

INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE

by

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Based on the novel by
Anne Rice

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**FOR EDUCATIONAL
PURPOSES ONLY**

FADE IN:

EXT. DUBOCE STREET HILL SKYLINE (SAN FRANCISCO) - NIGHT

INT. BAR (SAN FRANCISCO) - NIGHT

UNDER CONTINUOUS ROARING ROCK MUSIC -- we see, but do not hear:

YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN

talking in groups or couples, some dancing, as lights flash. Punk hairdos, heavy makeup. Chatter.

DAVID MALLOY, aged 25, well-dressed, leans close to a uniformed police officer, holding a mike to the officer's lips, as the officer talks. The wire from the mike leads to a small recorder on the bar. Malloy also wears one earphone plug connected to this recorder, which he holds to his left ear.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER PART OF BAR - BOOTH

Malloy interviews two beautifully-dressed women, who obviously flirt with him, as they answer his questions, lean forward, talk into the mike. Malloy finishes his drink, puts the recorder in his pocket, takes out a cigarette, looks for a door.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - MALLOY

Cigarette on lip, stumbles in darkness, amid garbage cans and debris, fumbling for lighter, then finally lighter flashes.

LOUIS is REVEALED for one instant only an inch from Malloy, his hand on Malloy's shoulder. Faces almost touching. Malloy stumbles away in shock.

Louis recedes more slowly into shadow.

MALLOY

I'm sorry! I didn't know... you were there.

He struggles to make out the figure but can't. Smokes nervously.

LOUIS

I know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALLOY

Really, I didn't mean to run into you.

LOUIS

Go on. Pass by.

Malloy stamps out the cigarette, holds up the hand mike.

MALLOY

You don't want to tell me the story of your life, do you?

He flicks on the recorder in his pocket. Eagerly.

MALLOY

That's what I do. I interview people. I collect life stories. Sometimes I interview four or five people a night...

He backs away further. Louis is perfectly still.

LOUIS

The story of my life?

MALLOY

Yes, I've been collecting lives for years. F.M. radio. K.F.R.C. In there I just interviewed a genuine hero, a cop who...

LOUIS

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

MALLOY

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

INT. ROOM (SAN FRANCISCO)

City skyline from Duboce Street hill.

Louis in shadow moves to the window, as behind him Malloy sets the tape recorder on the table and sits in one of two straight chairs. Dim light burns on chest of drawers beyond. As they talk, Louis keeps his back to the room and Malloy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALLOY

This is where you live?

LOUIS

It's just a room...

MALLOY

So how shall we begin?

(playfully, almost
teasing)

What do you do?

LOUIS

I'm a vampire.

MALLOY

Ah, and you mean this literally, I
take it.

LOUIS

Yes. I was waiting for you in
that alleyway. You or whoever
came out of that doorway. And
then you began to speak.

Malloy laughs goodnaturedly.

MALLOY

Well, what a lucky break for me.

LOUIS

Perhaps lucky for both of us.

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

LOUIS

I want to tell you my story. All
of it. I'd like to do that very
much. I'm glad we've met.

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

MALLOY

You were going to kill me? Drink
my blood?

LOUIS

Yes, but you needn't worry about
that now. I told you in the alley
to go on. I was letting you pass
by. I let a lot of motals pass
by.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis stands opposite, hand on the chair.

Malloy is riveted.

MALLOY

Oh this is one I have to hear.
You believe this, don't you? That
you're a vampire? You really
think...

LOUIS

(patiently)

We can't begin this way. I'm
going to turn on the light.

MALLOY

But I thought vampires didn't like
light.

LOUIS

We love it. I only wanted to
prepare you.

Louis pulls the cord of the overhead naked light bulb.

LOUIS'S FACE

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

MALLOY

Good God!

He struggles to suppress fear and understand.

LOUIS

Don't be frightened. I want this
opportunity.

The light appears to go out by itself and suddenly Louis
is in the chair, dimly lighted by the nearby lamp and the
tape recorder has been turned on. The cassette is
turning.

MALLOY

How did you do that!

LOUIS

The same way you do it. A series
of simple gestures. Only I moved
too fast for you to see. I'm
flesh and blood. Only not human.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (CONT'D)

I haven't been for two hundred years.

Malloy is speechless, frightened, yet enthralled. Spellbound.

LOUIS

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

MALLOY

(baffled)

You're not lying to me, are you?

LOUIS

No. 1791 -- that's the year when it happened. I was twenty-four -- younger than you are now.

MALLOY

Yes.

LOUIS

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

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LOUISIANA - DAY (1791)

A disheveled Louis, hair in pigtail, in deep pocket frock coat, rides his horse through the fields of indigo, waving here and there to the African slaves at work.

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

CONTINUE V.O. as he speaks he approaches a small parish church and graveyard. He dismounts, approaches a rectangular Greek style above ground tomb. The stone is like a doorway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis in ragged lace and dirty brocade coat walks drunkenly along the sidewalk. As he enters a crowded, smoky little tavern and blunders into a card game, flat-boat men and one FANCY-DRESSED GAMBLER eye him as a mark. He lays his money down on the table. They deal him in.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Perhaps if I'd had time, I would have come to my senses. Who can say? I might have married again. As it was, I courted death, taking every risk that I could.

As the men play cards two tavern waitresses approach -- TERESA and SUZANNE. Suzanne throws her arms around Louis, and exchanging glances with the Fancy-Dressed Gambler, puts a powder into a drink of whiskey which she pushes toward Louis, eyeing him stealthily. Teresa watches all and looks down at Louis' hand of cards.

PAN OVER tavern scene -- Indians, men of color, black African freedmen, sailors and wenches.

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

CLOSE ON - LESTAT

He approaches the table as:

Louis lifts the glass of drugged whiskey. The hooded and cloaked figure of Lestat knocks it out of his hand, bumping into Suzanne and knocking Teresa roughly to one side.

Louis rises, drunk, outraged.

LOUIS

How dare you, monsieur.

Louis pulls out a pearl-handled pistol. Teresa clings to him. Others gasp and give way, though eager to see what will happen.

Lestat, face half-covered by the hood but eyes gleaming, backs away through the crowd, eyes riveted on Louis, smiling. The crowd closes indifferently.

Louis is slightly dazed by Lestat's eyes. Then shudders, loses interest, sits down and picks up his cards.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREET - COTTAGE - NIGHT

Louis and QUADROON PROSTITUTE emerge from the cottage, kissing fervently.

QUADROON PROSTITUTE
Don't leave me, Michie Louis.

Fancy-Dressed Gambler appears from shadows.

FANCY-DRESSED GAMBLER
First you call me a cheat, then
you try to steal my woman.

The Gambler spins Louis around and goes to hit him. Louis blocks punch, knocks Gambler into the dirt.

Quadroon Prostitute shouts warning to Louis as the Gambler draws his pistol.

LOUIS
Go ahead. Do it. I'm already
dead. Finish the task, so they
can sing the Requiem.

Louis shrugs.

Gambler rises slowly and warily holding the gun on Louis.

GAMBLER
The Oaks; tomorrow morning at
six.

Louis laughs and shakes his head, no. He turns his back.

CLOSE ON - LOUIS'S FACE

thoughtful distant, and behind him --

GAMBLER
Coward!

Louis staggers down the wood sidewalk. Quadroon Prostitute comes after him, embracing him, and he kisses her firmly and gently pushes her away. She pleads with him in French.

LOUIS (V.O.)
My invitation was open to anyone.
But it was a vampire that
accepted. I had never conceived
of such a thing.

Louis moves on into darkness among small colonial French buildings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rain falls. He looks up in it and lets it drench him. Over his shoulder, we see Lestat approach, hood still shadowing his face.

ANGLE ON LESTAT'S BLUE EYES

Lestat's hands clamp on Louis's shoulder and then Louis stiffens, cries out and freezes, as Lestat's teeth go into his neck.

Louis slips from Lestat's grasp, unconscious in the mud and rain.

INT. ROOM (SAN FRANCISCO)

Malloy and Louis facing each other.

MALLOY

That's how it happened?

LOUIS

No. That is how vampires drink blood. The Dark Gift of transformation requires a good deal more as you'll see. Besides, this vampire wanted something from me. He came back for it the following night.

INT. LAVISH FRENCH-FURNISHED BEDROOM AT POINT DU LAC (NEW ORLEANS)

Louis is delirious in four-poster bed, shrouded with mosquito netting. Female slave Yvette bathes his face with a rag. She is crying. Other slave women hover in shadows. Overseer, a Quadroon male, stands weeping in door.

Yvette puts out all candles save one by the bed.

LOUIS

My poor Yvette. What will become of you -- all of you -- if I die?

YVETTE

You won't die, Michie. We need you. You won't leave us here.

SAME SCENE - LATER

Louis alone.

Candlelight flickers on face of bisque virgin.

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

Lestat, exquisitely dressed in French clothing, stands beside the bed smiling. In the light of the candle, we see that he is not human; skin too white; eyes too bright. It is more subtle than earlier electric light shot of Louis. Lestat looks amiable, even mischievous, but impossible -- an angel or a monster.

Louis rises, grabs for his pistol from the table and cocks it.

LOUIS

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

LESTAT

(looking around the
lavish bedroom)

And such a beautiful house. Yours is a beautiful life.

Louis takes aim and FIRES.

The BULLET passes through Lestat's slightly raised hand. It leaves a bloody wound. Lestat winces, studies the wound. It begins to heal as we watch.

Louis reaches for his sword, hanging over the end of the bed. He struggles to get up.

LESTAT

You're not afraid of anything, are you?

LOUIS

Why the hell should I be? I warn you again. Get out!

LESTAT

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

Louis rises up, jabs the rapier at Lestat who effortlessly knocks it from his hand. It "appears" across the room on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis slumps against the headboard, staring keenly at Lestat. He is in a rage.

LOUIS
(quietly and coldly)
If some voodoo priest sent you here, say so. If you're the devil, I'm all yours.

LESTAT
I don't believe in voodoo priests or the devil. Neither do you.

Lestat sits on the side of the bed, facing Louis.

LESTAT
But I do believe in eternal life.

Lestat holds up his bullet-wounded palm, and we see the very last healing as it smooths out and is whole again.

LOUIS
(coldly)
How was this done?

LESTAT
I love your courage. I even love your grief. You're no simple soul, are you, my friend?

Louis is bewildered. Feels pain. Is becoming spellbound.

Sound of SEA RISING.

LESTAT
What if I told you I could give you back your old passion for living, and that for those with courage, living can be for all time?

Sound of HEARTBEAT, DRUM IN TIME WITH IT...

DISSOLVE TO:

DARK SEA

An 18th century ship sailing with black ragged sails. Only two figures on the top deck, Lestat at the wheel and Louis, in his soiled night shirt watching him. In this sea are the ruins of buildings, temples, churches, seen dimly in the midst.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT (V.O.)
 Vampires, that's what we are.
 Creatures of darkness, only we see
 more clearly in that darkness than
 any mortal has ever seen!

Dead men and women float in the water. Louis is amazed. Dead woman and dead infant float by. A giant dead oak floats by. Lestat holds the wheel steady. Lestat points to the horizon of white clouds stacked high under the moon. The two speak together but we do not hear their words.

EXT. PARISH GRAVEYARD (LOUISIANA) - NIGHT

Louis and Lestat stand before the tall crypt of Louis's wife and baby. Sounds of WIND. Lestat leads Louis from the graveyard into a dreamlike swampland.

DREAM SEQUENCE

thickens as we see HAZY fragments suggesting possibility:

- A) Louis, beautifully-dressed, dancing with a woman.
- B) Louis and Lestat together riding horses fast through the night.

LAUGHTER, MUSIC, HEARTBEAT INTERMINGLE.

PAN OVER an audience of bejeweled and wigged spectators all clapping and cheering. Return to:

INT. LOUIS'S BEDROOM

Louis sits against the bedstead staring intently at Lestat.

Silence.

FOCUS ON LESTAT

seated on the bed.

Then:

LESTAT
 You have to ask me for this. You
 have to give your full consent,
 do you hear?

(CONTINUED)

INT. TAVERN - LOUIS AND LESTAT

at a corner table are watching Suzanne as she re-enters.

LOUIS
(fearfully,
confusedly)
You mean now, with this knife?

He reveals the dagger inside his coat.

LESTAT
She's an evildoer, my friend.
I've made it easy for you. Don't
you see what she's up to? If you
can kill her, the Dark Gift is
yours.

Louis rises, uncertain, crazed, pushes through the crowded tavern, approaches Suzanne and seduces her out into the same alley.

EXT. ALLEYWAY

Louis stares in horror at the bloody knife in his hand as Suzanne falls back dead onto the ground.

Lestat appears over his shoulder, looking coldly at the dead woman. He puts his hand on Louis's shoulder.

LOUIS
What have I done?

LESTAT
(reassuring)
It won't be this way when you're
one of us.

Louis drops the dagger on the ground and moves away fast.

EXT. POINTE DU LAC

Louis on a horse dismounts and walks towards the steps leading up to the gallery. He is crazed with guilt. Suddenly, as he comes into light from lantern at foot of steps he sees --

LESTAT

sitting collected at the head of the steps.

LOUIS

backs up as Lestat rises and descends the steps so fluidly he hardly appears to move. Light from lantern illuminates Louis as:

LOUIS

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

LESTAT

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

LOUIS

I can't go through with this.

LESTAT

You're perfect for it. You're
bitter, and you're strong.

LOUIS

But why do you want me?

LESTAT

Because you're as strong as I
was... when I was alive. And
besides, I like you. I like your
conscience. You remind me of...
myself.

Louis takes out his flask and drinks. Fearlessly, drunk-
enly, he turns and heads slowly for the nearby swamp.

EXT. PARISH CEMETERY - GRAVES OF LOUIS'S WIFE AND BABY

Louis stops in front of the crypt. Leans his forehead
against the stone.

Lestat appears beside him, radiant, beautiful.

LESTAT

You really want to be with them?

LOUIS

Yes. I killed that tavern girl.
I deserve to die.

Lestat in quiet rage, raises his right fist and shatters
into large fragments the rectangular marble face stone,
revealing two coffins on the upper and lower shelf.
Insects swarm from opening.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The upper coffin slides out, cracks open, revealing half-rotted body of a woman, holding an infant, no longer recognizable as individuals, a tangle of gruesome, rotted flesh, hair, eaten away lace, insects and worms crawling over it.

Louis gasps and bends closer taking in the full horror.

LESTAT

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

Lestat stares at him, smiling, becoming a hazy dreamlike vision, and then hyperclear. He draws closer and closer. We hear the FLASK fall and BREAK ON paving STONES.

Louis is again spellbound. Sound of HEARTBEAT.

Lestate appears angelic in his radiance.

LESTAT (V.O.)

(patient and
persuasive)

We shall be this way, always.
Young as we are now. I'm so
lonely for a companion... But you
must ask. Do you want to or no?

Louis's senses are confused. He is entranced.

LOUIS

(tentative and then
sure)

Yes. Yes!

Lestat embraces Louis obscuring his face. HEARTBEAT grows LOUDER. DRUMBEAT comes, OUT OF SYNC, but almost together.

LOUIS'S POV

The moon, the clouds, the sky, and fragments of earlier visions, blurred figures are glimpsed, with earlier dream images. LAUGHTER and MUSIC rise and fall under the UNSYNCHRONIZED SLOWING BEAT of the HEART and the DRUM.

BACK TO SCENE

Lestat lets Louis fall down beside the broken crypt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lestat stands over him, once again radiant. Lestat speaks gently.

LESTAT

You may go now.

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

LOUIS

No! No, give it to me.

Lestat lifts his own right wrist to his teeth. Fangs slash his own flesh, blood falls. Louis rises to receive the first drops into his open mouth. Lestat gathers him up, as Louis clamps his hand on Lestat's arm and sucks from the wrist.

HEARTBEAT AND DRUMBEAT are SYNCHRONIZED and grow STRONGER and pick up speed.

Louis is released. Staggers.

VAMPIRE VISION

The world around him (and the look of the film) is transformed; the swamp, the CRY of the night BIRDS, the moon, the clouds, all reflect his heightened vision. He looks down in pity on the rotted woman and infant who appear to glitter and to be beautiful rather than repulsive. He closes the lid of the coffin, astonished at the ease of it. Then lifts the entire coffin and returns it to its slot in the crypt.

He turns and stares at Lestat whom he sees now with a vampire's vision. Lestat's eyes are brighter. His buttons are glimmering in the light.

Everything is clearer, brighter, containing more facets of light and color.

LESTAT

(lighthearted)

Stop staring at my buttons.

Didn't I tell you it was going to be fun? But we've work to do.

Lestat leads him into the swamp. Tiny CREATURES move or SING everywhere; leaves move as if growing before Louis's eyes. The water makes myriad OVERLAPPING sounds, and he can see deep into it, to the creatures swimming in the depths.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis stops, hand going around his waist as he feels a cramp of pain.

LESTAT
Your body's dying, pay no
attention. It will take twenty
minutes at most.

Louis is horrified, but the beauty of moon flowers and banana trees continues to distract him. The sky is violet, flooded with luminosity. Again he feels pain.

LESTAT
Come, you're going to feed now.

LOUIS
I want a woman.

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

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

LOUIS'S DAZZLED POV - SWAMP

Small high ground. Camp of runaway slaves. Several share a bottle of rum around the fire. Male slave rises, a gorgeous hunk of flesh in the firelight, simply beautiful (Razor Rudduck) and goes into swamp to relieve his bladder.

LESTAT (O.S.)
They're all beautiful now. Men,
women, the old, the young... simply
because they are alive.

BACK TO SCENE

Louis sees.

The slave comes nearer.

Louis pushes past Lestat. Lestat is surprised but amused and proud, and folds his arms to watch. Louis sees the tiny crucifix on a chain around the slave's neck. Stops. Lestat snatches the crucifix off the man and throws it away, urging Louis towards him.

SLAVE'S POV

Two gleaming white beings stand before him with devil's eyes.

BACK TO SCENE

As the slave tries to bolt, Louis embraces him easily then his teeth into the powerful neck. They are new fangs, he has to really bite into the victim, but he is ravenous to do it. Holds tight to the man as he drinks.

LOUIS'S POV

Trance as he drinks the blood. ECHO of Lestat's LAUGHTER as the swoon thickens. Distant firelight gets brighter and brighter.

INT. POINTE DU LAC - NIGHT

Main floor parlor and dining room with floorlength windows to porches on all sides. Building for all its high ceilings is crude. Furnishing is lavish Parisian Louis XVI.

Lestat plays the harpsichord rapidly and exuberantly... an improvisation on Bach as Louis -- skin whiter, eyes brighter -- wanders from room to room, dazzled by the candles, the light on the furniture, the petit point tapestry of the chairs, the draperies. Before a mirror he stops amazed to see his reflection. In the distance, over the MUSIC, Lestat laughs.

LESTAT

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

Louis draws closer to the mirror, and sees his small, now fully-developed fangs. He runs his tongue over them.

LESTAT

Those will make it easier next time to neatly puncture the flesh. We are well mannered immortals, always remember.

WILD MUSIC.

YVETTE

the mulatto slave, stands still in alarm on the porch gazing at Louis as he stares into the mirror.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Slowly Louis turns to her and is stupefied by her natural beauty.

The MUSIC gets LOUDER and more FRENZIED.

Louis moves out past the dazzled Yvette, along the --

EXT. GALLERY AND STAIRS TO GROUND

He moves out onto the grass and looks up at the stars. He begins to turn around. And suddenly he raises his hands to his lips and he roars. It's a long, horrified, grief-stricken roar. It DROWNS OUT the MUSIC.

INT. BASEMENT OF POINTE DU LAC

A brick walled storage room. Two coffins stand on the floor. Lestat, holding a lantern, closes and bolts the door. Then turns to see --

LOUIS

a full-fledged vampire of high gloss -- sitting on a bench staring at the coffin. Louis is stunned.

Lestat is apprehensive and protective of Louis. He approaches the nearest of the coffins and opens it. It is fitted with satin inside. Louis stares at it in shock. Then looks away sharply, staring at the lantern.

LESTAT

You must get into it. The sun can burn you to ashes.

LOUIS

But is it magical or merely a shelter?

LESTAT

It's the best shelter that you can have.

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

LESTAT

Don't be afraid. In moments you'll sleep as soundly as ever you slept when you were living. You'll dream. And when you wake I'll be waiting for you, and so will all the world.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis looks for assurance at Lestat's beaming face. We can see the fear behind Lestat's smile. The uncertainty.

LOUIS

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

Lestat smiles bitterly and nods.

He points to the coffin.

CLOSE ON HIS HAND

pointing into the coffin.

LESTAT (O.S.)

Some night I'll tell you that
story, if you like. We have a lot
of time now to talk to each other.

Louis gracefully crawls into the coffin, fearful yet fascinated, and is suddenly lying on his back as the lid comes down with a bang. Total darkness. Sounds of his breathing, of his gasp. Of a whispered prayer:

LOUIS (O.S.)

Dear God.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS

A big lavish drinking place with a raised stage.

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

Plantation owners in soiled brocade, lace, crooked wigs, some pretentious, some drunk, some merely young and happy, watch the show as tavern wenches move about.

CLOSE ON TERESA

entering. Looking about.

TERESA'S POV

Louis and Lestat at a small table watch the comedy. Lestat laughs uproariously at the antics of the actors, who trip or hit each other Punch and Judy style. Louis is quietly amused and amazed as much by the wine in his untouched glass, or the light on his boot. But he too watches the stage.

BACK TO SCENE

Teresa comes, offers the men two more drinks, even though their wine is untouched. Sits in Lestat's lap.

Lestat winks at Louis who is enthralled.

Teresa lifts the fresh glass to Lestat's lips as he flirts with her.

TERESA

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

LESTAT

You think so, cherie? But what if that's not what I want to drink.

Lestat sinks his teeth into her neck as he looks playfully beyond her at Louis who is amazed and amused in spite of himself.

ANTICS ON STAGE

Laughter rocks the tavern.

Lestat slips the dying, dazed Teresa onto Louis's lap. Louis studies her but does not drink. Gently he puts her in the chair beside him, and folds her hands on the table. She appears drunk. He wants to laugh but is ashamed. No one notices. Lestat lays gold coins on the table, and touches Louis's knee.

LESTAT

Let's get out of here!

Delighting in their own mischievousness, they rush out.

EXT. STREET

Louis is suddenly distracted by the moon moving beyond the clouds. Distant MUSIC from a ball room. The breeze.

LESTAT

Come, let me show you a lovely game.

EXT. BALLROOM

Quadroon house of ill fame. Beautiful dark-skinned quadroons, octaroons, mulattresses are dancing with white men as a mulatto or quadroon orchestra plays.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Men and women dance minuet. But even more men and women merely cluster everywhere, talking and laughing and flirting. Drinking wine.

Lestat spies a pretty dark girl, neglected.

LOUIS
(in a whisper)
Have you ever been caught?

LESTAT
Of course not. It's so simple.
You almost feel sorry for them.
Now watch me. This is called the
Little Drink. You take it
whenever you wish.

Music rises and becomes faster as Lestat embraces dark girl, startling her with sudden kiss on the neck, his eyes closing for one minute, and then leaving her dazed before she even knows she's been bitten.

Lestat embraces a red-haired yellow-skinned girl, turning her in a wild embrace, and giving her the same "little bite." Then goes to an elderly quadroon, a chaperone, and flirting with her, takes "the little drink" from her.

Lestat backs up next to Louis. Lestat is dazed. There is a faint sheen of blood on his lips.

LESTAT
Oh, it takes skill, and restraint!
But it's worth it. It's fun.

Louis is suddenly drawn to a victim.

Toinette, a beautiful girl with cold eyes, who has been staring at him all this while. Very pale, very calculating, and very luscious.

Louis is dazed with hunger. Moves towards her, embraces her and leads her into --

ALCOVE

lighted by candles.

Louis kisses her lips and then sinks his teeth in her throat. The swoon takes him into the realm of light and music only.

Suddenly Lestat pulls him away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Toinette lies against a chair, dead.

LESTAT
You need a little practice.

Louis stares at the body.

LESTAT
But never mind. She was a
merciless little schemer. The
town is thick with them.

Lestat leads Louis out into the night.

LOUIS
But how do you know? All I tasted
was... innocence.

LESTAT
From her thoughts. Couldn't you
read her thoughts?

Louis shakes his head.

LESTAT
You can't hear anything they're
thinking?

LOUIS
No. I hear no thoughts from
anyone.

Lestat considers, then shrugs. He throws his arm over
Louis's shoulder and they walk together.

LESTAT
The Dark Gift is different for
each of us. But one thing is
true of everyone. We become more
powerful as we go along. You'll
learn to pick the evil ones.

LOUIS
Yes, I see things in the faces of
men and women...

LESTAT
Oh, I'm not the right hand of God,
mind you. Nor the local constable
or judge. It's just that
evildoers are easier. And they
taste better.

EXT. GIANT OAK TREE BESIDE COLONIAL MANSION

Lestat leads Louis with preternatural ease up high into the tree, then onto the gallery of the mansion. They peer through glass doors into huge library.

LOUIS

You hoped I'd be better all this,
didn't you?

Lestat interested in the library inside.

LESTAT

I didn't know, to tell the truth.
And you're doing very well.

Lestat easily pries open the door and enters. A man dozes by the fire in a chair. Lestat moves all around him soundlessly, and smiles as he takes books: Tristram Shady, Robinson Crusoe, Moll Flanders. He tosses a volume of Byron to Louis, who catches it easily, wary of the sleeping man, who never stirs. They leave, the man still dozes.

INT. POINTE DU LAC - LOUIS'S PARLOR

Lestat sits paging through his new books.

LESTAT

Wonderful new novels from England.
Remember, you can move easily
around them without making a sound
that they can hear. Look, he
never even read any of these
books, he never cut the pages.

Louis follows Lestat out onto the gallery of Pointe Du Lac. They look out over the river.

LOUIS

But what are the rules? What is
it we can not do? What are we,
really?

Lestat looks at the river:

LESTAT

What in the world makes you think
there are any rules for anyone,
Louis? We're vampires, I've told
you. You must find your own way
on the Devil's Road, as I did.

EXT. STREET

Louis and Lestat argue as they hurry past riverfront taverns and lighted colonial houses.

LOUIS

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

Lestat in rage comes to a halt.

LESTAT

Why? Why should I know these things? Look.

He points into the tavern.

LESTAT

Does anybody in there know the answers? Go to the priest. Ask him!

LOUIS

But the vampire who made you. What happened. What did he tell you? There must be some purpose.

LESTAT

(laughs in spite of himself)

Purpose? Louis, what purpose was there to your life last week, or last month, or last year?

Lestat rushes along, impatient, hating this discussion.

LOUIS

I cursed God that he took my wife and my child from me. But I never doubted...

Loses conviction. Louis questions himself silently.

LESTAT

Shall I make up stories for you?

LOUIS

No. But you must have learnt something from the one who made you.

LESTAT

I learnt less than you've learnt from me. I wasn't given a choice, remember?

(CONTINUED)

ENGLISH STAGE

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth engaged in conversation.

LESTAT (V.O.)

You want to know how it happened?
I was an actor. Oh, nothing so
very great. Just the boulevards
in Paris, but if you'd come from
the provinces as I had, they
seemed splendid enough.

INT. BOULEVARD THEATRE (PARIS)

Lestat as a human (far less lustrous) plays Lelio in the Commedia. He bows and introduces himself to the audience. We can not make out his words, only that he is making them laugh. He pretends to be choking on the smoke from the footlamps. Then goes back into character. More laughter.

LESTAT (V.O.)

You might say he picked me for my
yellow hair. Or perhaps because
in my country youth, I'd been a
good hunter. And we must be good
hunters, we vampires. We must like
the hunt, or we can't survive.

CLOSE ON LESTAT

Transfixed on the stage.

HIS POV - MAGNUS

An old male vampire heavily cloaked, with a face almost like a skull, peering from the audience at Lestat.

LOUIS (V.O.)

So it's passed on, one to another,
century after century. And he
left you no secrets except that
fire can destroy you. And so can
the sun.

LESTAT (V.O.)

Jewels, that's what he gave me,
and a coffin such as you'll never
see in this damned wilderness.
And a tower, yes, and clothes.
He left me such fine clothes. We
are the secret, Louis. Maybe this
is all a secret. Maybe God
himself has forgotten we're all
here.

INT. POINT DU LAC - DINING ROOM - ANOTHER NIGHT

Louis XVI chairs, table, sideboard. Crystal glasses gleam on sideboard.

Louis sits at the table watching Lestat as Lestat paces.

LOUIS

What if we are wounded, a stake
driven through the heart, a bullet...

Lestat is vaguely amused.

LESTAT

We heal. You saw this for yourself
the night you aimed your pistol at
me. It may take time but we heal.
Only the destruction of our bodies
brings us to the finish. Crosses,
garlic, all that rubbish has no
power over us, naturally. We can
not turn to mist and pass through
keyholes. We are not magical
creatures, really, merely lucky
little devils, so to speak.

LOUIS

Preternatural.

LESTAT

(kindly)

Good word. Come with me. It's
been weeks since we've hunted
together. Let's go...

LOUIS

How long can I go without feeding?
One night? Two?

LESTAT

(impatient but kind)

You'll have to find that out for
yourself. Never let yourself
become so weak that you can't
feed. That's an endless living
death in itself.

Louis ponders.

LESTAT

Are you trying to tell me you
don't like it? Are you trying to
say that every time the blood
touches your tongue you don't
feel that pleasure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

You know I do. But I didn't see things clearly before. I didn't see them for what they are.

LESTAT

And now you know what life is and you have eternity to enjoy it.

LOUIS

I have eternity to destroy it.

LESTAT

Louis, there's nothing beyond your reach now. Stop grieving for yourself. And for your victims!

Louis does not respond.

LESTAT

Look, you need a little refreshment. Here, let me show you another little trick. Your trouble is you don't experiment enough on your own.

He picks up one of the crystal glasses, holds it to the light of the candelabra and then sets it before Louis. He turns, one eyebrow raised, listening, and then he darts too fast for us to see through the French door, curtains closing behind him.

Louis gasps as Lestat appears before the table, holding a long-tailed gray rat. The rat appears paralyzed, as Lestat tears open its throat with his own teeth, and lets the rat's blood gush into the crystal glass. Lestat begins a low, helpless laugh. Absently he lays the rat to the side on the lace tablecloth.

Louis is impressed in spite of himself. Smiles, shakes his head. Lestat hands the glass to Louis. Louis drinks the blood, and stares at it in surprise.

LESTAT

I know. It gets cold so fast.

LOUIS

We can live from this, the blood of animals?

Lestat shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

I wouldn't call it living. I'd call it surviving. And you may have to do, now and then. You'd better know the trick if ever you find yourself for a month on a ship at sea, unless you mean to slay all the passengers and the crew.

Louis downs all the blood in the glass. His eyes are suddenly bloodshot. He wipes his mouth.

He stares at the body of the rat.

Rat is soft and beautiful to behold. Very delicate little hands and feet; lovely eyes.

LESTAT

It doesn't disgust you, does it?

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

LESTAT

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

LOUIS

... fascination.

LESTAT

Yes. And I'm restless. I don't want to spend another evening here. There's an opera in New Orleans tonight. A real true French opera.

LOUIS

But we can live on animals. We can live without taking human life.

LESTAT

Yes, I suppose we can. But how long do you think you can resist mortals? Give it a try.

LOUIS

I can't take blood from mortals without killing. You know that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

(imploring)

But don't you see, it's the death you want, as surely as the blood. It's the life that flows with it when you drink.

LOUIS

My God. I know. I do see. I know. I know.

LESTAT

(patient but
frightened)

I won't stay here engaging in this sophomoric prattle. You have all of them out waiting for you. Take the evildoers if you must. Mon dieu, are there not hundreds in this miserable little place? And what a paradise they make for us, Louis, with their dancing and drinking till dawn?

LOUIS

Wasn't it that way in Paris? Why did you come here?

Lestat laughs beguilingly as he rises.

LESTAT

In Paris, a vampire has to be clever for many reasons. Here, all one needs is a pair of fangs.

He becomes frustrated at Louis, snatches his cloak and tricorne hat from the chair and turns to go. Louis says nothing.

Lestat, stubborn and conflicted, leaves.

Sound of LESTAT'S SINGING an Aria in Italian as he leaves. Then sound of the HORSE RIDING AWAY.

Yvette, the slave woman enters.

YVETTE

Michi Louis? You don't want any supper?

Louis stares at the glass with its thin residue of blood. He laughs soundlessly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

No, ma cher. I need nothing now.
Is all well at Pointe du Lac
tonight?

Yvette draws closer. Light reveals her beauty.

YVETTE

We worry about you, master. When
do you ride the fields? How long
is it since you've been to the
slave quarters? Have you seen the
new baby born to Charlotte? Why
do you let the overseer whip so
many so often? Always before you
looked after us.

Louis listens, but in spite of himself he is getting
hungry. Yvette looks more and more succulent. Throat
long and slender. Skin gorgeous.

LOUIS

(dazed monotone)

Leave me alone now, Yvette. Go
out.

YVETTE

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

LOUIS' POV

She approaches the table, skin gleaming, but her voice is
no longer audible, only her beating heart. As she places
her hands on the table to lean forward, she sees the dead
rat lying on the tablecloth.

BACK TO SCENE

Louis' hunger crests.

Yvette, staring at the rat and then at Louis, starts to
scream. He upsets the wine glass as he rises and clamps
his hand over her mouth.

The GLASS rolls to the floor and BREAKS.

In horror, he realizes he has accidentally broken her
neck. He stares at her dead eyes, and he is
griefstricken.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

For one moment he is tempted to drink her blood, then horrified by the incestuous and monstrous idea. He cradles her as he would a precious friend, overcome with grief.

LOUIS

Yvette, my poor faithful Yvette.

EXT. SWAMP - NIGHT

Louis watches the body of Yvette sink deep into the muck. He is utterly dejected. He hears SOUNDS, turns, sees slaves at a distance spying on him.

He walks back to:

EXT. SLAVE QUARTERS

A row of brightly lighted little pitched roof bungalows. Not turning his head he walks past the slaves in the darkness of the porches as all greet him softly with a Bonsoir, Michie. He makes no answer. He stands looking at:

MANSION OF POINTE DU LAC

The rich house with all candelabra and chandeliers lighted, all windows open. He stands rapt by the vision. Behind him slaves gather, uneasy, whispering.

Suddenly galvanized, Louis rushes up the stairs, snatches up the candelabra and sets fire to the drapes. He goes from window to window doing it.

SLAVES' POV - MASTER

setting fire to the house.

BACK TO SCENE

They rush up the stairs, with shouts of "Stop him, he's mad."

INT. BEDROOM

Louis stands surrounded by flames, ready to be consumed. The night is full of SHOUTS and SCREAMS and the plantation BELL CLANGING. GLASS BREAKS. Louis turns to see --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lestat stepping through the broken window. Louis squints as he looks beyond at the paling sky.

LESTAT

You fool, what have you done?

LOUIS

It's almost sunrise. You promised me that the sun or the fire could kill me! Now leave me, save yourself.

Lestat pulls Louis' left arm around his shoulder, as if hefting a drunken companion. Carrying Louis, he rushes out on the porch and leaps over the railing to the ground.

He climbs on his horse, lifting Louis before him. Louis covers his eyes as the barest light of morning fills the sky. He slumps forward over the horse's neck.

Slaves rush towards them, but Lestat drives them back effortlessly with several swipes of his riding crop and rides out the road and out the gates. The sky is violet with the coming dawn.

EXT. LARGE GRAVEYARD

With many large crypts. Louis, now unable to uncover his face, is being carried over Lestat's shoulder.

LOUIS'S POV

Passing crypts, light coming in orange flashes. Sound of RUSTED HINGES. Then darkness.

INT. CRYPT

Louis is flung down on the floor of a large crypt. Lestat fits the iron door back into place and secures it. The gleaming burning light is gone.

LOUIS

Where are we?

LESTAT

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

Louis laughs softly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

We belong in hell.

LESTAT

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

Lestat lies down in the shadows beside him.

LESTAT

(defeated)

Never mind, don't answer. Sometimes this is close enough to hell as it is.

INT. INN (NEW ORLEANS)

Lavish little supper chamber with coffered bed, fancy French furniture. Open window to rooftops of colonial city.

Louis is in fresh clothes and sits calmly in a chair. Lestat before the mirror fusses with his lace collar.

LOUIS

Why did you bother to save me? You can make another. Someone better than me.

LESTAT

You're too strong. That's your trouble. You feel too deeply. You see too much.

LOUIS

You spoke of old ones, you said in time they went mad. Is that what will happen to you and to me?

LESTAT

Some do, some don't. There are legends of those who've lived for a millennia. Why can't we live for eternity. We have the chance!

Lestat pauses, perplexed, plunged into thought.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

I'm leaving you. I've disappointed you, Lestat. And there's no reason for me to remain. You have no need of me. You never did.

Lestat looks sad.

LESTAT

(compassionately)

And where are you going? You think you'll find others in the New World? Or will you attempt the voyage to Europe? Suppose the ship sinks, Louis, and you and your coffin are plunged to the bottom of the sea. You won't die, you know. You'll lie there, struggling forever. And you'll have forever to realize all your questions were in vain.

Louis rises and moves to the door.

LOUIS

I'm sorry I've failed you. I told you I wanted it, and I was wrong. I'm going. Where, how -- I don't know the answers. I'll live from the blood of animals, I swear it. I shall never take another human life again. And I'll search... for what I can't say...

Lestat shakes his head, trying to suppress his dismissal of this. He is losing Louis and afraid.

LOUIS

There's nothing more you can teach me, you've said so yourself.

LESTAT

And you think there are others who can teach you things? That you'll find them? You don't understand about the others. They're lone predators, jealous of their territory. They'll see you coming. You'll be a mark.

LOUIS

All of us lost... lone wolves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

Now that is the truth. And all we have is the companionship we can give each other. That's all anyone has, Louis. Go out, walk the city streets, peer through the windows at the couples in their beds.

Lestat takes Louis by the shoulders and tries to get him to listen. He hovers like an angel whispering in Louis' ear.

LESTAT

It's part of our nature to meditate, to seek, to see through ... to understand.

Louis tries to remain resolute. Does not reply.

LESTAT

We are creatures of the earth, my friend. And yes, like a thousand other species we kill so we may live. This world is a savage garden. We're no different from other beasts of prey.

Louis looks at Lestat. Sincerely:

LOUIS

Adieu, Lestat. I'm sorry.

LESTAT

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

LOUIS

I know. Forgive me. It was all an error, a tragic error from the start.

EXT. STREET (NEW ORLEANS) - NIGHT

Deserted narrow muddy streets of small, pitched roof bungalow cottages. Louis walks alone, seeing things in a daze.

He sees a white X marked on an empty house.

A MAN with a lantern lifts it as he passes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN

Don't go that way, monsieur. It's the plague, monsieur. Go back the way you come.

Louis smiles at those words, repeating them softly.

LOUIS

... the way I came.

He walks on. More houses marked with X's. MOANS and CRYING come from the houses. Sometimes only the sound of someone GASPING for BREATH.

A black cat darts past Louis. Crazed with hunger, he stares at it, watches it speed away. He trembles. He walks on.

A CHILD'S CRYING becomes LOUDER and LOUDER. Gradually, we realize it's a child of perhaps six, crying in exhaustion and fear. It is coming from a dark house.

Louis pauses before the house. The child is sobbing.

CLAUDIA (CHILD) (O.S)

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

LOUIS' POV

CLAUDIA, in a ragged little gown tugs at the dead body of her mother, crying softly and wearily.

CLOSE ON the dead mother. Her eyes are being eaten away by ants.

BACK TO SCENE

Louis gasps in horror.

Claudia turns. She is a radiant doll or angel as she stretches out her hands to Louis.

CLAUDIA

Monsieur, please, help us. We have to get to the ship. My papa's waiting for us. Please, monsieur, help me. Wake Mamma, please.

Louis stares past her at the dead mother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Instinctively, he gathers the child to him, protectively, looking back at the spectacle of the mother's face swarming with ants.

Claudia chokes and sobs against his shoulder.

He turns her face upward looking at her, stricken with pity, and then the hunger glazes his eyes. Her crying becomes louder yet ever more distant, and we see only her beauty, her cheek, her throat.

Louis closes his eyes, hand touching her throat, and slowly he bends to kiss it, and then we see his fangs for one instant as he eases them into the flesh.

The CRYING DIES away as Louis goes into the swoon. Gradually another sound replaces it.

LESTAT'S LAUGHTER, GROWING LOUDER AND LOUDER and more distinct.

Suddenly, Louis breaks away, caught redhanded, the child in his arms. He sees Lestat laughing in the doorway, pointing at him, slapping his knee, and laughing again.

LESTAT

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

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

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

LESTAT

Well, let's make a party of it
shall we? The child's still alive,
Louis. Look at her, you've left
some life in her, and some blood
too.

Louis flees into the street.

Lestat runs behind him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Men with cart of corpses pass by, peering into each house.

LESTAT

Come back, Louis. Come back. It's only your vampire nature.

Louis runs. Lestat follows taunting him.

LESTAT

Louis, do you want me to go back for her?

Louis scales a wall and runs from rooftop to rooftop, Lestat following him easily, dancing alongside of him.

LESTAT

Oh, come on, it's not so very shameful! She'd have died of the plague if you hadn't taken her. Oh, Merciful Death, how you do love your precious guilt.

Louis turns on Lestat and attacks him with all his strength. They fight, Louis again and again assaulting bravely, Lestat easily blocking the blows.

Finally Lestat's hand rises.

BLACKNESS.

INT. INN

Window open to the setting sun. Night comes over the city.

A maid enters, puts a lighted candle on the table.

Full darkness outside.

CUT TO:

LESTAT AND LOUIS

seated by the candle. Lestat is talking.

LESTAT

What can I tell you? How can I make you understand?

LOUIS

Talk to me. Where did you come from? How did it happen with you?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LESTAT'S CASTLE IN AUVERGNE (FRANCE 18TH CENTURY)

Snow storm.

LESTAT (V.O.)

We were country lords. Proud,
penniless, the old order who never
went to Paris to wait hand and foot
upon the king. If I didn't hunt, we
starved in our ancestral castle.

INT. GREAT HALL

Three tradesmen from the village stand with platters of
hot food before --

Lestat, a crudely dressed Robin Hood style lord, dappled
with snow, walks in with two slain wild rabbits over his
shoulder. Stops, sees the laden table, and acknowledges
the tradesmen with a bow.

LESTAT (V.O.)

(bitterly)

Unless the villagers fed us,
bringing their gifts of roast pig
and wine, as if they were tributes
and not charity to keep us alive.

CLOSE ON GABRIELLE

at nearby hearth in much mended and faded finery. Pale,
obviously ill.

Lestat approaches her, lays down the game, and then
kisses her on the mouth.

Lestat and GABRIELLE gesture for the tradesmen to place
the food on the table, and we see --

LESTAT'S FATHER

blind, dignified, seated at the table, making a grandiose
gesture of acceptance as the villagers back away. Two
brothers also watch stiffly and uncomfortably, giving the
villagers nods of thanks.

Lestat leaves with the villagers, talking together,
escorting them to the doors. They talk.

LESTAT (V.O.)

And when a pack of wolves began
terrifying the villagers, it was
I who had to hunt and kill them.
I was the only one left who could
sit a horse, the only Lord who
could hunt our ancestral lands.

CLOSE ON BLIND FATHER

groping for cup of wine. Two brothers begin to dine as well.

EXT. SNOW-COVERED VALLEY

Lestat, in crude garments, with crude weapons -- flail, old broad sword, musket in its belt, flintlock rifle -- rides his mare through the deep snow. Behind him plod two giant mastiffs with spiked collars.

LESTAT

(singing)

Come out, brother wolf. I'm
waiting. I'm waiting for you all.

Whistles as he rides on, enjoying wind and blue sky.

Two wolves appear, rushing from the dark woods towards him.

Lestat is galvanized, takes aim with FLINTLOCK RIFLE and brings one down as the other charges and kills one dog.

Lestat has no time to reload. He aims the MUSKET, wounds the wolf, but the dog is dead. Then to his horror --

Three more wolves suddenly come running from far ahead.

LESTAT (V.O.)

It was an ambush. They are such
clever animals. And I should have
known. I'd hunted them before.

Lestat fights at the wolves with his sword, killing a third, as the other one attacks and kills his other dog. The wounded wolf and the last of the five come back, charging him, striking his horse, and wounding the horse's hind quarters so that it falls.

Lestat slips out of the saddle. He grabs the flail from his belt. He strikes the wounded wolf and kills it. The last wolf, very canny, merely watches him.

Lestat looks at the nearby forest. It's too far. The branches are too high. Nevertheless he backs towards it, staring down the wolf who begins to pace.

Lestat turns and starts to run. The wolf chases.

Lestat pivots and rams the sword right through the wolf's throat. In exhaustion he collapses, arm over the warm body of the wolf, staring back at...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His HORSE emitting terrible WHINNIES as it tries to stand up but cannot.

LESTAT (V.O.)

How did I slain the entire pack?
Another man might have lost his
life then. It seemed the greatest
victory, but afterwards it came
to mean so much more.

Lestat reloads his MUSKET and executes his horse.
Bitter. Heartbroken.

INT. GREAT HALL

with table and fire.

Lestat and Gabrielle greet THREE VILLAGERS. Villagers
present Lestat with beautiful red velvet cloak lined with
wolf fur.

VILLAGER #1

From the wolves, my lord, those
you slew with your own hand.

LESTAT

Thank you, Antoine, thank you all.

Lestat turns, sees four villagers filling the table with
meat and drink.

As villagers leave, Lestat slumps into a huge medieval
style chair by the fire.

Gabrielle comes to him. He rises, but she bids him to
stay seated and she sits on the broad arm of the chair.
He is alarmed at her pale appearance. He goes to kiss
her. She pushes him away.

GABRIELLE

Listen to me, my youngest and my
dearest. Listen well. I know
why you don't leave here...

LESTAT

(resigned)

I'd never leave you, Mother.
Don't talk of such a thing.

She takes gold from her pockets. Lestat is shocked at
the sight of so many real gold coins.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABRIELLE

This is all I have left of my family's money. You're to take it, do you hear me? You're to go to Paris and make your fortune.

Lestat tries to protest.

GABRIELLE

(forcefully)

Lestat, I'm dying. I can't live through another winter. Now you must do this for me. Go to Paris so that I know you are happy and away from here as my eyes close.

Again, Lestat tries to protest. Gabrielle looks almost cruel.

GABRIELLE

Give me this gift, my son. For my sake, leave tonight.

LESTAT (V.O.)

I could hardly bear to leave her. But I couldn't deny her either. That she knew.

Gabrielle kisses him, slightly intimate for mother and son, but very full of love.

RETURN TO INN

Lestat talking to Louis who is rapt.

LESTAT

It was the boulevard theatres I went to. I loved them. No decent lord would have ever acted upon a stage but what did that matter to me? Thanks to my mother I was free.

INT. RENAUD'S THEATRE

Lestat in the red cloak with its wolf lining, cavorts before the audience as the younger lover in the play. He winks as he chases the beautiful heroine. A buffoonish old man with a fake nose suddenly blusters between them, grabbing the heroine, who takes one look at him and flees into Lestat's arms.

Roars of laughter from the audience.

CLOSE ON LESTAT'S FACE

as he sees in the audience, third row:

MAGNUS

A skull-like visage with dark, gleaming eyes, watching him from beneath a dark hood of black velvet.

LESTAT

in a trance senses danger.

SOUNDS OF AUDIENCE GROW FAINT.

CLOSE ON MAGNUS

MAGNUS (V.O.)
Wolf killer.

SOUNDS OF THEATRE GROW FAINTER. Magnus smiles.

LESTAT

breaks into a sweat.

LOUIS (V.O.)
He could read minds as you could.

LESTAT (V.O.)
Oh, yes!

INT. ATTIC ROOM (PARIS) - NIGHT

Lestat and two actresses and actors sleep on pallets on the floor. Snow falls outside. Lestat wakes, shivering, hearing.

MAGNUS (V.O.)
Wolf killer.

The WINDOW SHATTERS. Lestat is dragged by a hooded figure out of the bed, out of the window and up into the swirling snow. He fights like mad, even biting at the white hand that holds him. We hear Magnus's LAUGHTER. The HOWLING STORM.

INT. TOWER ROOM - FUNERAL PYRE

Lestat newly made a vampire with blood on his lips watches in terror as Magnus, leaping about like a spider monkey, sets fire to the pyre and then ascends.

LOUIS (V.O.)

He told you nothing.

LESTAT (V.O.)

Only where I might find my coffin, and how I must find it. And that he'd left me the tower and all his wealth.

LOUIS (V.O.)

He thought you were strong.

Lestat wanders through the dungeon of the tower. Comes to a cell where he sees something which horrifies him.

LESTAT (V.O.)

And I was strong. I'd fought him through every step of it. That must have been why he had let me live. Because there had been others, lots of others whom he had chosen and then allowed to die.

Lestat grabs the bars of the cell, staring at what's inside.

CLOSE ON GREAT HEAP OF BODIES OF YOUNG BLOND-HAIRED MEN

Some long dead, some recently dead. All resemble Lestat. All have his height, coloring, even similar garments. And the most recent corpse, swarming with flies, has blue eyes!

Lestat backs up, doubled over with nausea and vomits a stream of blood onto the stones. Stunned, he stares at the blood and instinctively, arches his back and reaches down and laps it back up with his tongue.

Realizing what he is doing, he rises, slamming back into the bars, against the corpses and then he lets out a roar. It is like the roar we have already heard from Louis in the swamp. It echoes throughout the dungeon and the tower.

EXT. BOULEVARDS (PARIS)

Lestat, a vampire, beautifully dressed in brocade and lace, walks through the crowds of jugglers, vendors, ladies of the street, city strollers and stops at Renaud's Theatre. He watches from a distance, as the crowds go in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT (V.O.)

Of course I learned how to hunt instinctively. That was nothing. But as for the rest, I was as confused as you ever were. I didn't dare return to my mortal companions. To Gabrielle, my mother. I sent vague letters describing my turn of fortune, and all the money she could possibly desire. I thought I'd never lay eyes upon her again.

Lestat turns away from the theatre and goes through the crowd.

LESTAT (V.O.)

All around me, I could hear the thoughts of mortals. I always have been able to hear them. It's like a chorus of whispers. And in the midst of that chorus, I was alone. Until one night, I heard the voice of a different soul, a monster like myself.

EXT. PLACE DE GREVE

Lestat stops, listening, wary. A shadowy shape rushes away from the facade of Notre Dame.

LESTAT (V.O.)

Soon, I heard them often. They were following me. I could feel their hatred, and when I glimpsed them, I saw ragged, filthy little goblins. Why, they reeked of the dirt of the grave!

EXT. DOORS OF NOTRE DAME (PARIS)

Lestat rushes toward them as a little band of ragged vampires in rags hurries silently after him. He sees them up on the roofs. He rushes into the:

CHURCH

He peers back out at them with curiosity and contempt. Three little vampires hang out in the shadows trying to keep an eye on him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A man passes before the cathedral with a lantern and the three vampires run cowering from the light.

LESTAT (V.O.)

It was very easy to elude them. All I had to do was seek shelter of a church. They were afraid to go into them! They ran from crosses. They ran from the light.

RETURN TO:

INN (NEW ORLEANS)

Louis listens rapt, as Lestat talks, walking back and forth.

LESTAT

I soon realized they lived in the cemetery of Les Innocents. It's long gone, that place. But in those days it was in the heart of Paris.

EXT. LES INNOCENTS CEMETERY

Gigantic place full of many crypts. Three vampires dart through the darkness and disappear through a crypt door.

LESTAT (V.O.)

They inhabited the catacombs beneath the cemetery. And they believed the cross could hurt them, that holy water would burn them, they believed it, do you understand?

LOUIS (V.O.)

Yes, I can understand it.

RETURN TO:

INN (NEW ORLEANS)

Lestat talking to Louis.

LESTAT

All that superstition. And I, the orphan was breaking all their rules, because I didn't know there were any rules at all.

RETURN TO:

INT. BALLROOM TUIELIERES (PARIS)

Lestat in dim light dances with a mortal woman.

LESTAT (V.O.)

What was it they later accused me of? Ah, yes, walking in the places of light. I didn't serve the devil properly as they saw it. I tempted the fiend to drag me down into hell for my sins. And of course, there was another thing. I'd made a companion soon after. And broken more of their rules when I'd done that.

EXT. ILE ST. LOUIS

Lestat on horseback rides over bridge behind Notre Dame and stops before a mansion, anxious, looking up at a lighted window.

LOUIS (V.O.)

A companion! Where is this being now?

RETURN TO:

INN

Lestat smiling sadly at Louis. Louis studies him, curious yet patient.

LESTAT

If only I knew.

RETURN TO:

ILE ST. LOUIS

Lestat dismounts, enters:

INT. MANSION

He rushes past attendants up stairs.

LESTAT (V.O.)

As I told you, my mother was dying when I left her. That journey to Paris was the hardest thing I'd ever done.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT (CONT'D)

Yet with the wealth I showered upon her -- the wealth Magnus had given me -- she accomplished the one thing I never expected. She made the journey to Paris to see her son for the last time.

Lestat stops before a bedroom door.

A NURSE emerges gesturing for him to be quiet.

NURSE

Madame is very ill. Yet she is dressed and waiting to see you. All day we've waited for you! Do you think death waits on every spoilt young lord?

Lestat is anguished. Slowly he goes into the room. He stands in the shadows. In the light of a candle, we see:

Gabrielle, his mother, pale and very sick obviously, yet beautifully dressed and seated in a gilded armchair by the big heavily-draped bed. She is almost too weak to rise.

GABRIELLE

Lestat, oh, my darling... Come into the light where I can see you.

Lestat remains in the shadows.

LESTAT

Put out the candle, Mother. I was a pauper when last you saw me. I might dazzle you now.

GABRIELLE

So were we all, my darling, before your good fortune. It is you I came to see. Not your fine clothes.

LESTAT

Put out the candle, Mother.

She pinches out the candle. Only light comes through high window.

GABRIELLE

Please, come to me. Let me take you in my arms.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lestat draws nearer, trancelike.

LESTAT (V.O.)

How could I tell her? How could I explain I wasn't her son anymore, that this is what I'd become? You know what you see with your vampire eyes. Imagine the sight of her to me with my new vision. She was dying. She could not have lived another week, perhaps not another night. And her thoughts, I could hear them. She was afraid of dying! That's why she'd come to me. She'd thought it would be easier with me there!

Lestat in anguish draws nearer. Gabrielle struggles to her feet, eyes full of tears and reaches out. As she touches him, she realizes he's not human anymore. She falls back, losing her balance, grabbing for the bedpost. Lestat stares at her sadly.

LESTAT (V.O.)

Countless mortals I'd deceived in the ballrooms and the theatres, in the boulevards and the cafes. But I could not deceive her. She knew the moment that she touched my skin. What could I do but explain to her silently, making her see it in images, that I hadn't chosen it, that it had been done to me, against my will.

CASCADE OF IMAGES

- A) Magnus
- B) The Towers
- C) Jewels
- D) Lestat drinking blood from a mortal in an alleyway.

BACK TO SCENE

Gabrielle moves trancelike toward Lestat. Though his lips don't move, we hear his whisper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

I hide nothing from you, not my ignorance, not my fear, not the simple terror that if I try I might fail. I do not even know that it is mine to give more than once, or what is the price of giving it, but I will risk this for you, and we will discover it together.

GABRIELLE

Take me. Bring me with you! Do it!

Gabrielle opens her arms just as she is about to fall from weakness. Lestat enfolds her in his arms, lovingly, sinks his teeth into her throat and enters a swoon. They embrace tightly. As she weakens he wakes her and slashing his own throat with his fingernail puts her lips to it and she begins to suck his blood. Again, he closes his lips on her wound. They make a cycle, each drawing blood from the other. Sound of HEARTBEAT. Sound of DRUM.

Gabrielle steps back, wiping the blood from her lips, transformed.

EXT. ROOFTOPS

Gabrielle and Lestat hurry over the roofs together. They drop down on the top of a passing coach, laughing, holding tight to each other.

EXT. HOTEL PARTICULEIR (PARIS) - NIGHT

Gabrielle is dressed as a man now, standing over a corpse from which she took the clothes. She ties her hair in a long pigtail with the dead man's ribbon and taking Lestat by the arm they walk off together.

GABRIELLE

Now, don't look so heartbroken. There's no reason for me to wear skirts any longer.

Lestat reaches for her long hair.

LESTAT

Just... don't cut your hair, Mother. Do that for me, don't cut your hair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABRIELLE

Gabrielle now, Lestat. Let go of that word, Mother. Let it go with the mortal coil. And if the hair means so much to you, very well.

Gabrielle kisses him. They walk off together, arm in arm.

BACK TO:

INN (NEW ORLEANS) - LESTAT

He smiles sadly at the amazed Louis.

LESTAT

Yes, my mother. I am such a devil. If you were I, would you have let her die?

LOUIS

I don't know. But she was the strong companion you needed, that much is plain.

LESTAT

You think so? But how this angered the ragged coven beneath Les Innocents! I had broken the rule of all rules. Being a bastard was one thing. Making another of one's own mother, why, you'd think I'd trampled on the Sacred Host itself.

INT. LES INNOCENTS

The ragged coven of twelve vampires surround Lestat and Gabrielle. Gabrielle is in her male garb with her hair in a braid. The vampires hold torches with which they taunt the pair. Gabrielle clings to Lestat but she is as grimly angry as he is.

ARMAND, a boy with an angel's face and auburn curling hair appears. He points a denouncing finger at Lestat.

LESTAT

What devil do you serve? Where is he? Who says that you cannot go into the cathedral of Notre Dame, if you want to? That you must live here in filth among the old bones!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARMAND

(gently, sadly)

Blasphemer. We are the devil's children.

LESTAT

You're a pack of fools.

Suddenly he remembers something. He drags a jeweled rosary out of his pockets. The vampires gasp and back away.

GABRIELLE

Look, he took it from one of his victims. He's stolen a hundred. The cross has no power.

She snatches the rosary from Lestat and dangles the cross in the light of the torches.

GABRIELLE

These are but superstitions. You are as deluded as mortals. More deluded. Who in the Paris above you believes in God as you believe?

CLOSE ON ARMAND'S STRICKEN FACE

as the argument continues. Armand is being mentally and spiritually destroyed.

LESTAT (V.O.)

Don't you see? I was the first one among them to discover that these old curses didn't matter. A bunch of monks and nuns, that's what they were, Satan's mendicants. And it was all nonsense.

LOUIS (V.O.)

But had they all believed it? Every one?

LESTAT (V.O.)

No. Their leader, Armand. The Botticelli angel with the dark red hair. Oh, how deceptive was that innocent face! He had been taught it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And he had believed in it, which was far worse than believing it. That's why he had always ordered the destruction of any heretic or rogue outside the coven.

Armand steps forward, obviously issuing judgment. Gabrielle draws close to Lestat as the torches ring them.

Lestat in desperation looks at ELENI, a ragged, half-naked vampire woman who comes at him with a torch.

LESTAT

And you, ma cherie, what has the devil done for you of late, that you should serve him so devotedly? Ah, but you'd look so pretty if only you'd let me fit you in a proper dress.

Eleni is startled, lowers the torch. Others cry

"Burn them."

Lestat turns to a tall boy of twenty or so -- Laurent.

LESTAT

And you? How many years have you endured the smell of death in your nostrils? Wouldn't you like to walk with me for an hour along the boulevard? Perhaps sit for a while among mortals in a warm cafe?

Lestat turns this way and that. The vampires are losing their nerve. They turn to Armand.

LESTAT

Why, some of you are cold! We need never be cold. Why have you no hearth here?

Armand does nothing. He appears brokenhearted, sad. As we CLOSE ON him, he turns his back slowly on the proceedings. Eleni throws aside the torch.

ELENI

You can take me into the cathedral?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

Yes, once you're bathed and properly attired. I could take you to Versailles.

Whispers, murmurs from the confused vampires.

GABRIELLE

Come with us, all of you. We'll show you. The lights of the night have no power. By day, we must sleep in the dark of course, but once the sun sets, we are free to hunt and do as we please.

The vampires degenerate into loud quarreling.

Suddenly Lestat seizes the torch from Laurent and Gabrielle snatches up the torch that Eleni has let drop to the dirt floor.

Lestat and Gabrielle flee, brandishing the torches. They rush up --

INT. WINDING STAIRS

strewn with skulls and bones, with bodies in niches along the walls, until they reach --

CEMETERY - HUGE CRYPT

out of which they run, throwing aside the torches, jumping to the top of the wall, and dashing away.

RETURN TO:

INT. INN (NEW ORLEANS) - LESTAT

He looks dejected.

LESTAT

They soon scattered. The coven was destroyed. Armand, the devil with the angel's face, he destroyed most of them because they could not survive without him, and he could no longer lead.

INT. LIBRARY (PARIS) - CLOSE ON ARMAND

dressed now as a French gentleman, standing in a lavish library in Paris. He is addressing Lestat who stands by the fireplace, equally well-dressed.

ARMAND

(gently)

You were our ruin. You drove us out of Eden with your burning sword.

LESTAT

You were in purgatory. What do you want of me! All I did was tell you the truth!

ARMAND

And what was that? That there is no truth to be known? Our beliefs were our strength, our survival. They were our citadel against time.

LESTAT

Lies? Lies can't be the strength of anyone. We are monsters. So are mortals. If we cannot face the truth we are lost.

ARMAND

Stop speaking of the truth as though it were something. It is nothing.

LESTAT

Oh no, you're wrong. The truth is in the flesh, in the beauty we see, in the blood we drink. It's in the mystery of the rainfall, and the clouded sky, the flight of a lone bird over the sea.

He pauses, entranced for a moment with the beauty of Armand himself. He reaches out, touches Armand's cheek.

LESTAT

How many centuries lie behind this radiant face?

He pulls Armand to the window and points down into the crowded Paris street. A mob is surging by.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

Do you hear them, they're screaming for the death of King Louis and his Queen, Marie Antoinette.

ARMAND

What do I care what they want?

LESTAT

The old order has fallen for them. It's fallen for you as well. Make a new order as they must make it.

ARMAND

Ah, but you know so little, fledgling. With your jewels, and your velvet, and your shining sword. You think it will be easy to see everything you love disintegrate and crumble away?

LESTAT

The blood, the warmth, the love... that is what will keep me immortal.

ARMAND

Gabrielle. Your companion. She gives you what you require. That is why you say all these things. But will she remain with you always? You cannot read her thoughts, can you? Though you can read mine?

Lestat looks afraid.

ARMAND

But you could before you took her in that lovely bedroom on the Ile St. Louis, is that not so? You could know her soul as I know yours now.

Lestat refuses to answer Armand, but we hear:

LESTAT (V.O.)

He was right. Gabrielle's mind had been closed to me from the moment my blood had filled her veins. As closed as your mind is to me now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARMAND

It's always so with master and fledgling. You can hear other children of darkness, you can commune with mortals. But we master and fledgling are divided. We must speak to and reach out for each other. And with no vows to bind her, she will tire of you, your mother. She tires of you already. She has never needed anyone, your mother. She is harder than you!

LESTAT

Stop!

ARMAND

Oh, you'll make others. You'll seek for better, more genial companions. But it will always be the same. They'll turn on you. They'll leave you. They may even hate you for making them. Our service to Satan has held us together. You have nothing, and you will go into the fire some night as the old ones have always done.

LESTAT

Never.

ECHO. Never. Never...

Armand looks sadly after Lestat and then sadly at all the books on the shelves. He stands back and with the power of his mind makes the books suddenly fall in heaps all over. They cascade to the floor from all the surrounding walls.

Lestat is afraid of this show of telepathic power, but angry that he is afraid.

Armand smiles sadly.

ARMAND

Patience. All these little skills come... if you last long enough!

LESTAT

Get out of here. Get away from me. With your dark prophecies and maledictions.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT (CONT'D)

To keep those fools in slavery as you did. It was unspeakable.

Armand gives one last wan smile. A vision of beauty. He seems to vanish. Lestat searches the empty space anxiously.

Gabrielle becomes visible, in fancy male dress, hair braided down her back. She is merely watching. She and Lestat exchange glances.

LESTAT

He's right, isn't he? You dream of being free of me already. You've had no need of me since our enemies were destroyed.

Gabrielle opens her arms to him.

GABRIELLE

(kissing his cheek)

To love and to need -- these are different things. And what does it matter if some night we decide to part for a little while?

Lestat backs up, smiling, with deliberate reassurance:

GABRIELLE

It's too soon now to speak of it, anyway. Let's go out into the crowd.

They walk down the corridor together:

GABRIELLE

Let me tell of my most recent discovery. Last night I abandoned the coffin. I slept in the earth itself.

LESTAT

But how?

GABRIELLE

I dug deep beneath the ground, and when the sun set I rose as a swimmer rising to the surface of the sea.

Lestat is fascinated.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

So the coffin has no magic power.
It is pure darkness which we
require.

GABRIELLE

We should leave Paris. I'm tired
of it already. Tired of all these
mortals. I long for exotic places
which I have never seen.

They go out into Paris streets.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. INN (NEW ORLEANS)

Lestat sits at the table staring away from Louis.

Silence. Then...

LESTAT

I could have told you Armand's
lies. That we were the children
of darkness, that we travel the
Devil's Road. That Satan is our
master. I could have used a
pinch of stolen incense when I
made you. And Latin mumbo jumbo.
Instead I made up a little test
for you, that you kill that tavern
maid. And then I told you... what
I've seen for myself.

Lestat looks searchingly at Louis.

LOUIS

(compassionately)
But Gabrielle. Where is she?
Surely she didn't leave you. Not
in hatred and coldness as Armand.

Louis shakes his head, disapproving.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SNOW-COVERED MOUNTAIN SIDE - FOREST

Lestat and Gabrielle dressed in fur garments walk, arm
in arm. Then they stop and part and Gabrielle moves on
alone...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT (V.O.)

Where is she, tonight? I can not imagine. What continent, what nation, what wilderness does she roam? She was always the lone one. That was the argument. We never hated each other. We love each other even now. It's only that she sought the wilderness -- the forests and the mountains. And I could scarcely bear it. I need the cities, the lights, the mortals around me, the things which men and women have built.

INT. INN (NEW ORLEANS)

LOUIS

And a companion... at least one of our kind.

Lestat nods, admitting it defiantly.

LESTAT

Yes -- not to be the only one among all the others, not to know... love.

LOUIS

And when she left you, you came to the New World.

Lestat reflects; decides not to answer directly.

LESTAT

(impishly)

Well, I couldn't stay in Paris. Armand's power was incalculable. And there were too many others left in Paris. I loathe them, really. And you would too.

LOUIS

What do they do now?

LESTAT

What we do. Wander the savage garden in pairs or little families. Same thing mortals do, really. The world's enough to drive mortals mad if they think about it. You ought to know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT
I picked you carefully and deliberately, Louis. And I've always found it boring... to be alone.

LOUIS
(nodding)
Yes, that I understand as well.

LESTAT
Have patience with your weaknesses. All our powers increase with age. When the old ones give you their blood, which they can when they choose, they give you greater strength.

LOUIS
Have you drunk the blood of old ones? Have you...? Did you? Did Armand...

Lestat interrupts.

LESTAT
Don't let's talk of Armand. It gives me a mortal headache to think of Armand. Besides, reading minds -- it's not such a blessing as you might think. I don't like knowing when other vampires despise me, or when mortals find me ugly or don't even notice me at all!

LOUIS
As if that ever happens to you!

Lestat preens at the compliment, and shrugs. Suddenly he stands up.

LESTAT
Come, not only do I hear the mortals about me, I breathe their scent. I hunger for them. We'll hunt together. I won't let you hate me so soon. I won't let Armand be proved right, do you hear me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

I want him to be wrong. For your sake. But I can't bear this, Lestat. And you know it now. Choose another, and let me go.

Lestat smiles seductively.

LESTAT

But Louis, you haven't tried!

EXT. DARK STREET

with lights and NOISE of the CITY in the b.g.

Lestat and Louis walk arm in arm. Partygoers pass them. A coach rushes by.

LESTAT

(tenderly)

Pain is terrible for you. You feel it like no other creature because you are a vampire. You don't want it to go on.

LOUIS

No...

LESTAT

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

LOUIS

Wed to her, and weightless as if in a dance.

LESTAT

That and more.

Lestat looks about, gets his bearing, is seized by an idea. He takes Louis's hand.

He leads Louis as if searching for some specific place.

LESTAT

Evil is a point of view. Armand knew it. You know it. Gabrielle, my beloved mother never forgot it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT (CONT'D)

And what we have before us are the rich feasts that conscience can never appreciate and mortals can never know without regret!

Louis almost winces in pain at the accuracy of it. Lestat quickens the pace as they come to --

LIGHTED BUILDINGS

Lestat speaks while searching each with his gaze.

LESTAT

God kills, and so shall we. For no creatures under God are as we are, none so like him as ourselves...

LOUIS

Yes, merciless and greedy and cruel. That I do believe.

Louis looks at the stars. He is soothed by the breeze.

LESTAT

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

Louis is baffled. He follows as Lestat enters --

LONG COLONIAL HOSPICE OR SHELTER

with rows of wooden beds. Children moan and cry beneath the covers. One nurse and one doctor attend, each with candle in hand.

Lestat peers into the shadows.

LESTAT

She's there, your wounded one!

LOUIS

What are you saying? What is this place? These are foundlings, starving children...

Intrigued and seduced, he watches as Lestat moves fast down the ward, and points to Claudia, pale and unconscious on the bed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis recognizes her.

The doctor approaches Lestat. The doctor wraps the sleeping child up in her little white blanket, as Lestat takes money from his pockets and flings it on the bed. Many gold coins.

LOUIS

(whispers)

Lestat, what are you doing?

Lestat is murmuring politely to the doctor, who is bowing. Lestat turns and hurries silently past Louis, with Claudia asleep on his shoulder. Louis hurries after him into the night.

LOUIS

Lestat!

EXT. DARK STREET

We see only dim figures and the white blanket as if it were flying through the dark like magic.

INT. INN - SUPPER ROOM

Bedroom as before. Candle on the table.

Lestat lays Claudia gently on the coverlet of the bed. Louis draws near, looking down at her, stricken by her beauty and her fragility.

LESTAT

(gently)

You haven't fed yet at all tonight.
And last night you took so little.

LOUIS

No. Don't demand this of me.
Don't make me do this. It's too
like your old Paris coven. No
rituals between us.

But he cannot take his eyes off Claudia who tosses in half sleep.

LESTAT

See how plump and sweet she is,
still. Even death can't take her
freshness. The will to live in
her was so strong. Death might
make a sculpture of her tiny lips
and rounded hands, but he cannot
make her fade!

CLOSE ON LOUIS

becoming desperate with hunger and anguish.

Lestat whispers in his ear, compassionately.

LESTAT

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

LOUIS

I didn't want to kill her.

But he is overcome with the memory of the ecstasy.

HIS POV - CLOSE ON CLAUDIA

Claudia is lifted towards him, slipped into his arms.

LOUIS (O.S.)

Poor cherie, no chance...

LESTAT (O.S.)

No chance at all.

BACK TO SCENE

Louis closes his eyes as he caresses her, holding her cheek against his own and kissing her forehead, very paternal. And then he opens his eyes and looks at her neck, and sees the traces of the wound of last night and he becomes a ravenous vampire, and slowly, gently sinks his teeth once more, careful not to hurt her.

LESTAT

(whisper)

Just a little tear. It's just a
little throat.

Louis moans as he sinks into the swoon. HEARTBEAT. DRUMS. The ECHO of Claudia's crying from the night before. His hand cradles her head tenderly. He is like a father kissing a child.

LOUIS

So strong.

LESTAT

(whispers)

Is she?

The HEARTBEAT and DRUM are getting SLOWER and SLOWER.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

CLAUDIA

More.

LESTAT

Yes, cherie, of course you want more. And I'll show you how to get it. Louis, the bell rope. Pull it.

(to Claudia)

You drink from mortals, my beauty, but from me? Never again.

LOUIS

(whispers)

Burn in hell!

Impatient, and still suffering, Lestat reaches for the bell rope himself.

LESTAT

Oh, come now, the child's hungry.

CLOSE ON CLAUDIA

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

BACK TO SCENE

Louis cannot stop looking at her. He does not notice --
As the MAID enters.

MAID

Ah, quelle belle enfant!

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

LESTAT

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

Claudia lunges for the throbbing vein in the neck, very serious, gnawing, growling slightly, then locking on the flowing blood.

The Maid is transfixed.

CLOSE ON LOUIS

As we see his anguish, we hear Lestat's voice.

LESTAT (O.S.)

That's enough, cherie. Stop before the heart stops. It's best in the beginning, lest the death take you down with it. Ah, yes, that's it. My child. My beloved child.

LESTAT AND CLAUDIA

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

CLAUDIA

Where is Mamma?

ANOTHER ANGLE

The words ECHO in Louis's head as he puts his hands to his ears.

LESTAT

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

Lestat and Louis exchange glances. Claudia looks at each of them.

LESTAT

This is Louis, and I'm Lestat.

Lestat takes out his comb and begins to comb her hair. At once, it curls resiliently. He smiles with delight and kisses her cheek.

LESTAT

Your mamma's left you with us. She wants you to be happy. She knows we can make you happy.

LOUIS

(whisper)

You are the Devil! You are the instrument of Satan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

(shhh)

Do you want to frighten our little daughter? What's the matter with you?

CLAUDIA

I'm not your daughter.

LESTAT

Yes you are, dearest. You are my daughter and Louis's daughter.

Louis kneels before her as the Maid did. He is struck with compassion and fascination. It is done and she is irresistible. He cannot help but reach for her, and hold her gently as if she were a doll that might break.

Claudia smiles at him.

CLAUDIA

Lou... eee...

Louis is conflicted. He cannot leave her. He touches her cheek, her hair. Same as his. Vampire skin and hair. He draws in his breath, shocked at her beauty, and then he clasps her head again, tenderly kisses her forehead. His body relaxes as he embraces her, takes her to himself as a father might a daughter, his eyes closed.

LOUIS

(whispers to Lestat)

You devil, you monster.

Lestat is sort of amazed. He stares at Claudia as though fascinated by what's happened, and then:

LESTAT

Yes, Claudia dearest, you are our little daughter. Now whom should you sleep with? Darkness and safety are so important. Perhaps you should sleep with Louis. After all, when I'm tired I'm not always... so kind.

DISSOLVE TO:

ROOM (SAN FRANCISCO) - PRESENT

Malloy looking at Louis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALLOY

He did it to make you stay with him! He made a vampire of a child!

LOUIS

Perhaps. The answer to why isn't so simple. Lestat was always the man of action. And that night he'd bared his soul to me. He'd showed me his own weakness, his own failure.

MALLOY

That Gabrielle had left him. That Armand had been right.

LOUIS

Maybe he didn't know himself why he'd done it.

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

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

INT. FLAT

Striped wallpaper gives way to flowers in the bedrooms. And though huge four posters fill three of these rooms, we also see large chests, as big as coffins, standing against the walls. Everywhere there are candles, and pretty Louis XVI furniture.

There are oil lamps about.

As we MOVE INTO:

DIMLY LIGHTED PARLOR

we see Claudia resplendent in white lace standing on a petit point chair, as a DRESSMAKER hems her garment with pins.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Life was very different with Mademoiselle Claudia, as you can imagine. And he loved her. Oh, he loved her as much as I loved her and that was more than words can express.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lestat stands in the French window, open to the porch, watching as Louis sits at the desk, his hand idly on an open book.

DRESSMAKER

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

Claudia laughs, languidly, beautifully. Laughter seems to echo off every surface. Lestat smiles at Claudia and winks.

INT. ST. LOUIS HOTEL (NEW ORLEANS) - LOBBY - EARLY EVENING

Slave auction going on under the rotunda. Spectators everywhere.

Lestat and Claudia (mentally six years old) sit at small table in the open bar.

Lestat points to a man passing.

LESTAT

All yours to choose from. Always pick carefully. Always pick one you want to hold in your arms. One you want to know for a precious moment.

Claudia nods.

CLAUDIA

That one!

She points to a well-dressed WOMAN WITH a BABY in her arms who has just come down the stairs. A black slave woman follows.

Lestat is obviously a little distressed. But he doesn't want to question her.

He follows Claudia as she slips after the Woman out into...

EXT. DARK STREET

WOMAN WITH BABY

Hush, my little one. The cathedral is only steps away. Here, take her, Annette. I won't be long.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Woman gives the baby to the slave woman who rocks it in her arms as the Woman enters the cathedral.

INT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL

The Woman approaches the shrine of the Virgin and kneels and quickly makes the sign of the cross. She looks up startled to see...

CLAUDIA

radiant, still as a statue, beside the altar.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The Woman is entranced as Claudia draws nearer. Others move quietly about the church.

WOMAN

What is it, little one? Are you
lost? Come here to me, darling.

Claudia winds her arms around the Woman's neck, looks deep into her eyes. Then awkwardly, quickly, less gracefully than Lestat or Louis, she sinks her teeth. The Woman freezes.

WOMAN'S DAZED POV

as she is dying: Lestat beside the altar watching, amazed at Claudia's determination and fearlessness. Yet a little put off.

EXT. CROWDED STREET CAFE (JACKSON SQUARE)

Lestat and Claudia talk together.

LESTAT

I like the evil ones, I told you.
I like the taste. I like the rum
in their blood. It gets me tipsy.

Claudia laughs scornfully.

CLAUDIA

And I like the innocent and the
young. Come now, I dare you.
Take that little orphan there,
wandering outside. Look at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FOCUS ON ragged boy selling matches in the street.

LESTAT
You're a little fiend, you know
it?

CLAUDIA
And you love it.

LESTAT
I want a sodden drunk tonight.
Come, I'll show you. We'll find
someone who's had at least a fifth
of the best wine.

They leave together.

CLAUDIA
You really can taste it.

LESTAT
Cherie, I'll have to carry you
home.

INT. FLAT (FURNISHINGS - 1815)

Louis and Claudia sit together on the French couch as
Louis reads to Claudia from Moll Flanders. He stops,
tired and sits back.

CLAUDIA
Here, Louis, let me read to you
for a while.

LOUIS
But I've never taught you...

CLAUDIA
Well, I don't think it's so very
hard. Not after watching you.

Claudia begins to read the page, haltingly, then faster
and more fluidly and finally as eloquently as Louis.

Louis is amazed. We hear:

Lestat's laughter.

Lestat appears with a handbill. He drops it over the
book. He gives a little belch.

LESTAT
Here, my precious, read this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

(reading)

'The Saint Charles Theatre hereby invites all young actors of the city of New Orleans to audition for the leading role in Shakespeare's tragedy... '

Oh, not Macbeth again, Lestat. We've seen it a hundred times. And you've been hunting among the sots again, haven't you?

Louis laughs softly to himself.

LESTAT

Ah, but not with Lestat de Lioncourt in the leading role, you haven't seen it!

CLAUDIA

You? As Macbeth? How marvelous!

Jumps off the couch and runs to him. Lestat picks her up.

LESTAT

I intend to try for it fair and square.

LOUIS

It's too risky and you know it. To be that close with mortals night after night.

Lestat dances around the room holding Claudia as if she were a woman dancing partner.

LESTAT

I have it all figured out, Louis. I'll go to the audition with my face painted. I shall always have my face painted. They can look as closely as they like!

INT. ST. CHARLES THEATRE - LOUIS'S AND CLAUDIA'S POV

alone in back row watching:

Crowd of actors on the stage. Dickensian theatrical director motioning for quiet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lestat dressed as Macbeth with face painted heavily holds the script and begins to read.

LESTAT
(with great but
subdued feeling)
' ... Out, out brief candle.
Life's but a walking shadow, a
poor player that struts and frets
his hour upon the stage, and then
is heard no more...
(hesitates,
struggles to
continue)
... It is a tale told by an idiot,
full of sound and fury, signifying
nothing.'

BACK TO SCENE

Claudia makes a silent delighted gesture of clapping her hands, and in her excitement kisses Louis who watches smiling as --

Other actors applaud, nod in agreement. Stage manager goes into raptures of approval, jumping to the stage to take Lestat's hand.

Lestat stands transfixed staring at the dark empty theatre.

The mortals all around him.

BACK TO LOUIS'S POV

who realizes Lestat is suffering.

Lestat stares into emptiness.

INT. FLAT - SEVERAL EVENINGS LATER

Lestat enters the parlor with Claudia rushing behind him. Louis looks up from the evening paper.

CLAUDIA
What do you mean you won't be in
the play? Why? Why did you back
out? Tell me.

Lestat sits at the harpsichord and starts fussing through the music.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT
I told you, I decided not to do
it.

CLAUDIA
But it wouldn't have been such
fun! They'd have never guessed.

LESTAT
That's just it. It didn't seem
fair, really. It's their realm,
their time... the mortal actors.

Lestat and Louis exchange glances.

CLAUDIA
Fair! To mortals! I've never
heard such nonsense. Lestat,
what is the matter with you?

Lestat deeply distressed begins to play a slow melancholy
tune.

Louis rises and sweeps Claudia up in his arms.

CLAUDIA
What's wrong with both of you?

LOUIS
Great actors have their moods.
Maybe he'll try again sometime.

He carries Claudia down the hall. Glancing back he sees
Lestat sitting with his hands over his face.

Louis carries Claudia down the stairs, and through the
courtyard and out the gate.

LOUIS
Come, let's walk together, we
haven't done it in a long time.

CLAUDIA
Yes, I'm hungry for your lessons.
Teach me to see with my vampire
eyes, as you always do.

EXT. ROYALE STREET

LIGHT RAIN. Aureoles around the crude oil lamps. Richly
colored walls, mud street, gleaming carriage passes.

Claudia leans close to Louis's ear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

Let me see you kill tonight.
You've never let me see you kill.
Lestat lets me see it all the
time.

Louis is unperturbed.

LOUIS

That's because he's so much better
at it than I am.

They turn on a side street. Flowers pour over garden wall. Louis grabs a handful of loose blossoms and sprinkles them over Claudia's hair.

LOUIS

Let me sing a song to you, or tell
you a story. I'm better at that
sort of thing.

She smiles.

CLAUDIA

Not Macbeth!

LOUIS

No, not Macbeth!

CLAUDIA

And no silly child's story either.

They laugh and whisper together as they walk AWAY FROM US.

EXT. RUE ROYALE (1830'S - 1830'S) - NIGHT

(CHANGES INDICATING PASSAGE OF TIME)

Mud has given way to flagstone. Lamps are bigger and more stately. Passing carriages are now big and lumbering. Streets are crowded with people in the dress of the 1830's.

EXT. SHIPS AT PORT/CROWDED MARKETS (NEW ORLEANS) - EVENING

Theaters emptying out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (V.O.)

Oh, it was a very different life. Every burden seemed somehow lighter. And the new century was simply wondrous. What had once been a small godforsaken French colony was growing into a great port.

Claudia walks with Louis and Lestat on either side of her. All are dressed in 1830's fashions. The hair of Louis and Lestat is trimmed according to the newer fashion. Bushy, but no longer pigtailed.

They enter --

CROWDED OPERA HOUSE - LOBBY

Louis picks up Claudia, who allows herself to ride in his arms.

INT. OPERA BOX - LESTAT, LOUIS AND CLAUDIA

watch the performance, applauding enthusiastically.

LOUIS (V.O.)

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

INT. CLAUDIA'S ROOM

(1840 Styles) CANARIES SING in a cage.

Claudia is writing at a secretaire. She is writing in her diary with a quill pen. She reads aloud as she writes. Her cadence is now entirely mature.

CLAUDIA

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

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

CLAUDIA

Another doll? I have ten you realize.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

LESTAT

Well, I thought you could use another.

He hands her the box. She opens it. It's a fine Parisian Jumeau Doll. She likes it and strokes its face.

CLAUDIA

Why always on this night?

LESTAT

What night? What do you mean?
What are you writing there?

Claudia shuts the diary, playfully making an indignant face. Lestat pretends to sulk.

CLAUDIA

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

LESTAT

I didn't realize.

CLAUDIA

Is this my birthday?

He examines the other dolls.

LESTAT

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

CLAUDIA

(patiently)
I have. Or there would be twice as many.

LESTAT

And you're the fairest, by far.

Lestat drops to his knees, kisses her hand. They dote on each other. Then Lestat leaves whistling to himself, as she watches, vaguely distressed.

INT. PARLOR - 3 A.M.

by the mantel clock.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Claudia enters, dressed as a vagabond boy. The clothes are even soiled. Her long hair mussed.

Louis rises from his chair.

Claudia goes to the secretaire and removes a big scissors.

LOUIS

What's happened to you?

CLAUDIA

Nothing's happened to me. There's no need for me to be dressed like a doll, is there? I'm impatient with all this childish fuss. As a boy I can go about scarcely noticed.

She goes into the hall, and stands before the mirror and begins cutting off her hair.

LOUIS

No, please don't do it! Claudia, don't!

She turns around, an angelic little boy with soft curls around her face. Her hair is all over the floor.

CLAUDIA

Now, Louis, don't give me a long lecture. It's almost dawn. I am ready for sleep.

She disappears into the bedroom. Glimpse of coffin against the wall as she shuts the door.

Louis stares at the long blonde hair all over the Oriental carpet. He kneels down and gathers up a handful of it. As he brushes the cut ends across his left hand, they leave thin trails of blood.

Lestat enters noisily letting the door bang. Come to a halt.

LOUIS

History's repeating itself? Why should a girl child be a girl child, when a boy has such freedom?

LESTAT

She cut off her hair!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

Yes.

He stands up, holding the tresses.

LESTAT

Did you tell her? Did you explain to her?

LOUIS

No.

LESTAT

Louis, you should have.

INT. PARLOR - FLAT

Beyond the French windows, the sun sinks over the roofs. Darkness falls. A lamp is lighted. Louis stands at the window looking out into the night.

A HORRID SCREAM pierces the silence. MORE SCREAMS which become roars.

INT. CLAUDIA'S BEDROOM

She stands before the dressing table, all her long hair grown back hanging down around her. She holds it with both hands screaming and screaming and screaming.

Lestat grabs her by the shoulders.

LESTAT

Stop it. It's only... our nature. Now stop!

He's very frightened. She falls silent staring at him.

CLAUDIA

And if I cut it off again!

LESTAT

It will grow back again!

Claudia backs away from him, her hand raised to her lips.

CLAUDIA

My God! Day after day it would grow back, until my cut tresses filled this room the way the dolls fill it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She screams again.

Louis brushes past the panic stricken Lestat, scoops her up in his arms and takes her into the --

PARLOR

and out --

ONTO PORCH

They look down into the Rue Royale. An old woman with a pushcart passes. She is selling flowers. A man pauses to buy a bouquet with a coin.

Louis holds Claudia, and wipes her soiled face with his handkerchief.

LOUIS

(tenderly)

We're immortal. You've always known that. We don't age or decay. And that means we don't change either.

Claudia nods. She's in shock.

LOUIS

You see the old woman? That will never happen to you.

She nods in acceptance. Gently he puts her down.

She stands in the doorway looking at Lestat in the parlor who gazes at her fearfully, then back to Louis who tries to be calm.

CLAUDIA

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

With outstretched hands, she looks down at her own small form.

Lestat is stunned. Then hurries away in panic.

Louis tries to calm her with firmness.

LOUIS

Claudia, stop this...

Claudia rushes after Lestat...

SERIES OF SHOTS - CONTINUOUS ACTION

down the hall, down the exterior stairs, through the courtyard and the carriageway.

CLAUDIA

Yes, go out, run from me, run from my questions. You want me to be the doll forever, don't you? That's what you think I am.

Lestat in a fury turns. He drops on his knees, angry gritting his teeth, but his anger leaves him as he looks at her. He is suddenly overcome with conflicting emotions.

In a broken voice he quotes Webster.

LESTAT

'Cover her face
Mine eyes dazzle
She died young.'

CLAUDIA

And what is that, Father? More lines from a play? Do you never tire of them?

She slaps him with the full force of her right hand, stepping back to see tiny pink imprint of her hand on his white face. Then it vanishes. He is completely unaffected by the blow otherwise. He merely looks at her. And then slowly:

He stands up, on the edge of tears, looking down at her, towering over her.

CLAUDIA'S POV

Staring up at his great height. He pivots, departs.

EXT. WALLED CEMETERY AND CHURCH - ANOTHER NIGHT

on outskirts of French quarter. Claudia dressed as a boy with hair tied back. Louis with her.

Claudia stares at corpses piled up to be buried in mass graves.

CLAUDIA

Yellow fever...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

Yes, every year it's the same.
And you know. Please come home
now. Come back. It's almost
morning.

CLAUDIA

I see the light coming as well as
you do. I don't want to sleep in
that coffin. I want to sleep in
a grave.

Lestat appears.

LESTAT

Claudia, please, for Louis' sake,
come home. You can torment me all
you like. But please don't be
such a nuisance to Louis.

Claudia walks past them towards the church. Forces lock
on the side door and goes in.

INT. CHURCH

Candlelight and sanctuary light illuminate altar and pews.

Lestat and Louis follow.

CLAUDIA

You slept in a grave once. Louis
told me. Remember, Louis? The
night he saved you from the fire.

LESTAT

(ironically)
And it was so thrilling! Why
don't we all move to a graveyard
post haste.

She ignores him. She walks past the altar rail and
stares at the memorial stones in the floor beneath which
priests are buried. Reads the names carved.

CLAUDIA

Father Michael, of yellow fever...

LESTAT

Claudia, we can not remain here
another minute.

CLAUDIA

Then go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She falls on her knees, rips up the stone, revealing a deep and wide crypt.

LESTAT
For the love of hell!

LOUIS
Claudia, we can't leave you here.

Lestat reaches for her. She backs away, glaring at him. Louis tries but she slips out of his arms.

She peers down into the crypt. There is plenty of room. The old coffin is rotten and fallen to splinters. She lies down in it. Lestat and Louis join her. Lestat moves the stone back into place above.

LESTAT
I loathe places like this! Damn it!

Claudia lies there still peering into the eye sockets of a skull, her hand on it. She says bitterly.

CLAUDIA
Then leave me, Father. Nobody said you had to be properly buried.

LESTAT
You brat!

Claudia suddenly turns over and in panic snuggling against Louis, who holds her patiently, his eyes closed.

BLACKNESS.

We hear SINGING. A whole CHORUS SINGING a Latin hymn:

CHORUS (O.S.)
O Salutaris Hostia
Quae caeli pandis ostium.

A seam of light falls on --

LESTAT'S SLEEPING FACE

He opens his eyes.

INT. CHURCH ALTAR CRYPT - NEXT NIGHT

He sits up staring wildly --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHORUS (O.S.)

Bella premunt hostilia,
Da robur, fear Auxilium...

He stares at the sleeping Claudia and Louis. He tries to wake them but it is too early. They lie as if dead.

FROM ABOVE, come sounds of the PRIEST INTONING a litany to the blessed sacrament to which the CONGREGATION RESPONDS.

PRIEST (O.S.)

Blessed be God --

CONGREGATION (O.S.)

Blessed be God --

PRIEST (O.S.)

Blessed be thy most holy name.

LESTAT

(comically enraged)

Oh, you little monster! I could
break your pretty neck!

Louis opens his eyes slowly, like a corpse coming back to life.

LOUIS

Where are we? What's happening?

LESTAT

The six o'clock novena and
benediction. The church is filled
with people. The Priest is
standing right over our heads.

Louis laughs in spite of himself. Lestat, trying not to laugh, and still angry, clamps a hand over his mouth.

INSERT

verses of Litany. (Take from Roman Missal.)

CLAUDIA

opens her eyes. She sits up. She hears the LITANY coming to a close.

Congregation sings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONGREGATION (O.S.)
Tantum ergo Sacramentum
Veneremur cernui...

She's frightened. She looks around at Louis and Lestat. And she tries to stand up but the roof of the crypt won't allow it. Louis and Lestat sit there, Louis still laughing and Lestat trying to control his temper.

LESTAT
You see what you've done? This service will go on for two hours! It's the first time I've been made to go to church since I was twelve.

LOUIS
Shhh. You want them to hear us?

LESTAT
And what would they do if they did?

Claudia is panicking.

SOUND suggestion of dim memory of early church services. She stares at the skull, at the bones, the splintered coffin. Claustrophobia. She tries to stand up. Louis pulls her down.

CLAUDIA
I can't stay in here. I have to get out of here!

LESTAT
It was good enough for you last night!

LOUIS
Claudia, we have no choice but to wait!

CLAUDIA
I know it. The blessed sacrament is on the altar!

LESTAT
So what!

Louis can see this is irrational, phobic. He tries to embrace her. She tries to push up the stone and again he stops her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The HYMN CONTINUES ABOVE.

CLAUDIA

I can't stay in here, I tell you!

Louis is confused.

LESTAT

All right, then we shall go out of here. But we are going to do it as proper vampires, do you hear? We will do it in style!

He picks up handfuls of grave dirt and smears it all over the bewildered Louis and the petrified Claudia.

LESTAT

You have money? Get it out of your pockets.

Louis and Claudia both find several gold coins. They nod. Claudia is shaking violently.

LESTAT

Now when I lift the stone, make the most horrible faces you can muster ! And show your fangs and howl!

Claudia rises heaving the stone back.

CLAUDIA, LOUIS AND LESTAT

leap up into the lighted Sanctuary of the crowded church.

PRIEST

drops the Monstrance with the blessed sacrament and falls down. The altar boy screams.

Lestat bares his fangs and gives a great roar, and so does Claudia who runs for the front door which is open to the night. She drops the coins. Louis flings them into the panicstricken congregation as he follows. Lestat howling and growling, pitches the coins everywhere.

People scream, fall back, scurry to pick up the gold.

PRIEST

The devil and his cohorts throw money! Catch them!

EXT. CEMETERY - SWAMP BEYOND - NIGHT

Claudia, Louis and Lestat rush into the darkness, up on top of the cemetery walls, easily outdistancing the few faithful Catholics following, and soon they are deep into the swamp.

Lestat slumps down beside a huge cypress, laughing helplessly. Louis is beside him, also laughing, hand on his shoulder. Claudia stands there. She can't repress a smile, and then she too laughs, quietly.

CLAUDIA

Well, they'll be talking about
that till the twentieth century!

Lestat and Louis respond with more laughter.

CLAUDIA

The devil throws money! Indeed.

Lestat climbs to his feet, brushing the dirt off his clothes.

LESTAT

Look what you've done to me! I
hate dirt!

LOUIS

Well, there was no one there who
would ever recognize us, you can
be sure of that!

LESTAT

Not like this! I never looked
like this in my entire endless
life!

(eloquent)

Yuk!

Claudia laughs more freely. Lestat tries to be angry but he is only pretending. He lets her laugh. They all laugh.

INT. FLAT - LESTAT

in style of 1840s, comes into Claudia's room. She is dressed neatly in boy's clothes, and is throwing her bobbed hair onto the coal fire in the grate.

LESTAT

I loathe that smell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

So do I. That's why I do it before I leave, so that I can walk away from it.

LESTAT

Well, don't walk out so fast tonight. I have a surprise for you.

CLAUDIA

What in God's name could that be?

LESTAT

Come. The workmen have been very busy in the last few days. You might have noticed if you were home anymore with us.

Lestat leads her into the parlor. Louis is waiting. As Lestat nods, he turns up the wall switch of the new crystal gaslight chandelier, filling the room with light.

Lestat hurries to turn up the sconces and soon the whole flat is full of light.

Claudia smiles. She loves it, the vision of light everywhere. So does Louis. Claudia is softened utterly.

LESTAT

No expense spared, my child. The Quadroon ball room is no better lighted, or the suites in the Saint Louis hotel.

CLAUDIA

I do believe you.

Louis watches as Lestat turns away. Claudia watches Lestat lovingly, forgivingly, as if she can't resist him.

CLAUDIA

(sincerely)

It's beautiful, Father. You're a Prometheus. You've brought the fire from heaven.

LESTAT

Yes, that's true, my dear. In more ways than one.

Lestat breaks off, realizing this might be taken the wrong way. But Claudia is smiling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

And we've a pair of new servants.
Lestat's found a mother and
daughter, excellent maids.

LESTAT

Yes, I'm tired of all this dust,
and strange charwomen coming and
going.

LOUIS

They think us most peculiar, of
course, but they will clean by
day, and take their wages from the
hall table, and be out of the way
before we rise.

Claudia laughs at the irony of it.

She sits at the piano, looking around at all the gas
light, even the gas sconce that lights her music, and she
begins to play a somber piece by Beethoven, become ever
more morose and involved.

Lestat and Louis exchange glances, amazed at her absorp-
tion and her skill. She doesn't notice. She continues
to look dreamily at the light.

CUT TO:

INT. FLAT - PARLOR - ANOTHER NIGHT

Paintings have changed, and some furniture.

Louis watches Lestat go through a pile of books on the
table:

LESTAT

My, but she reads dreary things.
Boethus. Plato. And Marcus
Aurelius. What's the matter with
Dickens or Thackery or Wilkie
Collins!

LOUIS

Yes, and she reads her books
faster than I can.

Louis and Lestat realize that Claudia has appeared in the
door:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Claudia is dressed gorgeously in a violet dress with ribbons and silk flowers. Her hair is long and shining. She holds a big bouquet of chrysanthemums.

Lestat is alarmed. Claudia steps menacingly into the room.

CLAUDIA
Which of you made me what I am?

They are stunned.

CLAUDIA
(to Lestat)
Did you do it! Was it you? Or
was it Louis!

She points to --

Louis. Then turns back to Lestat approaching him.

CLAUDIA
One of you had to do it. You
didn't find me on All Hallow's
Eve. You were the one, weren't
you! Answer me.

She hurls the chrysanthemums at Lestat's feet.

CLAUDIA
Monstrous parents! To give me
immortality in this helpless
guise, this hopeless shape.

Lestat is angry.

LESTAT
I was a sorcerer's apprentice
only! I didn't know what would
happen!

CLAUDIA
Then it was you, wasn't it? You
were the one!

Louis steps forward.

LOUIS
Claudia, it was no simple thing,
I swear it.

Lestat rushes out as he has done before. The door bangs behind him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

Did you do it? Did you? It was Lestat. I know it was. You would never have done such a thing.

Louis says patiently.

LOUIS

I want you to come with me. And listen.

EXT. OLD PART OF CITY - OLD PITCHED ROOF OF FRENCH HOUSES - MUD STREET

Louis talks with Claudia as they walk slowly, finally coming to a halt beneath a dim gaslamp.

ECHO of Claudia's CRYING of years before.

LOUIS

It was the old days, there, there is the house, or perhaps it's that one. I can't tell. The plague was raging in the city. I heard you crying. You were there in a room with your mother, and she'd been dead for days. You didn't know it. You clung to her. You begged me to help you. I came into the room. I felt pity for you. Pity... but something else.

CLAUDIA

You fed on me! I was your victim!

LOUIS

Yes! I did it! But you had a heart like no other heart I'd ever felt. It wouldn't stop. Then Lestat came. He found me out. He laughed at me, Louis the sentimental one, with a holy innocent in his arms. I ran from him, from you.

CLAUDIA

You meant to kill me! You left me for dead.

LOUIS

Yes. The next night, he found you in the hospital where they'd taken you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (CONT'D)

I never knew what he meant to do but teach me my nature. 'Finish it,' he said.

Claudia backs away. He grabs her wrist.

LOUIS

Oh, I know I've lost you. You look at me now as you look at mortals, from some cold self-sufficiency I can't understand. But the hunger, that we all understand! I felt it for you then, a vile unsupportable hunger, a hunger for your hammering heart. For this cheek, this hair.

Claudia lets him touch her.

LOUIS

You were pink and soft as mortal children are, sweet with the bite of salt and dust.

Claudia's face softens only a little.

LOUIS

I held you again. I took you. And when I thought your heart would drag me down with it and I didn't care, he parted us. He cut his wrist. He gave you the blood to drink. And drink you did. And you became one of us that night. And drank blood from your first victim. And you have drunk the blood of mortals every night ever since.

He waits. Claudia looks at him, unreadable.

LOUIS

It was I who took your life. He gave it back to you.

CLAUDIA

(holding out her hands)

And here it is, and I hate you both!

INT. PARLOR OF FLAT - SUNRISE

Stillness reigns over all.

Quadroon maid and teenaged daughter arrive. Both wear red tignons or scarves, and gold earrings. The maid picks up all the withered chrysanthemums, clucking over the mess. The teenaged daughter begins to sweep. Return to:

MALLOY AND LOUIS (SAN FRANCISCO) - PRESENT

Order of opened tapes on the table indicates the tape has been changed, if anyone cares.

MALLOY

Did you lose her? Did she leave you?

LOUIS

How could she? Little boy. Little girl. She was a child no bigger than that. What would her life have been? And something in her was kin to me, kin to Lestat. We had each other. We had endured for half a century in harmony. We could not bear to be alone.

INT. FLAT (1860)

Claudia at her dresser, dressed as a little girl, brushes her long hair. Louis stands behind her. Then drops down beside her, takes the brush and brushes her hair for her.

She watches him through the mirror.

CLAUDIA

Locked together in hatred, that's what we are.

LOUIS

No. You feel that now. But it's love that binds us. Love is the only thing that allows us to go on.

CLAUDIA

(softening)

You think so?

LOUIS

I know so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Claudia turns and touches his face and kisses him. She cannot help herself. They embrace.

We hear...

Lestat's voice SINGING a Verdi aria as he comes in.

Lestat enters. Looks about.

LESTAT

Well, I see the maids are doing their usual fine job.

LOUIS

I raised their wages as you suggested. They're happy. This evening, I saw them as they were leaving. I told them how very much we appreciated their work.

LESTAT

Yes, Jeannette the daughter has grown so pretty.

CLOSE ON CLAUDIA'S STILL FACE

LESTAT

And do pay them more. That's one thing I've noticed about even the most superstitious mortals. Pay them enough and they question not a single thing.

Louis smiles.

LOUIS

I think you're right. They're happy. And so are we.

Lestat snaps his fingers and points to Claudia.

LESTAT

Uptown, in the Rue Camp, a haunted house! Ghost appeared three times this very week. Want to go see it.

Inspite of herself, Claudia smiles, sadly, wisely. She rises and goes to his waiting arms. She is womanly, cool, but pleasant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

But we aren't going to merely watch, are we? Maybe we should ... you know... make a little supernatural mischief ourselves, don't you think? Louis, want to come?

LOUIS

I wouldn't dream of spoiling your evening.

INT. FLAT - PARLOR - EARLY EVENING

Lestat is reading a newspaper -- Mercurie De France -- which he then throws into the fire.

Claudia enters, dressed in velvet, with muff and bonnet, to go out. Bad mood.

CLAUDIA

Another newspaper from Paris?

Lestat turns round, stares at her. Tension.

CLAUDIA

Why don't you ever save them?

LESTAT

Have you been searching my room?

CLAUDIA

Wouldn't do any good, would it?

She approaches the grate, confirms the paper is now ashes.

CLAUDIA

You have no keepsakes, do you? Only a wardrobe worthy of Czar of Russia or the King of France.

LESTAT

Stay out of my room!

She looks up at him coldly.

Lestat is confused.

LESTAT

You look very beautiful tonight. I love you in red.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

I know. There are many vampires in Paris, aren't there. Many of us in the old world.

LESTAT

You'd despise them. We're the only vampires on this earth who matter! And New Orleans is ours. We've never had to share it with anyone.

He tries to laugh.

CLAUDIA

Perhaps it's time I saw Paris.

LESTAT

Perhaps so. Though frankly, I'd prefer New York or maybe London...

CLAUDIA

You'd let us go to Paris, me and Louis?

LESTAT

Oh, I see, so that's how it is. I won't stop you, but you'd be a fool if you didn't take me with you.

CLAUDIA

Why?

LESTAT

Louis can't protect you as well as I can. And our kind can be your worst enemy.

CLAUDIA

Are there others like me there? Little ones.

Lestat is overcome with emotion. He shakes his head. He whispers.

LESTAT

Claudia, you would have died if I hadn't done it. I didn't understand what I was doing. It was an impulse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

I know. Poor darling. Poor darling, Lestat, the thoughtless one. And you'd protect me from all the big bad vampires in Paris, wouldn't you?

LESTAT

Yes, I would. You think they don't war with one another, that they don't try to destroy one another? Remember the fire, my child, and the light of the sun. And there are other ways as well. They won't share the City of Light with a vagabond.

CLAUDIA

You're serious, aren't you? You're telling me the truth.

LESTAT

Darling, I've never lied to you. I've teased you, taunted you, shouted at you, kissed you, even struck you. But I've never lied.

She watches Lestat leave.

CLOSE ON HER FACE

Inscrutable.

INT. FLAT - SUNSET (ANOTHER NIGHT)

through parlor windows.

CLAUDIA'S ROOM

Her coffin lid is raised.

Claudia sleeps inside against satin lining like a dead body.

CLOCK TICKING.

Then her eyes snap open.

Lestat is looking down at her. From nearby Louis watches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Still sluggish and weak, she sits up slowly with no help from her own hands. Her eyes clear.

Lestat smiles thinly.

LESTAT

We thought we'd wait for you,
tonight.

Claudia now fully awake smiles coldly.

CLAUDIA

All right. We hunt, then,
together?

As he turns to go, unseen by him, her face becomes cold, masklike with hatred.

Louis sees it.

EXT. JACKSON SQUARE - ANOTHER NIGHT

Standing against the new iron fence before the Cathedral, holding the bars and peering through it. Louis in top hat and gloves and opera cape looks down at her.

CLAUDIA

If he made the journey we can make
it. We feed off the rats of
course. We take the little drink
from the elder passengers. We
can do it if he did it.

LOUIS

But why must we go without him?
It's time we all went traveling
... together.

CLAUDIA

He can't come with us.

LOUIS

Why not? I think he's ready for
a journey.

CLAUDIA

You misunderstand me, beloved. He
won't be here when we leave.

LOUIS

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

He'll be in hell when we leave here. I intend to kill him.

LOUIS

Claudia, you can't do this!

Claudia turns and walks away impatiently. Louis follows.

CLAUDIA

Why can't I? You don't think he can die? We can all die! There are lots of ways. He's told me.

LOUIS

He's part of us! He's... he's Lestat! You can't simply turn on him.

CLAUDIA

Oh, yes, I can. I want to kill him, and I'll tell you a secret, Louis, if you come down so I can whisper it in your ear.

Louis kneels.

CLAUDIA

I want to kill him! I'll enjoy it. Killing mortals can't be half as much fun.

Louis draws back.

LOUIS

No. You can't mean it. I won't let you do it.

CLAUDIA

Shhh, don't you want to be free of him! I hate him. The mortals I kill. I care nothing for them. But him I hate.

LOUIS

Impossible. You can't succeed at it. You don't know his strength! He do can things neither of us can do.

CLAUDIA

Yes, and do you think that strength will pass into me when I kill him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

I won't allow this to happen.

CLAUDIA

Why don't you admit that you hate him as much as I do?

LOUIS

Because I do not hate him. Hate myself? Yes, often.

CLAUDIA

He made you too, didn't he? He did it to you as he did it to me. Why don't you hate him?

Louis shakes his head.

LOUIS

It's not as easy as that, my dear. and I will not let you harm him. Maybe we should go away for a while, travel on our own, see if we can manage.

CLAUDIA

Oh, we'll manage. Don't seek to know the week or the night, or the hour. And don't seek to come between us, I warn you. Or --

LOUIS

Or what? You'll destroy me too?

Claudia is shaken.

CLAUDIA

No. I would never harm you. But if you do seek to interfere...

LOUIS

Yes?

CLAUDIA

You'll never see me again.

She leaves so fast she seems to vanish.

INT. FLAT - ANOTHER NIGHT

Lestat marches through the place, seeing mess everywhere, a theatre program on the carpet, a newspaper lying on the settee. The window is open and the rain is coming in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

Mon Dieu, where is Jeanette?
Where's Marie? They haven't been
here for days!

LOUIS

Maybe we've frightened them some
way. I'd better call at their
house when I go out.

LESTAT

Jeanette would have come to me
herself if she were troubled.
She's never suspected a thing.

Lestat stops. He lifts his chin. He catches a scent.

LOUIS

What is it?

LESTAT

Damn her into hell. She's done
this!

LOUIS

What? What are you talking about?
Lestat, wait.

Lestat goes DOWN the hall, OUT on the porch, DOWN the
back stairs, ACROSS the courtyard, and INTO old deserted...

BRICK KITCHEN

As he rips open the wooden doors, a huge swarm of
gnats rises and nearly suffocates him. He waves them
away in disgust.

Louis looks over his shoulder.

They both see Jeanette and her daughter, Marie, freshly
dead in each other's arms, yet already devoured by heat
and insects.

Lestat bangs the shutters closed.

LESTAT

How dare she! Our own servants!
Mortals under my protection, and
to kill here, in our lair, and
leave the remains!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

I'll talk to her. I'll reason with her. She's full of resentments. Now, come, help me get rid of these two. I can't bear to be near them.

Lestat shudders. Opens kitchen doors again.

LESTAT

Damn her. Only the mad ones are too lazy to clear away the remains! She knows this is forbidden.

He opens the old, unused iron-doored brick oven, and turns and stares at the two bodies, disgusted that he must touch them. He reaches down and touches Jeanette's dark hair.

CUT TO:

Sound of a MATCH.

FLARE OF FLAMES

Bodies burning amid kindling and paper.

CLOSE ON LESTAT'S FACE

in firelight.

LOUIS

There'll be more trouble from her. And we must ride it out. She'll come round to herself again.

LESTAT

I'm mortally tired of her!

LOUIS

Lestat, she broods. She makes threats. It's idle talk --

LESTAT

Threats? What do you mean, threats?

Lestat is furious. Louis is stymied. Sees the dilemma.

LOUIS

It will run its course. We must be patient.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lestat looks hard at Louis, then turns his back walks off.

Louis realizes full dilemma, says nothing.

Lestat turns back, deeply aggrieved.

LESTAT
Does she despise me so much?

LOUIS
She's so small, so powerless.
What can she do to either of us?
She is a woman, and the pain runs
deep.

CLOSE ON OPEN OVEN

and bodies burning.

LESTAT
(whispers)
No, not a woman. That she never
was. And that's the horror.

LOUIS
She harms herself more than --

LESTAT
Let her try to harm me and I'll
put her out of harm's way fast
enough!

Leaves.

CLOSE ON LOUIS'S FACE

realizing he's caught between the two of them.

INT. PARLOR - LESTAT - ANOTHER NIGHT

in formal dress comes in, sees all the doors are shut.
Listens, catches scents. Angrily he walks into the
parlor.

Louis is playing solitaire at a small game table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

She's back. What a surprise. I thought she'd run away with the gypsies. And she's got two mortals with her.

LOUIS

Seems so. I don't like it either.

LESTAT

How dare she bring them here!

LOUIS

Patience, mon ami. She wants an independence that she can never have. Let it go... for my sake and your sake.

Lestat is too disgruntled.

Sounds of Claudia CLOSING DOOR at the end of the passage and coming down the hall. She is a vision in lovely white lace, pink ribbons, long hair.

CLAUDIA

Bonsoir, mon pere!

She beams at Lestat who sits down at the piano with his back to the keys.

LESTAT

Ah, the prodigal daughter! I'd given you up nights ago, after you left those two murdered in the kitchen. Where have you been.

CLAUDIA

Oh, little people can hide in little places. And how considerate of you to burn those bodies. Ashes to ashes. My thanks.

He gets angry, but she gestures for patience. She approaches him, smiling, radiant, seductive. She puts her little hands on his shoulders.

CLAUDIA

'Bless me, Father for I have sinned.' I'm sorry. Truly. I've a gift for you. To make up for the whole thing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

Gift? What do you mean, gift?
What are those mortals doing under
our roof?

CLAUDIA

They are my gift for you, darling.

LESTAT

I don't need such a gift.

Claudia grabs his right hand in both of hers and tugs
him to his feet and after her down the hall.

Louis follows, alarmed, suspicious.

CLAUDIA

Oh, come see! They're the most
beautiful tavern girls I've ever
beheld.

LESTAT

Tavern girls. You know my
weaknesses...

CLAUDIA

Your favorite kind. Faces like
angels and hearts of coal. They've
sent many a sailor to his death,
those two...

Lestat stops in the doorway of a back parlor, seldom
used dusty. Two gorgeous women -- a blonde and a
brunette -- lie tumbled on the couch, heavily painted,
full breasts, gorgeous, very flashy and tacky and fast
asleep.

Lestat laughs.

LESTAT

Ah, yes, from Lafitte's. Does
the world never stop giving us
these luscious little ladies of the
streets! Oh, you're right, they
are my favorite meal, surely.

CLAUDIA

Killed a man this very evening.
For a single gold coin.

Lestat hardly hears her. He walks toward the women.
He's getting hungry. On the table are bottles and
glasses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Behind him, Louis is very wary. Can't quite figure all this out.

LOUIS

How did you get them to come here?

CLAUDIA

It wasn't difficult. I'm an adorable little girl when I want to be. I led them to believe I was alone in this great big flat full of such fine furniture and silver!

LESTAT

You are a genius, Claudia.

He kneels down before the two irresistible women, tumbled against each other.

CLOSE ON LESTAT

savoring them. He runs a finger over the lips of the brunette.

CLAUDIA

Well, it was you who gave me the idea, actually. Burning the remains of the maid and her daughter. I thought why not bring the meal home now and then, and use the old oven again.

LESTAT

(uneasy but dazed
with hunger)

Where we can really savor it.

LOUIS

Don't take this victim here, Lestat. Claudia, I want none of this!

LESTAT

Don't fuss, Louis. I'll burn the remains myself.

She draws near to Lestat who is bending over the brunette.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

Go to it, let me watch you.

Lestat lifts the brunette, who groans and he sinks his teeth into the flesh above her breast and drinks, giving off long savoring moans as he does so. They look like lovers.

Claudia watches.

Louis turns angrily to return to the parlor, then hears:

LESTAT

Hmmm, absinthe...

CLAUDIA

You've always liked the taste of it, Father.

Louis comes back. Lestat continues to drink. Then glaze-eyed, he pulls himself up and reaches for the Blonde. He takes her ravenously, like someone kissing farewell before a war.

He moans again, and she slips out of his arms and back on the couch onto the body of the other one. He stares forward...

LESTAT

Absinthe!

Almost paralyzed, he stares wildly as he slips to a sitting position on the floor. With effort he focuses on Claudia who comes toward him on tiptoe, and then bends over him.

CLAUDIA

That's right, Father, and laudanum, so much of it, they would not have lived another hour had you not come!

LESTAT

Louis! Louis... she's... poisoned me! Louis, put me in my coffin...

Claudia slips a huge knife out from under the pillows beneath the whores. She drives it right through his heart.

CLAUDIA

I'll put you in your coffin, Father. I'll put you there forever!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis rushes to stop her, as Claudia stabs Lestat over and over in an orgy of wounds, blood pouring out of him.

Louis reaches her just as she has slashed Lestat's throat, and he grabs for the knife, lifting it, and her with it because she will not let go of it.

LESTAT

My God, Louis... it's too many wounds! Too fast!

Claudia kicks at Louis heaving him backwards over the table, BOTTLES CRASHING as he falls. As he climbs to his feet, she pounces upon Lestat and sinks her fangs into his neck and sucks his blood ravenously.

Louis rushes to Lestat just as Claudia draws away, repelled and stunned by what is happening to Lestat:

Lestat is shriveling, as if he'd been a bag of blood. His skin is shriveling against his bones like parchment, his eyes are slipping back into his skull-like face. A noise escapes his lips. His lush, beautiful hair remains unchanged. But his clothes are virtually being emptied of the body.

It is now no more than the bones, wrapped in paper and the pupils of the eyes suddenly roll up into the papered skull.

Claudia stares at the shriveled skeleton in its skin wrapping, which looks totally dead. She is fascinated.

Louis kneels beside the ghastly spectacle.

He reaches for Lestat's shoulders. But it's just bones, held together with cloth, or so it seems, and Louis drops the skeleton in fear and horror. It lies in the puddle of blood. The eyeballs, blank, now look yellow. All the skin looks yellow.

Claudia pulls herself out of her thrall.

Tenderly, she approaches Louis, patting his shoulder in a reassuring way.

CLAUDIA

Go now, go on. It's my doing and I shall finish it.

LOUIS

No!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

He's dead, Louis! Spare yourself
the sight of the flames.

Louis begins to gather up the dried limbs though they
flop free like sticks.

LOUIS

Not in that filthy oven, not with
those charred bones. Not like
that, no.

INT. LESTAT'S BEDROOM

The shriveled skeleton lies on the lace coverlet. Louis
stares at it. It looks deader than ever.

EXT. OLD CEMETERY NEAR POINTE DUE LAC - NIGHT

A carriage stands on the distant road with its lamps
burning.

Louis, carrying the white wrapped body of Lestat wanders
among the old tombs.

LESTAT (V.O.)

I loathe places like this, damn
it!

CLAUDIA (V.O.)

Then leave, Father. Nobody said
you had to be properly buried.

Louis, in grief and confusion, leaves the cemetery.
Goes into:

EXT. SWAMP

A still pool under the moon.

ECHO of Lestat's LAUGHTER.

LESTAT (V.O.)

Didn't I tell you it was going
to be fun?

CRIES of BIRDS merge with Lestat's LAUGHTER. RAPID
HARPSICHORD MUSIC.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT (V.O.)
I'm so lonely... I want a
companion.

Gently Louis lowers the body to the surface of the pool
and then lets it sink.

LOUIS
Who can forgive me, Lestat? Who
can give me absolution?

He gives up in despair.

FOCUS ON YELLOW HAIR

billowing from the sheet beneath the water.

EXT. CEMETERY - TWILIGHT

The next NIGHT FADES TO NIGHT:

EXT. COURTYARD

Claudia stands in the open brick kitchen watching the
burning of Lestat's belongings in the furnace. She
throws a top hat into it, a pair of gloves. Her face
is grave, sad.

She turns as Louis returns.

CLAUDIA
At last! I've been sick with
worry.

As she tries to go to him, he moves past her up the
stairs and into the...

INT. FLAT

Claudia comes behind him, distressed and perplexed.

CLAUDIA
Don't you see, we're free now? We
can go. What's wrong with you?
Louis, look at me. Louis, he
deserved to die.

Louis turns around in the doorway of his room:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

Then so do we! Every night of our lives. We should die, both of us, now. He was my brother! My maker! He gave me eternal life.

CLAUDIA

I told you I meant to do it.

LOUIS

Yes, you did! And I didn't dare warn him because I didn't believe you could do it! And I was afraid that if I did warn him, that if he believed me, he'd destroy you!

CLAUDIA

(hurt)

Please, Louis... He wronged us both when he made us. He kept us under his dominance always...

LOUIS

Leave me alone. I can't look at you. I'll care for you because you can't care for yourself. But I don't want you near me. Get away.

Claudia's eyes are glazing over with faint bloody tears. She turns away.

Louis walks into his room, stares blindly around him.

Then he's distracted by:

Claudia's CRYING. A terrible heartbroken crying, like the crying he heard the first night he ever saw her, utterly defenseless, but it's ECHOING like a vampire's crying.

He can't quite believe his ears. He moves into the hallway and then into her room. She lies against a heap of pillows on the bed, truly sobbing. He draws near, touches her shoulder and when she looks up at him, her eyes and face are stained with blood tears. The blood runs down her cheeks. Her lips tremble. She sobs uncontrollably, lips trembling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

Louis, I did it for us. So we could be free. I did it because of what he did to us. I tried to forgive him. I couldn't do it. Louis, if I lose you... I have nothing. I would undo it to please you. I would, I swear it...

He shushes her gently, gathering her into his arms and sits on the bed covering her hair and her blood-stained face with kisses. She cries softly, allowing herself to be comforted.

LOUIS

Very well, my darling. Very well, my love...

Claudia crying softly against his blood-stained shirt.

CLAUDIA

We'll leave here, Louis. We'll go to Paris. We'll forget he ever existed. We'll find others. We'll see the world. Who knows what the old ones know? What they can do.

LOUIS

All right, my darling. All right, my love.

INT. FLAT - TWO NIGHTS LATER

Movers take out two trunks. The parlor furniture is all draped with white sheets.

Louis and Claudia both have on cloaks and gloves. They are ready to go. Louis takes one look around. He stands with the poker looking down at the small coal fire. Then hears...

The BIRDS. CANARIES SINGING in Claudia's room.

LOUIS

Ah, the birds. I forgot the birds. There's nothing to do now but let them go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Claudia, weary, melancholy sits down on the sofa as he puts down the poker and goes down the hall. He stops, staring at the back door.

Sound of FOOTSTEPS SHUFFLING in the courtyard. Then HEAVILY TREADING on the stairs.

Louis is frozen. Claudia rises and comes toward him, takes his hand.

LOUIS

It can't be.

CLAUDIA

But it is!

She turns in panic to the front of the flat. STEPS CONTINUE UP the STAIRS. ON the PORCH. The DOOR CRASHES open.

Lestat in filthy swamp-soaked rags nearly falls into the hall. He is robust again, but his entire body is covered with creases where the flesh had wrinkled and shriveled. He is scored all over with these scars. His eyes are bloodshot. He can hardly steady himself.

Louis tries to stop him, but Lestat contemptuously and clumsily throws Louis to one side.

CLOSEUP OF LESTAT'S

scarred face, seemingly without reason.

LESTAT

Claudia!

BACK TO SCENE

Claudia rushes into the parlor, but he's after her. She snatches up the poker from the fireplace and batters him with it fiercely, knocking him backward. He staggers.

Louis comes in and throws his arms around Lestat's shoulders. Lestat hurls him back and off balance again and then kicks him a powerful kick in the gut. Claudia screams.

Lestat snatches the poker from Claudia and reaches for her. She shoves him with all her might and he falls back against the gas sconce, SHATTERING the GLASS. The fire burns his face. He cries out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Claudia regains the poker and whips the burning coals out of the grate at Lestat's feet. They land on the carpet and near the draped furniture and begin to smolder. Sheet over chair begins to burn. Lestat stares down at the smoking coals trying to get his bearings. Claudia slams him with the poker again in the GAS flame, and this time the SCONCE SHATTERS and the flame EXPLODES up the wall.

Louis struggles to his feet. The wallpaper is burning. Lestat's hair catches. She turns, sees the burning sheet on the chair and hurls it at Lestat. Her dress catches. She screams.

The room is exploding into flame.

Lestat is on his knees, choking, hands up over his face, in the smoke. Louis grabs up Claudia smothering the flames of her skirt with his hands. The whole parlor is afire.

Louis carries her out, down the back stairs, through carriage way and through the gathering crowd of mortals and away down the...

STREET

Finally, he stops and sees that she is not badly burnt, only terrified. She clings to him. He looks back at the glare of the distant burning house.

He puts Claudia down in a doorway.

LOUIS

Stay here, until I come back.

CLAUDIA

No, Louis, don't leave me. The ship is about to sail.

Louis runs back toward the townhouse. It is surrounded by mortals. Fire roars out of the parlor window. Louis walks closer, cleaving to the wall, trying not to rouse notice. He looks up. The parlor is an inferno.

Claudia catches up with him. Desperate.

CLAUDIA

The tide's going out! The ship's going without us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

Not yet.

Picking her up, Louis hurries away.

EXT. DECK OF SHIP

Louis stands at the railing in the morning mist as the ship moves down river. He sees...

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

with its flickering lights.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Until the very dawn I stood on that deck, watching, fearful he would come again, out of the very river like some monster to destroy us both. And all the while I thought Lestat, we deserve your vengeance. I deserve it. You gave me the Dark Gift. And I have delivered you into the hands of death for a second time.

Return to:

MALLOY AND LOUIS (PRESENT)

LOUIS

We had the voyage to ponder it, how he had survived. Claudia swore we had a fatal error when we had failed to burn his remains.

EXT. DECK OF SHIP - CLAUDIA AND LOUIS

at the rail. Stars over the sea.

CLAUDIA

Pray he died in the fire! Did you see him? Did you see the scares all over him? He couldn't have gotten away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

Oh, yes, he could have. He couldn't come after us, no, he was too weak for that. But he could have gotten away.

CLAUDIA

You sound as if you wanted him to escape. When will you admit your own hatred for him?

She cleaves to Louis. In spite of himself, he strokes her soft little face.

RETURN TO PRESENT

MALLOY

Was she right? Did he die in the fire?

LOUIS

(smiling sadly)

How could we know? You can imagine how powerful he was to rise from the swamp as he had...

MALLOY

He was conscious all the while, waiting to get his hands on something living, something with blood in it...

LOUIS

Exactly. It isn't very hard to envision. There must have been blood filled creatures all around him in those waters. And he was Lestat after all. Maybe he fed on the smallest at first, and then the great alligators of the wilderness until he was healed enough to take some hapless human on the road.

CLOSE ON MALLOY'S FACE

As:

LOUIS (O.S.)

You know as much about us now, perhaps, as I do. We can suffer terrible blows, blows that would kill a mortal, but if we are not burnt to ashes, we heal. We come back.

EXT. 19TH CENTURY STEAMSHIP

moving at sea under night skies.

LOUIS (V.O.)

I think I did pray that he escaped the townhouse. And yet I feared for Claudia at the very thought. Meanwhile, each night brought us closer to Europe, closer to Paris, closer to a world of which we had only dreamed.

EXT. BOULEVARD FACADE OF GRAND HOTEL AND PARIS OPERA

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

LOUIS (V.O.)

Ah, Paris. How many mortals have uttered that name with reverence. Is there any other place that evokes such love? But understand what Paris meant to us... we two had lived a century in New Orleans. Paris was a universe, whole and entire unto herself!

EXT. 18TH CENTURY PALACES ALONG THE SEINE - NIGHT

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

EXT. STREET - SHOP WINDOW

Claudia, in furtrimmed muff and bonnet, peers through the glass at the dolls. They resemble her markedly, these, with blonde hair and blue eyes. She peers deep into the shop to see:

MADELINE, a young woman bent over a workbench painting a doll's face, oblivious to being watched. Claudia smiles at her lovingly. Then looks with a troubled expression at the dolls.

INT. OPERA STAIRCASE

Louis and Claudia hurrying hand and hand with crowd of mortals as we hear the sound of the ORCHESTRA TUNING beyond. Both are excited and happy.

INT. NOTRE DAME

Claudia and Louis standing in the deep shadows of Notre Dame, looking up at the branching arches. Louis is overcome with the beauty. He is excited. Claudia is fascinated.

INT. GALLERY

Louis and Claudia walk among paintings of 1870 with other spectators. Louis studies them intently. He studies the mortal ladies passing, studies their big fashionable hats.

INT. CAFE

Claudia watches the waitress flirt with Louis as she teases him about not liking his wine. She smiles to herself thoughtfully.

LOUIS (V.O.)

We were alive again. We were in love, and so euphoric were we that I yielded completely when Claudia moved us into the Grand Hotel, the very largest in Europe on the Boulevard des Capuchines.

INT. SUMPTUOUS SUITE

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

CLOSE ON HUGE, BLACK, EBONY CHEST

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

CLAUDIA

at the open French windows listens to sounds of the CROWD outside. Busy night.

Louis approaches, drops on one knee and presents her with a little string of pearls. He puts them on her, gazing at her slightly uneasily and then he kisses her on both cheeks.

She forces a smile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

Where are the others, Louis? I can hear them. I can sense their presence. But they hide.

LOUIS

Let's not be so eager to find them, my fairy princess. Lestat warned me often enough about them. They may not be willing to share their territory, even with two such human creatures as you and I.

CLAUDIA

But they're like us! They are what we are!

LOUIS

Are we so alike, Claudia?

Claudia smiles at him, kisses him.

CLAUDIA

Alike enough, don't you think?

LOUIS

(thoughtfully)

Yes.

She looks out at the crowds below. Then:

CLAUDIA

Maybe they know things.

She looks at her hands, her own reflection in the open French door beside her.

CLAUDIA

Old magic, secrets. Charms. Who knows?

LOUIS

Charms for what, my dear?

Claudia looks down at her little hands, at her arms, then muses.

LOUIS

Lestat would have told us if they had some precious secret. You know what they'll be like. City cousins and we, the ridiculous rustics.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis admires her. She watches carriages stop below. Porters rush to gather luggage. Ring of LADY'S LAUGHTER.

CLAUDIA

Sometimes it's almost worse here.
The loneliness, the separateness.

Louis controls his inner thoughts. He says only.

LOUIS

Sometimes, but not always. And
definitely not tonight.

He takes her hand. She gives in. As they open the door to the hall to leave, sound of ORCHESTRA SWELLS from lobby below.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - ANOTHER NIGHT

Louis wakes up from a nap, ruffled on the lavish bed, picks up his book -- David Copperfield -- and tries to find his place. He is wearing distinct clothing -- a green frock coat and striped waistcoat, cream-colored pants. Claudia enters, shuts the door.

She has a large parcel. She strips off bonnet and gloves and then tears loose the ribbon from the box.

She lifts a huge doll from the box, a duplicate of herself.

LOUIS

Wherever did you find that?

CLAUDIA

You thought I hated dolls now,
didn't you?

LOUIS

Yes, I did. But that one looks
exactly like you.

Claudia flings the doll gently in the chair. She strips off her own cape. Her hair is loose. Her manner and expression are entirely womanly.

CLAUDIA

It should. It was made for me, by
the doll maker, Madeleine. I asked
her to make it. All her dolls
resemble me.

Claudia tosses her hair, scowls at the doll and picks it up and begins fussing with it. Suddenly something snaps in her expression.

CLOSE ON HER FACE

as she looks down at the doll. She blinks as we hear the GLASS BREAK. She flings the doll onto the empty hearth where its broken head is utterly shattered.

Louis studies her sadly, but not with complete sympathy. He looks at the broken doll. He holds his tongue. Claudia runs her fingers back through her own hair in a woman-like gesture, her face ironic and grim. Louis deliberately looks away.

CLAUDIA

Why do you look away, why don't
you look at me?

Louis puts down the book on the table, rises, brushes off his coat and straightens his coat. He lifts a dark green wool cape from over the arm of a chair and puts it over his shoulders.

LOUIS

Your tone is unkind with me
again, tonight. It seems your
habit of late. Maybe I should go
walking and leave you to your
meditations for a while.

Claudia approaches, face molded in a sophisticated expression of ironic dissatisfaction.

CLAUDIA'S POV - LOOKING UP AT LOUIS

CLAUDIA (O.S.)

Ah, but tell me something from
that lofty height, before you go.

BACK TO SCENE

Louis nods, he sits down on the bed beside her and he bends to take her hand and kiss it.

CLAUDIA

What was it like... making love?

Louis is stunned. He blushes. He rises and goes to the door. He reaches for the knob.

CLAUDIA

You don't remember? Or you never
knew.

She stares at him coldly, mocking him. He turns around, leans against the door. He answers candidly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

It was something hurried. Seldom savored. Quickly lost. I think that it was... the pale shadow of killing.

They look at each other.

CLAUDIA

(in pain)

Ahhh. Like hurting you as I do now... that is also the pale shadow of killing.

LOUIS

Yes, madame. I am inclined to believe that is correct. Bonsoir.

He goes out and closes the door.

EXT. WINDING STREET (LATIN QUARTER)

LOUIS (V.O.)

I knew her dissatisfaction was growing. Her resentments were increasing night after night. Though she'd claimed to hate Lestat, now she missed him, and her anger was turning slowly on me.

Louis walks briskly, inspecting the old buildings about him, enchanted with them, yet worried about Claudia.

Suddenly he stops. Listens. He takes a step. He hears a STEP behind him. He takes two steps. He hears TWO STEPS. He takes three, four, five and the STEPS MIMIC his. He senses danger.

He stares ahead at the light of a lone gaslamp at the top of the hill and then a figure materializes there under the gaslight, or appears to do so.

SANTIAGO, a tall vampire stares down at him. And gradually we realize as does Louis that this vampire has assumed the same attitude and posture as Louis and that his clothes are identical to Louis's and his black hair is combed in the same way.

Louis gives a little involuntary shake of the head. Santiago mimics. Louis takes a step forward. Santiago mimics. Louis utters a syllable and so does Santiago. Louis falls silent and folds his arms. So does Santiago. The timing is preternatural.

(CONTINUED)

BACK TO SCENE

LOUIS

Armand!

Armand looks momentarily confused, then regains his calm, tranquil expression.

ARMAND

Louis, is it not? Louis de Pointe
du Lac.

He cocks his head, scanning Louis's mind.

Louis becomes faintly suspicious.

Armand takes an engraved invitation out of his pocket and thrusts it at Louis.

Louis reads aloud as we see:

THEATRE DES VAMPIRES
By Special Invitation
Friday, 9 p.m.

ARMAND

Bring the petit beauty with you.
No one will harm you. I won't
allow it. But you must explain
tomorrow how you know my name.

Armand vanishes.

Louis listens to the silence.

EXT. BOULEVARD DES CAPUCHINES - THEATRE DES VAMPIRES
- NIGHT

Louis formally dressed, with Claudia in rich attire, in his arms, approaches the theatre as others buy tickets and go in.

LOUIS

Remember what I've told you.
They'll have different strengths
and weaknesses. Some will read
your thoughts if you allow it.
Be on guard.

They draw close to:

HUGE POSTERS

announcing the Theatre Des Vampires showing cliched images of vampires in cloaks overcoming damsels.

ANOTHER ANGLE

CLAUDIA

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

LOUIS

I think it's nonsense, all right. But something tells me it's going to be the strangest nonsense we've ever seen.

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

INT. THEATRE BOX POV - STAGE BELOW

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

CLAUDIA

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

LOUIS

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

Stage; curtain rises.

A vampire disguised as an old woman comes out on the stage, limping to COMIC MUSIC, basket on her arm, as the grim reaper, a vampire, holding a skull mask on a stick before his face, follows her.

Suddenly she sees him. MUSIC is poignant. She kneels, prays to him silently to take her. She lays her head against her folded hands in weariness.

The grim reaper comes for a closer look, then backs off. Laughter. The old woman rises and chases the grim reaper. Laughter as they run round and round on the stage.

The grim reaper hides behind a painted tree. The old woman gives up, goes away. Grim reaper now lowers the mask and yawns. Revealing that he is Santiago. Bored, he lifts the mask again, appears to fall asleep with it over his face, against the painted tree.

LOUIS

(whisper)

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Santiago affects a bored air as if about to go to sleep, when a spotlight uncovers --

A MORTAL WOMAN suddenly forced out upon the stage.

CLAUDIA

She's no vampire.

LOUIS

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

The audience laughs uneasily, then stops as the Mortal Woman comes into the footlights. She is too beautiful, too confused. Silence falls.

The grim reaper throws up his hand in adoration. Then he tears away the skull mask and his white face grimaces at the audience, looking as frightening suddenly in its preternatural gleam as the mask.

The Mortal Woman sees him and is more frightened. Tears stand in her eyes.

Vampire men and women, clothed in black emerge from the shadows, each holding a skull mask before his or her face as they make a great horseshoe behind the Mortal Woman which she does not see.

Suddenly, the Mortal Woman sees them and is more frightened.

CLOSE ON VAMPIRE MEN AND WOMEN

as in concert, they cast down before them the skull masks, the sticks stack like crossbones, the skulls gleaming at the audience. It is a preternatural trick of skill.

The vampires are seven -- five women and two men in addition to the grim reaper. All beautiful gleaming white, aged 20 or 30 in mortal appearance.

LOUIS

(whisper)

They use no paint. And the audience thinks it is paint!

CLAUDIA

CLAUDIA

Oh, Lestat would have loved this!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

I'm not so sure you're right. I don't love it!

MORTAL WOMAN

I don't want to die!

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

SANTIAGO

We are death!

The Mortal Woman steps to the footlights.

MORTAL WOMAN

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

LOUIS

This is no performance!

CLAUDIA

And you and I are the only ones in the audience who know.

SANTIAGO

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

Santiago gestures to the audience.

FOCUS ON AUDIENCE

Rapt faces.

ON STAGE

MORTAL WOMAN

But I'm young...

SANTIAGO

Death is no respecter of age. You could harbor an illness in your young body. Outside a man might wait to kill you simply for your yellow hair. Need I tell you what fate has in store for you.

MORTAL WOMAN

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANTIAGO

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

SANTIAGO

approaches her, and tears the drawstring out of her peasant blouse. It opens completely, and starts to slip. She tries to catch it, but he gently takes her wrists and lifts them down. The blouse falls revealing her young breasts.

LOUIS AND CLAUDIA

LOUIS

This is monstrous!

CLAUDIA

(dazed with hunger)
Yes, and very beautiful.

ON STAGE

SANTIAGO

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

MORTAL WOMAN

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

SANTIAGO

Then why should you care if you die now?

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

AUDIENCE

is awestruck by her beauty, her suffering.

SANTIAGO

draws near her cheek.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANTIAGO

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

AUDIENCE

A YOUNG GIRL cries out from the third row.

YOUNG GIRL

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

Audience roars with laughter.

ON STAGE

SANTIAGO

(aside to the girl)
You wait your turn.

Laughter.

The Mortal Woman shakes her head in panic.

SANTIAGO

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

CLOSE ON CLAUDIA

Even she is repelled by the cruelty of it. Shakes her head.

MORTAL WOMAN

shakes her head no. She is helpless.

ON STAGE

SANTIAGO

Unconscious death waits for you everywhere. But we are conscious death. Do you know what it means to be loved by death, to become our bride!

MORTAL WOMAN

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

FROM HER POV

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

ARMAND

No pain.

MORTAL WOMAN (O.S.)

(entranced)

No pain?

ARMAND

takes her by the naked shoulders.

ARMAND

Your beauty is a gift to us.

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

ARMAND

Who deserves such a gift?

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

MORTAL WOMAN

No pain...

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

CLOSE ON LOUIS

who battles desire and hunger with anger. Pushes his tongue against his fangs, and frowns.

LOUIS

I've seen enough of this.

CLAUDIA

(cajoling)

Be still!

ON STAGE

The naked Mortal Woman lies dead on the floor of the painted forest. The vampires seem to vanish one by one. The AUDIENCE LOUDLY APPLAUDS the tricks.

ANOTHER ANGLE

APPLAUSE, CHATTER. But the audience is uneasy and eager to escape. They hurry to the exits, whispering anxiously, with forced smiles.

CLAUDIA

Patience, Louis. Patience.

Houselights go up as Louis sees Santiago standing in the door of the box gesturing for them to come.

INT. FOOT OF STAIRWAY

opening into a

HUGE UNDERGROUND BALLROOM

Walls are painted with copies of famous Brueghels, Goyas, depictions of death. Fine wooden coffins lie in niches set into the walls up and down both sides of the long room. Some are very old, some lustrous, some rusted.

Candles burn in sconces.

Armand stands in the center of the ballroom, hands clasped behind his back, as Claudia and Louis come down the stairs and into the room.

Vampire men and women seem to appear all around Louis and Claudia deliberately startling them. Hands dart out to touch Claudia as if she were a doll. Shrieks of preternatural laughter. She cleaves to Louis. He is silently enraged. He looks to Armand.

Armand gestures for the vampires to back off.

All obey but ESTELLE.

ESTELLE

Such a darling. Whoever made you,
my dear?

She menaces Claudia, her breasts enormous, her fangs bared.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Armand glares at her. Suddenly she is forced off her feet and back against the wall by something invisible. She slams into the plaster and glowers at Armand.

ESTELLE

That was crude of you!

She vanishes.

Blur. Armand reappears with a lighted candle in his hand. He gestures for Louis to follow him. Claudia remains behind, watching warily.

Armand and Louis walk along the walls, the candle flaring on the ghastly murals: The Triumph Of Death; The Fall Of The Angels; Bosch's Hell.

Armand's face gleams like that of an angel above the candle. Louis is horrified by the paintings as he was by the performance.

LOUIS

Monstrous.

ARMAND

(lips not moving yet
echoing Claudia's
earlier words)

Yes, and very beautiful.

LOUIS

Your lips, they didn't move.

ARMAND

I'll speak in audible words if it
makes you happy. I can do it
either way.

Louis looks at him, drawn to him, yet wary.

Armand snaps his fingers.

A mortal boy of fifteen comes forward. Armand gestures to Louis. And the boy offers himself. Louis is utterly confused. Can't resist. Sees marks on the boy's throat. Drinks his blood.

Other vampires appear all around Louis who suddenly senses it and draws back, releasing the boy, ashamed.

CLOSE ON CLAUDIA

far away, watching contemptuously and warily.

LOUIS

is disoriented, trying to regain his equilibrium.

BOY

smiles as he withdraws, spellbound and weak.

LOUIS

glares at the others.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Armand beckons for Claudia and Louis to follow as he reveals a door in the wall by opening it and leading them down stairs into a passage and into a stone room with medieval chairs, table, an old coffin, a blazing fire. Books on one wall.

MEDIEVAL PAINTING OF SATAN

hangs over the fire.

ON SCENE

A door is open to the rainy night outside and another stairway to the street above. Armand closes it. Louis falls into the chair, hands to his temples.

Armand turns to Claudia. Claudia's eyes mist. Without a change of expression, she sits limp in a chair, her eyes moving listlessly over the books.

CLOSE ON BOOKS

Withcraft, demonology, lives of the Saints, Grand Grimoire.

BACK TO SCENE

She refuses to lose consciousness.

Armand sits in the chair opposite Louis as Louis looks up.

ARMAND

Disappointing, isn't it? To come so far, and find so little! Jaded lords and ladies of darkness amusing themselves like the Old Royal Court.

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

Yet, you are their leader! You let them do all this. This play, this horror...

ARMAND

You sound like your maker. It was Lestat de Lioncourt, wasn't it, who made you both? He condemned me once in the same way. All I do is give the others what they need of me.

LOUIS

And this theatre sustains them, and gives them contentment.

ARMAND

So they let me believe. Or perhaps I must believe it.

LOUIS

You can read my thoughts, can't you?

ARMAND

Now and then. You don't know your own strength. The child knows hers. Her purpose she can't conceal, but her deeper thoughts are closed to all who would pillage them.

LOUIS

She's no child. You know that whether you can read her mind or not. And what purpose do you speak of?

ARMAND

She has the charm of a child. And the wisest of us can be lulled by appearances. And we need interesting and new companions.

LOUIS

Do we?

ARMAND

You know we do. Time is our enemy! What would we do without the fledglings to guide us into the new era as all we love slowly rots and fades away?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis tears his eyes off Armand and looks up at the picture of Satan.

ARMAND

Why do you stare at that? It's a picture, nothing more.

He rises suddenly, composure broken, grabs the picture off the wall and throws it into the fire.

LOUIS

It has no meaning.

ARMAND

You know it does not. It's a symbol.

LOUIS

But the old ones, the very old ones...

Armand takes his hand.

ARMAND

I know nothing of God or the Devil. I have never seen a vision, nor heard a divine voice, nor learnt a secret that would damn or save my soul. And I am the eldest. For all I know I am the oldest living vampire in the world.

Louis is thunderstruck. He stares at the angelic face which is very sad.

CLOSE ON ARMAND.

Louis falls back into the chair.

Armand waits patiently. Then:

ARMAND

This doesn't surprise you. You knew you would find no answers here.

LOUIS

Oh, but I hoped and I dreamed. That Lestat was wrong, that there was some framework, some place for us. Children of Satan... that someone somewhere knew why we were allowed to exist.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARMAND
Children of Satan? Didn't Lestat
tell you of those old customs.

LOUIS
Yes.

ARMAND
And if there is a Satan, who made
him, pray, whom do think?

LOUIS
Why, God made Satan. Who else?

ARMAND
Then we're all Children of God,
aren't we? And that is what
mortals believe. How can we
improve upon that?

Louis is struck by the simplicity of it.

LOUIS
Then we are damned in hell, all
of us. We are evil...

ARMAND
But what is evil?

LOUIS
Now it's you who are deceiving
yourself. You know what it is.
You saw it on that stage tonight.
Evil is cruelty. Evil is murder.
Evil is the taking of a single
human life!

Armand is deeply moved by Louis' sincerity.

ARMAND
I fear for you!

LOUIS
And not for yourself?

(OPTIONAL. SCENES OF VENICE WITH VOICE OVER)

ARMAND
No. I was born to Darkness
centuries ago, in Venice by a
Master who brought me to him in
love. He told me no tales of gods
or demons. It was the others who
told those lies.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARMAND (CONT'D)

Those who came to destroy him because he was an outlaw and a blasphemer. Those who took me away and taught me the Ways Of Satan, and the Rules Of The Children Of Darkness, the old catechism of the damned.

CLOSE ON Louis's face.

ARMAND

And I took their vows, and said their litanies, and sang their hymns and danced at their sabbats. Until Lestat came. Your maker. The innocent one, the perfect spirit of the last century, believing in nothing but the goodness of his own nature. And he was right.

Louis doesn't answer. Then:

LOUIS

Lestat knew we were evil. He just didn't care.

ARMAND

Knew? You say knew? You mean Lestat is...

Claudia appears suddenly at Louis's shoulder, interrupting. She is fighting a spell, as if it is a drug. Trying to see and move with clarity.

CLAUDIA

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

She stares hard at Armand and he stares back at her. She looks away warily, as if his eyes have a power.

ARMAND

You can leave by this door. The others won't hurt you. I won't let them. This I swear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Armand looks meaningfully at Claudia who eyes him suspiciously.

ARMAND
I have no magic potions for you,
little one. No charms.

Claudia is shocked by his words.

ARMAND
You will be as you are and as you
were made... a child forever.

Claudia is enraged and humiliated, glaring at him and then at Louis.

CLAUDIA
I made no requests of you!

LOUIS
What are you saying to each other?

ARMAND
Go. Your finely appointed rooms
await you. You can always come to
this door if you wish to find me.
I'll be here.

INT. HOTEL SUITE (PARIS) - BEFORE DAWN

Claudia paces in a rage. Hair wild, dress undone, looking entirely like a little woman, voice resonant like a woman. All childish innocence long lost.

CLAUDIA
I detest them, I can't stand the
sight of them! They disgust me!
Stupid, bourgeois Parisians.
Fools! They all dress in black,
did you see it? It's a damned
organization, a private club!

Louis stares into the fire, dejected.

CLAUDIA
God in heaven, what I wouldn't
give to speak with Lestat for
five minutes! And there are no
little ones among them. I am the
only one! The only one! And
their leader mocks me!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis takes her in his arms, tries to still her with kisses.

CLAUDIA

What a fool I was to kill Lestat.
And I'm in danger.

LOUIS

What danger?

CLAUDIA

I can feel it emanating from all of them! They want to know what became of our maker. They're suspicious. They have their rules. Their idiotic rules!

LOUIS

They don't know what happened to Lestat. They search our souls but they don't have the answers. Not yet. And we are in danger, my cherie. We. Not you.

CLAUDIA

No, it is I who am in danger. And as much from that ghastly Armand as from the rest.

LOUIS

That's not true.

CLAUDIA

He wants you, Louis. He wants you for a companion. He bides his time in this place. 'How we need new companions.' Do you remember what he said? And he taunts me with my foolish dreams!

LOUIS

What dreams, Claudia?

CLAUDIA

Did you think you were the only fool, beloved? I dreamed of some wizardry that would make me...

He kisses her, smooths back her hair.

LOUIS

You are perfect to me as you are. You always were. You are my beloved.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She leans on him, closes her eyes, confides:

CLAUDIA

Do you know what Armand's soul
said to me -- 'Why not end the
pain now, child? The sun can be
your deliverance.'

LOUIS

No.

CLAUDIA

Oh, yes. He can't make me grow
into a womanly shape but he can
show me how to die.

EXT. FOOT OF STEPS (PARIS) - NEXT NIGHT (RAIN)

by Armand's door.

Louis knocks. Armand opens.

ARMAND

You've come early. I'm grateful
to you. I was waiting for you,
of course.

LOUIS

Listen to me.

He follows Armand into the room.

LOUIS

Claudia, she is dear to me, my...
daughter.

ARMAND

Your lover.

LOUIS

No, my beloved, my child.

ARMAND

If you say so. You are so
innocent.

LOUIS

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

ARMAND

She is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

But why? Why would they hurt her. What right have they to do anything to either of us!

ARMAND

They are the coven. They have their laws. It's forbidden to make one as young as she is, one so helpless, one that cannot survive on its own.

LOUIS

It wasn't her blunder!

ARMAND

She's too small to make a vampire of a male or female old enough to protect her. She can't... make another at all. Do you know what she hoped to find here?

LOUIS

Yes. She should have known such a thing wasn't possible. But you have to protect her.

Armand nods.

ARMAND

I know.

Louis sinks into the chair, looking up at Armand.

LOUIS

There was so much I wanted to say to you, so much I wanted to ask, to learn from you.

ARMAND

And I'm here to teach. I need you, young one, just as you need me. I'm the teacher Lestat wouldn't be. And you're the pupil he didn't want.

He draws close to Louis, a picture of boyish innocence.

ARMAND

How many vampires have the stamina for immortality? Do you know how quickly they perish of their own will.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

Yes, because I almost did it once to myself.

ARMAND

No, you'd never give up on life. I know you wouldn't. If the world were reduced to one empty cell and one fragile candle, you'd stay in that cell studying that candle. You see too clearly. You see too much.

LOUIS

That's what Lestat said to me. And I failed him! I wronged him. Oh God.

ARMAND

(smiling)

How he must have loved you. I love you.

LOUIS

But why?

ARMAND

I need you more than he ever did. To make my link with this century, to carry me into its art and its philosophy, and all the things I despair of understanding on my own.

LOUIS

Oh, but you'd be making a terrible mistake. I'm at odds with everything and always have been. I wasted life when I had it. I waste my gifts now. I have never belonged anywhere with anyone at anytime.

Armand laughs softly.

ARMAND

You are so nearly perfect. Louis, don't you realize everyone in this Nineteenth Century feels as you do? You are the very spirit of these times! Your melancholy is the melancholy of the century.

Louis is speechless, and in love.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARMAND

There's so much I can show you. I want to go back to Italy, back to Venice, to the palace where I was made. I can teach you things about your powers you haven't begun to learn. But listen. You must... you must get the child away from here. They won't tolerate her. They'll destroy her.

LOUIS

I can't leave her. Oh, I want to come with you. Talking to you, it's...

ARMAND

Like feasting? Like the deep rich taste of blood?

LOUIS

Yes.

ARMAND

Come, I'll hold them off. They're all cynical little cowards when we get right down to it. The trash of the era, just as you are its essence. I'll keep them at bay, but you must think of some way to get her safely out of here and on her own.

EXT. STREETS (MONTMARTRE)

Louis walks up the hill past lighted cottages.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Of course I couldn't leave her, get her safely away! What did such words mean to me. But I wanted to leave her! For the first time, I admitted it. I had wanted to leave us since the night she's tried to kill Lestat. I loved her, yes, beyond reason, but since that night, we had been a torment to each other now and I could deny it no longer.

Louis stops. Peers into --

PAINTER'S STUDIO

The mortal painter is fast at work on a huge canvas, vaguely impressionistic, very early Monet. He stops in his work as he sees Louis in the doorway.

The painter wipes his hands on his smock, beckons for Louis to enter. The room is brightly lighted, full of glorious pictures. A fire blazes in the little stove.

Louis is hungry. He lets the painter, enrapt, put him in the chair.

The painter begins Louis's portrait.

CLOSE ON Louis who becomes ever more hungry staring at the painter who works furiously sketching Louis's face.

The painter stops, disturbed.

LOUIS
(dazed monotone)
Save yourself. Beware.

The painter drops the brush, backs away in fear.

Louis takes him. The painter fights, but Louis sinks his teeth and drinks.

LOUIS
Die. Die... Give it up...

He releases the painter, still alive but comatose, onto the floor.

Louis stares at the canvas, the sketch is a portrait of innocence, a young man, wholly compassionate and gentle.

LOUIS
I'm mortal now, like you, my
brother, with your blood.

He touches his face.

Louis touches his own face.

LOUIS
Warm and wanting to be warmer, to
go on existing, and thriving on
your blood!

The painter's eyes close.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis lifts the painting and starts to leave with it, when the painter opens his eyes, and rises up, grabbing the painting from Louis.

They wrestle with it, Louis winning, but casting aside the painting and drawing the painter up to him and gashing his throat in rage for the final drink.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Louis enters. He is carrying the painting sketch, which he props on the mantel. Suddenly he catches a scent. Small lift of his chin. He looks into the mirror. He sees in the glass.

MADELINE, the Doll Maker, resplendent in green taffeta, sitting like a Madonna with Claudia on her lap. Claudia's arms are around her neck. The contrast between mortal woman and immortal child is plain.

Louis turns around.

LOUIS

Why did you bring her here? What does this mean?

Claudia slips from Madeline's lap. She approaches, looking womanly and cruel.

CLAUDIA

Don't you know?

LOUIS

No.

CLAUDIA

Even now you dream of leaving me, of wandering the world with your new teacher. Well, you will make her one of us before you leave me! You will do that for all you've done to me!

Louis recoils.

CLAUDIA

Do you know how I despise you? Your evil is that you cannot be evil! You will not! You didn't stop Lestat when he made me! You didn't stop me when I destroyed him. Well, you will do evil now and for me!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

You will make her strong and
immortal so she can care for me,
so I can leave this place!

Madeline is stricken with love for Claudia. Claudia paces, a woman in a doll's body, enraged.

Louis is not surprised so much as defeated. Bravely he listens.

CLAUDIA

Snatching me from mortal hands
like two grim monsters in a
nightmare fairy tale! You idle,
blind parents! Fathers!

She spits blood at his feet.

CLAUDIA

And you weep. You haven't tears
enough for what you did to me.
Six more mortal years, seven,
I would have had that shape.

She points to Madeline.

CLAUDIA

Now, you give her to me! You do
this so I can go on with her! I
will not live with this hatred
any longer. I will not live with
this rage!

CLOSE ON Louis accepting, and identifying with her completely without defense.

CLAUDIA

Oooh!! I love you still, that's
the core of it.

She pivots. Bending at the waist as if struck by a blow.

CLAUDIA

Lestat I never loved, but you
always. The hate I feel is equal
to the love. Louis, do you know
how much hate that is?

LOUIS

Yes, I know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Claudia begins to tremble and cry blood tears. Madeline comes to her side.

MADELINE

Oh, my precious one, don't cry.
Don't.

They embrace each other. Louis watches.

Pause.

He goes to Madeline and he draws her near to him. He cradles Madeline's chin in his hand.

LOUIS

You must do as I tell you. Look at the gaslight. Don't take your eyes off it. I'm going to drain you to the brink of death but you must stay alive, do you hear me?

MADELINE

Yes!

Louis bends and starts to drink her blood.

EXT. HOTEL SUITE - BALCONY

Louis emerges from the room and puts his hands on the railing. The wind blows the curtains. Behind him we see...

Madeline dancing in mad circles with Claudia. Their mingled laughter becomes louder and louder. Louis stares down into the Boulevard. At the corner of...

CAFE DE LA PAIX

he sees...

Armand. Solitary. Watching him from the street.

HOTEL SUITE - NEXT NIGHT

Luggage being carted out by bellhops. Madeline is tracing the flowers in the carpet with her foot like a person on LSD, giggling, and dancing around the flowers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis pays the last bellhop. He leaves. Claudia, dressed and ready for the journey, shuts the door. She comes back and she looks at Louis.

CLAUDIA

Forgive me.

LOUIS

There's nothing to forgive.

CLAUDIA

I showed you my pain, Father.

LOUIS

That you did, child, and I deserved to see it. All of it, and your anger as well.

Claudia reaches up for him with both arms. He lifts her, embraces her.

LOUIS

My darling, my love...

Claudia kisses him on the mouth. She draws back, bites into her tongue, and when the blood flows, she kisses him full on the mouth again. He closes his eyes, receiving the kiss, and then he pulls away holding her.

CLOSE ON MADELINE

looking up, startled.

Lights dim all around her.

LOUIS

is fully alert. He looks around.

OTHER VAMPIRES

in their black clothes are all around them. Pressing closer and closer.

ESTELLE

Time for justice, little one.

SANTIAGO

(to Louis)

Yes, you blundering fool!

As Louis starts to fight, we hear Madeline scream.

INT. FACADE OF THEATRE

which is closed. Carriages stop before the doors. We see the whole crowd in black, with Louis, Claudia, and Madeline, emerge from the carriages. The prisoners are shoved inside.

INT. BALLROOM

Louis, Madeline and Claudia are forced inside, and the vampires make a circle around them.

LOUIS

Where is Armand? I demand that you wait for him.

SANTIAGO

You can make no demands here, rogue! Bastard!

Louis rushes at him and is knocked back. Madeline and Claudia cling to each other. Claudia appears fatalistic. Madeline sobs in fear.

Louis gasps.

HIS POV

Lestat, dressed beautifully but horribly scarred now from the fire more than from the early stabbing, is shoved forward, teetering and reaching for Santiago's shoulder to steady himself. He is clearly confused.

LESTAT

Louis... Where is Armand? Armand promised me...

BACK TO SCENE

He stares, disoriented, at the others. Claudia looks at him, but he does not seem to recognize her or anyone, but Louis. Claudia is fearless and resigned.

SANTIAGO

You rose up against your maker. You tried to destroy one of our own kind! You rose against the coven master!

LOUIS

But he's alive. We didn't destroy them. Lestat, I beg you if ever there was a particle of love between us...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lestat tries to follow the words, but can't.

LESTAT

Where is Armand? He promised me his healing blood. I need it. I need the blood of the old ones.

(recognizes Louis again)

Louis?

(smiles)

It's you.

Vampires scream over and over, Justice, Justice, Justice...

Santiago points at Claudia. Lestat appears to see her for the first time.

SANTIAGO

Denounce the rebels. Name them and pass sentence.

LOUIS

Where is Armand? This creature doesn't know what he's saying. You have no right to condemn us. Lestat, look at me. Tell them to let the other two go. I am the one who hurt you. Tell them.

Lestat tries to follow, but can only express a faint happiness at the sight of Louis. He tries to gather his thoughts.

A BANGING, DRAGGING NOISE distracts Louis.

ESTELLE

Enough. The outcast has confessed. The child is an abomination. The woman is a weak and stupid fledgling. The sentence on all is death.

Louis goes wild, fighting, but they overpower him, dragging him to a big iron coffin which they have dragged to the spot. They force him down into it. They lock a chain over his chest, and hold him.

Santiago bends over the coffin.

SANTIAGO

For you, the slow way. Perhaps it will take centuries. Perhaps it will never really come at all.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Deep in the old dungeon, no one
will ever hear your screams as
you thirst, as you wither. Time
will have you all to itself.

Louis struggles. The lid slams.

INT. COFFIN

Louis struggles, breaks the chain, and beats his fists
against the lid of the coffin. All in vain. He tries
to turn over, he can't. It's too tight. He goes wild,
beating at the lid. Then stops.

TREAD OF FEET on stairway, and going down a long passage.
Seems endless. Louis feels all around him for some weak-
ness in the coffin, can find none.

Sounds of BRICKS and MORTAR. Louis stares. One more
struggle. Then he loses consciousness.

BLACKNESS.

INT. COFFIN

Dim light. Louis sleeps. Sounds of BRICKS being BROKEN,
thrown aside. Then of LOCKS BREAKING.

Louis opens his eyes. He is at once alert.

The lid opens. He sees.

ARMAND

above him, reaching down to lift his hand. A torch burns
on the wall behind Armand.

CUT TO:

LOUIS

Standing beside Armand, in vast long catacomb. Very far
at the end, we see the broken wall. Louis runs to it.

CUT TO:

LOUIS AND ARMAND

stepping through the broken brick wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

Where is she? What's happened?
Where is Claudia?

ARMAND

Come, we must go, that way through
my cell.

Points to his cell at the end of the passage, foot of
the steps. We can hear the RAIN through the open door.

LOUIS

No, not without Claudia and
Madeleine. Where are they?

ARMAND

I can't save them.

LOUIS

That's not true. You don't
believe I'd go without them do
you. Good, God! They have them
here, somewhere, you must help me
find them.

He goes up the stone stairs and enters the ballroom.
Estelle stands far off, looking at him coolly. She lifts
the stage skull mask and laughs softly behind it. A male
vampire slumps in a chair staring fully at Louis.

Silence. Indifference.

Others hover in the same manner. A door is open to the
falling rain.

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

LESTAT

Louis, we should go home now. We
should go back where we belong.

LOUIS

Claudia! Claudia!

Louis turns round and round in rage. Passive still faces.
The open DOOR BANGS suddenly in gust of breeze and opens
on the RAIN once more.

Louis glares at it, at Lestat. Lestat's hands release
the cloth. We see it is a small torn bloodstained
dress. Claudia's dress.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis sees it. He snatches it up and stares at it. The DOOR BANGS AGAIN. Estelle laughs. RAIN GUSTS into the ballroom.

Louis goes to the door. Armand approaches, tries to pull him away, but Louis shrugs him off, advancing on the doorway. He draws nearer and nearer and stares out --

INT. BRICK AIRWELL

On the stones lie Claudia and Madeline, burnt to greasy ashes, in each other's arms, exactly like the maid and her daughter in the brick kitchen in New Orleans. Same attitude, as if they died embracing each other.

Only Claudia's blonde hair and Madeline's red hair remain unburnt.

Louis look at the walls of this airwell, he looks up many stories to the sky.

Santiago shoves Louis suddenly into the ashes. Louis roars in horror, then attacks Santiago, overpowering him, ashes scattered into the RAINY WIND. Claudia's golden locks fly up into the wind, they swirl around the two warring figures.

Santiago tries to escape, dragging Louis back with him into --

BALLROOM

where the others close in.

Armand pulls Louis free of them. Louis fights.

BLACKNESS.

EXT. DOOR OF NOTRE DAME (PARIS)

Louis is slumped against the stone wall. Armand stands beside him like a guardian angel.

ARMAND

I couldn't prevent it.

LOUIS

I don't believe you. I do not have to read your soul to know that you lie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARMAND

Louis, they can not be brought back. That is impossible. Their remains are destroyed.

LOUIS

You let them do it.

Louis climbs to his feet.

LOUIS

You held sway over them. They feared you. You wanted it to happen.

ARMAND

I swear I did not.

LOUIS

I understand you only too well. You let them do it, as I let her rip Lestat's heart to pieces! You let it happen as I let him make her! Well, I am your passive fool no more. Your melancholy spirit of this century! I know what I must do. And I warn you, do not seek your cell in the Theatre des Vampires again. Do not go near it.

EXT. STREETS (PARIS) - ALMOST DAWN

Wet and deserted. Theatre Des Vampires is quiet.

CLOSEUP ON CLOCK

CHIMING five a.m.

CLOSE ON LOUIS

looking at the paling sky. He is in the alleyway, outside of Armand's cell. He has a huge keg with him. He finds the door unlocked. He enters.

INT. CELL

empty. The hearth is cold. The old coffin is gone. Louis silently closes the door to the passage, and bars it with the immense bar. He looks about. Looks at the bar. It's enough to block this exit. He rushes back out.

INT. THEATRE

Louis hurls kerosene all over the stage curtain, the padded seats, the carpet. He leaves a long trail of kerosene behind him like a wick. He rushes to the wings and down the stairs, dribbling the kerosene behind him. He sees the candlelight of the ballroom below. Then the candle goes out. He listens, creeping quietly into the ballroom, leaking the kerosene from the cask. He splashes over the coffins that gleam in the dimness.

Then he strikes a match and heaves it at the kerosene. Everything bursts into flames. The trail of kerosene ROARS INTO FIRE through the ballroom over the coffins and up the stairs. We hear EXPLOSION of FIRE above.

LOUIS

shudders all over, fighting the morning weakness. He takes a small scythe from his belt and stands like the Grim Reaper.

Estelle rises from her burning coffin, screams and tries to run through the fire, but Louis slashes at her with the scythe, and she goes down screaming, her dress in flames.

ESTELLE

Stop him. It's morning. The
sunlight. Stop him.

Others rise, choking in the smoke. SCREAMS come from everywhere. They are burning.

Louis backs to the stairs to the dungeon. He can see down there a thin pale light under Armand's bolted door. Morning coming.

Santiago suddenly appears behind. He turns. Santiago rushes him in a blur. Louis lifts the scythe, too fast to see what he himself is doing. Santiago's head streaming blood flies through the air. The body drops, flapping its arms.

SCREAMS come from everywhere.

Another vampire rushes burning towards Louis. He decapitates the burning vampire.

The light from below is nearly blinding him.

LOUIS

covers his eyes with his arm and descends, rushing past the door of Armand's cell with its burning gleam of light. He runs down the long passage to the broken brick wall. He enters the --

DUNGEON

He stops once to catch his breath in the cool dark,
listening to --

SCREAMS ABOVE. ROAR of FIRE.

PASSAGEWAY

before and behind are empty.

He rushes back the long dark passage and finds the iron
coffin in which they locked him. He digs the scythe into
the ceiling, over and over, causing RUBBLE to FALL in a
great heap before the coffin, and then he climbs inside.

INT. COFFIN - CLOSE ON LOUIS

His eyes closing. Oblivion.

STAIRWAY - LOUIS - FOLLOWING NIGHT

Moves slowly up the sooty stone stairs, hearing the SOUNDS
of the CITY above. He emerges in the --

BURNT-OUT BALLROOM

under the naked sky. Above, on the --

EXT. SIDEWALKS

there are hastily constructed wooden barriers, a fragment
of a wall, heaps of rubble, but the theatre is gone.

He climbs up over the heaps of rubble. A high wall
remains, a piece of burnt roof and rafters.

Carriages and pedestrians go by, ignoring him.

INT. CROWDED CAFE

across from the theatre. Louis sits at a table, paper
folded in front of him. We see headline:

FIRE DESTROYS BOULEVARD THEATRE

LOUIS (V.O.)

The mortal world did not guess
what had taken place. Few bodies
had been found in the ruins.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

In other words, the younger ones had left their bones; the older ones had been obliterated. No mention of an eyewitness or a survivor. How could there have been?

INT. LOUVRE - NIGHTS LATER

It is already a museum by this time, and Louis fancily dressed and composed, walks alone through the rooms, looking at the painting by moonlight that comes through the windows and the skylights. He pauses before a Gericault. The Wreck of the Medusa.

Armand appears standing beside the painting.

Louis sighs.

LOUIS

You didn't even warn them, did you?

ARMAND

No.

LOUIS

Why not?

ARMAND

I didn't want to.

LOUIS

You were their leader. They trusted you.

ARMAND

No. That was never true. The theatre was mine. But I was never the leader, not since the time when Lestat destroyed the old ways.

Louis stops.

LOUIS

And Lestat? Was he there when the theatre burned?

ARMAND

Did you want him to be there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (V.O.)

Then only a few years ago, I caught a glimpse of another vampire, and I knew at once it had to be Gabrielle!

CLOSE ON Louis in gentleman's white tropical suit staring through the crowd.

Distant figure of Gabrielle, her hair tied back, dressed in khaki men's clothes, white-faced, oblivious, like a walking statue. Unnoticed yet horrifying in her trance-like movement.

LOUIS (V.O.)

I didn't dare call out to her. What could I have said to her? It was like seeing a goddess!

He watches as she suddenly vanishes. He hurries through the crowd trying to catch another sight of her, but he can't. She seems to have disappeared. He's alone in the mortal crowd.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Every memory of Lestat I'd ever buried in my soul came back to me. Oh, I'd never really forgotten him, but now he crowded everything from my mind. He became my obsession.

EXT. STREET (SAN FRANCISCO) - MALLOY'S FACE (PRESENT)

MALLOY

Lestat is still alive. He did escape the fire.

LOUIS

That's what I had to find out. I'd been back to Paris innumerable times. I would have known had he been there. Now I wanted to return to New Orleans. Finally I could think of nothing else. The idle dream that if he existed still, he might be there. And I wanted to see my home again. My city. Where we had been so happy all those years. It was a reason... for existing.

EXT. GARDEN DISTRICT - NIGHT

Louis in Twentieth Century suit walks past the many Greek Revival Mansions.

LOUIS

Maybe I sensed something in those dark streets. I saw and heard sounds. And then on Prytania Street, only blocks from the Lafayette Cemetery, I caught the scent of death and it wasn't coming from the graves.

PAN OVER white-walled Lafayette Cemetery, surrounding mansions.

LOUIS (V.O.)

The scent grew stronger as I walked on uptown. Old death. A scent too faint for mortals to detect.

Louis sees rats darting along the street. One, then two, then two more together. They rush into a great overgrown garden surrounding a ruined mansion. No lights.

LOUIS (V.O.)

Someone was luring them.

A cat darts along the top of the wall and into the garden.

LOUIS (V.O.)

The smell of death grew stronger.

Louis stops at rusted gate. He forces it open and enters --

EXT. VERITABLE JUNGLE

of overgrown rose and oak tree and wisteria. He sees a faint glimmer of light coming from a distant glassless window of a huge two-story Greek Revival house.

He approaches, and then he sees --

HIS POV

Old shriveled corpse of a man, long dead and dried up, snagged in the thorny rose vines.

BACK TO SCENE

He looks around. Walks on. Sees another corpse, almost nothing but bones sinking into the wet earth, the roots of the oak overgrowing it.

He looks up at the distant light.

He passes a third corpse, caught in wisteria and rose vine, only bones and clothes.

LOUIS (V.O.)

They were like the doomed princes caught in the thorny vines of Sleeping Beauty's castle. I knew what it meant. A vampire had lured them here, but had been too weak to get rid of them.

Louis sees dead rats lying near the steps.

LOUIS (V.O.)

No vampire can linger near the remains of his victims. It spelt despair -- the behavior of a dying animal that pollutes its own nest. Perhaps it meant madness.

Louis treads carefully on the rotted steps. He moves along the porch. More dead rats. He sees through the floor-length windows into rooms lined with stacked books. Virtually walled with them. Water seeps down over the books. It gleams as it drips from the ceiling. The floors of the splendid rooms are bare, except for a rotted French chair by a dead fireplace. A single mirror reflecting the moon.

Dead rats.

He moves along the porch to the parlor windows. The candle flickers inside. He sees --

HIS POV

Lestat lying on the floor. He is gaunt to near starvation. All his scars are gone, but he is almost a skeleton and his eyes are enormous in their sockets. His clothes are rags. Blond hair beautiful as always.

One tiny candle stands beside him. He reads:

The Black Mask Magazine. 1929.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He reads aloud the second installment of Dashiell Hammett's, *The Maltese Falcon*, laughing now and then, with delight. He affects a tough American voice, lapsing into French accent for narrative.

Without turning his head he speaks.

LESTAT
Come into my parlor, Louis, said
the spider to the fly.

He goes on reading, as Sam Spade bullies Joe Cairo.

INSIDE

Louis studies him. Lestat ignores Louis.

LOUIS
I prayed you were alive!

LESTAT
Did you? To whom did you pray?

Lestat continues reading. He is Sam Spade.

Louis approaches and takes the magazine tentatively from Lestat's hand. Lestat allows this.

LOUIS
1929. Do you know what year this
is?

LESTAT
Why don't you bring something new
to read then? A long time ago
the magazines stopped coming. I
had no more bank drafts, no more
ink to write. No more stamps.

Lestat appears almost too weak to lift his head. But he is very composed. Mentation perfect.

LESTAT
You are beautiful, Louis. You
always were. The strong one.
Armand's no longer with you, is
he? That's better for you, though
you may not know it now.

LOUIS
Where is the coffin?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

What does it matter? There are many dark places in my house and beneath it.

LOUIS

Lestat, this place is a ruin. This is no longer safe. Mortals will come here.

Lestat laughs softly.

LESTAT

That would be lovely. I haven't tasted mortal blood in so long. Could you get me a mortal, Louis?

Lestat struggles to sit up. He is straightbacked, smiling, a horror of starved limbs.

LESTAT

You know, some nasty little thief or killer, like in the old days. Some bittersweet trash from the riverfront. I can still hear the river. I can smell it. Can you? Don't bother. I don't really want a human. If I did, I'd get one for myself.

LOUIS

How long have you been here?

Lestat falls into thought, then suddenly excited:

LESTAT

Louis, last time I went out I saw the most marvelous thing.

LOUIS

(compassionately)
What was it?

LESTAT

A motion picture, Louis. People moving on a giant screen. Oh, it was magic. And there was dialogue, written on cards in between the moving pictures. It was a whole story. Orphans In The Storm. Lillian Gish. It was beautiful. Surely you've seen it. You look so fit, so well.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lestat's face darkens.

LOUIS

What is it?

LESTAT

They showed the daytime sky! I was frightened. I left the theatre. I ran all the way back here. Do they still make these motion pictures? I know all about radios, I can hear them, I love them, and some sort of... I don't know what it is...

LOUIS

Lestat, they make motion pictures in color. The actors speak. The daytime sky in a film can't hurt us. The rising sun in a film is just an illusion.

Loud noise from the street of TRUCK RATTLING BY.

Lestat shivers, covers his ears. He's terrified. He crosses his legs Indian-style and bends over.

LOUIS

Lestat, it's only a truck passing.

Lestat takes his hands away from his ears.

OTHER SOUNDS of the night. DISTANT TRAFFIC. A SIREN. Lestat winces at the siren, but it DIES AWAY.

LESTAT

I know what these sounds are, Louis. I saw the automobiles when I went out last. I saw them chugging and racing through the street. Here... look!

He holds up the Black Mask magazine. Points to an advertisement of a young man riding a motorcycle. Year 1929.

LESTAT

Motorcycles, they pass sometimes.

Lestat shivers.

LESTAT

And there are aeroplanes... in the sky.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A silence falls. Lestat's mind appears to wonder. He looks about and then looks up at Louis in happy surprise.

LESTAT

You are here, I thought I was dreaming! See the rats? In the old days in France, they called us country lords harecatchers -- we starved if we didn't kill the small game. And now I'm the rat catcher!

(laughs)

The Pied Piper. And the rats, they are marvelously reliable. They never learn not to come when I call.

Lestat laughs softly.

Louis smiles bitterly.

They look at each other.

LESTAT

I didn't go to Paris for vengeance, Louis.

Louis says nothing.

LESTAT

I came for the blood of the old ones. For Armand's help. I was healing, but it was so painful and so gradual, and I was still, well, you know... young.

Louis says nothing.

LESTAT

I did tell them she'd tried to kill me. You can't blame me for that, can you?

LOUIS

No. I can't blame you for it.

LESTAT

But it was Armand who directed the whole trial and execution as if it were the final play for his little stage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

I suppose I've always known that was so. And yet I stayed with him.

LESTAT

Loneliness. You needn't tell me. You should develop a taste for rats again. You tried once, didn't you? Sometimes I talk to them before I kill them. I never did that with innocent mortals. Did I? I was never cruel to mortals, was I?

Louis shakes his head.

LOUIS

You must come out of here. Please. Come with me.

Lestat shakes his head.

Sudden sound of DIESEL TRAIN from the riverfront. PIERCING WHISTLES. Again, Lestat cowers, covering his ears. He trembles violently. He shrinks up, knees under his chin. The SOUND DIES AWAY.

A pause.

LESTAT

There are machines out there, that cool the houses. In summer they roar like wild beasts. But the warmth is lovely then. I don't mind it. Only I wish the trees hadn't grown so thick. I can no longer see the stars.

Louis drops down beside him. Urgent.

LOUIS

Lestat, let me get you out of here. Let me show you the world the way it is now. It's full of marvels. Of all of us, you should see it, you above all should --

Lestat smiles.

LESTAT

Should what? Respect it? Have the stamina for eternity? A passion for beauty that helps me endure the passage of time?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lestat laughs bitterly.

He gathers up the Black Mask magazine. He begins to read again out loud -- Sam Spade and Joe Cairo. Tough guy accent.

Louis stares at him. He speaks his name, but can't get his attention.

He grabs Lestat and shakes him.

LESTAT
Back off, my friend! I may not be
as weak as you think.

He sits up again very straight, in full command.

LOUIS
That's the point! You've healed.
You're whole again. But you must
feed.

LESTAT
Go away, Louis.

LOUIS
You'll be destroyed if you stay
here. You'll be discovered. This
place... it could...

LESTAT
Burn? Like Pointe du Lac. Like
our townhouse? Like the Theatre
des Vampyres? Oh, and thank you
for that last conflagration. I
thought they deserved it.
Despicable liars. They never
helped me. They never gave me
their healing blood. And to think
Armand's blood was so powerful
with age. Do you know what he
really did?

EXT. TOP OF TOWER (PARIS) (1870)

Armand forcing the wounded, scarred Lestat to the battlements.

LESTAT (V.O.)
He took me back to the Magnus's
tower, the very place where it
had all started. He lured me
there with his promises.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Armand strikes Lestat and sends him over the battlement. He falls and falls until he is smashed on the stones. Blood flows from his fallen body but his blue eyes are wide open. He is alive.

RETURN TO SCENE - NEW ORLEANS MANSION (PRESENT)

Lestat sitting on the floor.

LESTAT

He had his reasons. I'd destroyed the old coven. My broken bones healed. Everything healed. We are immortal, more or less.

He reaches for the Black Mask magazine. Louis lets him take it.

LESTAT

Some night, something will rouse my curiosity. Give me a reason to rise and become the vampire Lestat again. But not you, Louis. You remind me of too many things.

He lies back down and opens the magazine.

LESTAT

You knew she meant to destroy me.

LOUIS

Yes, I did.

LESTAT

You left me in the burning townhouse.

LOUIS

Yes, I did.

LESTAT

And when you burnt the Theatre, for all you knew I was there.

LOUIS

Hate me for it. Come back to do battle, to quarrel. Take your vengeance!

Lestat laughs softly, shaking his head.

LOUIS

My blood isn't as powerful as Armand's, but it can revive you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESTAT

No, thank you, my dark brother.
I remember that taste only too
well.

LOUIS

Lestat, don't you want to make
me suffer for what I've done to
you?

Lestat merely smiles at him, seeing through the taunt.

LESTAT

Louis, I think you are suffering
beautifully, just as you have
always suffered. Why should I
lift a finger? It isn't
necessary.

Louis smiles ironically and nods in agreement.

LESTAT

Go away now, mon ami. Go back
to your modern world of marvels.
Let me have my peace and quiet.
And if you do come back, bring
something new to read. And
candles. Bring me candles. You
know how I love the light.

EXT./INT. RUINED MANSION - NEXT NIGHT

Louis comes up the steps and into the parlor. He has a
small parcel. Lestat reads as before. He does not look
up. Louis tears open the parcel, and removes a small
Watchman portable TV with earphones. He kneels by Lestat
and he turns it ON.

We see the tiny screen glimmer with a ROCK VIDEO, Madonna
dancing wildly.

Lestat sits up, clasps it, amazed.

LOUIS

This is to blot out all the sounds
that hurt you. Here.

He drops extra batteries on the floor and they gleam in
the light. He puts the earphones over Lestat's head.
Turns up the volume.

Lestat smiles in delight. He begins to laugh, and then
sway with the music which he can hear and which we can
not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He holds the little Watchman like a treasure, singing in perfect pitch the words of MADONNA'S song.

LESTAT

'Like a Virgin, kissed for the very first time.'

INT. MANSION - HALLWAY - ANOTHER NIGHT

Louis stands in the doorway, arms folded. He watches --

Lestat, a skeleton in rags, dancing as he wears the earphones and holds the Watchman.

We hear a very THIN SOUND from the earphones: ROLLING STONES. "I Can't Get No Satisfaction." Lestat dances with eerie grace in perfect time.

MUSIC GROWS LOUDER.

As Louis watches, Lestat becomes the performer, singing, dancing to the music, a spectacle among the ruins, as he does the modern Michael Jackson-style move to perfection.

Louis tries to clear his vision, to shake the illusion or suggestions of Lestat as rock star.

LOUIS (V.O.)

I don't remember how many times I came back. Three? Four. It doesn't matter. He would not look at me or speak to me. And finally one night he wasn't there.

EXT. MANSION

From a distance behind its jungle of vine and trees.

LOUIS (V.O.)

But I could hear the music, coming from somewhere, perhaps beneath the foundations. I went away. I never saw him again.

EXT. MANSION

We DRAW AWAY FROM the mansion, THROUGH the Garden District streets, PAST huge Magnolia trees, PAST iron fences.

Oaks hung with moss.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (V.O.)

That's my story. You have it all. I go on, night after night. I feed on those who cross my path. But there is no passion in me any longer. I am reverent. A spirit with preternatural flesh. It ended when I saw Claudia burnt to ashes in that airwell. My dreams died with Claudia. My faith.

RETURN TO SCENE (SAN FRANCISCO) - PRESENT

Malloy staring at Louis.

MALLOY

No! It can't end like that.

LOUIS

But it did. It's finished. There is no more to tell.

MALLOY

But it's not over. Your passion for all of it, your vision -- It's still inside you. It comes out in every syllable you speak. You're immortal! Truly immortal --

LOUIS

I tell you it's over! As Lestat once said to me, I have given you what I have to give!

MALLOY

Louis, listen to me. Lestat may still be there.

LOUIS

It makes no difference now. It's finished.

Louis looks at the cassettes on the table.

LOUIS

Do with this story what you will! Learn from it what you can. Give it to others. I'm glad I've told it. Maybe for the first time I understand it myself.

Malloy rises.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALLOY

One more chance, Louis! Take me!
Make me one of you! Do it.

Louis is slowly horrified and then outraged and angry.

LOUIS

(barely able to
contain his rage)
This is what you want? After all
I've told you! You ask me for
this!

MALLOY

Yes. I can be your link with this
century! I'm the one to take you
both into these times. Louis,
give it to me. You don't
understand your own story. You
don't understand the intensity
that you yourself described!
You've forgotten what mortal life
is!

LOUIS

Dear God. I've failed again,
haven't I?

Louis rises, overturning the table, scattering the tapes.
He disappears.

Malloy sits there trembling. Quickly he gathers up the
tapes, and the recorder. He puts away the mike. He is
muttering to himself almost feverishly. He stands up
and turns to go and --

Louis is right before him, inches away, a figure of
menace, as in the alleyway at the start.

Malloy falls back in terror.

Louis reaches out, drags Malloy to him. Malloy drops the
tapes and the little machine.

LOUIS

You want to go a little deeper?
One final lesson to make you see!

Malloy panics and tries to get away, but Louis gashes his
blood, sucking the blood fiercely and then throwing the
groaning Malloy on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Malloy, badly weakened, hand to his heart, gets up. Louis advances on him in menace.

Malloy staggers out of the room. He makes for the stairs. Louis grabs him again, drinks again, as Malloy tries to push him away. Louis drags him from the stairs to the second staircase which leads to the roof. He throws him down. Malloy is weak, his throat torn.

LOUIS

You like it? You like being food
for the immortals! You like
dying? Is it beautiful? Is it
intense?

MALLOY'S POV

His heart is racing. In a haze, he flees up the stairs, as Louis comes relentlessly after him, barely seeming to take steps, he moves so fast and so gracefully.

BACK TO SCENE

Malloy pushes open door to the roof.

EXT. ROOF (SAN FRANCISCO) - NIGHTTIME

light of San Francisco all around him. He staggers to the right and to the left. No escape.

He turns.

Louis smack dab against him again.

Malloy screams.

Louis sinks his teeth again.

MALLOY'S POV

of view as he loses consciousness. Haze. Confusion.

He sees --

Blurred image of Louis standing over him looking down at him.

His eyes close.

EXT. ROOFTOP - MORNING

FROM ABOVE we see the body of Malloy like garbage on the roof.

As we DRAW IN, we see Malloy looks dead, eyes half open. Sun strikes him. Wind blows torn newspapers across the roof and out into the sky. A cat approaches, licks at Malloy's neck, then goes away.

CLOSE ON MALLOY

Half-mast eyes look dead.

Then suddenly the eyes open. He sits up. He stares around him. He is pale and feverish and trembling. Like a drunken man, he makes his way --

INT. STAIRS - BACK TO ROOM

There in the sunlight is the tape recorder and all the cassettes, just as he left them.

He falls on his knees gathering them up.

CUT TO:

INT. MALLOY'S CAR

He hunches over the wheel. Looks impossibly sick and weak. He holds the RECORDER, rewinds the tape. Then hears:

LOUIS (V.O.)

(on tape)

And then on Prytania Street, only blocks from the Lafayette Cemetery, I caught the scent of death and it wasn't coming from the graves.

Relief. Excitement. Malloy turns ON the IGNITION. He ROARS out of the parking place while with his right hand, he STOPS the RECORDER, puts in another tape, hits the rewind button.

EXT. FREEWAY

FROM ABOVE we see Malloy's car on the freeway.

We see it on the open road:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS (V.O.)

(on tape)

1791. That's when it happened...
I was twenty-four -- younger than
you are now.

PAN TO sky;

ROCK MUSIC RISES. ROLLING STONES. "I Can't Get No
Satisfaction." GROWING LOUDER and LOUDER and BLENDING
with the motion picture THEME.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

is a tiny speck on the dark desert highway.

We DRAW UP again and FROM --

EXT. DESERT SKY

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LOUISIANA SKY

Oaks with moss, magnolias... CRY of BIRDS...

ROLLING STONES and THEME CREST.

FADE OUT.

THE END