting himself from memory...

LOUIS

I wasn't a homosexual man you understand. I mean, I had had a few experiences and always when I had abused my body with spirits...Obviously I've come to terms with my...Of course you know that...We met at gay bar, didn't we, Daniel?

Molloy stops typing.

MOLLOY

A good place to score at the time. I did what I had to for a fix...

LOUIS

You've been married.

MOLLOY

Three times. Two exes. But we're not here for me, yeah?

Louis takes a moment.

LOUIS

When you were using drugs, Mr. Molloy. Do you remember the best you ever had?

MOLLOY

Berkeley, California, 1978. The summer batch Karly and Pedro were slinging. Everything after that was like shooting up dog food.

LOUIS

Okay...so imagine that flowing inside your veins again...now multiple it by miles to the rings of Saturn and back.

BACK TO LESTAT'S TOWNHOUSE

Lestat lets Louis go. Louis falls to the couch grabbing his neck. Lestat falls back into a chair, blood all over his mouth and neck and staining his chest.

LOUIS (V.O.)

He had taken what he called 'Une Petit Soeur' the 'Little Drink.' Not enough to kill me and just enough to keep him fit. It takes an enormous amount of restraint for us, the Little Drink. For a human experiencing it for the first time, it was...unsettling.

They sit their like addicts coming down from a high. Louis reaches out and touches Lestat's hand.

LOUIS (V.O.)

And not for the physical toll on my body which was significant, but for the feelings of intimacy it awoke within me. But I had never allowed myself to feel emotionally close to anyone, much less a man.

POP of Lestat, Louis and Lily all getting dressed. Louis examining the tiny holes in his neck that were already beginning to close in a mirror. Slightly awkward goodbyes.

LOUIS (V.O.)

And as I gathered my things to leave that night, I knew Lestat had surrounded me...quieted me. And how could feelings like these ever be sustainable? I had no room for feelings like these in my life. You could be a lot of things in New Orleans, but an open gay negro man was not one of them.

EXT. LESTAT'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Louis putting Lily in a carriage. Walking off as Lestat watches from the balcony, cigarette in hand.

LOUIS

I vowed never to return again. I shut that night out of my mind and turned my attentions back to life as it was before.

EXT. DU LAC MANSION, BACKYARD - DAY/NIGHT

Decorated with the intention to be talked about for years, the backyards has been overrun with flowers and lights. Grace (in a stunning wedding dress) and Levi stand before a simple broom as a **PASTOR** finishes the ceremony. Family, Friends look on, everyone smiling or joyfully crying, except for Paul who stands next to Father Matthias in muted disapproval.

PASTOR

And so the broom sweeps away the past and cleans the pathway for a future full of prosperity *and fertility*.

The Guests second that one. Louis and Florence smiling.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

For all of the varieties of joy God has given this couple, join me now in a one two three jump for Levi and Grace Freniere.

PASTOR & GUESTS

One! Two! Three! Jump!

Grace and Levi jump over the broom! The Guests cheer and hug and get out of the way as Florence begins running traffic for the setting up of tables, a buffet, a dance floor and Jelly Roll Morton and his band on the back porch. Music swells.

POP of a Line Greeting the happy couple.

POP of folks finding a table (each decorated with a framed photo of the two families' portrait.) Florence and Mother Freniere having a disagreement about seating arrangement.

POP of a champagne toast from Levi's Father.

POP of Florence calling all the Single Ladies (Babette included) up to the wedding cake for the traditional cake pull. Babette pulls the RING CHARM meaning she's the next one who's gonna get married. Guests give her the business. Paul catches her throwing a look Louis's way. Levi shoves a slice of checkered wedding cake into Grace's mouth.

POP of a Hat Box being carried by Florence through packed backyard of guests.

GRACE (O.C.)

We are missing my father today. He's supposed to dance with me to start the night off...I'm trying not to cry now...

Florence and the Hat Box make way onto the dance floor where Grace is standing on a chair, propped up by Levi.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Well, it's my wedding day, and I thought the best way to honor Daddy would be to make my brothers do the work.

Louis and Paul are summoned forth, not knowing what's going on. Florence takes the lid off the box and Grace pulls out two pair of old tap shoes. Louis and Paul say no way.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Half of y'all don't know but these no good boys used to shuffle for pennies on Sunday. Called themselves the ABCDEFG's, you 'member that Father Matthias?!

Father Matthias nods.

BABETTE

ABCD...?

PAUL & LOUIS

(Louis a little behind)

Altar Boys Come Dancing Everyday For God!

Everyone laughs.

FATHER MATTHIAS

I remember their collection hat didn't always make it to the collection plate.

Everyone laughs, the Guests egg the brothers on. They look at each other, smile. Louis throws Finn his walking stick.

POP of Louis and Paul with tap shoes on, encircled by the guests with the Bride grinning from her high chair waiting.

PAUL

Shoes are tight.

GUEST

Shoes are fine, it's the feet that's fat.

Everyone laughs. Paul cracks a smile.

JELLY ROLL MORTON

(shouting)

What kinda rhythm you want, boss?

LOUIS

Don't matter none just play loud so no one
can hear our feet.

Jelly and the band fire up a GENUINE FOOT STOMPER (that plays for the rest of the sequence.) Louis and Paul start and quickly get off synch. Guests let them have it.

They try again. They get a few steps in, then Paul fucks up. The brothers bicker about what the sequence of steps are. They wait for the melody to come around and this time they remember some of their old routine. It ain't perfect, but for a moment the two brothers are one...taps coming mean and quick. Babette runs in and throws down some money. Others do the same! It's joy bomb! Especially for Grace and Florence.

Louis falls to the ground in exhaustion. Paul raises his hands in triumph, picks up all the money on the floor!

POPS of electric lights coming on! The party getting wild!

A dog getting into the food. Groomsmen wrasslin'. Young couples grindin'. Father Matthias separating the grindin'.

Levi and Grace kissing. Louis and Babette dancing together. (Paul pointing to his neck, then Babette, making Louis see the cake charm around Babette's neck.) Florence and Mother Freniere finding something to agree on at a table.

Grace and Levi getting showered in rice as they climb into a car to take them off to their honeymoon hotel room downtown.

Florence bawling her eyes out, Paul and Louis comforting her as the auto carriage carries Grace away, drunk guests and Jelly's band marching behind them.

EXT. DU LAC MANSION - DAWN

A drunk and merry Louis and Paul climbing up the trellis on the side of the house. Evidence of the party that never ended and a few servants breaking down the last of it below.

LOUIS

We gonna miss it.

PAUL

Don't talk. I have to concentrate.

LOUIS

It's them three pieces of checker cake,
holding you back.

PAUL

Five pieces, ha!

Paul lifts himself up onto the roof.

EXT. DU LAC MANSION, ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Paul pushes himself up onto his feet, heads for the center of the roof, Louis following him.

PAUL

Five pieces of checker cake, a pompano filet, three boudin, dirty rice, beef and green beans, turtle soup. One, two, four hurricanes!

LOUIS

Eat anything else the buttons on your vest are gonna pop off like cannonballs...take down the neighborhood.

They laugh. They look out onto the rooftops of New Orleans, the light of God beginning to say get up y'all.

PAUL

Nine thousand five hundred and seventeen.

Louis looks over at Paul.

PAUL (CONT'D)

That's how many days we've been in this house.

LOUIS

You do that math all by yourself?

He throws some rice at Louis. They look out again.

PAUL

Remember when I use to be taller than you.

LOUIS

Always bringing that up.

PAUL

Shot up like a Nuttail Oak. Daddy said I was going look down on you for the rest of days.

*

LOUIS

Didn't quite happen.

PAUL

It was a good month, that month though.

Paul throws some more rice at Louis. They laugh.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I'm gonna marry Babette.

LOUIS
Is that right?

PAUL
I know she's looking at you but she'll see
I'm more qualified to make her happy. You
could buy us a house like you did Grace.

Paul throws more rice, Louis ducks. The first glimpse of the sun coming up. A darkness comes over Paul.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You still doing business with that man,
Lestat?

LOUIS
Nah. Didn't work out.

PAUL
That's good...Cause he's the devil.

LOUIS
You think everyone's the devil.

PAUL
He's here to take souls. He told me so. He
spoke to me without moving his lips.

LOUIS
He got tricks is all...

PAUL
Mortal sins must be confessed...

LOUIS
Ain't never gonna see him again, Paul.

Paul nods. The black cloud lifts. The red light of the sun lighting up their faces now.

PAUL
You think Levi loves her enough? Grace
needs a lot of love.

LOUIS
I do.

PAUL
You think he's giving her everything he's
got inside him?

Louis nods. They stand there listening as the birds begin to wake, making their first chirping of the day.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Mother made a good party for Grace.

LOUIS

They gonna talk about this one for years.

PAUL

I love you, Louis.

LOUIS

Love you too, baby brother.

PAUL

...I ate too much checker cake.

As Louis laughs, Paul starts walking. Before he realizes what's happened, Paul walks right off the roof.

LOUIS

Paul.

A moment, then a thud and a quick quieter thud.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

PAUL!

Louis runs to the edge and looks down-- Paul splayed in an awful pose, his skull shattered on the pavement. A couple of servants coming running in to see the blood pour.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

PAUL!!!

OUT on Louis screaming.

BACK TO DUBAI PENTHOUSE

Louis stands by the window as the sunset finishes.

LOUIS

That was the last sunrise I ever saw.
Perhaps the kindest thing the Dark Gift has given me. I don't miss the sun...the reminders it carries.

Rashid powers down the tint of the windows, exits.

MOLLOY

I had a brown lab named Rocket. I see a picture of him now, I weep like a baby.

LOUIS

It was a hundred and sixteen years ago.

MOLLOY

I can play it back... "I loved him more than anyone on earth." Your brother killed himself in front of you, it hits you how?

LOUIS

Like an ambassador let go from his post.
Like an antiquities dealer selling a valued possession.

Louis walks out to the balcony. Molloy stops the recording.

EXT. DUBAI PENTHOUSE, BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

The lights of Dubai beginning to pop on. Molloy joins Louis.

LOUIS

I have seen death over and over and over and over and over and over and over again.
It's boring.

MOLLOY

That'll make a great blurb.

LOUIS

The diagnosis you received, Daniel, it winds your clock. This virus that's turned the world sideways, it has no doubt intensified meaning for your species.

MOLLOY

I get it. I'm gonna die. They're gonna die.
But not the vampire.

LOUIS

The vampire is bored...The human was destroyed...Utterly destroyed.

INT. DU LAC MANSION, PARLOR - DAY

Louis, Father Matthias, Florence, Grace, and Levi going over funeral arrangements. Inconsolable grief all around. Eyes on the floor except for Florence, who is staring at Louis.

FATHER MATTHIAS

I was at the funeral home. Everything is going as it should. Good men there. Promised me their finest carriage. Said the procession would pick up the family...

FLORENCE

What'd you say to him up there, Louis?

Louis picks his head up.

LOUIS

...Mama?

FLORENCE

You musta said something to him, made him do that to hisself.

FATHER MATTHIAS

Paul slipped and fell, Florence, I don't think this's something you want...

FLORENCE

He was a fragile boy. Always was.

(to Louis)

And you always had to have the last word. Always had to take 'em down a peg, didn't ya? What did you say to him up on that roof, Louis? Why was you even up there?

LOUIS

We's watching the sun come up, mama...

FLORENCE

...You don't get past the gates if'n you kill yourself, don't you know that? Paul gone down the other way, Louis. Paul in hell 'cause of you.

She gets up and runs to her bedroom. Grace runs after her. Louis looks to Father Matthias, who looks back down.

EXT. DU LAC MANSION - EVENING

A sizable crowd holding candles. The front door opens. Father Matthias escorts the De Pointe Du Lac family in funereal attire- Florence's face barely visible in heavy black veil.

LOUIS (V.O.)

The funeral was set for the late morning. And it should tell you something about the people of New Orleans, when I tell you the mourners and the musicians hired all waited a full seven hours outside our home for my mother to gather herself.

EXT. STORYVILLE STREETS - EVENING

A candle-lit procession shuffling its way down Basin Street-
A band playing a heart heavy rendition of "In The Sweet By
and By". Paul's Coffin is pulled by a horse carriage.
Florence arm in arm with Grace and Levi, followed by Louis,
Finn, Babette, Levi's family and a second line of mourners
and musicians.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Storyville lowered their hats, gave their
propers because it was custom. But if you
looked past the one or two deep, lined up
on the sidewalk, you'd see the bars hadn't
stopped serving. The whores hadn't stopped
whoring. What was Paul's life worth to
them? What would my life be worth? The Big
Man of Iberville Street...

MOLLOY

The executor-in-charge...

LOUIS (V.O.)

Marching down Basin Street, trailing the
satin-lined evidence of his failure. Again
and again I replayed that night on the
roof. Words I should have said, signals I
should have picked up on. And with every
repetition my weakness consumed me.

ANGLE ON LESTAT on a storefront wall.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Easy prey for the discerning predator.

Lestat joins the procession and sidles up to Louis.

LESTAT

Mes Condoleances.

Louis sees who it is.

LOUIS

Pas ici.

LESTAT

An elegant coffin...could you tell me where
you purchased it?

LOUIS

Move on.

LESTAT

I wait on my balcony every night. You've
been avoiding me.

Grace looks back to see Louis and Lestat.

<p>LOUIS I have been...occupied.</p>	<p>LESTAT (CONT'D) ...and Miss Lily proved herself a poor substitute.</p>
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LESTAT (CONT'D)
I don't take kindly to being avoided.

LOUIS
Mafugga, it's my brother's damn funeral.

Finn takes a step closer.

LESTAT
Yes, I read about the unfortunate fall in
the Picaynue. Believe me when I tell you,
Louis, your brother longed for that
flagstone.

Louis grabs him by the lapels and begins shoving into the
crowd lined on the street. Finn jumps in and takes over.

FINN
I got it, Boss. Keep walkin'.

Finn grabs Lestat and Louis walks on as Grace and Florence
take in the distraction. Finn tries to subdue Lestat, but
Lestat takes one of Finn's arms and snaps it like a pretzel
rod. Finn falls to his knees moaning. Lestat doesn't take his
eyes off of the back of Louis's head.

A relentless music creeps up on the soundtrack...

EXT. ST. LOUIS CEMETARY - EVENING

The crowd and a few Cemetery Workers gather around Du Lac
Family Crypt as Father Matthias recites words of remembrance.

LOUIS (V.O.)
Lestat's ambush had disoriented me.
The sermon that was given I could not hear,
and when the gathering cut loose the body.

Cemetery Workers who lift Paul's coffin and walk it into the
Du Lac Family Crypt. Father nods to Remy, who leads the band
into a ripping rendition of "Didn't He Ramble."

LOUIS (V.O.)
I could not join the transformation of
those in attendance. He would not let me.

As tears are wiped and condolences are offered, the camera pushes in on Louis taking another a swig from his flask, all the sound of the world lowers and he hears a quiet voice.

VOICE OF LESTAT

Come to me.

Louis looks around. No one's behind him.

VOICE OF LESTAT (CONT'D)

Come to me.

Louis shakes the spell off. Heads over to Florence and Grace, talking with Levi and Babette.

LOUIS

Walk you home, Mama?

FLORENCE

No, thank you.

She turns to grab Levi's arm.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

Would you be so kind, Levi?

He looks to Grace, who nods.

LEVI

Of course, Mother Du Lac.

Grace and Levi walks Florence out the Cemetery gates. Babette turns to Louis.

BABETTE

She didn't mean nothing by it.

LOUIS

Oh but she did now.

BABETTE

She just needs to put it somewhere. Don't let it inside you.

She kisses him on the cheek.

LESTAT (V.O.)

Come to me, Louis.

BABETTE

...See you back at the wake?

Babette runs up to catch to her family.

LOUIS (V.O.)
I did not go to the wake.

EXT. IBERVILLE CRIB, NO. 17 - EVENING

Louis drinking in his car parked on the street.

LOUIS (V.O.)
I did not want to face my mother's blame.
My sister's pity. I wanted to grieve alone.
But he would not *allow it*.

He looks over at Bricktop out on the porch.

LESTAT (V.O.)
Venez a moi, Louis.

He and Bricktop lock eyes.

INT. IBERVILLE CRIB, NO. 17, BEDROOM - EVENING

Louis getting undressed. Bricktop getting herself ready.

BRICKTOP
I been working for you near a year, you
just now sampling the product?

LOUIS
I want some now...

BRICKTOP
You come to the right room then, baby.
Wasn't expecting is all.

LOUIS
Why's that?

BRICKTOP
Something about your manner. Figured you
was soft in the hands, Mr. Du Lac.

LOUIS
...You figured wrong.

LESTAT (V.O.)
Venez à moi, Louis.

Louis puts money on the dresser.

LOUIS
Fuck the devil outta me, Bricks.

They go at it hard. Bricktop going deep into her bag of skills. But Louis can't get off. Cause he's drunk. And because a vampire's projecting himself into Louis's mind.

EXT. RUE ROYALE TOWNHOUSE, BALCONY - NIGHT

Lestat in his evening robe, looking directly into the camera.

LESTAT
Venez à moi, Louis.

BACK TO IBERVILLE CRIB ROOM

Louis pushes off of Bricktop without climaxing, his cock barely hard. Goes to get dressed.

BRICKTOP
Whiskey dick, sha. Ain't no bottle ever
beat my pussy. Come back to bed now.

She reaches for him, he knocks her hand away, grabs his walking cane, hits the door. The relentless music continues, the music box melody revealing itself above it.

EXT. IBERVILLE STREET - NIGHT

Louis walking fast, then running down to the Fair Play.

INT. FAIR PLAY SALOON - NIGHT

Louis hits the door.

MISS CAROL
Hello, handsome.

Louis hands Miss Carol his flask.

LOUIS
Sazerac.

MISS CAROL
My heart broke when I heard about your
brother's passing, Mr. Du Lac.

LOUIS
Miss Lily.

MISS CAROL
Oh, my dear...

LOUIS

I don't care if she busy with someone, I like Ms. Lily. I need her.

MISS CAROL

Lily died Mr. Du Lac. Two weeks ago. The Police found her under the dock...

Louis reaches to hold onto something sturdy.

MISS CAROL (CONT'D)

Said she contracted the fever's that's been going around. Blood went and dried up inside her...

LOUIS

(quietly)

Lord. Lord. Lord.

INT/EXT BUFFUM ROADSTER - NIGHT

Louis driving determined but drunk.

LOUIS

I could not escape him. No matter how much I drank, how far I drove, how desperate I became, he demanded satisfaction.

He looks down over at the Passenger seat sees Lestat's suited legs, his left hand touches Louis's knee.

VOICE OF LESTAT

Venez à moi, Louis.

INT. ST. MARY'S ASSUMPTION - NIGHT

Father Matthias walking fast down the center aisle with a lantern and keys, towards the shouting and pounding outside.

LOUIS (O.C.)

(shouting)

Help me Lord! Help me, Lord!

Father Matthias opens the door on Louis, slamming his walking stick against the door, tears streaming down his face.

FATHER MATTHIAS

Louis?!

LOUIS

Help me! Help me please! He's in my head, Father!

Music out.

INT. ST. MARY'S ASSUMPTION, CONFESSIONAL - NIGHT

On Louis's side of the box, Father Matthias's shadow seen through the latticework.

LOUIS
(like a child trying not
to hyperventilate)
The devil...He's...in New...Orleans...my fa-
fa-fault..

FATHER MATTHIAS
Calm down, son. Get your breath.

Louis slams a fist down on the side of confessional.

LOUIS
(calming down just enough
to make sentences)
Bless me Fa-Father for I have sin-ned.
Grievously sin-ned. This my confess-ssion.

FATHER MATTHIAS
Sign of the cross, son.

Louis makes the sign of the cross, tries to slow down but has to fight to do it.

LOUIS
I am a drunk, Lord. I am a liar. I am a
thief, Lord. I profit off the miseries of
other men and I do it easy! Liquor, women,
drugs, I lure them in and grab what they
got, Lord. I take daughters with no homes
and I turn them out, Lord. I lie to myself
saying I'm giving them roof and food and
dollars in they pockets but I look in the
mirror I know what I am. The big man in the
big house, stuffing cotton in my ears so I
don't have to hear they cries and Lord, I
dragged my family into this pit with me! I
have shamed my father! I have failed my
brother!

FATHER MATTHIAS
No, son.

LOUIS
I have lost my mother and sister and rather
than fix it like a man should, Lord...I run
like a coward. I run to the bottle.

(MORE)

LOUIS (CONT'D)

I run to the grift. I run to bad beds. I am...a sodomite, Lord! I laid down with a man. I laid down with the devil and he has root in me! All his spindly roots in me and I can't think nothing anymore but his voice and his words, LORD, HELP ME! I am weak. And I want to die! I want so badly to die!

SUDDENLY THE CONFSSIONAL SHAKES AND WE HEAR THE SPLINTERING OF WOOD AND THE FATHER MATTHIAS SCREAMING!

Louis leaves the confessional and sees **LESTAT FEASTING BRUTALLY ON THE NECK OF FATHER MATTHIAS, RIPPING HIM APART!**

LOUIS (CONT'D)

NOOOO!

Louis tries to knock Lestat off of the Priest but Lestat **PUSHES LOUIS THIRTY FEET AWAY WITH ONE EASY FREE HAND!** Louis is momentarily stunned but recovers, grabs his walking stick, pulls the blade from it and once again **CHARGES LESTAT, REPEATEDLY STABBING LESTAT WITH HIS KNIFE!** **LESTAT BEGINS TO PULL AWAY FROM THE FATHER'S NECK, DRUNK ON THE BLOOD, ANGRY WITH A FULL MOUTH OF RED GLORY!**

LESTAT

Do you think God heard you, Louis?

STAB!

LESTAT (CONT'D)

In that tawdry box, through this pig vessel? This charlatan?!

STAB!

LESTAT (CONT'D)

Do you not see how unworthy he is? HOW CAN YOU HUMILATE YOURSELF LIKE THIS!

STAB. STAB. STAB. LESTAT GRABS LOUIS'S WRIST, HOLDS IT BETWEEN THEM. LESTAT LICKS HIS OWN BLOOD OFF THE SHAFT OF THE BLADE, SLICING HIS OWN TONGUE AS HE DOES IT. HE SHOVES LOUIS TO THE GROUND AND EFFORTLESSLY FLOATS BACK TO HIS FEET!

LOUIS

You killed Lily.

LESTAT

Cut short that magnificent life she was living. What a tragedy.

LOUIS

Ain't no fever out there. That's you. You bringing the death to town!

LESTAT

Yes. I give death to those deserving. I'm not the devil, you were wrong about that, but I can give you death!!

The Vicar appears at the Altar. He see's the Priest's mutilated body, looks back at Lestat and Louis and **RACES FOR THE CHURCH'S FRONT DOOR!** Lestat looks annoyed, take the keys from the Priest's robe and in a blink, **TRANSPORTS HIMSELF ACROSS THE CHURCH'S FRONT DOOR, CATCHING THE VICAR BY THE HEAD AND CRUSHING IT AGAINST THE CHURCH'S STONE WALL!**

Lestat admires his work for moment then PULLS HIS HAND FROM THE STRANDS OF FLESH AND SKULL STILL CIRCLING HIS WRIST AND THE VICAR'S BODY DROPS TO THE FLOOR LIKE A SACK OF STONES!

Louis looks to run but is frozen in fear from the horrors he's just witnessed, paralyzed as Lestat **TRANSPORTS HIMSELF TO EVERY EXIT OF THE CHURCH, CHECKING THE LOCKS OF EVERY DOOR! SLAM RATTLE. SLAM. SLAM RATTLE. SLAM. SLAM. SLAM. THEN BACK STANDING IN FRONT OF A TREMBLING LOUIS!**

LESTAT (CONT'D)

Louis. Dear Boy. Ma Beauté Noire.

Louis begins to backtrack, Lestat stalks him.

LESTAT (CONT'D)

This primitive country has picked you clean. Shackled you in permanent exile, every room you enter, every hat you're forced to wear. The stern landlord. The deferential business man. The loyal son. All these roles you conform to and none of them your true nature. What rage you must feel as you choke on your sorrow!

Louis bumps into the Fount of Holy Water, backs around it.

LESTAT (CONT'D)

The first time I laid eyes on you, your beautiful face, I saw that sorrow. I did not know how it got there or why it was so voluminous, but I knew it soon enough, and now you know it too.

Lestat grabs the sides of the Fount and dips takes a big long blasphemous slurp of it.

LESTAT (CONT'D)

I can take away that sorrow, Louis. I can give you that death you begged your feeble, blind, degenerate, non-existent God, and I can do it, joyfully in his house of worship just like that.

Louis backs up to the Altar wall, Christ's crucified feet dangling over his head.

LESTAT (CONT'D)

I can swap it out for a Dark Gift and a power you can't imagine. You just have to ask me for it.

BACK TO DUBAI PENTHOUSE

Louis sits shaken from the recollection.

LOUIS

You probably don't remember. But, we'd get to a point like this and you'd run out of recording tape. You would have to unwrap another out of its package and I'd have a pause.

Molloy stops the recorder. The camera slowly pushes in on him as a single reverberating note creeps in.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

This work we do here now, Daniel. It's so very important. Events are upon us. And I don't mean temporal viruses or the civil unrest of nations. Something far more threatening to the order of things is afoot.

MOLLOY (O.C.)

I had a feeling...It's why I got on the plane, Louis.

LOUIS

We have to get all the details right. Every nuance. My whole story. We have to prepare your readers for what's coming.

MOLLOY

There's more of you out there.

LOUIS

Yes. And they're exceedingly more powerful than I am...and far less sentimental about humanity.

MOLLOY

What do they...

LOUIS

My whole story, Daniel.

Molloy starts recording again. Melody over the single note.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

You just have to ask me for it, he said.

BACK TO ST. MARY'S - Lestat persuading Louis upon the altar.

LESTAT

You just have to nod your beautiful head
and say yes.

LOUIS (V.O.)

It is difficult to explain how his words
disarmed me. How efficiently succinct and
impenetrable his argument was.

Lestat. Louis.

LOUIS (V.O.)

All my conceptions, even my guilt and my
wish to die, seemed utterly unimportant and
I completely forgot myself and the barbaric
scene that surrounded me. For the first
time in my life, I was...seen.

Lestat. Louis.

LESTAT

Be my companion, Louis. Be everything you
want to be and be that thing for all
eternity.

Louis nods.

BACK TO DUBAI

LOUIS

He drained me to the very threshold of
death.

BACK TO ST. MARY'S

LESTAT BITES DOWN ON LOUIS. The Music Crescendos! The camera
pushes in on Louis's suffering face! The image of Louis's
face begins to slowly vibrate. Becomes a fragmented blur!

Music Out again. A POP of Lestat pulling back from Louis. A
POP of Lestat biting down on his wrist, releasing his own
blood. Only the sound of Louis barely breathing.

LOUIS (V.O.)

The blood. It came as a dull roar at first.
And then a pounding...

BACK TO DUBAI

Louis, unable to control himself, begins to re-live it. The score creeps up following Louis's description.

LOUIS

...like the pounding of a drum, growing louder and louder, as if some enormous creature were coming slowly through a dark and alien forest, a huge drum.

BACK TO ST. MARY'S - Louis's blurred face again. Lestat's blurred wrist pressing into Louis's mouth. Louis latching on like an infant nursing.

LOUIS (V.O.)

...And then there came a pounding of another drum, as if another giant were coming behind him, each giant intent on his own drum, giving no notice to the rhythm of the other.

As the image begins to slow its vibrations,

BACK TO DUBAI - Molloy watching Louis's eyes moistening.

LOUIS

Throbbing in my lips and fingers, in the flesh of my temples. Above all, in my veins. Drum and then the other drum.

BACK TO ST. MARY'S - The pieta of vampire lovers and deafening roar of drums.

LOUIS (V.O.)

I opened my eyes and saw him sitting a length away from me. Radiant. And it was then that I realized the drum was my heart and the second drum had been his.

Lestat pulls his wrist free, and the drums fade, the quiet melody below underneath it remaining. Louis's eyes transforming into an immortally green iridescence.

LOUIS (V.O.)

And we sat there for some time...in throes of increasing wonder.

BACK TO DUBAI - Louis locked in ecstasy, a single tear of blood rolls down his face.

LOUIS

...The end. The beginning.

END OF PILOT.