

## "Darkest Before Dawn"

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - JUST BEFORE DAWN

Snow covers the ground and trees. All is quiet.

Then, we hear the sound of RUNNING and heavy BREATHING.

MOVING - YOUNG NATHANIEL

a boy between eight and ten years of age. He wears a cloak that is weathered. Young Nathaniel is being pursued by a YOUNG VAMPIRE, who looks to be in his twenties. The Young Vampire is dressed in the style of the mid-1800's.

WIDER ANGLE

on the chase. Young Nathaniel is pursued into a...

SMALL CLEARING

There is a dead tree in the center of it. Young Nathaniel trips and falls into the tree.

The Young Vampire bares claws and fangs. He lunges at Young Nathaniel.

Young Nathaniel picks up a broken branch and turns to face the Young Vampire.

THE BROKEN BRANCH

pierces the Young Vampire's heart.

YOUNG VAMPIRE

falls limply on Young Nathaniel. Young Nathaniel BREATHES heavily.

THE SUN

breaks the horizon.

THE YOUNG VAMPIRE

awakes and grabs hold of Young Nathaniel.

The two struggle as sunlight engulfs them.

The Young Vampire suddenly bursts into flames. Nathaniel is burned on the left side of his face. He pushes the Young Vampire away.

The Young Vampire collapses to the ground and burns to death.

CLOSE SHOT

of Young Nathaniel as he watches the Young Vampire burn. There is terror in his eyes.

THE CLEARING - LATE AFTERNOON

It is lightly snowing. Young Nathaniel has not moved since the attack. All that is left of the Young Vampire is ash and snow.

CLOSE SHOT

of Young Nathaniel staring at the Young Vampire's ashes. His eyes are heavy.

We hear HOWLING and BARKING of a pack of dogs.

MOVING - A SEARCH PARTY

A group of five WOODSMEN, a pack of DOGS, and NATHANIEL'S FATHER move out of the forest into the clearing. Nathaniel's Father is in his early thirties.

NATHANIEL'S FATHER

Nathaniel! Nathaniel!

He sees Young Nathaniel in the clearing.

THE SEARCH PARTY

rushes to Young Nathaniel. The woodsmen examine the spot of ash. Nathaniel's Father kneels by Young Nathaniel and embraces him.

NATHANIEL'S FATHER

Nathaniel! My son!

Young Nathaniel doesn't respond.

NATHANIEL'S FATHER

Nathaniel! Speak to me! What has been done to you, boy?!

Young Nathaniel still does not respond.

NATHANIEL'S FATHER

Please speak to me!

CLOSE SHOT

of Young Nathaniel with a blank look in his eyes.

WIDER ANGLE

of the entire scene. Nathaniel's Father picks up Young Nathaniel. The snowfall thickens.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Street lamps reflect light off the snow covered cobblestone road. JOSHUA, a well-dressed man in his late twenties, walks up the street. He carries a bouquet of flowers.

INT. ELIZABETH'S HOME - NIGHT

ELIZABETH'S ROOM

The room is lavishly decorated. ELIZABETH, a beautiful young woman in her early twenties, sits at a mirrored vanity and brushes her hair.

There is a locket on the vanity. We hear a KNOCK at the bedroom door.

ELIZABETH

Come in.

The door opens and ELIZABETH'S FATHER, a well-kept man in his late forties, enters the room. He stands silent and admires his daughter until she notices him in the mirror.

ELIZABETH

Father, don't you ever get tired of watching me brush my hair?

Elizabeth smiles.

ELIZABETH

Well, since you are here, come and help me with my locket.

Elizabeth's Father moves to the vanity. He picks up the locket and opens it.

INSERT

a picture of Elizabeth's mother inside the locket.

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

You look just like your mother did at your age. Joshua is a very lucky young man.

ELIZABETH

He does not have me yet. Besides that, he could never replace you, father.

Elizabeth's Father lowers his head. Elizabeth stands up from the vanity. She lifts her father's head so that their eyes meet.

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

I am sorry, Elizabeth, but since your mother's death the very thought of losing you brings me to tears.

ELIZABETH

(smiling warmly)

Fathers don't cry. That is a daughter's job.

Elizabeth kisses her father on the cheek.

ELIZABETH

You will never lose me, father.

Elizabeth's Father closes the locket and puts it around Elizabeth's neck. We hear the DOORBELL from downstairs.

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

That will be Joshua I suppose.

ELIZABETH

Will you go and tell him that I shall be down in a moment?

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

Of course.

Elizabeth's Father turns to leave the room.

ELIZABETH

Father.

Elizabeth's Father stops and faces Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

Yes?

ELIZABETH

I love you.

Elizabeth's Father smiles warmly then leaves the room.

DOWNSTAIRS HALL

There is a large staircase on the right side of the hall. The front door is a set of wooden double-doors. Elizabeth's Father enters the room on the stairs and moves to the front door. He opens the doors and lets Joshua into the house.

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

Good evening, Joshua.

JOSHUA

Good evening, sir.

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

Elizabeth will be down shortly.

JOSHUA

Thank you.

There is an awkward silence.

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

Joshua.

JOSHUA

Yes sir?

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

You have been courting my daughter for a long time now and I know that marriage is what both of you want. I...I want you to know that when the time comes...you will have my blessing.

JOSHUA

(nervous)

Actually sir, I was going to ask you tonight.

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

Am I to assume then that the flowers are for me?

JOSHUA

(confused)

I'm sorry?

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

Yes, Joshua, you have my permission and my blessing to marry my daughter. Just promise me that you will take good care of her.

JOSHUA

I would never let any harm come to her.

Elizabeth enters the room from the stairs with her coat in hand.

ELIZABETH

What are you two talking about?

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

The usual banter amongst men.

ELIZABETH

(playfully shocked)

Father, I'll not have Joshua discussing brandy and smoking tobacco!

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

(in playful protest)

I would never discuss those things with this fine young man!

JOSHUA

Elizabeth, you look enchanting.

ELIZABETH

(smiling)

Thank you.

JOSHUA

These are for you.

Joshua presents the bouquet of flowers to Elizabeth. Her eyes brighten.

ELIZABETH

You always know exactly how to make me smile!

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

Let me take those and put them in some water.

Elizabeth's Father takes the bouquet of flowers. Joshua helps Elizabeth into her coat.

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

You two be careful this evening and please have my daughter back at a decent hour.

JOSHUA

Yes sir.

ELIZABETH

Good night, father.

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

Good night.

Elizabeth takes Joshua's arm and the two leave out the front door.

CUT TO:

EXT. LARGE HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

We hear MERRY MUSIC and LAUGHTER from inside. There is a light snowfall. Joshua and Elizabeth come out of the house. Both laugh and carry on.

Joshua and Elizabeth walk home from the night's festivities.

ELIZABETH  
(jokingly)

Your friends.

JOSHUA  
What about my friends?

ELIZABETH  
Was Thomas not just running about in nothing but his long johns, pretending to be a large bird?

JOSHUA  
(smiling)  
The last time I checked, my friends were your friends also.

ELIZABETH  
(playfully)  
Don't remind me.

Joshua looks towards the sky.

JOSHUA  
The night sky always looks brighter through the snowfall.

ELIZABETH  
You are odd. You know that?

JOSHUA  
Does that mean you would not marry me if I asked?

ELIZABETH  
No darling, that all depends on how big your pocketbook is.

JOSHUA  
What?!

Elizabeth laughs. She playfully runs away from Joshua.  
Joshua smiles and runs after Elizabeth. He quickly catches her.  
He gently grabs her, spins her into his arms and kisses her.

CLOSE SHOT

of Joshua and Elizabeth as their kiss ends.

JOSHUA

I love you.

ELIZABETH

And I love you.

JOSHUA

I uh...I was talking to your father earlier and  
I...I asked for his blessing and...and he gave it.

ELIZABETH

What are you saying?

JOSHUA

I am saying that I wish to ask your father's  
daughter's hand in marriage.

(realizes what he said)

Your hand. I wish to ask for your hand in  
marriage.

ELIZABETH

Shouldn't you be down on one knee?

JOSHUA

I thought I was.

Joshua looks down. He sees that he is not kneeling.

JOSHUA

I'm sorry. May I try again?

ELIZABETH

(smiling)

Of course you may.

JOSHUA

More romantic this time, I promise.

WIDER ANGLE

of Joshua and Elizabeth. Joshua steps onto a large rock.

JOSHUA

(shouting skyward)  
Let it be proclaimed before God and all that  
are listening-

ELIZABETH  
Joshua, you are going to wake the whole town!

JOSHUA  
I love this woman and wish to take her as my  
wife!

ELIZABETH  
Joshua, come down from there!

Joshua comes down off the rock.

JOSHUA  
(laughing)  
I'm sorry. Was that not to your liking?

ELIZABETH  
(sarcastic)  
More romantic?

Joshua takes Elizabeth's hand in his.

JOSHUA  
Elizabeth, I love you more than life itself..  
and I want us to be together for all of time.

Joshua reaches into his pocket, pulls out a ring, and begins to  
kneel.

JOSHUA  
Elizabeth, I-

Joshua stops. He stands as he sees a STRANGER emerge from the  
darkness. The Stranger is poorly dressed.

STRANGER  
Don't stop on my account. This is the most  
beautiful thing I've ever seen. The only  
thin' that might make this better is if you'd  
kindly give me all your valuables.

The THIEF pulls out a knife. Joshua makes a fist to hide the ring  
in his hand. Joshua pulls out his pocketbook with his other hand.

JOSHUA  
Here take it. Just don't hurt us.

The Thief takes the pocketbook.

THIEF

And I'll be needin' the pretty one's jewelry  
as well.

The Thief reaches for Elizabeth's locket.

ELIZABETH

Not my mother's locket!

Joshua tries to stop the Thief. The Thief elbows Joshua in the  
head. Joshua falls down.

ANGLE ON

the ring as it flies out of Joshua's hand into the snow.

ANGLE ON

Elizabeth as she struggles with the Thief. During the struggle  
the Thief stabs Elizabeth in the chest with the dagger and yanks  
the locket from her neck.

CLOSE SHOT

of Elizabeth's face. Her shocked expression slowly turns to  
blankness as she collapses to the ground.

THE THIEF

runs away with the locket and pocketbook in hand.

JOSHUA

gets up and rushes to Elizabeth's side.

JOSHUA

Elizabeth! Elizabeth, hold on! Help us!  
Somebody help us!

ELIZABETH

Joshua...I...

JOSHUA

Don't waste words on me, my love! You need to  
hold on! Don't leave me! Please don't leave  
me!

ELIZABETH

I...love...y...

Elizabeth's eyes go cold as she dies.

JOSHUA

No! No! You can't go! I need you...

WIDER ANGLE

on the street as Joshua cradles Elizabeth's body. The snowfall begins to thicken.

EXT. ALLEY - LATE NIGHT

The Thief runs into the alley still clutching Elizabeth's locket and Joshua's pocketbook. He stops once in the alley and looks at his evening's earnings.

A DARK FIGURE

reaches out of the shadows and grabs the Thief by the throat.

CLOSE SHOT

of the Thief's face. He is terrified.

DARK FIGURE

Was that locket really worth someone's life?

The Dark Figure reaches out his other hand and motions for the Thief to give him the locket.

The Thief drops the locket into the Dark Figure's hand.

The Dark Figure LAUGHS from within the shadows and crushes the Thief's throat in his hand before he drops him.

DARK FIGURE

You were right.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETARY - MORNING

Snow covers the ground. Elizabeth's funeral comes to a close and TOWNSPEOPLE begin to depart. Elizabeth's Father and a few others remain in front of Elizabeth's gravesite.

Joshua watches from a distance.

Joshua slowly walks towards Elizabeth's grave.

ANGLE ON

Elizabeth's Father as he looks up and sees Joshua approaching. Elizabeth's Father moves to intercept Joshua.

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

You do not belong here! Leave now!

JOSHUA

Please, sir, no one mourns her death more than I.

Elizabeth's Father, in a rage, punches Joshua in the face. Joshua falls down. The townspeople at Elizabeth's grave rush over to the scene.

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

I have lost a wife and now a daughter! They were all I had! Yet no one mourns for her more than you?! You said you would let no harm come to her!

Joshua stands.

JOSHUA

And if I could exchange my life for hers I would!

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

You are not welcome here!

JOSHUA

But I-

ELIZABETH'S FATHER

And if I ever see you again I will send you to Hell so that one day you can be with the one that did this to her!

Joshua chokes down whatever he had to say, turns, and walks out of the cemetery.

CLOSE SHOT

of Joshua's face as tears stream from his eyes.

JOSHUA

Elizabeth, I'm sorry...

CUT TO:

EXT. YOUNG NATHANIEL'S HOME - NIGHT

The slums. Snow very lightly covers the ground outside.

INT. YOUNG NATHANIEL'S HOME - NIGHT

FRONT ROOM

The interior is mostly barren. There is a doorway leading to a

back room and a door leading outside. Nathaniel's Father and a WOODSMAN sit at a table. There is a lit oil lamp on the table.

NATHANIEL'S FATHER

I do not know what is wrong with him. It has been weeks and he still hasn't come back to us. He just stares blankly...so distant.

WOODSMAN

Does he respond to anything?

NATHANIEL'S FATHER

No, nothing. His mother and I have tried everything we can think of, yet there has been no change in him at all. If only we knew what had happened out there.

WOODSMAN

Some of the villagers talk of dark creatures that prowl the night feeding on the helpless. They say that sunlight and fire are the only things that kill them.

NATHANIEL'S FATHER

That's nonsense! There are no creatures of the night! Do not be led around by village stories.

WOODSMAN

I only thought it might explain-

NATHANIEL'S FATHER

Explain what?! How ignorant people are? I want no more talk of this foolishness!

We suddenly hear SCREAMING from outside.

The Woodsman jumps up and runs to the front door. He opens the door and looks outside. Nathaniel's Father stands up.

WOODSMAN

There's a fire!

The Woodsman leaves out the front door. Nathaniel's Father follows.

BACK ROOM

It is lit only by light entering from the front room. Young Nathaniel lay on the bed. He stares up at the ceiling.

CLOSE SHOT

of Young Nathaniel's face. His expression is blank.

EXT. BURNING HOUSE - NIGHT

Dozens of VILLAGERS surround the house, including Nathaniel's Father, throwing buckets of water on the flames in a futile attempt to extinguish the fire.

We hear SCREAMING from within the house.

INT. YOUNG NATHANIEL'S HOME - NIGHT

BACK ROOM

The COMMOTION from the fire outside can be heard.

CLOSE SHOT

of Nathaniel's blank stare. Suddenly he blinks his eyes. He sits up, looks towards the door and stands. His expression is distant as though he is in another place.

EXT. YOUNG NATHANIEL'S HOME - NIGHT

The night is brightly lit from the fire down the road. We hear SCREAMING off to the left. Young Nathaniel comes out the front door of his home. He looks to his right, sees the fire, and immediately walks that direction.

EXT. BURNING HOUSE - NIGHT

The fire has gotten worse. We still hear the SCREAMING from inside.

YOUNG NATHANIEL

approaches the house and watches it burn. Villagers scramble to put out the fire and pay no attention to Young Nathaniel.

VILLAGER #1

We must get her out of there!

VILLAGER #2

We cannot! The flames are too big! There is no hope for her!

NATHANIEL'S FATHER

sees Young Nathaniel. He forgets everything else and rushes to embrace his son.

NATHANIEL'S FATHER

My son! I thought you would never return to me!

CLOSE SHOT

of Young Nathaniel's face. He is fixed on the fire and the sound of SCREAMING. There is pleasure in his eyes as he watches.

CUT TO:

EXT. TAVERN - NIGHT

Light pours through the building's open doorway. We hear LAUGHTER and MANY VOICES talking all at once. A very light layer of snow covers the ground outside.

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

The tavern is one level with a bar and many tables and chairs. The PATRONS range from men as young as twenty to as old as sixty. There are a few WOMEN mixed in with certain crowds.

Joshua is very drunk and sits at the bar with an empty mug of ale.

GABRIEL, a light skinned man who appears to be in his mid-twenties, sits at the opposite side of the bar. He keeps an eye on Joshua.

THE BARTENDER, a portly older fellow, approaches Joshua.

BARTENDER

I think you've had your fill tonight, Joshua.

JOSHUA

I'll tell you when I've had enough!

PATRON #1, who sits next to Joshua, eavesdrops on the conversation.

BARTENDER

You cannot keep doin' this to yourself.

JOSHUA

Save your advice for someone who cares. Now, bring me another ale.

PATRON #1

(to Joshua)

You heard him! He's not giving you anymore. Why don't you go home?

Joshua looks over at Patron #1 and in a fit of anger grabs Patron # 1 by the back of his head and slams his face into the bar. Patron #1 falls to the ground unconscious.

PATRON #2, who was sitting with Patron #1, jumps up and pulls out a dagger. All other patrons clear away from the bar.

BARTENDER

Take this outside!

Patron #2 slashes at Joshua with the dagger a couple of times. Joshua barely evades the attacks. On the third attempt, Gabriel grabs Patron #2's attacking arm and holds him.

Gabriel then releases Patron #2's arm and steps between Joshua and Patron #2.

GABRIEL

This is not necessary.

PATRON #2

Mind your own business!

GABRIEL

This is my business!

Gabriel swings behind him and elbows Joshua in the head. Joshua falls down, unconscious.

GABRIEL

(to tavern patrons)

Now, please...go back to your drinking.

Gabriel lays some money on the bar, picks up Joshua, and moves to a table in the back corner of the tavern.

PATRONS

return to the bar and the tavern returns to normal.

ANGLE ON

Gabriel and Joshua in the corner. Joshua wakes up and looks around. He is dazed.

JOSHUA

What's going on?

Joshua feels the side of his head and then looks at Gabriel.

JOSHUA

You hit me!

GABRIEL

I did it to save your life.

JOSHUA

Maybe I didn't want my life saved!

Joshua begins to stand up. He is still drunk and not very steady.

GABRIEL

Joshua, sit down.

JOSHUA

How do you know my name?

GABRIEL

Sit down!

Joshua sits. Gabriel locks eyes with him.

CLOSE SHOT

of Gabriel's eyes as they change color.

GABRIEL

Clear your head.

WIDER ANGLE

of Joshua and Gabriel. Joshua shakes his head for a moment. He looks around. He is now sober and confused.

Gabriel's eyes revert to their normal color.

JOSHUA

What are you, some kind of magician?

GABRIEL

Not really.

JOSHUA

Then how did you know my name?

GABRIEL

I know a lot about you, Joshua. I know that every night for the past month you have spent time in places like this...drinking and getting into fights with a hope that you will be killed in the process. I know that everything you hold dear in life has left you. And I know that you blame yourself for it.

JOSHUA

Have you been following me?

GABRIEL

No.

JOSHUA

Then who have you spoken to?

GABRIEL

No one, Joshua. I can read your thoughts.

JOSHUA

What is it you want from me?

GABRIEL

I want to help you.

JOSHUA

Help me how?

GABRIEL

Ever since that night you have longed for death. I want to give you another chance at life. I want to give you the ability to start over.

JOSHUA

What are you talking about?

GABRIEL

I am not like you are, Joshua.

JOSHUA

I noticed that.

GABRIEL

My kind are masters over mortal men and women. We have the power to live out our fantasies. Would you not like that gift also?

JOSHUA

Can you change the past?

GABRIEL

We can see into it, but we cannot change it.

JOSHUA

Then peddle your gypsy ways somewhere else.

Joshua stands and looks around.

JOSHUA

I need to go find another tavern. One with some life in it!

Gabriel stands.

GABRIEL

Joshua, it is not pity I am offering! I am allowing you to choose between a new life and this!

JOSHUA

And I have made my decision, sir.

Joshua leaves the tavern. Gabriel shakes his head at Joshua's choice.

EXT. TAVERN - NIGHT

The street is quiet. Joshua walks out of the tavern and looks around for a moment.

JOSHUA

Yes! I shall start a new life...up the road here at some other drinking establishment!

Joshua walks to his left. As he passes the alley between the tavern and the next building over we hear a WOMAN CRYING inside the alley. Joshua stops and listens.

JOSHUA

Hello? Are you alright in there?

ELIZABETH (OS)

Joshua?

CLOSE SHOT

of Joshua's face. His eyes widen immensely.

JOSHUA

Elizabeth?!

ELIZABETH (OS)

Joshua, help me!

Joshua rushes into the alley.

EXT. TAVERN ALLEY - NIGHT

Moonlight pierces the two building rooftops giving some illumination. Joshua enters the alley. He frantically looks around, but sees nothing.

ELIZABETH (OS)

Please, Joshua, help me!

Joshua runs deeper into the alley.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

This alley is darker than the last. Joshua runs into the alley and sees Elizabeth. She is pale and wears the same dress she wore when she died. Her mortal wound is visible and blood trickles from it.

CLOSE SHOT

of Joshua's face. He is shaken and begins to cry.

JOSHUA

Elizabeth?!

ELIZABETH

Why didn't you save me?

JOSHUA

I couldn't...I'm sorry...

ELIZABETH

You said you would let no harm come to me.

JOSHUA

I know...I'm so sorry, Elizabeth...

ELIZABETH

Don't cry, Joshua. Come to me.

Joshua moves to Elizabeth and she embraces him.

CLOSE SHOT

of Joshua's face. He cries.

JOSHUA

I love you...

CLOSE SHOT

of Elizabeth's face. She grins.

ELIZABETH

Do not worry, my love...

Elizabeth's face changes into DANIEL'S face. He appears to be in his early thirties. He has a dark aura about him.

DANIEL

Everything will be alright.

Daniel bares his fangs and bites into Joshua's neck. Joshua falls unconscious.

INT. INN ROOM - NIGHT

JOSHUA'S POV

His eyes open to reveal the hazy image of a poorly lit inn room. The light flickers and seems to come from a fire off to the right. Joshua lies sideways on the ground. He sees Gabriel and Daniel as they argue. Joshua slowly BLINKS.

GABRIEL

You just drank of him and then forced your blood upon him?!

DANIEL

Of course. Why not?

GABRIEL

This is not the way it is supposed to be!

DANIEL

Do not speak to me of what is supposed to be! When you reveal what we are you either bestow the gift or take their life! You don't just leave them to tell others!

Joshua BLINKS.

GABRIEL

He would not have remembered anything.

DANIEL

Fool! You would leave the fate of our kind up to whether or not he remembered your little offer?!

GABRIEL

When have you ever cared about our kind?

DANIEL

I am finishing what you started! How dare you ask me such a question!

Joshua BLINKS.

GABRIEL

Quit being dramatic, Daniel! You care nothing for him and you will leave him to die!

DANIEL

That is none of your concern.

Joshua CLOSES his eyes. All is dark.

DANIEL (VO)

He is mine.

INN ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Poor lighting flickers about the room. There is a fireplace, but the fire is burned out. Daniel sits at the table with an evil smile on his face. There is a dagger and a candle burning on the table.

Joshua lies on the floor unconscious. We hear a KNOCK on the door.

DANIEL

Come in.

The door opens and a YOUNG PROSTITUTE enters the room.

YOUNG PROSTITUTE

The innkeeper said you might want some entertainment.

DANIEL

(grinning)

Don't we all?

The Young Prostitute moves towards Daniel.

DANIEL

Stop.

The Young Prostitute stops. Daniel points to Joshua.

DANIEL

It's not for me. I like to watch.

YOUNG PROSTITUTE

Whatever your pleasure, as long as I get paid.

Young Prostitute moves to Joshua.

DANIEL

Don't worry. You will get what's coming to you.

The Young Prostitute kneels down and checks Joshua.

YOUNG PROSTITUTE

He'll not be much fun. He's had too much to drink!

DANIEL

Oh quite the contrary, actually. He is just dying for a drink.

CLOSE SHOT

of Daniel's eyes. They change color as they lock with the Young Prostitute's eyes.

CLOSE SHOT

of the Young Prostitute's eyes. She is in a daze.

DANIEL

Why not let him taste you? Use this.

Daniel picks up the dagger and offers it to the Young Prostitute.

The Young Prostitute moves to Daniel. She continues to look as though she is in a trance. She takes the dagger and moves back to Joshua.

DANIEL

(smiling)

Slowly now. I want to enjoy this.

The Young Prostitute, with no control over her actions, slowly cuts her wrist open with the dagger. She puts her slit wrist to Joshua's mouth.

THE BLOOD

runs into Joshua's mouth.

DANIEL

That's good. Now back away.

The Young Prostitute stands and backs away from Joshua.

DANIEL'S EYES

revert to their normal color.

JOSHUA

suddenly wakes. His eyes are glazed over. He bares his claw and fangs. He sniffs the air and follows the scent of blood like a rabid animal.

He moves right in front of the Young Prostitute, who has tears streaming down her face.

YOUNG PROSTITUTE

Please don't hurt me!

There is a moment where Joshua does nothing. Then suddenly he rips the Young Prostitute's throat open with one slash and drinks her blood.

Daniel watches the scene with delight and after a few moments slowly claps his hands.

Joshua stops. He wakes up from his frenzied state. Upon seeing what he has done, he drops the Young Prostitute's body and it falls lifelessly to the floor.

Joshua is frightened and confused. He frantically looks around the room until he sees Daniel.

JOSHUA

Wha, what have I done?!

Daniel stands.

DANIEL

You have taken your first step into a better world.

JOSHUA

No! This isn't happening!

(closing eyes)

It's only a dream! It's only a dream!

Daniel becomes angry and grabs Joshua.

DANIEL

This is no dream! Open your eyes!

JOSHUA

No! This is not happening!

Joshua pushes Daniel back, smashes through the door, and continues out of the room. Daniel looks angry, but follows Joshua out.

EXT. AN INN - NIGHT

The street is dark and quiet.

Joshua bursts out of the front of the inn.

Joshua runs up the street towards the outskirts of town.

EXT. SOME WOODS - NIGHT

Just outside of the town.

Joshua, in a panic, runs through the woods. He trips on a large tree root sticking up from the ground.

DANIEL

seems to appear out of nowhere. He grabs Joshua by the throat and effortlessly picks him up with one hand.

Daniel bares his fangs.

DANIEL

This is no dream!

JOSHUA

Yes it is!

DANIEL

If this were a dream, would you feel this?!

Daniel throws Joshua through a tree into another tree behind it.

After the debris clears from the destruction Joshua slowly stands. He is in pain, but surprisingly unscathed. Daniel stands before him.

DANIEL

Care to try that again?

JOSHUA

What are you?!

DANIEL

The same thing as you.

INT. A TAVERN - LATE NIGHT

The room is poorly lit and smoky. There are few PATRONS.

Daniel and Joshua as they sit at a table in the corner.

DANIEL

None of us know why we are or where we come from.

JOSHUA

There has to be an explanation.

DANIEL

Still thinking as a mortal. There always has to be something. Doesn't there? Mortals are not happy unless they have something to blame the unknown on. Maybe it was God that bore us. Or better yet, maybe we are of the devil. I know I've been told that from time to time.

JOSHUA

That doesn't surprise me.

Daniel smiles at this comment.

JOSHUA

What is our purpose?

DANIEL

To live...just as mortals do. Only we get to enjoy life without worries or boundaries.

JOSHUA

We must stay in the darkness! How is that not a boundary?!

DANIEL

Do you always look for the negative in life?

JOSHUA

I don't want this life!

Daniel bares his fangs. He grabs Joshua by the collar and pulls him close.

DANIEL

Then say the word and I shall end it right here! I have no patience for you to feel sorry for yourself! I have given you a gift! A chance at a new life! And I have told you what you need to survive so you had better decide whether you want life or death before someone else decides for you!

Daniel shoves Joshua and knocks him on the floor. When Joshua stands up Daniel is gone.

DANIEL (VO)

(heard in Joshua's head)

If you choose life, we will meet again.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A LARGE CITY - NIGHT

A BUSY MARKET STREET

The 1890's. It is brightly lit. It is early evening. COUPLES and FAMILIES, dressed for the fall season are out enjoying the night air.

EXT. EDGE OF THE CITY - NIGHT

NATHANIEL, who is now in his late forties, approaches. He still has the burn scar on the left side of his face. He stops and looks over the city.

EXT. JOSHUA'S HOME - NIGHT

Joshua walks out onto the busy street from a basement under a two-story building. He is dressed for the times. Joshua looks around for a moment then walks down the street.

INT. DANIEL'S HAVEN - NIGHT

FRONT ROOM

Daniel stands in front of a large window. He looks out at the busy street. Sitting at a long table are four youthful looking vampires. CATHERINE, an attractive woman appearing to be in her early twenties, JACOB, a wild looking man appearing to be in his early twenties, MICHAEL, the youngest one, appearing to be in his late teens and NATALIA, a foreign woman appearing to be in her early twenties. All four have their attention fixed on Daniel.

DANIEL

Look at them. Going about their evenings...  
waiting for us.

Daniel turns and faces his progeny.

DANIEL

I know this is your first time here and I want you to be careful. The elder here and I have a history together so if you are caught it would be in your best interest to act like a stray. Michael, you are new to this. You shall stay with Jacob.

(to Jacob)

You watch him closely.

(looking at Catherine and Natalia)

Catherine, Natalia, make me proud.

NATALIA

How long are we in this city for?

DANIEL

Long enough to bring Hell to the streets, my dear.

Natalia, Jacob, and Michael all give a cheer of excitement.

DANIEL

I want you all back here by four.

Daniel grins.

DANIEL

Have fun.

Natalia, Jacob, and Michael excitedly rush out the door.  
Catherine approaches Daniel.

CATHERINE

Daniel, this was once my home. Why did you  
not tell the others?

DANIEL

We do not live in the past, Catherine. It is  
not a part of who you are anymore. Do you  
understand?

CATHERINE

Yes.

DANIEL

Good. Now go.

Catherine leaves.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

The street is busy. Natalia walks by herself. Catherine runs up  
to Natalia.

CATHERINE

Natalia, wait!

NATALIA

What took you so long?

CATHERINE

I needed to talk to Daniel.

NATALIA

Being favorite again?

CATHERINE

No! Now, where are we going?

NATALIA

Up here.

Natalia motions to a tavern up the street.

CATHERINE

Then let us bring Hell to the streets!

Catherine and Natalia laugh and continue on their way.

EXT. A BUSY STREET - NIGHT

A YOUNG WIDOW walks amongst the CROWDS. She looks sad.  
Joshua watches her from an alley.

As the Young Widow moves up the street Joshua follows her.

INT. A BUSY TAVERN - NIGHT

Catherine and Natalia sit at a table with three DRUNK MEN. All of them drink and laugh.

EXT. THE CITY PARK - NIGHT

A LARGE TREE

The Young Widow sits under the tree and sulks.

Joshua slowly approaches her. She sees him and is startled.

JOSHUA

Do not be frightened. I heard you crying and  
I wanted to help.

EXT. A BUSY TAVERN -NIGHT

Catherine and Natalia follow the three Drunk Men out onto the street.

DRUNK MAN #1

Ladies, you are gonna love the surprise we  
have for you.

DRUNK MAN #2

It's right this way.

CATHERINE

Lead the way.

Catherine and Natalia smile at each other then follow the three Drunk Men up the street.

EXT. THE CITY PARK - NIGHT

A LARGE TREE

Joshua now sits under the tree next to the Young Widow.

JOSHUA

You have lost someone close to you.

YOUNG WIDOW

How did you know?

JOSHUA

Because I know how it feels to lose someone close to you. In time the pain will lessen, but I will not lie...it will never fully leave you.

YOUNG WIDOW

Then what is there to live for?

JOSHUA

You must find a reason.

YOUNG WIDOW

How?

JOSHUA

Look into my eyes.

The Young Widow looks into Joshua's eyes.

CLOSE SHOT

of Joshua's eyes as they change color.

The Young Widow falls into a trance.

SECLUDED AREA

The three Drunk Men lead Natalia and Catherine into an area of the park that is covered by many trees and bushes.

Drunk Man #1 looks around then nods to the other two.  
Drunk Man #2 grabs Natalia and Drunk Man #3 grabs Catherine.

NATALIA

What is this?

DRUNK MAN #2

It's your surprise.

CATHERINE

Let us go!

DRUNK MAN #1

Not 'til we get a little somethin' first.

Drunk Man #1 drops his pants.

Natalia looks at this sight and laughs.

DRUNK MAN #1

What are you laughing at, you stupid whore!

Drunk Man #1 backhands Natalia.

CLOSE SHOT

of Natalia's face as she looks at Drunk Man #1. She smiles and shows her fangs.

A LARGE TREE

The Young Widow is still in a trance. Joshua's eyes are now their normal color.

JOSHUA

When you wake the pain will be gone. You will find new meaning in life...and a reason to live.

Joshua goes to bite the Young Widow on the neck, but is interrupted by the sound of Drunk Man #1 SCREAMING.

Joshua jumps up and quickly moves towards the sound.  
SECLUDED AREA

Drunk Man #1 lies on the ground and holds himself. His pants are around his ankles. Blood covers his lower body.

Natalia feeds on Drunk Man #2 and Catherine feeds on Drunk Man #3.

Joshua enters through some bushes with his fangs bared.

JOSHUA

What is going on here?!

Catherine and Natalia stop feeding and look at Joshua.

CATHERINE

We're just having a bit of fun. Care to join us?

Natalia drops Drunk Man #2 and lunges at Joshua. Joshua grabs her by the throat.

JOSHUA

Mortals are not playthings! You risk exposing us!

CATHERINE

Not that it's any of your concern, but we were going to make sure they were dead.

JOSHUA

Leave now or I'll crush this one's throat and

come after you.

Catherine moves a little closer to Joshua and sniffs the air.

CATHERINE

You have the scent of a mortal on you.

Catherine's eyes widen as she smiles.

CATHERINE

Fresh meat!

Catherine runs off in the direction that Joshua came from.

JOSHUA

No!

Joshua drops Natalia and runs after Catherine.

A LARGE TREE

The Young Widow still sits under the tree in a trance.

Catherine runs at the Young Widow with her fangs and claws out.

Joshua intercedes and tackles Catherine in front of the Young Widow.

The Young Widow wakes up and sees Joshua and Catherine in a struggle. The Young Widow is frightened. She runs away.

Joshua pins Catherine against the tree.

JOSHUA

Give me one reason why I shouldn't kill you!

CATHERINE

Because you can't.

JOSHUA

Don't let my affinity for mortals fool you into thinking I would not kill one of our kind!

CATHERINE

You don't have it in you.

Joshua throws Catherine to the side.

JOSHUA

Leave here before I show you just how wrong you are!

Joshua walks off. Catherine stands and walks towards the secluded area.

SECLUDED AREA

Natalia watches through some bushes. Catherine enters through the trees.

NATALIA

What was that about?

CATHERINE

I'm not sure.

Natalia looks at the three Drunk Men, who lie dead on the ground.

NATALIA

He cares for the mortals?

CATHERINE

Yes...and I intend to find out why.

CUT TO:

EXT. JOSHUA'S HOME - NIGHT

It is early evening. The street is busy. Joshua leaves his home.

Catherine watches Joshua from a nearby alley.

Joshua walks up the street. Catherine follows.

EXT. A BUSY STREET - NIGHT

Catherine watches from a distance as Joshua approaches a BEGGAR.

Joshua converses with the Beggar for a few moments. The Beggar then follows Joshua up the street.

Catherine follows them.

EXT. AN INN - NIGHT

Catherine watches through an open window as Joshua treats the Beggar to a meal.

AN INN - LATER THAT NIGHT

The street is no longer busy.

Joshua leaves the inn and the Beggar follows him. Joshua and the Beggar walk into the alley next to the inn.

EXT. INN ALLEY - NIGHT

Joshua gives the Beggar a small sack of coins.

JOSHUA

Look at me.

CATHERINE

sneaks up to the edge of the alley and watches.

The Beggar looks at Joshua.

CLOSE SHOT

of Joshua's eyes as they change color.

The Beggar falls into a trance.

JOSHUA

When you wake you shall no longer feel lesser  
than other men. You will take what I have  
given you and find a trade to work.

Joshua bites the Beggar on the neck and feeds just enough to  
sustain himself.

The Beggar falls unconscious. Joshua lays the Beggar down and  
walks off.

Once Joshua is gone, Catherine moves to the Beggar and examines  
him.

JOSHUA (OS)

Looking for me?

Catherine is startled. She turns and sees Joshua, who grabs her  
by the throat. Catherine in turn grabs Joshua by the throat and  
bares her fangs.

JOSHUA

Why are you following me?!

CATHERINE

Release me!

JOSHUA

Tell me why you are following me!

CATHERINE

I am not as forgiving as you! Release me or  
die!

Joshua releases his grip and Catherine does also.

Catherine looks at the Beggar.

CATHERINE

Why did you not kill him?

JOSHUA

Do you really want to know?

CATHERINE

I would not have followed you if I did not.

JOSHUA

Very well. Come with me and I will explain,  
but if you try anything I will not be as  
forgiving as you think I am.

Joshua picks up the Beggar and walks out of the alley.

Catherine hesitates for a moment then follows.

INT. AN INN ROOM - NIGHT

The Beggar lies on the bed, still unconscious.

Joshua and Catherine sit at a small table with a lit candle on it.

JOSHUA

Were you not once mortal?

CATHERINE

Of course I was.

JOSHUA

Then what right do you have to take their  
lives?

CATHERINE

I'm not mortal anymore, besides...mortals kill  
other mortals.

JOSHUA

That doesn't make it right.

CATHERINE

And we do have to feed on them.

JOSHUA

But you do not need to kill them.

CATHERINE

Mortals take life in order to eat.

JOSHUA

I thought you weren't mortal anymore.

CATHERINE

Clever.

Catherine looks at the Beggar.

CATHERINE

You are helping him...and the girl in the park.  
You were going to help her as well. Why?

JOSHUA

When my mortality was taken from me I was left  
alone with no one I could turn to for help.  
It was a feeling that I cannot let others live  
with.

CATHERINE

How long have you been alone?

JOSHUA

Forty years or so. It is difficult to keep  
track when time no longer has a meaning.

There is an awkward silence.

CATHERINE

My sire is probably expecting my return. May  
we continue this conversation tomorrow  
evening?

JOSHUA

If you wish to.