

THE TRAIL - 1x01 - It Begins with Blood

By

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A BLACK VOID

SUPER: "The dead travel fast." - Bram Stoker.

EXT. CASTLE DRACULA - NIGHT - FLASH-FORWARD

SUPER: Transylvania, 1899

High atop a dangerously-steep hill in the countryside: CASTLE DRACULA - tall, lean and indestructible. Ancient, powerful - a place where nightmares are made.

Even higher, a STORM brews. Far below, waves crash against a rocky cliff side, threatening to tear the whole thing down.

Despite our every instinct, we move in closer. Closer, until we're at the entryway. A thin stream of blood escapes beneath the sturdy doors.

Then, a WOMAN'S VOICE narrating - soft, but strong:

MINA (V.O.)
The blood. So marvelous a gift,
wrapped neatly in flesh and bone. Just
waiting to be opened. *Enjoyed*. But by
whom?

During this monologue, we continue

INSIDE THE CASTLE

And follow the trail through the luxurious estate, ending just outside the Grand Ballroom - the source of the blood.

MINA (V.O.)
Who is truly worthy?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. PRISON - CELL BLOCK - DAY - PRESENT

A row of dirty, rotting cells, full of MAD MEN/WOMEN.

SUPER: London, 1 Year Earlier

In the final cell, the woman from before: MINA MURRAY (mid 20s). She's pale and delicate, but undoubtedly a force to be reckoned with - even in her tattered robe. She scribbles in her diary, hunched over with wide, keen eyes. She uses the muddy water on the cell floor for ink.

MINA (V.O.)
There is only one. And he is waiting
for us all.

FOOTSTEPS, and then Mina's cell door is RIPPED OPEN. She stops writing and looks up. Meets the gaze of a burly PRISON GUARD.

BACK TO:

CASTLE DRACULA - GRAND BALLROOM

THUNDER AND LIGHTNING as the doors burst open, nearly flying off their hinges. We're hit with the sight of a gruesome, bloody massacre. Carnage from wall-to-wall.

MINA (V.O.)
The blood is the life.

It's impossible to tell who (or what) has been slain, and before there's time for a post-mortem, we

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: THE TRAIL

INT. PRISON - CELL BLOCK - DAY - PRESENT

Back to Mina. The guard looks down at her suspiciously.

GUARD
Whatchya got there?

Mina tries to keep the journal hidden. Fails.

GUARD
Love letters, eh?
(chuckles)
Sending those off to your loverboy,
are ya? Or maybe to God?

Mina trembles. Does her best to stay strong as the guard chuckles.

GUARD
Save yourself the trouble. I have a
feeling you'll be seeing Him *real*
soon.

Mina's eyes widen. She knows what this means. But then he's on her, ripping her from the ground like she's

nothing. Mina digs the quill into the guard's arm and he CRIES OUT.

Blood shoots out of his arm and for just a moment, TIME SLOWS DOWN as Mina watches the gushing blood - spraying like fireworks.

The guard throws Mina to the ground outside her cell.

GUARD

BITCH! I'm gonna enjoy watching you swing.

He grabs Mina by the hair and drags her down the cell block, ROUSING THE OTHER PRISONERS. Complete and total chaos.

EXT. PRISON - EXECUTION YARD - MOMENTS LATER

The guard pulls Mina past a line of other chained prisoners and throws her to the ground before the execution dock.

THE EXECUTIONER turns to them.

GUARD

This one's next!

MOMENTS LATER

On the dock, MINA IS PREPARED for hanging: her hands are bound, a noose is slipped around her neck. It's the cruelest of rituals.

Just as the executioner's about to slip the bag over Mina's head -

MINA

- No.

EXECUTIONER

Have it your way.

The executioner moves into position and Mina looks out into the gallows. Sees not one friendly face, prisoner, guard or otherwise.

MINA

(low)

I am coming.

The executioner grabs the lever. Just as he's about to pull -

PRINCE EDWARD (O.S.)

STOP!

PRINCE EDWARD OF SAXE-WEIMAR (current Field Marshall) and a small group of TROOPS approach the dock.

EXECUTIONER

This is my domain. NOT YOURS!

PRINCE EDWARD

You will stop this execution immediately and surrender the prisoner.

EXECUTIONER

On who's authority?

Edward unrolls a document complete with an official stamp/seal.

PRINCE EDWARD

Her Majesty the Queen. Ever heard of her?

INT. PRINCE EDWARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Mina is on her knees, hands bound, eyes glued to the floor.

PRINCE EDWARD (O.S.)

Look at me.

Nothing.

PRINCE EDWARD (O.S.)

Do you wish to die?

Only then does she look up at him, her dark eyes speaking volumes.

Edward is unfazed - probably because of the knife he's holding.

PRINCE EDWARD

That's better.

Mina doesn't break her cold stare, and it finally starts

to effect Edward, as if her gaze pierces not only his soul, but past it.

He moves threateningly towards her with the knife, but uses it to cut Mina free. She stands as Edward returns to his desk.

Finally, A LOOK AROUND THE OFFICE, immaculately-designed and totally pretentious.

MINA

What do you want from me?

Edward's turn for the 'silent treatment.'

MINA

You don't want to kill me. Otherwise
I'd have neck burns. So what is it
then?

Edward begrudgingly answers, each word more painful than the last -

EDWARD

It's The Count.

Mina's eyes go wide as a subliminal shock-wave surges through the room.

INSERT: A grand ballroom, RICH PATRONS dressed to the nines. Mina navigates the crowd alone. But the guests suddenly part and the lights dim, illuminating a single subject - COUNT DRACULA. His magnificence takes her breath away.

EDWARD

It is he you should thank for every
breath you now take. The irony...

MINA

What of him? What of Dracula?

EDWARD

The Count has overstayed his welcome,
says Her Majesty. Enough blood has
been spilled... *digested*. So you, my
deplorable, wretched thing, are going
to put an end to the madness. To him.

MINA IS A PUZZLE. It's impossible to decipher her look.
Anguish? Agony? Glee?

MINA

And then?

EDWARD

Then you will go home. Live out your days in the cold, empty hell you have made for yourself.

He leans in a little, emphasizing his point.

EDWARD

There is nowhere else to turn, no fork in the road. Your unspeakable crimes have led you to this very office, to this very moment, and you will leave here as our assassin or with a rope around your neck.

Mina thinks hard, working through the past, present and future simultaneously.

MINA

I cannot do it alone.

A small, knowing grin curls Edward's mouth.

EXT. LONDON STREETS - NIGHT

A full moon casts a haunting glow over London.

A lone carriage pulls into an alley and stops outside an unremarkable building: a SAFE HOUSE in disguise.

Mina peers out THROUGH THE CARRIAGE WINDOW until a GUARD opens the door and leads her out. Edward is close behind as they enter the building.

The guard keeps watch outside.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - COMMON AREA - MOMENTS LATER

The actual safe house is on the top floor of the building.

Mina stops abruptly at the sight before her. It's not the dingy living room or the sickly glow of a fire along peeling wallpaper and musty furniture - it's the FIVE MEN scattered throughout the room.

Some sit while others stand, but all are still - a 'Tableau of Men.'

ALL EYES ARE NOW ON MINA, but when she makes eye contact with the youngest, WILLIAM TAYLOR (20s, mousy, afraid of his own shadow), he quickly looks away.

MINA

What is this?

EDWARD

This is one of Britain's forgotten safe houses. Tonight it is a limbo for the damned.

Mina still hasn't blinked.

EDWARD

Or were you referring to your 'backup?'

The eldest of the five, ROBERT MORLEY (50s), clenches his fists at 'backup', ready for a fight. Scarred by a life of torment, his entire being is forever cold.

EDWARD

(grinning)

Down boy.

It takes every last ounce of willpower for Robert to unclench his fists.

EDWARD

Get to know the individuals in this room. They will be the ones to secure your freedom... or your end. For if you are unsuccessful, death will be your future.

MINA

And how are we to succeed? With our bare hands?

HAROLD ROBINSON (30s) hasn't moved a muscle from his corner of the room. He's silent, arms folded - a guarded man. Always observing.

EDWARD

You may make such requests to me. They will be granted on a case by case basis. But understand that your supplies will be limited, for obvious reasons.

The equally snide/charming ARTHUR DAVIES (30s) - the comic relief - pipes up:

ARTHUR

Yes, we wouldn't want any firearms to go off unexpectedly, would we?

EDWARD

Precisely. Which is why such amenities must be earned.

Edward pulls out six identical dossiers and hands them out.

EDWARD

Inside is a full report of our investigation to date. We've been able to track his movements until two weeks ago. That is where the trail goes cold. We believe him to still be in London, and that is precisely what you will uncover.

Edward reaches WALTER GREEN (40s), an imposing figure with dangerous eyes - the type of man who bashes in skulls for sport. When he refuses to take the folder, Edward tosses it as his feet.

WALTER

And how do you suppose we do that? With bags over our heads? Or would you prefer we stick to the piss-filled alleys?

EDWARD

In an effort to remove any obstacles you might encounter, it would seem your crimes have temporarily been expunged.

ROBERT

And when this is concluded?

EDWARD

We will determine if this is an enterprise worth continuing.

ROBERT

Not the mission - the battle. When we defeat The Count, what will come of us?

EDWARD
You shall have your freedom.

Silence as the notion washes over them, almost too good to be true.

MINA
Cowards.

EDWARD
I beg your pardon?

MINA
It is a suicide mission. But one that you would gladly have us perform, while you hide away in your castle.

EDWARD
You award him more credit than he deserves. He is just a man.

MINA
He is no man. He is an enigma. A shadow.

Edward's haughty attitude wavers just slightly. He moves to the window, his back to the group.

EDWARD
It is a dark day when Britain must turn to its lowliest citizens - the wicked, the insane. But perhaps it is fate.

He faces them again.

EDWARD
Who better to hunt a cold-blooded killer?
(beat)
And so here we are. Your quest for freedom begins tonight.

On his way out, Edward turns to them one last time -

EDWARD
God save the Queen.

He leaves. Cold silence fills the room, and it seems to last an eternity.

ARTHUR

Should we introduce ourselves? Perhaps
an icebreaker?

Arthur's comedy falls flat.

ROBERT

There will be no exchange of anything.
We are not here to become
acquaintances, we are here to do a
job.

(re: the dossiers)

This is the only thing we share.

ARTHUR

What should we call you then? Master?

WALTER

Will be a cold day in hell before I
call the likes of any of you 'Master.'

ARTHUR

Then we're agreed. Aside from this
lovely endeavor, we mean nothing to
one other.

Everyone nods in agreement.

ROBERT

There is nothing left to be
accomplished tonight.

(to Mina)

The rest of us have found our rooms. I
assume you can do the same?

MINA

I'll see if I can manage.

Everyone exits into their rooms, leaving only Mina. She
stands in silence a moment - her gaze ever-indecipherable -
before moving towards the last bedroom.

As she reaches for the handle, VOICES rise from within -
whispering. Mina stops, pale.

She leans in closer. Puts her ear to the door.

VOICE (O.S.)

No... don't do it. Don't do it. STOP!!

Mina lurches back and falls to the floor. When she finds the courage to stand, she bursts through the door and into her

BEDROOM.

It's empty. She looks to the window. *Locked.* Looks around the bare-bones room. *Nothing.*

Mina explores. She opens a closet and finds fresh clothes. She flips through them, surprised to find EVENING WEAR. As she focuses on this outfit - SOUNDS OF THE PAST flood her mind: CLINKING GLASSES, LAUGHTER, MUSIC.

Finally, she lights a fire in the small fireplace. Pulling a shawl tightly around her, she looks down at the flames.

MONTAGE:

WALTER'S ROOM

1. Walter rips open his dossier, nearly tearing the documents inside. On the first page, the man of the hour: DRACULA.

Page after page of notes/sightings/lore.

And then he comes to a page that causes his blood to run cold. He freezes, gripping the pages tightly.

WILLIAM'S ROOM

2. Sitting huddle in a corner, William SOBS, trying to muffle them as best he can, while also reading a page from the dossier.

THE PAGE IS A PRISON RECORD ON WILLIAM. His name and other details might be redacted, but it remains a complete exposé.

MINA'S ROOM

3. Mina drops her dossier to the floor and the pages scatter. Unflattering criminal records on ALL SIX OF THEM.

ROBERT'S ROOM

4. Robert, grim, studies Mina's profile in particular. He crumples it up and tosses it in the fireplace. The flames devour it.

MINA'S ROOM

5. Mina similarly tosses the criminal records into her own fireplace. She hangs onto all Dracula-related correspondence.

END MONTAGE.

Mina climbs into bed. Closes her eyes. And then, she's gone.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. DARK ROOM - DREAM

It's too dark to see anything but Mina. She opens her eyes and looks around, trying to find her bearings.

And then she looks to the side.

FAST ASLEEP IS A WOMAN (50s). But as Mina leans in for a closer look, we realize the woman's not asleep. SHE'S DEAD.

Mina spoons the corpse. In the blink of an eye, MINA TRANSFORMS INTO HER 8 YEAR-OLD SELF.

The woman opens her eyes, completely still otherwise, and looks down at YOUNG MINA.

MINA (8)

Mummy?

The woman's bony hand starts to move. It slides around Mina's side and then up to her neck. Without warning, it starts choking Mina - now in her adult form again.

THE DREAM DISSOLVES AWAY, and we're suddenly

BACK IN

MINA'S ROOM

Where she awakens, GASPING for air. She's still choking, clawing at a hand that isn't there.

When she finally breaks free from the remnants of the dream, Mina leaps out of bed and throws up the window. A GUST OF FREEZING COLD AIR BLOWS IN, extinguishing the fire.

The cold stings Mina's cheeks, but she inhales deeply nonetheless.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - SUNRISE

Warm morning light bathes the safe house's exterior, but even a new day cannot save it from the rot, the decay.

Both are permanent.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Mina enters. There's a package on the table, and Mina searches the bare drawers, finally finding a knife.

Before she can cut open the box, THE KNIFE IS SWIPED FROM HER HAND, and Mina nearly jumps out of her skin.

She turns to find Walter with the knife, staring her down with his trademark grimace.

WALTER
I've got it.

Mina slowly backs away as Walter cuts open the box.

MINA
How chivalrous.

WALTER
Didn't take you for the box-cutting-type.

He pulls a carton of eggs from the box.

WALTER
Or the sunny-side up type.

MINA
What's that supposed to mean?

But Mina knows exactly.

WALTER
You're about halfway across the kitchen. Frightened?

MINA
Not of anything in here.

Arthur saunters in, ever-jovial.

ARTHUR
Morning everyone. Looks like our self-proclaimed leader is setting up out there as we speak.

Walter rolls his eyes and brushes past Arthur.

ARTHUR
Someone needs their morning coffee.
(calling after him)
How do you take it? Black? *Bitter*?

Arthur turns to Mina and flashes a genuine smile. He takes a peek inside the box.

ARTHUR
Anything good?

MINA
Not much, I'm afraid. Someone might have to stop at the market.

ARTHUR
Pick me up something nice, will you?

Robert pokes his head in just long enough to announce that -

ROBERT
It's time.

ARTHUR
His majesty awaits.

Arthur exits. On her way out, Mina stops and pockets a bright red apple from the box.

INT. COMMON AREA - CONTINUOUS

Robert finishes pinning a large map of London to a board as everyone finishes gathering.

ROBERT
I trust everyone's evening was...
informative.

ARTHUR

Yes, quite illuminating.

ROBERT

I found it very extraneous. I burned the better part of it.

WALTER

Not before having a good read of it, I'm sure.

ROBERT

No, I did not, as a matter of fact.

WALTER

Well thank the Lord. Guess we can all rest easy then.

ROBERT

I cannot control your decision to believe or disbelieve me. That lies solely with each of you.

He sees the doubt remaining in each of their eyes.

ROBERT

Can't you see the game he's playing? The Prince has nothing invested in our survival; to him the battle was lost the moment he was forced to call upon us. 'We are nothing but our crimes' that was his message. But I refuse to fall for it. I intend to survive. The things we've done, the lives we have taken, they do not matter - not to me.

William hangs on Robert's words, so desperate for a clean slate.

MINA

Then we shall not speak of it.

Nods all around. Robert exchanges a quick glance with Mina - a look of thanks. Then, he turns to the map.

ROBERT

I took the liberty of transcribing The Count's movements. If some hidden significance exists, we will find it.

WALTER
Our feeble minds await your orders.

ROBERT
I should think the next step is
obvious. Or is it this post you'd
prefer?

He gestures - offering up his 'throne.'

ROBERT
Take it, by all means. It makes no
difference to me.

Walter, not used to being challenged, remains silent.

ARTHUR
We get it - divide and conquer.
(pointing)
What's that one?

ROBERT
Brentford Pumping Station.

MINA
Gypsy land.

ARTHUR
Sounds lovely, I'll take it.

ROBERT
I would not recommend going alone.

ARTHUR
Then I'll take the mousy one as
backup... or perhaps a shield.

WILLIAM
I HAVE A NAME!

ARTHUR
Yes, but we agreed we weren't doing
names...

Harold approaches the map, points at a marker.

HAROLD
The old hospital.

ARTHUR
Is that the one where -

But he cuts himself short. Everyone clues in to some hidden subtext, and the room turns grim.

ROBERT

Yes.

HAROLD

I'll go.

ROBERT

Last I heard, they sealed it.

Harold locks eyes with Robert.

HAROLD

Then I'll unseal it.

ARTHUR

He is the best man for the job.

ROBERT

Yes, I suppose you're right -

HAROLD

Thought you burnt those pages straight away?

Robert looks around, *guilty*. Arthur revels in the drama.

ROBERT

The hospital is yours.

()

William just can't sit still - a bundle of petrified nerves. Without warning, he bursts to his feet.

WILLIAM

I don't like this! He could be out there now - just waiting for us.

ROBERT

He won't be.

WILLIAM

How can you be sure?!

ROBERT

Because the hunter does not return to the feeding ground once the bones are picked clean.

Arthur puts a firm hand on his shoulder, eventually

coaxing him back into his seat.

ARTHUR

I'll watch your back if you watch mine, alright?

William nods, only semi-convinced.

Meanwhile, Mina's focused eyes dart all over the map - each location as likely a hideout as the last. It's like one big game of *Clue*, but without the instructions.

ROBERT

I'll take the Count's residence. Perhaps there's something the police missed. That leaves...

MINA

The slums.

ROBERT

I thought we might send someone more...

(eyes Walter)

...imposing to that part of town.

MINA

I'll go.

Mina clocks the nervous looks from her male counterparts.

MINA

Your concern is touching. I'll be fine. Someone needs to stop by the market anyway. I can do both.

(looks to Walter)

Unless you'd like the pleasure?

WALTER

I'll pass. I can see my talents will be of no use today.

Walter returns to his room -

ARTHUR

And what exactly might those be?

- and slams the door behind him.

ARTHUR

Such a tease.

MINA
 (to Robert)
 I'll leave now.

ROBERT
 Of course. This needn't be a mass
 exodus. Your time is your own, as
 borrowed as it may be.

But Harold already on his way out before Robert can finish his sentence.

ROBERT
 We must use our absolute discretion.
 Our hunter does not yet realize he has
 become the prey. Right now, that is
 our only advantage, and it is one we
 cannot afford to lose.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE/STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

Harold exits and continues briskly down the sidewalk. Mina's next out the door soon after.

From afar, a GUARD watches incognito.

MONTAGE OF THE INVESTIGATION:

EXT. DRACULA'S FLAT - DAY

1. Outside the posh flat once inhabited by Dracula.

Robert stands on the driveway, looking up at the dark, quiet apartment, wondering - *hoping* - the silence can be trusted.

EXT. SLUMS - CONTINUING

2. Just outside of the slums, Mina stands on a very apparent - *albeit invisible* - threshold. Behind her: safety. Beyond: uncertainty.

She takes a step forward.

EXT. DRACULA'S FLAT- CONTINUING

3. So does Robert.

After removing the boards over the front door (police handiwork), he picks the lock and lets himself inside.

INT. ABANDONED HOSPITAL - CONTINUING

4. The eerie quiet of an empty hallway is SHATTERED - literally - by a trash can that goes flying through a window.

Harold pulls himself through the window and starts poking around, not sure what he's supposed to be looking for.

EXT. GYPSY DISTRICT - CONTINUING

5. Brentford Pumping Station. A forgotten corner of London now claimed by GYPSIES - a close, protective clan living entirely independent from the rest of society. What little they have has come from their labors, alone.

But despite this sad reality, they're livelier than anyone we've yet seen, and a kind of magic seems to emanate off of them.

Music, dancing, laughter. One thing's for certain - *they're alive.*

Arthur and William navigate this community, making every effort to go unnoticed. While William struggles to simply keep it together, Arthur keeps a very keen eye out - peering under every tent and hood.

It's 'Where's Waldo - Romany-Gypsy Edition.'

William stays close to Arthur.

WILLIAM
(whispering)
What should be looking for?

ARTHUR
Someone who doesn't belong.

INT. DRACULA'S STUDY - CONTINUING

6. Like the rest of the flat, the study's been picked over, but Robert conducts a meticulous search nonetheless.

He comes across a locked desk drawer, notices the scratch marks around the lock. When he tries to lift the desk, he finds it bolted to the floor. Robert searches for something of use and finds himself looking

OUT A WINDOW

And straight at a maintenance shed.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAYS - CONTINUING

7. Harold turns a corner and stops in his tracks. Dried blood covers the walls and floors. Harold forces himself to continue on, but when he unwittingly comes across the

NURSERY

He stops again, paralyzed. He presses his hand against the glass, looking in on the leftovers of what must have been an utter tragedy.

EXT. SLUMS - CONTINUING

8. Mina travels further into the seemingly-empty slums, awaiting an ambush at any moment. But no attack comes.

INT. MAINTENANCE SHED - CONTINUING

9. Robert forces his way inside and quickly finds what he's looking for: a sledgehammer.

INT. HOSPITAL FREEZER - CONTINUING

10. Harold pokes his head inside. The freezer is full of blood bags and organ transport containers.

Harold impulsively goes for the containers, but finds them all empty - something which he seems oddly displeased about.

The blood bags - sorted/labeled by type - are surprisingly intact. What is odd, is that ONLY ONE SHELF IS ENTIRELY EMPTY: AB-NEGATIVE.

EXT. SLUMS - CONTINUING

11. Mina comes to the end of the slums and finds herself near a

SMALL SHIPYARD.

There's only one port, but a HULK is currently docked. LABORERS unload the contents, hours of work ahead of them.

INT. DRACULA'S STUDY - CONTINUING

12. Robert returns with the sledgehammer and goes to town on the desk, eventually breaking into the drawer from above.

He reaches inside, rifling through its contents. Most of it's useless, but one piece of paper (a photograph?) catches his eye.

Robert stops everything, staring at his new find.

EXT. GYPSY DISTRICT - CONTINUING

13. Dissatisfied, Arthur turns to William.

ARTHUR

Let's go. Whatever might've been here
is no more. We won't get a thing out
of them.

As the leave, A HAND grabs Arthur's wrist. He whips around to find an ELDERLY GYPSY WOMAN staring at him, her gaze mesmerizing.

GYPSY WOMAN

Looking for death, are you? Well you
have found it.

EXT. SMALL SHIPYARD - CONTINUING

14. Just as she's about to leave, a PUB beyond the dock catches Mina's eye. There's NOISE/CHATTER from inside, and Mina picks up on it even from her distance.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. MARKET - DAY

With a basket in hand, Mina browses a busy market. She feigns interest in the MERCHANTS' wares, her eyes covertly scanning the CROWD.

And then Mina finds what she's looking for: a fair-skinned BLONDE WOMAN shopping alone, a scarf wrapped tightly around her neck.

Mina covertly reaches into her jacket pocket, removing the apple she took earlier. As she continues on, the guard follows behind.

MINA CONTINUES THROUGH THE MARKET, deliberately navigating through heavily-crowded areas.

It becomes increasingly difficult for the guard to follow, and he frantically picks up the pace, suspicious of Mina's intentions.

The blonde woman turns a corner and Mina makes her move, rolling the apple behind her. Unaware, the guard slips on the apple and topples into a shopper/merchandise.

AROUND THE CORNER

The blonde woman continues her shopping until she's suddenly pulled into

A NARROW CREVICE BEHIND ADJACENT SHOPS

By Mina. The woman's about to scream until she recognizes the friendly face.

THE SCENE INTERCUTS WITH THE GUARD TRYING TO RESTORE ORDER IN THE MARKET.

LUCY
You're alive!

MINA
Just barely.
()

They wrap their arms around each other tightly.

MINA
Lucy... it's good to hear your voice.

LUCY WESTENRA takes Mina in, still unable to believe her eyes. They speak in hushed tones.

LUCY
What are you doing here?!

MINA
I've come with a warning. The Queen has ordered an assassination on The Count.

Lucy's eyes go wide.

LUCY
How do you know this?

MINA

You must leave London. It is only a matter of time until he discovers this conspiracy, and when he does...

LUCY

You think he will come for me?

MINA

There is no telling what a man will do out of desperation.

LUCY

But we were friends... he wouldn't harm a friend, would he?

MINA

Lucy, you must trust me. It is not safe for you here.

LUCY

This is madness. I won't have any part of it.

She tries to leave, but Mina pulls her back. *Hard.*

MINA

Have you forgotten what he did? Well let me remind you.

Before Lucy can react, Mina rips the scarf off of her. Lucy SHRIEKS and quickly covers her neck, but it's impossible to miss the BITE MARK.

MINA

I know what it is you believe. But there is only one whom that man loves. Do not be a fool to assume he would protect any other.

LUCY

Then let us leave together.

MINA

It is impossible.

LUCY

What on Earth has happened to you, my dear friend?

Mina takes a moment to answer.

MINA

It does not matter. I was doomed long ago.

Lucy can only look on with sadness.

MINA

Promise me.

LUCY

I promise.

She kisses Mina's cheek before hurrying off.

BACK IN THE MAIN MARKET AREA

The guard finally settles the dispute and dashes around the corner, only to find Mina browsing again.

Too focused on Mina, the guard doesn't notice **SOMEONE ELSE WATCHING** - a *severely Vitamin-C-deficient* MAN, lurking in the shadows.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE/STREETS - NIGHT

It's full dark now as Mina hurries down the sidewalk, the safe house poking its head out in the distance. The glow of the moon adds no comfort - only adding to an eerie atmosphere.

Without warning - a **RUFFLING SOUND** somewhere near Mina. Behind? Above? It's impossible to tell. Mina stops only a moment to listen and then picks up the pace, filled with dread.

The noise continues, coming from every direction now - closing in on Mina.

AT THE BACK ENTRANCE

Mina throws open the door and leaps inside the

SAFE HOUSE ENTRYWAY

Slamming the door shut behind her. She locks it and waits, listens. Nothing comes.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - COMMON AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Mina enters to find everyone waiting. Robert studies the map, while Arthur picks at some food and Harold smokes

near the window.

They all look at her in unison.

MINA

I'm sorry. The market was impossible.

She drops the bag groceries to the floor to emphasize her point.

William enters from his room, relieved.

WILLIAM

You made it.

ROBERT

(grim)

We thought you had died.

MINA

Not today. Where's... -

ARTHUR

- Mr. Morose? I'll fetch him.

Arthur moves to Walter's room and knocks.

ARTHUR

Yoohoo!

No answer. He enters

WALTER'S ROOM

To find him doing sit-ups on the window sill, his legs wrapped on the banister but HIS ENTIRE BODY OUTSTRETCHED outside.

ARTHUR

What in the hell are you doing?!

Walter slides back inside and stands, shirtless and rock-solid. Arthur swallow his surprise.

WALTER

None of your business.

Arthur can't stop staring.

WALTER

You mind?

Arthur snaps out of it and exits back into the

COMMON AREA

Where he reclaims his seat.

ROBERT

Well?

Still overcome, Arthur can barely speak.

ARTHUR

He'll be out presently.

A moment later, Walter joins the group, fully-clothed.

ROBERT

Wonderful. Let's begin.

MINA

Were you able to find anything?

ROBERT

I'm afraid not. The police investigation was thorough.

ARTHUR

No luck for us either. Just a colony of freaks.

MINA

They're not freaks.

ROBERT

(to Harold)

And you?

Harold shakes his head.

HAROLD

Just a lot of death.

This resonates with Arthur.

ROBERT

And the slums?

MINA

Empty.

ROBERT

Odd. But that must've given you an opportunity to search the premise.

MINA

No.

ROBERT

I beg your pardon?

MINA

I'm not in the habit of wasting my time.

Robert tries to keep his cool.

ROBERT

Your one and only task today was reconnaissance. You were given a rare opportunity - to search a known location of the man we're after, *unhindered* no less. But instead, you gave up a chance to collect information that may have been vital to our cause.

MINA

I disagree.

Robert is stunned. No one dares breathe a word.

MINA

I'm not concerned with where he's been. I'm concerned with where he's going. These attempts to rationalize the mind of an unequivocally *irrational* man - based on his former whereabouts - is futile.

ARTHUR

I'm with the girl. He's either in London or he isn't. And yes, maybe there's someone out there who knows where he's going. Should we start interviewing all of London?

ROBERT

After today, I'm beginning to think that's all you might be capable of.

WILLIAM

This whole thing was pointless right from the start. He could be anywhere. There's trains leaving London every day.

ARTHUR

They have men on every train, boat and border in town. No, I'd bet my life he's still in London.

ROBERT

Hence this investigation.

ARTHUR

Is *that* what you were hoping? That if one of us didn't return tonight, it would mean you were on the right track!

ROBERT

That's absurd.

Arthur approaches Robert.

ARTHUR

And so you chose his apartment - the very last place he'd dare go. Nice and safe for you, isn't that right? Admit it.

ROBERT

No.

ARTHUR

Admit it!

WALTER

ENOUGH! Stop your bickering. What a useless lot we are.

ARTHUR

And what exactly have you done?

WALTER

I'm not a detective. Looking under carpets, making something out of nothing - not my specialty.

ARTHUR

And what is your specialty, *doctor*?

MINA

I think I know what he's planning.

Silence. All eyes on Mina.

MINA

A final refuge empty. It was no coincidence. The people there had fled.

ROBERT

You think he's there?

Mina shakes his head.

MINA

There's a small shipyard not far.

ROBERT

Those aren't passenger vessels.

MINA

Precisely. A hulk was there. Endless cargo. I wonder what it might be transporting next.

ROBERT

Perhaps a stowaway.

ARTHUR

But if he's in hiding, how did they know to clear out?

ROBERT

And more importantly: where did they go?

On cue, a SCUTTLING above. ALL EYES dart up to the ceiling and then to each other.

ARTHUR

(wishful thinking)

Vermin?

Robert's eyes tell all.

ROBERT

I'm afraid so.

THE DOOR BURSTS OFF ITS HINGES and THREE SICKLY MEN (*much like the spy from the market*) slink inside. Their eyes are

void. HUNGRY.

IN WALTER'S ROOM

Another intruder slips inside the open window undetected, while

IN MINA'S ROOM

Another pair of feet drop down into the fireplace.

BACK IN THE COMMON AREA

More intruders join via the bedrooms. The heroes are nearly surrounded. Walter rolls up his sleeves.

WALTER

Now this... This would be my specialty.

One intruder licks his lips before launching himself across the room, starting the battle. Walter catches the man mid-flight, and crushes his skull against a wall.

THE REST OF THE INTRUDERS DIVE IN, equipped with a surprising amount of strength. THE BATTLE IS PRIMAL, ugly and raw - neither side afraid to kick or claw their way to victory.

With little to defend themselves, the heroes improvise: Mina grabs a fire poker, Arthur breaks off a coffee table leg.

But despite their best efforts, the heroes are outnumbered. Even Walter struggles to hold his own, taking on four intruders at once.

William nervously watches from the sidelines, completely paralyzed with fear.

ARTHUR

(to William)

A little help!?!

But an advancing intruder sends Walter fleeing into the kitchen.

Despite taking out numerous enemies, the heroes are quickly overwhelmed. Robert is pinned to the ground, barely able to hold back the enemy as they lean in hungrily, trying to take a bite out of him.

Just when it seems that it's all over, A KNIFE slides across the floor, just inches from Robert. He looks up - sees WILLIAM WITH A HANDFUL OF KNIFES.

Robert grins. In one motion, he whips the knife off the floor and plunges it into an assailant's jugular. It shrieks falling off of him as Robert quickly goes to work on the others.

William tosses another knife to Walter, who similarly clears another horde off of him.

Distracted, William doesn't notice an intruder sneaking up beside him. It launches itself towards him and - at the very last moment - Mina brings the poker down hard on its skull.

A stunned William locks eyes with Mina and holds out a knife, speechless.

MINA

No thanks.

Mina spins on her heel and quickly takes out another assailant behind her. Her movements are efficient and purposeful - no theatrics here. Speed is her ally.

The battle continues and soon a UNIQUE ENEMY enters, visually-distinct from the others. His eyes - two dark, murky pools - have tripled in size.

FROM ITS POV, it surveys the scene. With each BLINK OF ITS EYES, a FLASH goes off.

Robert spots the villain - sees the flashing. It realizes it's been made and flees.

ROBERT

Stop her!

The creature runs into

MINA'S ROOM

And leaps

OUT THE OPEN WINDOW.

But moments before it falls out of range, the creature is grabbed by the collar and pulled

BACK INSIDE MINA'S ROOM

By Walter, who shows no emotion as he quickly snaps the creature's neck and throws the now-lifeless body back out the window.

BACK IN THE COMMON AREA

An OTHERWORLDLY WHISPERING sounds (indecipherable), and the intruders stop what they're doing - looking up to the heavens.

THEN, they scuttle out of the room. All is quiet again.

ARTHUR

You better run!

EXT. SAFE HOUSE ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Standing atop the safe house: two feet wrapped in dark boots. They leap off the roof with alarming speed.

INT. COMMON AREA - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The heroes regroup.

ARTHUR

There goes our element of surprise.

William's whiter than white.

WILLIAM

How did they find us?

ARTHUR

Someone got themselves spotted today.

ROBERT

It means nothing.

ARTHUR

We were attacked - *in a safe house!*

ROBERT

All we know is that an unhinged group of individuals felt threatened enough to go on the offensive. Or perhaps they weren't guided by reason at all.

HAROLD

You're right about that. They were

carriers. Looked like scurvy to me.

MINA

And when exactly would they have found time to contract a sea-borne illness?

HAROLD

It could've come from him. Either he found them that way or he infected them himself.

ROBERT

We cannot assume that Dracula was behind this without further investigation.

MINA

It is the only assumption. These were no ordinary men and women. There are other forces at work here.

HAROLD

I'm not in the habit of putting stock in make-believe.

MINA

Perhaps you should. Did you not see how they moved? *Their eyes?*

HAROLD

I did. I saw a disease, a contagion. It's simple biology - nothing more. I refuse to be sidetracked by pagan lore.

MINA

Then consider this my forgiveness, for when you are proved wrong.

Mina exits towards her room, but stops in the threshold.

MINA

There's a tavern... near the shipyard.

ROBERT

And?

MINA

Perhaps we aren't the only ones with

a safe house.

Mina disappears into

HER BEDROOM

And closes the window. She moves to the fireplace and lights a FIRE.

A MONTAGE BEGINS.

MATCH CUT TO:

ROBERT'S ROOM

1. Where a fire is also lit. Robert sits in front of the hearth, completely lost in thought.

WILLIAM'S ROOM

2. Huddled on his bed, William wraps himself tightly in a blanket - a shield against the SHADOWS cast along the walls from his own fire. They stretch from wall-to-wall, just desperate to swallow him.

MINA'S ROOM

3. Mina tries to get warm. Something in the fire catches her eye, and she kneels down for a closer look.

The FLAMES TWIRL & DANCE around each other, and soon THEY TRANSFORM into two tiny silhouettes: a man and a woman waltzing in midair.

Mina grabs the fire poker and topples the wood, ending the illusion.

ARTHUR'S ROOM

4. Arthur moves to his window and looks up at the night sky, searching for answers.

Nothing comes.

OUTSIDE THE SAFE HOUSE

A VIEW OF EACH WINDOW and the six solitary individuals inside. All equally alone. The MONTAGE ENDS and we

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MINA'S ROOM - MORNING

Mina finishes dressing and moves to the mirror for a final inspection.

There's a crack in the mirror, dividing it in two. It runs right across Mina's chest - a splinter tearing through her heart.

She quickly steps away, trying to push the odd imagery from her mind. She grabs the doorknob but then stops, mentally preparing. When ready, she opens the door into

THE COMMON AREA

But finds it empty. Mina moves stealthily to the exit. Just before she's home free -

ROBERT

The tavern. What was its name?

MINA

Maelstrom.

ROBERT

We will go there tonight.

FROM THE THRESHOLD OF WILLIAM'S ROOM

Mina is seen from afar. She nods to Robert and exits.

We finally see William near his bedroom door. He's heard everything. He sinks to the floor, his face full of dread.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A quiet graveyard. Completely empty - *except for the dead*. Mina stops before a particular HEADSTONE:

"MURRAY"

She pauses, looking down at the grave, her bottom lip trembling. She opens her mouth to speak, but can't find the words.

She gives up, and kneels instead. Finally, her voice croaking -

MINA

I've missed you.

INT. WILLIAM'S ROOM - CONTINUING

William paces, shivering. He throws on a heavy coat, but it barely helps. He exhales into cupped hands, fingertips blue. Desperate, he whips the blanket off his bed, pulling it around himself -

MATCH INSERT: A thick black cape FLUTTERS as it's pulled around a LARGE FIGURE.

William winces, the memory stinging. He slides down into the far corner, filling every last inch. Huddled beneath the blanket, he is suddenly so very small.

CREAKS and GROANS fill the silence. The more William listens, the more THE HOUSE SEEMS TO TAKE ON A LIFE OF ITS OWN.

The pipes are next - GURGLING as they begin to heat. And then a HISS. WILLIAM STOPS - completely still. He puts his ear to the wall, listening to a voice that only he can hear.

The longer he listens, the wider his eyes become, until he can bear it no longer. He lurches away from the wall.

WILLIAM

I need to get out of here.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE/STREETS - CONTINUING

William speeds down the sidewalk and the house fades into the background. When it's finally out of sight completely, William's pace slows - calm restored.

All around are REGULAR PEOPLE living REGULAR LIVES. William marvels at the innocence of it all, smiling.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Can I help you?

William whips around, his perfect moment ruined. He now faces a dark alley. No sight of a woman.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

I bet I can. Come here.

The woman's voice is seductive - siren-like, and William can't resist. He moves cautiously towards the alley.

CEMETERY

MINA

I had hoped to bring flowers.

Another long pause.

MINA

Truthfully, I... I thought we'd be together by now.

Mina leans in and gently places her palm on the ground. A SMALL TREMOR SHAKES THE EARTH and Mina leaps to her feet.

Silence. Then, a MUFFLED RATTLING - *hands pushing up against wood*. Quiet at first, but then louder. *Faster*. Then -

FEMALE VOICE

(muffled)

Sweetheart? Is that you?

It's coming from underground.

ALLEYWAY

William moves further into the darkness.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Come and see the surprise I've got for you.

He reaches a lit corner. Still nothing. William touches the cold brick. Closes his eyes. *Listens*.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Or do you have a surprise for me?

THE SOUND OF COLD STEEL. THE WOMAN'S GASP. THE KNIFE SLICING HER GUT.

CEMETERY

Mina can barely stay standing, let alone respond.

FEMALE VOICE

(muffled)

Let me out. Help me. Pleasssssssse!

More PANICKED RATTLING as the deceased tries to escape her prison.

ALLEYWAY

THE SOUNDS OF THE PAST continue. BLOOD SPLATTER... STEEL SLICING FLESH... AGONY.

William fights the urges boiling inside of him, but it's not long before he finally surrenders. He throws his head back and lets out one final SIGH OF ECSTASY.

William falls blissfully into the corner, pressing himself up against the wall, feeling ever last brick - every last memory.

CEMETERY

The POUNDING continues, and Mina finally flees.

ALLEYWAY

William's euphoria continues until THE WOMAN TAKES HER FINAL BREATH. William exhales too, *very much alive*.

INT. SAFE HOUSE COMMON AREA - DAY

Mina bursts inside and heads straight for her

BEDROOM.

As she removes her layers, THE VOICES start again (the voices Mina heard on her first night).

VOICE (V.O.)
Let me live, please!

Mina covers her ears, eyes wild and full of fear.

MINA
Stop it...

VOICE (V.O.)
I don't want to die. No no no. NOOOOO!
(SCREAMS OF AGONY)

MINA
Stop it! Leave this place. LEAVE ME!!!

The voices finally die out and all is quiet again. Mina waits, petrified, wiping the tears from her eyes.

HER DOOR OPENS, and Mina leaps to her feet, ready for more.

But it's just William. He looks visibly different. *Confident* - sure of himself. He steps inside and closes the door without an invitation.

MINA

William...

WILLIAM

So you do remember me!

Oops. It's a misstep Mina can't recover from.

WILLIAM

I need to talk to you.

MINA

Now is not the time.

WILLIAM

Oh yes - now is very much the time. I *heard* you.

MINA

Then you know I am in no state to accept visitors.

William smirks, a mad twinkle in his eye.

WILLIAM

Not of our kind anyway.

Mina has no rebuttal.

WILLIAM

You've been hearing them too, haven't you?

MINA

And you?

WILLIAM

I happened upon an alleyway this afternoon - this dark, lonely corridor. I should have kept on, I know, but something called me. Into the darkness. And then I

understood...

He sighs, nearly returning to his former state of bliss.

WILLIAM

Oh, the agony that had been felt
there. *The pain...* intoxicating.

Mina is still, William's words pulling her into a trance.

WILLIAM

You can clean the blood off the brick
but you can never wipe away the
screams. Do you recall when they first
spoke to you? I remember. You and I
were neighbors then -

MINA

- No.

(beat)

Those were different screams.

William takes a few steps closer, his eyes widening with
excitement. *Not unlike a madman.* Mina quickly peers around
the room. She has nowhere to go.

WILLIAM

But I listened. Yes, very attentively.
There wasn't much else to do, was
there? Listen. Wait. *Die.*

His face is mere inches from hers now. Mina tries to stop
from shaking.

MINA

What do you want from me?

A glimpse of fear inches to the forefront of William's
facade.

WILLIAM

I need to know what's next. For me.

MINA

And I'm to have the answer?

WILLIAM

But of course. You have all the
answers. If not you, then whom? Well
there's him, but he is indisposed!

He's babbling now, distracting himself with his own words as he goes on. Mina takes the opportunity to try and sneak by, but it alerts William.

He pins her against the wall with surprising strength. He's a completely different man than the one we first met, and he has only one goal.

WILLIAM

Why must you insist on lying to me?
Nothing's changed, has it? You -
taking everything for granted, as if
all the marvelous things you've been
given were worth nothing.

MINA

Let me go.

She tries to free herself, but it's futile. William grins. He starts choking her.

WILLIAM

I need to know. And you are going to
tell me.

Mina struggles to breath, but William continues to squeeze, no shred of humanity left in his eyes.

Just as Mina's about to fade into nothing, the DOOR BURSTS OPEN and Walter comes barreling inside. He rips William off of Mina, throwing him across the room.

William hits the wall with a THUD and crumples to the floor.

When he looks back up at them, he's back to his normal, sane self. Every shred of him quivers with fear.

WILLIAM

Did I...? Oh, God...

Mina approaches him slowly, a fear tears breaking through her stone gaze.

MINA

Get out.

WILLIAM

It wasn't me, I swear it. You must
believe me.

MINA

Just go.

William barely manages to stand and hurries out on wobbly feet.

Mina turns to Walter. When neither can bring themselves to speak, Walter exits, but then Mina takes his hand.

MINA

Thank you.

Walter tries to come up with a retort, but simply grunts and hurries out.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - SUNSET

In a few moments, benevolent day turns to treacherous night.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - COMMON AREA - CONTINUING

The group assembles. With an unspoken nod of approval from Robert, they head out one-by-one, until it's just Mina and William.

WILLIAM

I'm afraid.

MINA

So are we all.

WILLIAM

You don't understand... I'm going to die in there.

Mina lets the words sink in.

MINA

There is nothing I can do for you.

She exits.

EXT. MAELSTROM PUB - NIGHT

A "charming" pub on the wharf. BOISTEROUS VOICES pour out from inside, while a rickety sign sways in the wind (MAELSTROM is printed above a whirlpool design).

INSIDE

It's even louder. DRUNKEN PATRONS unknowingly spill their beer as they share the same stories they've told a dozen times before.

Robert is already at the bar, watching. Listening. He takes in everything, most notably the MARKINGS ON THE WALLS - stains where items used to hang.

Come to think of it, for an ocean-themed pub, there's a lack of nautical decorations.

Meanwhile, in a corner, William sits huddled next to a coat rack while Arthur plays snooker nearby.

BEHIND THE PUB

Mina keeps to the shadows. A TRIO OF DRUNK MEN smoke, absorbed in their conversation. When a BARKEEP exits with the garbage, Mina slinks past him into the

BACK STOCKROOM.

She looks around. Where to begin?

MAIN AREA

The straight-laced, no-funny-business OWNER/BARTENDER refills Robert's drink.

ROBERT

Nice little place you have here.
Yours?

OWNER

Yes sir.

ROBERT

A change in ownership I assume?

OWNER

No sir. Always been mine.

It's clear he's not interested in chit-chat.

ROBERT

I see. I noticed the bare walls and thought things might be changing around here.

OWNER

You talk like you're one of my
regulars. Except... I've never seen
you around here before.

Robert doesn't miss a beat, laying the 'polite' act on thick.

ROBERT

No, you're absolutely right. Just
making conversation. Unlike the rest
of these fine gentlemen, I'm here
alone tonight.

OWNER

(suspicious)

Are you now?

BACK STOCKROOM

Mina hears the back door unlocking and dashes into the
darkness. The same barkeep from earlier enters and moves back
into the main pub.

Mina notices a locked panel in the floor. She searches for
something to break the lock.

MAIN AREA

Robert continues the conversation.

ROBERT

I just can't understand why someone
would go to all the trouble of fixing
something that wasn't broken...

OWNER

What's it to you anyway?

ROBERT

Nothing - which is precisely my point.
Judging by your clientele, they seem
far too... *engaged* to care what you
put on your walls.

The owner's starting to sweat a little.

OWNER

Let's just say I've gotten a little
sea sick lately...

Robert watches the owner's nervous gaze as it darts around the room.

OVER ARTHUR'S SHOULDER, a HIRED HAND quietly observes. He locks eyes with the owner.

BACK STOCKROOM

Mina finds a shovel - *the spade caked with dirt*. She grabs it and quickly breaks the lock, opening the panel.

STAIRS LEAD DOWN INTO A BLACK ABYSS. Mina grabs a lit lantern and disappears into an

UNDERGROUND HALLWAY.

Rotting wood panels line the walls on either side of Mina as she ventures further into danger. GUSTS OF WIND escape the cracks - an OTHERWORLDLY VOICE that beckons Mina onward.

Mina soon comes to a door - this one unlocked. It GROANS as she pushes it open.

MAIN AREA

ROBERT

Been out on the waters, have you?

OWNER

Only when necessary.

The owner spies a SECOND HIRED HAND on the opposite side of the room. Meanwhile, Arthur continues to play, seemingly oblivious.

OWNER

Listen friend. You're playing a very dangerous game.

ROBERT

Am I? Why don't you enlighten me?

Without warning, the owner grabs Robert by the collar and leans in.

OWNER

Think it's as simple as beginning and end, do ya? 'Follow the trail, get to the finish line.' It'll never end - not even in death. He will never

stop.

THE LIGHTS BEGIN TO FLICKER/DIM.

UNDERGROUND CELLAR.

Mina enters as the WHISPERS CONTINUE. It's too dark to see anything. She hangs the lantern and adjusts the brightness.

Suddenly, EVERYTHING IS MUCH TOO CLEAR:

Pale CORPSES line the floor and walls, not a drop of blood left in their bodies. Mina, horrified, takes it all in, unable to move.

Then, THE WHISPERS DIE OUT and one-by-one the eyes of each of the corpses begin to open. They all stare straight at Mina.

A LIGHT FLASHES, as if behind Mina's eyes, and THE SCENE CHANGES BEFORE HER:

A large figure, facing away, hovers over a WOMAN, holding her in what appears to be a sweet embrace. She WHIMPERS, and it becomes clear that the embrace is one of death. His mouth is at her neck, and he's devouring her.

Without warning, the man WHIPS HIS HEAD IN MINA'S DIRECTION. Mina shudders, knowing those eyes all too well.

MAIN AREA

The lights dim almost entirely and the owner looks upwards.

OWNER

He is here...

Robert follows his gaze, and the owner takes the moment of distraction knock Robert over.

OWNER

MASTER! I've got them!

The owner's henchman launch into action.

The man behind Arthur lunges in Robert's direction, but Arthur takes him out with the pool cue before he makes it one step - *very much aware after all.*

Walter and Harold leap out of their own carefully-chosen hiding spots, and tackle another group of henchmen.

UNDERGROUND CELLAR

Mina hears the SHOUTING above, and the scene before her DISSOLVES BACK TO REALITY. Mina flees.

MAIN AREA

The owner leaps over the bar and throws a clear liquid on Robert, stinging his eyes. By the time Robert realizes what's going on, it's too late.

He watches the owner light a match and finally realizes what he's been doused with.

ROBERT

NO!

He drops the match and Robert catches fire. Chaos ensues as patrons stumble over each other to escape. Meanwhile, Robert burns.

Mina bursts into the room, stunned by the sight before her.

Panicked, William grabs a large black coat off the rack and dashes towards Robert.

SLOW MO.

Mina takes it all in. Robert on fire. The rest of the pub catching fire. And finally, William with the coat. To Mina, the coat emanates an eerie dark light, and Mina's eyes go wide.

END SLOW MO.

MINA

WILLIAM, NO!

But William can't hear her over the racket. He throws the jacket onto Robert - only IT STOPS IN MID AIR.

The jacket twists and turns in the air, morphing into:

DRACULA.

Every part of him is menacing, from his size to his death-inducing eyes. He is darkness in its original, purest

form.

The owner grins and closes his eyes, letting the bliss of Dracula's presence wash over him.

Mina snaps into action, taking off her own jacket and finally extinguishing Robert. Meanwhile, Dracula turns to William, whose entire body trembles.

WILLIAM

Is it really you?

Walter charges Dracula, but with a single thrust of his fist, he sends the bull flying across the room.

Arthur snaps his pool cue in half and charges sharp-end first, meeting a similar fate. As Mina helps Robert to his feet, they look on, knowing there is nothing they can do.

DRACULA

Yes, my child. I am here.

William smiles, unable to believe his good fortune. But then in a SNAP ACTION, Dracula grabs William and soars across the room with him in hand. Dracula slams him against the far wall and SNAPS WILLIAM'S NECK.

MINA

NO!

The bar is now almost entirely engulfed in flame.

ROBERT

We need to leave. NOW!

But Mina ignores him, her eyes locked on Dracula. She charges across the room.

Dracula slowly turns, intent on wreaking additional death - UNTIL HE SEES MINA.

She stops before him and their eyes meet. Dracula looks down at Mina and for just a moment, there's a glimpse of sadness in his eyes. *Humanity*.

And then, Dracula zips out of the bar, gone in the blink of an eye. For a moment, there is nothing but the CRACKLING of burning wood.

ROBERT

LET'S GO!

Mina follows Robert and the rest out.

EXT. MAELSTROM PUB - MOMENTS

The remaining five sprint away from the pub.

ARTHUR
Where are his minions?

HAROLD
Gone.

ROBERT
Long gone. We have nothing left to
gain here.

ARTHUR
He just snapped the poor boy's neck.
He didn't stand a chance.

ROBERT
And neither do we.

INT. SAFE HOUSE COMMON AREA - NIGHT

The group BURSTS inside. Arthur continues towards his room.

ROBERT
Check outside. Make sure we weren't
followed.

ARTHUR
What the hell do you think I'm doing?!

Harold follows suit while Walter moves back into the hallway,
leaving only Robert and Mina.

MINA
It was an ambush.

ROBERT
Your instincts were right.

MINA
My instincts got him killed!

ROBERT
Get a hold of yourself. That boy was
not the first to die, nor will he be

the last. You best prepare yourself
for more - much more.

MINA

He tried to warn me. I ignored him.

ROBERT

You put the mission before the man and
because of that we were nearly
successful.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Are you kidding me?!

They turn to find Arthur back in the common room.

ARTHUR

It's a miracle any of us are alive at
all!

ROBERT

The only thing that matters is that we
are.

Harold and Walter rejoin the group.

WALTER

All clear.

ROBERT

For now. I believe we've overstayed
our welcome.

ARTHUR

You're damn right! I'm not spending
another minute in here.

MINA

We have nowhere to go.

WALTER

Out there we're exposed. At least in
here we have four walls.

ARTHUR

And half a dozen windows.

ROBERT

We stay here the rest of the night.
Morning will be here soon.

ARTHUR

And then what?

ROBERT

Then... then we discover if we have a future to worry about at all.

The reality of their impending doom temporarily silences the room.

MINA

We need to have a burial.

ARTHUR

Am I missing something? THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO BURY!

MINA

What of his things?! Are they not something? He may not have measured up to the rest of us, but he was still *here*. Cursed with this impossible task. No, we will not simply forget him.

ROBERT

Fine.

MINA

Then I will see to his things.

INT. WILLIAM'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door slowly CREAKS open. Mina stands in the threshold, analyzing the room. It's all deathly still.

She enters tentatively, stepping lightly as if to avoid landmines. Mina stops in the middle of the room, willing herself to find courage.

A MONTAGE OF MINA CLEARING WILLIAM'S ROOM:

She collects his things one at a time, taking a moment to look at each of them - a few clothes, a cheap watch with initials engraved.

She stores them all in a box - a very final act.

Looking at the box - the remains of William's life - Mina starts to cry silent tears.

When the door opens behind her, she quickly wipes away the tears and stands to find Robert waiting. He closes the door behind him.

ROBERT

You knew him - before?

MINA

Yes.

ROBERT

Then I'm sorry for your loss.

MINA

Thank you.

ROBERT

I would like to believe there can be redemption in death. But something tells me you're too smart to find solace in such sentiment.

MINA

A violent death is always unjust.

Robert chuckles.

ROBERT

Justice... *Justice* tells us that a man can kill for his own pleasure. That should he ever be caught, his fate is to be decided by a room full of men who have no stake in the matter... who didn't know the mother and child that were slaughtered at the hands of a maniac.

Mina now realizes this is more than objective banter.

ROBERT

We live in a world where justice belongs to a group of spoiled, weak men. But should another man seek retribution in their stead? Well, then he must be punished too. Do you know what they truly wanted from me? An admission. That I was out of line, that I stole their holy act of vengeance. But I will die before they get the satisfaction.

Robert pauses. Analyzes Mina.

ROBERT

You must be wondering "why the confession - the conceit of his Achilles heel?" Perhaps it is because tonight was proof that we are at death's door, that any of us might be next, including you - Mina Harker.

Mina's blood runs cold.

ROBERT

Your eyes say more than every word that's ever been spoken.

A small smirk from Robert. He's enjoying this.

ROBERT

In truth, I knew you the minute I saw you, Wihelmina, heiress to the Harker estate. *Consort of Dracula. Traitor*.

MINA

It's lies.

ROBERT

Is it not why he spared you tonight? That when he looked upon your face he saw the woman he once loved - the woman that once loved him?

MINA

NO!

ROBERT

LIAR!

Robert throws a piece of paper at her - what he retrieved from Dracula's study. IT'S A PHOTO OF MINA. Something's been written on the back -

ROBERT

'Until the very end, and further' - your remarkable penmanship, is it not?

She lowers the photo, mentally retreating into a very dark place.

ROBERT

I read the papers, after the massacre occurred.

Mina's voice croaks - barely able to manifest words.

MINA

It was a burglary.

ROBERT

Listen to yourself. Even you can't believe your empty words.

(beat)

I'd heard the rumors, of course - all of them - but never did I imagine they could be true. Until now.

She finally looks up at him.

MINA

Imagine? You couldn't begin to comprehend... You think you've seen blood? Van Gogh could've painted masterpieces with the red that filled that room.

ROBERT

You're right about one thing. I will never understand what would possess a person to slaughter their entire family!

Mina bursts off the floor -

MINA

I AM NOT A MURDERER!

ROBERT

THEN YOU LOVED ONE!

For a moment they're both silent, their rage echoing off the walls.

ROBERT

There is one mystery that remains. Why aren't you with him now, murdering the world together? Was it you who grew tiresome, or was it the creature that became unbearable?

MINA

Said the coward of a man, too weak to
save his own wife and child!

Mina waits for Robert to send her flying across the room, but instead he simply smirks.

ROBERT

Your words would sting if I only I
could feel pain.

Mina certainly can, and it shows all over her face.

ROBERT

I may not have an ally left in this
sorry city, but I will never lose my
allegiance. You, my dear, haven't even
that - not even to him.

MINA

Then why don't you tell them? Tell
them everything!

She waits. Robert doesn't move.

MINA

GO!

ROBERT

I would love nothing more. But we
cannot afford to lose another soldier.
So consider this my pledge. I am
telling you - promising you - that I
will devote my every molecule to
destroying Count Dracula. Will you?

It takes her a moment, but when Mina finally locks eyes with
him again -

MINA

Yes.

Robert searches her eyes for any sign of deceit. Finally, he
nods and exits. Just before he's gone -

ROBERT

My name is Robert Morley.

Just at the doors close behind him, we

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. WALTER'S ROOM - MORNING

Walter, sleeping soundly, STARTLES AWAKE without warning, ready to fight off an assailant unseen.

Instead, he finds Edward standing opposite him. Edward's caught him in a state of total vulnerability, and he knows it.

EDWARD

Oh my - someone having a nightmare?

WALTER

That'd be you.

Edwards smirks.

EDWARD

The Grim Reaper has arrived. Judgement day is upon you.

EXT. PALACE OF WESTMINSTER - DAY

A carriage pulls up to the palace and Mina, Robert and the others are led by GUARDS into the building.

INT. EDWARD'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Edward waits, sitting at his desk as the group files in.

EDWARD

It appears you're one short. At each other's throats already?

ARTHUR

You'd like that, wouldn't you? Those "dossiers"... You might as well have given us a copy of each other's diaries.

EDWARD

A simple test - to see if you could look beyond each other's demons.

MINA

You are truly a foul man.

EDWARD

You'd know about foul, wouldn't you,

Mina Murray? And you, Walter Green.
Harold Robinson. Robert Morley. If
only I could say the same for dear
William.

It takes every last ounce of willpower for Mina not to
strangle him.

ROBERT

He died playing your game.

EDWARD

I hear it was quick, at least. Far
more preferable to the alternative,
wouldn't you say? *Death by noose.*

Mina grabs Edward's letter opener and drives it into the
desk, shaking.

MINA

Enough.

EDWARD

Yes, perhaps you better explain the
series of events that led to your
colossal failure.

ROBERT

Our investigation led us to a local
tavern, which Dracula was using as a
hideout. We believe he was biding his
time until he could escape as a
stowaway via commercial ship.

MINA

There was an underground cellar. Where
he kept his victims.

EDWARD

And how did you manage to uncover all
of this?

Mina stares Edward down.

MINA

Let's call it 'woman's intuition.'

ARTHUR

We were there barely five minutes
before the sonofabitch ambushed us and
killed the boy.

EDWARD

So in the end, you learned nothing?

ROBERT

We discovered in two days what you could not in weeks. If there was ever a chance of ending him, it is with us. No, Edward, we did not learn nothing - we learned everything. We have a taste for him now, so to speak. And we will follow him to the darkest corners of the world until he is erased.

Edward - knowing he's been beat - swallows his pride.

ROBERT

But to do so, we will need resources. Starting with a new residence.

ARTHUR

One that's actually safe!

EDWARD

Fine. Your demands will be met. Get out of my sight.

They filter out - all but Mina.

EDWARD

Something else?

MINA

When you pulled me from my prison, you took something from me.

EDWARD

And?

MINA

I would like it back.

INT. SAFE HOUSE/MINA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mina enters, clutching her journal. She sits on the bed and opens to where she left off.

INSERT: Mina in her prison cell, writing, as a reminder.

Mina takes her quill/ink and hovers just above the page. Can she find the courage to continue?

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. GYPSY DISTRICT - DAY - FLASHBACK

From earlier, the gypsy woman grabs Arthur's arm:

GYPSY WOMAN

Looking for death, are you? Well you
have found it.

ARTHUR

What the hell are you talking about?

The gypsy woman beckons Arthur closer. Despite every
instinct, he puts his ear to her mouth. She whispers
something (unheard), and Arthur listens intently.

BACK TO:

SAFE HOUSE/ARTHUR'S ROOM

Arthur sits in silence, contemplating said warning.

MINA'S ROOM

Finally, MINA puts pen to paper.

MINA (V.O.)

The blood is the life. It is
everything, and I... am nothing.

(beat)

It begins with blood. And it will end
with blood.

Mina looks up from the page. Her eyes are dark - full of
danger. EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS WOMAN IS A MYSTERY.

CUT TO: BLACK.

END.