

Prelude: Vince Markevich

🕒 1:09:01

S Storyteller Rina 00:01

Thank you for joining us wherever you are. This podcast episode is brought to you by the Old Ways actual play team. This actual play uses the fifth edition Vampire the Masquerade tabletop role playing rules by World of Darkness. This actual play is performed by adults and in an adult setting. Listeners should know that this podcast is intended for a mature audience and will include strong language and mature themes. All content including names, places, events, companies, and so forth that may bear resemblance to entities living, dead, or undead is strictly coincidental. My name is Rina Haenze, and for tonight's game, I will be your Storyteller.

S Storyteller Rina 01:01

Greetings, and welcome to another episode of the Old Ways Podcast's Vampire the Masquerade chronicle "Blood Moon Rising." I'm your Storyteller, Storyteller Rina, and tonight we are bringing you the final of our character prologues, introducing the last member of our little coterie to all of you. So thanks again to all of our Patreon backers who chose to bring this chronicle to life, and I hope you will enjoy the story that we have for you this evening. So without further ado, I'm going to turn the spotlight on to our player tonight. John, why don't you tell us a little bit about who you are bringing to the table?

J John (Vince) 01:43

Hey, everybody, I'm John and I will be playing Vincent Markevich. You can just call him Vince. And he is a young vampire; he's only been embraced for like the last 3 years. He isn't super keen on being a vampire; turns out there's all these things, all these strings attached that weren't made clear. He is really in it for what he can get out of it. He's 35 years old, he works as a nurse, he swipes blood from work. He is from a pretty disadvantaged background. He did his best to become a doctor but failed to get the grades and is totally okay with that. He now works as a nurse and he's chosen to become a vampire because he has the promise of learning about magic and having all of time to read books, which is why Clan Tremere found him as a worthy prospect. He has been sired into the clan and is one of the lower members of the San

Francisco brotherhood family. Visually he is 5'10, has kinda hazelnut hair, brown eyes, pretty lean, pale, you could even call him gaunt. He has only been a vampire for the last 3 years, so he still does not truly understand vampire society or why he has to be so careful around certain people. And honestly, he found dealing with drug dealers a lot easier. But a little less scary than these guys. Yeah.

S Storyteller Rina 03:49

Excellent. I can't wait to see what Vince is going to bring to the coterie, what sort of strange magics and perhaps some moral waffling is in our future from Vince.

J John (Vince) 04:07

He has his idea of what being good means and I'm sure needing the blood of the living isn't gonna wear down on that over the course of time.

S Storyteller Rina 04:19

Oh, most certainly not.

J John (Vince) 04:20

Most certainly not. Why would we even say that?

S Storyteller Rina 04:24

No idea. Alright, so let us get into our story for this evening. So you wake up, Vince. It is about 7pm; sunset in San Francisco in October is generally between 6-6:30, but you like to sleep in a little bit because you have long shifts, so it's a little bit later for you. And you're quite okay with that. So you wake up to greet a somewhat chilly evening, decent breeze, kind of night when most people would be wearing probably windbreakers, or at least a nice cardigan or sweater, but not too chilly, especially for the legions of the damned who are used to the cold anyway. So why don't you tell us a little bit about where Vince sleeps? Where is he safe at night? Do you have other people around you, whether other vampires or humans? Where are you when you awaken tonight?

J John (Vince) 05:36

Vince awakens in a house granted...well, more accurately, rented to him by his sire. She has quite a wide property portfolio in the San Francisco area and he is currently in a nice suburb on the north side of the city. This is far from where he ever thought he'd end up, but it's pretty good. He lives in a small bungalow, alone. Except for the ghost, who sometimes shows up because the place is haunted. But that is great. Yeah, Vince has a, well he takes public transport, but that's mostly just because it makes him feel more personable. He likes to mill in

with the crowd. But the bungalow is a nice place. It's four rooms, plus corridor plus bathroom. It's pretty, pretty, pretty good for a bungalow. I mean, it's got a library, which is where Vince keeps his coffin. It also has a surgery. Which...Vince doesn't really question why it has that.

S Storyteller Rina 06:55

So does Vince sleep in a coffin because he thinks that's what vampires do, or was he given that by his sire?

J John (Vince) 07:06

She absolutely gives him a coffin to sleep in. Yeah.

S Storyteller Rina 07:10

Ok. And he doesn't question it.

J John (Vince) 07:13

He's never talked about this with other vampires. He's just...she told him "you sleep in a coffin because you're a vampire". And he just said, "ok", I guess.

S Storyteller Rina 07:25

Alright, right. So you sit up in your coffin, the lid rises dramatically as you sit up, Dracula style. And I'd like you to make a Rouse check. This is going to be a single d10, and you need a 6 or higher because you're starting to feel hungry. You can feel the throbbing from outside somewhere, someone's heart is beating as they're walking past your bungalow. You haven't eaten since last night and you need to feed, so let's see how well you're able to control yourself.

 08:10

8 on a 10.

S Storyteller Rina 08:12

Ok, you rolled an 8, so you successfully pass your Rouse check, you're able to fight back these feelings of hunger and ravenous desire for blood. You've got other things to do for now. You're not going to go out and rip out anyone's throat today. So you wake up, you get out of bed, or rather your coffin, and since your coffins in the library, you are greeted by a loud thump as a book comes flying out of the bookcase and just lands on the floor. It's this old leather tome, and

it appears to be one of the ghost's treasured possessions. They seem to be connected to it somehow, because this tome is the only tome that goes flying off the bookcase whenever the ghost wants to say hello. So how does Vince respond to this?

J John (Vince) 09:13

He responds by picking up the book carefully, checking the spine and saying,

V Vince 09:17

Oh, good morning to you too. Let's see here.

J John (Vince) 09:21

He flicks it open to a random page, and he just reads out a paragraph from it.

S Storyteller Rina 09:28

You feel a kind of sense of calm almost as you read this section out of the book. And there's a bit of a cold sensation that you're used to by now, almost as if something else is moving your fingers to turn the pages, just for a few minutes. But you feel calm and satisfaction from somewhere. And then you can close the book and return it to its spot on the shelf and that feeling of that presence that was in the room has gone now. Your ritual is complete for the evening.

J John (Vince) 10:08

Someday I will find out who this ghost was. But until then, I guess I just have to keep them, keep them off my back. That's...that's tomorrow's problem. It's fine.

S Storyteller Rina 10:21

Well, you read to them tonight, so you know there won't be any rivulets of blood trickling down your coffin walls when you're sleeping tomorrow morning. No rusty clanking sounds.

J John (Vince) 10:33

It's a real hazard.

S Storyteller Rina 10:33

Yeah. No giant spider feeling crawling up you while you're trying to sleep. So you've done what

you needed to do today.

J John (Vince) 10:42

I absolutely view this as helping the ghost and being kind to them. But the downside, I'm pretty sure the ghost has bullied me into reading them a story. And I'm not too sure how I feel about it.

S Storyteller Rina 10:56

It's a very complicated feeling for sure.

J John (Vince) 10:58

Yeah, it's, there's layers to this relationship.

S Storyteller Rina 11:04

Oh, you put those aside for the moment because you have bigger issues on your metaphorical plate tonight. You need to get to work because you have some business to attend to, let's say. So how do you get to work at night? Do you take public transportation? Do you walk? Do you take an Uber?

J John (Vince) 11:27

Time permitting, Vince takes public transportation. He just likes to be amongst the crowd, helps him blend in, feel like he's still just another person going about their business, going to work. You know, he just looks at the people around him. He does a lot more people watching than he used to do. But uh, yeah, he keeps reminding himself they're human beings. They're all people with their own interesting backstories. They all have their own places they're going. Yeah, people,

S Storyteller Rina 12:03

You get on the bus tonight, and it is a bit more full even than usual. Probably just because of the chill of this evening, more people are choosing to ride the bus instead of maybe walk like they would normally do. And it's very comforting to you, this close press of people, even as you're steadfastly ignoring the scent rising up off of all of these bodies, that intoxicating, delicious, living blood that you can smell when you brush up against someone and you can feel their heartbeat just for a split second. But you've worked so hard at containing this that you're able to push those thoughts aside and just enjoy being amongst all of these people. There's a young woman carrying a small dog in her purse. The dog does not look too happy about this, and you can entertain yourself by watching the dog's antics as it tries to escape the purse on multiple occasions. There are a couple small children with their parents, and they are taking a

cat on a leash with them. The cat somehow seems more happy about this than the dog seems to be in the purse. There's an old homeless gentleman sitting in the back of the bus, half asleep. He's got a newspaper stretched out over his lap. People are sitting further away from him because of the smell of alcohol and the fact that he probably hasn't showered in god knows how long, but he's asleep, or at least nearly so and seems to be quite comfortable back there. So you just take in all of these sites of home and of what used to be your normal life as the bus winds its way up and down. And up and down. And up and down the famous hilly streets of San Francisco before depositing you at a bus stop outside the Sisters of Mercy Hospital. It's a fairly small hospital, all things considered. It's a bit more high end, let's say, it's a religious endowment hospital, a Catholic hospital, and it focuses mainly on the elderly and on end of life care. And there's an entire wing for hospice care for people who can't afford to have care at home, or whose families have chosen not to have them at home. There's also part of that ward for the charity cases that the Sisters of Mercy, this religious organization, bring in who have nowhere else to go who are terminally ill or injured and are brought in off the street. There's a whole section of the hospice wing dedicated just to these people, and often it's the job of the night nurses to do the most care for these particular unfortunate people, they tend to come in at night, or be brought in at night. And there's a couple of them tonight you're going to have to go in and perhaps sit with because it's fairly close to their time, and you have a knack for knowing or at least coming pretty close to the end. For some of these people, you can just sort of feel it, you're not sure how, or why; this is something that you had even before you were Embraced. You could just sort of feel it. And perhaps that's why you went into hospice care when you became a nurse.

J John (Vince) 16:00

Yeah, and it's a big part of why he chose this field; he absolutely believes he is doing people a much needed service by being there for their loved ones, being there for them when the end is come and nobody else can be there.

S Storyteller Rina 16:19

So you walk into the hospital; the night guard on duty smiles at you from over his giant cup of coffee as you swipe in with your ID card. The doors slide open, the night receptionist, Sally, a young woman with really long blonde hair that she keeps up in a ridiculously tight ponytail, so tight it makes her face seem like it has no lines, no wrinkles or anything, which is probably the intended effect. She also looks up at you and says,

S Sally 16:54

Hey, good evening, Vince.

V Vince 16:57

Good evening, Sally.

—

J John (Vince) 16:58

And he's just gonna stop and like, check something on the desk. And he's just like, so,

V Vince 17:04

How's your...how's your weekend?

S Sally 17:07

I mean, not too bad. I got stood up again. I don't know what it is with me and losers. I keep, you know, I swipe for them, and we set things up and then they just...they don't come. I don't know what's wrong with me.

J John (Vince) 17:24

And he's like,

V Vince 17:26

Sally, it's important to remember nothing's wrong with you. There's something wrong with them, if only because they made plans and didn't follow through. But also because you're charming and lovely.

S Sally 17:36

Oh, you're, you're such a charmer, Vince. Well, I'm going out of town next week, going to go visit my mother. She's not doing super well. Do you think you could stop in and check on the cats a couple times while I'm gone?

V Vince 17:55

Oh, yeah, that's no problem. I still have the spare key from last time.

S Sally 17:59

Thank you. They seem to really like you. So far I haven't found anyone else that the cats will actually, you know, hang out with and also not destroy my furniture. Whenever I bring in someone they don't like while I'm gone, they destroy my furniture.

V Vince 18:16

I guess maybe I remind them of somebody or something.

S Sally 18:20

Oh, they seem to like you. So thanks. I'll make sure everything is, is set up for you. I'm not going to try any more dates this week. It's just too much. But I'll...I'll let you know if I hear from anyone.

S Storyteller Rina 18:35

And she looks sort of sad and lonely off into the distance before recalling herself, like,

S Sally 18:42

Oh, Mr. Perkins.

S Storyteller Rina 18:45

She lowers her voice.

S Sally 18:47

I don't think he's gonna make it through tonight. Could you could you check in on him first? He doesn't have anyone you know, and it's not looking good.

V Vince 19:01

I'll check it Sally. Don't worry about that. I'll update the sheets and I'll be there.

S Storyteller Rina 19:09

She nods and she pats your cold, dead hand.

S Sally 19:13

You're a good person. Vince. You're a good person.

V Vince 19:17

Thanks. Pretty chilly out, though.

J John (Vince) 19:20
He says, pulling his hand back from the desktop where it was lying. And he's like,

V Vince 19:25
Yeah, pretty chilly out. It's really drawing in, huh?

S Sally 19:29
Yeah, you should try some gloves, Vince. Don't want to get sick and catch a cold with all this, all this wind and everything.

V Vince 19:40
Yeah, well...

J John (Vince) 19:41
He checks his watch. He's like,

V Vince 19:42
Look, I gotta start. You know what the time system's like.

S Storyteller Rina 19:45
She reaches under the desk and she pulls out a box of disposable masks, medical masks, and she hands them to you. She says,

S Sally 19:56
I noticed you're running, running low. So I had them leave another box up at the desk so I could hand them to you before you go scrub up.

V Vince 20:07
Oh, thank you. Sally, someday, I hope you find someone who makes you happy. You'd make anyone happy.

J John (Vince) 20:17

And he's just gonna, you know, take the masks and go off towards the changing room. He's just gonna whistle a tune as he goes.

S Storyteller Rina 20:26

She blushes a bit and looks a little flustered, but she's smiling as she goes back to doing whatever data entry she was doing on her computer at the desk. So you get back to the staff room where all the lockers and everything are so you can change into your scrubs. What kind of scrubs does Vince wear? Are you a plain green kind of guy? Or do you tend to go for more interesting prints?

J John (Vince) 20:56

Vince tends to go for plain green. I mean, it's easier to buy them in bulk, and people expect it. When they see you, you become kind of a...a reassuring piece of furniture, to some extent, when you are what they expect to see.

S Storyteller Rina 21:15

That makes sense. So you scrub up fairly quickly, wash your hands very carefully, for several seconds longer than absolutely necessary. You're not sure if bacteria can live on your dead hands at the moment, but you're not going to break protocol. So as always, you wash your hands, get ready, put on one of your masks, as even though the pandemic is mostly over and there's a fairly high vaccination rate in this part of the country in particular, health protocols still dictates that visitors to the hospitals and staff all wear face masks, and patients wear them when they're awake, or in the presence of other staff members. So you can put on one of your new disposable masks as given to you by Sally the receptionist, and as you do that, and you go to clip your ID badge onto the pocket of your scrubs, you feel that card that you found last night when you came in, just still in the pocket. You'd hoped you'd forgotten about it, but it's still there. Why don't you tell us what you found and why it's bothering you?

J John (Vince) 22:42

Last night when I came to work, the card fell out of my locker and it simply said, "Vince, I need double the supply. ASAP. Don't let me down." It's just signed "L", and this is a problem. This is a big problem for Vince.

S Storyteller Rina 23:03

Who is L, and why is Vince stressed out by this?

J

John (Vince) 23:09

Vince is really stressed out because when he was an undergrad doing his work placement, he had trouble making ends meet, and he resorted to stealing prescription drugs from the medical supply in the hospital he was in at the time. Now, needing someone to sell to he sold to a dropout from his course that failed the previous year. Now he goes by L, and for their business relationship, he refers to them by this. L has been blackmailing him for the past year and a half to get more prescription meds. They know that he has access to end of life care, so that there's a lot of painkillers, that there's a lot of opiates, and that he's in a position of trust. He's been here for a couple of years, he's a well-liked and respected, experienced hospice nurse. So it's relatively easy for him to get access. The main problem Vince has with this is, well, one, he doesn't need to steal drugs anymore. He is not in a financial situation, but that's a problem too. There have been previous investigations, which didn't catch him, into who was stealing medication, and every time one of those has happened, Vince has, you know, backed up, cut back, just eased off, he's always managed to stay ahead of the curve. And now there's one of those hunts going on at the moment, and Vince feels like this demand for double the supply, that's asking him to put his neck way too far out there. So he's gonna have to deal with L somehow.

S

Storyteller Rina 25:29

Yes, that's a bit of a tricky situation for Vince. How are we going to deal with L? Maybe we'll see, maybe we won't.

J

John (Vince) 25:39

He'll figure it out. He's always figured it out.

S

Storyteller Rina 25:42

That card is almost a weight inside the pocket of your scrubs as you get ready to make your rounds. And it's always present in the back of your mind that you don't know when L is going to show up. The last time, L showed up near the hospital, which kind of freaked you out a little bit. And L could be here now, L could be waiting for you at home, when you go home, you have no idea. So it just sort of, it's constantly ticking away in the back of your mind, like an irritating clock that just won't stop. But you have work to do. So you go out into the hallway towards the hospice wing. It's a hospital, so you've got the linoleum floors, and you've got the very sort of ugly beige walls that are in constant need of repainting, and there never seems to be funding to get around to it. But at least the lighting is fairly good, thanks to the funding that the organization does get, pretty decent lighting, and the snack machines are always full, which used to be a good thing for you, and now doesn't really matter anymore.

J

John (Vince) 27:09

They had an excellent brand of pepperoni in there. Just you know, the little thin sticks. And that's lost its appeal in the last couple of years. I couldn't tell you why, though.

S

Storyteller Rina 27:23

So your rubber soled shoes squeak a little bit on the linoleum, which irritates the hell out of you as you're walking down the hallway. Some nights you can block it out, but some nights like tonight, it's just adding to that already ticking in the back of your head that's building up and building up. But you are able to stop thinking about it for the moment, you're able to sort of push it aside, maybe not completely block out all of the the worry and the noise, but at least dampen it because what you're about to do requires your full attention. So you go up to a door that's half open. The doors are never completely closed on patients' rooms, that would be a bit dangerous. But you knock softly on the door. You hear:

M

Mr. Perkins 28:24

Hello? Hello?

V

Vince 28:27

Hello. It's Vince here, just checking in.

J

John (Vince) 28:30

He just pops his head in the door.

S

Storyteller Rina 28:34

So it's a two person room; you're not really going to get private rooms in this wing of the hospital. But the other bed is empty today, so there's just a very frail-looking elderly man, obviously ravaged by cancer. Mr. Perkins. There's this rasp and hiss of the ventilator that's keeping air pumping through his lungs. And he's lost what little hair he had left, and his face is fairly skeletal in appearance at this point. One withered bony hands with a pulse oximeter on the finger is trying to lift up from the thin, slightly garishly patterned hospital blankets. He's trying to wave at you, almost, but he can't quite get up the strength to lift his hand all the way and through the the rasp of the the ventilator and through the slight blockage of the tubes in his nose that are helping helping him breathe, he says,

M

Mr. Perkins 29:54

Nurse...Nurse Vince. Thank you for, for, for dropping by

V

Vince 30:03

Don't worry.

J John (Vince) 30:04
And Vince just like slides in the door and just like close them behind him very quietly so as not to create any kind of harsh sound, just quietly just eases it shut, and he's like,

V Vince 30:18
So, Mr. Perkins.

J John (Vince) 30:20
And he, you know, he goes to the wall dispenser and takes out, you know, does a small little hand dose of disinfectant and just does the hands again. And he's like,

V Vince 30:28
So, how are you doing?

M Mr. Perkins 30:34
Not...not good. Nurse this morning tried to tell me I'd be out of here in a couple of days.

S Storyteller Rina 30:41
But then there's this long, deep rasping cough. It shakes his whole body, what you can see of it from under the cover.

M Mr. Perkins 30:51
She was real nice, but also real, real bullshit.

J John (Vince) 31:00
Vince shares the laugh with him and he's just like,

V Vince 31:03
Yeah, well, I'm gonna be here. I'm gonna be here with you. You're not gonna leave alone.

—

S Storyteller Rina 31:10

You can see some moisture welling up in the corner of his eyes, just a little bit. His body doesn't produce much anymore. But his hands are shaking and he's able to get that one hand up a little bit further this time to reach out towards you and he says,

M Mr. Perkins 31:27

Thank you. Never thought I'd be doing this alone. I always thought it'd be in 'Nam with my brothers. Or before the kids, but...

S Storyteller Rina 31:47

And he starts shaking his head a little bit side to side.

M Mr. Perkins 31:52

Man shouldn't outlive his own children. Ain't right. Should have gone a long time ago, Vince, should have gone, should have gone...

J John (Vince) 32:04

Vince takes his hand that he's raised and he's just holding it. He's like,

V Vince 32:07

Sorry, mine are a bit cold.

J John (Vince) 32:10

He, like, strokes the back of his hand with his thumb, and he's like,

V Vince 32:15

Hey, you'll see them soon. If you want, I can, I can do something for the pain. Or I can just sit here with you.

M Mr. Perkins 32:23

Been too much for that.

- S** Storyteller Rina 32:26
He smiles weakly and he's coughing and you have to help him spit up all of the phlegm that his lungs are desperately trying to expel. And he settles back into the pillow
- M** Mr. Perkins 32:38
Spent so long in here not feeling anything. Want to feel this, at the end, you know? It's just...maybe it's the last feeling, you know? Maybe there's nothing after this. You a religious man, nurse?
- V** Vince 33:00
Just call me Vince. Um, not especially. I...I just don't know what's on the other side. Or if there is another side or if there's an after. And well, Mr. Perkins, I have to tell you that anybody that does know, he's either a liar or a crazy man.
- J** John (Vince) 33:21
But he, you know, he just gives the hand a firm squeeze. He's like,
- V** Vince 33:28
The suffering of this too will pass.
- M** Mr. Perkins 33:32
I hope so. I really do.
- S** Storyteller Rina 33:35
And his labored breathing is getting slower and slower, just as you sit with him. For a few minutes, he goes quiet. He can't quite get up the energy to talk. He's leaning back and settling into the pillow; the pillow almost swallows him a bit because of how frail he is.
- M** Mr. Perkins 34:01
Something strange about you, Vince. Never saw it before till tonight. Kinda...
- S** Storyteller Rina 34:13
His eyes are fluttering slightly.

M Mr. Perkins 34:20
I dunno...I can see...you got the devil in you, boy.

S Storyteller Rina 34:27
And his hand suddenly spasms and grabs onto yours tightly.

M Mr. Perkins 34:32
You got the devil in you, boy! He's in yah!

J John (Vince) 34:38
Vince holds the hand that grabbed him, like, he just holds it very, very firmly. He's not trying to hurt him, but he puts the other, his left hand, on Mr. Perkins' chest, just pushes him down gently into the bed. He's like,

V Vince 34:54
There's no one that doesn't have the devil in 'em. You got it. I got it. Your wife and kids had it. We've all got it. Everybody has this in them. It's human to be like this.

S Storyteller Rina 35:10
As you push him back onto the bed, and you're leaning in a bit to tell him this, you get a little intense as you're up close to his face. And I'd like you to make a Composure role for me. So that's going to be 3d10s, and you're going to need to succeed on 2 of them.

J John (Vince) 35:38
See how that goes. So 2 7s and a 3.

S Storyteller Rina 35:43
So you succeeded on 2 out of 3, which is good. His eyes are looking really blurry and he puts up his hand as if to touch your mouth, as if he tried to find something that he thought was there, but he can't quite get up the strength and his his hand falls back down to the bed and he rasps again.

M Mr. Perkins 36:14
Sorry. Gotta forgive an old man. I don't know what I thought I saw there. Sorry, Vince. Sorry.

V Vince 36:24
It's okay, Mr. Perkins. I'm here. It's alright.

J John (Vince) 36:27
And he just like, he's just still like holding the guy's hand with his right. He strokes what's left of his wispy hair with his left, and he's like,

V Vince 36:37
It's alright, bud. We all see...our eyes all play tricks on us sometimes. You know, you do what you can, to do the best you can.

M Mr. Perkins 36:49
Right.

S Storyteller Rina 36:50
He starts crying a little bit again, just tracks of moisture, not quite tears all the way.

M Mr. Perkins 37:03
I know I said I was ready, but I ain't ready. Vince, it hurts so much. But I don't want to go.

V Vince 37:11
Nobody's ready. Nobody's ready. But all you can do is accept that you got to go. Sometimes you don't have the choice. I know you fought long and hard, but it's just the end, my friend.

M Mr. Perkins 37:29
I won't haunt you, at least.

S Storyteller Rina 37:33

S Storyteller Rina 37:35
He tries to laugh a little bit.

J John (Vince) 37:36
Vince is like well,

V Vince 37:37
There's worse people to be haunted by, so I'll take that as a compliment. But I hope, I hope you do get to see them again. I'll be...I hope there is another side, that you do find them.

M Mr. Perkins 37:53
I'll come back and let you know.

S Storyteller Rina 37:55
And he smiles a little bit. And then he lets out this another long rasping cough, and you hear a little bit of a rattle, almost, escaping from his throat. And a few seconds later, his grip on your hand just kind of goes slack, and his eyes are just staring up at the roof of his little room. But you can already feel with your heightened senses that the pulse has stopped, there's no longer blood flowing through this frail shell that used to hold the soul, if there is such a thing, of James Perkins.

J John (Vince) 38:45
Vince stands up and closes his eyes. Well, closes Mr. Perkins' eyes, not Vince's eyes. That'll make more sense. But yeah, he's just like,

V Vince 38:56
I really hope you do find them.

J John (Vince) 39:00
And he's going to very methodically go about doing the procedure he's always done when a patient dies. And he notes the time of death and turns off all the gear around him.

S Storyteller Rina 39:15
You go about this very quietly and methodically as a couple of the night doctors come rushing

in; they would have been alerted when the machine started letting out that slow, steady, beep to indicate there was no heart rate anymore. You're able to put your feelings aside, whatever they may be, and just turn off the machinery, quietly pull the curtains around, so anyone coming through the hallway won't see what's happening, and Dr. Patel tells you that you did a good job.

D Dr. Patel 39:59

You did a good job, nurse. Thanks for being with him, I'm sure he would have really appreciated it. So you can, you can go finish your rounds. We'll take care of him now.

V Vince 40:15

Oh, thanks, Doc.

J John (Vince) 40:17

And he's gonna just disinfect his hands before leaving the room, and he only takes a moment to just look back then moves on to the next room.

S Storyteller Rina 40:28

It's a fairly uneventful evening for you after this. You find that when something of this import happens at the beginning of your shift, everything else just sort of feels muted and quiet, and you sort of move almost robotically through the rest of your rounds, you give the comforting words and you stop to talk to your patients, especially the ones who've been there for longer than a few days. But your heart's not quite in it, and it almost feels like a relief when you realize it's time for your break, that you can go back and you can sit down in the staff room for 15-20 minutes and just recompose yourself. And so you leave the room of the last patient on this round, and normally, this would be the place you spend the most time, with this homeless teenager who was brought in by San Francisco PD, but you just can't bear it tonight. Not tonight. So it's about 11:30pm and you go back to the staff room. What is Vince's routine for his mandated breaks, for the breaks that he gets inbetween his rounds?

J John (Vince) 42:06

Well, a couple of years back, he'd you know, sit down with a stick of pepperoni, a cup of coffee. Nowadays not so much, as neither of those things has the same appeal. So nowadays, he's gonna start resourcing, cuz he's gonna need to feed, he knows that to keep himself under control, he will need to feed and it's not something he's, you know, crazy about, but he's got to do it.

S Storyteller Rina 42:48

So how does Vince feed at this point in time? What does he do?

J John (Vince) 42:55

He took some of the tricks that he learned from when he was stealing drugs, and he applies it to the blood bank. The trick is that the blood has to be drunk fairly quickly, so that it's not had a chance to go bad. He can still drink it when it is, but it's not the same. What he does, he takes the type of the patient that he thinks is closest to death, because he figures that will be the one who'll need the least because they're on their way out. As it happened, Mr. Perkins is, well, sorry, was a very common blood type. So Vince doesn't feel too bad about having an AB-

S Storyteller Rina 43:46

So you take a small coffee thermos out of the out of the fridge. The nurses are fairly strict about not touching other people's food, so you don't have the normal office issues with people stealing your lunch or whatever. So you feel fairly safe keeping your meals, let's say, in this kind of situation, and this kind of thermos flask that's double insulated keeps out any smell, and also any visuals, let's say. So you can settle down at the small table to have a bit of a drink and ease some of the gnawing at your insides. It's quiet in here. And I'd like you to give me an Awareness plus Wits roll. So that'll be 4d10, and you'll need to pass 2 of them. Ok, so you got 2 Passes. So your keen vampire senses, just as you're sitting down and about to uncork this bottle, this thermos and take a drink, you pick up a sound behind you a split second before you realize there's someone else in the room. So you are not surprised in the act of feeding as you hear.

L L 45:22

Hey, Vince old buddy.

J John (Vince) 45:26

Vince puts the cap back on the thermost. He's like,

V Vince 45:34

Oh, shit, what's up, L?

J John (Vince) 45:36

And he just doesn't look up. He's just looking down at the table. He's like,

V Vince 45:39

What's up, man?

L 45:40
Hey, you got my message, yeah?

V Vince 45:44
Yeah. Yeah, I did.

L 45:48
You got what I need, old buddy, old pal? You come through for me and my hour of need, huh?
You got it?

J John (Vince) 45:56
Vince takes some deep breath and turns around in the chair. And he's just like,

V Vince 46:02
I was going to get it for ya at the end of the shift.

L 46:05
That's not gonna do it for me, I'm afraid.

S Storyteller Rina 46:09
And there's a short, very powerfully built, man. He's very pale, almost vampire pale, but not quite, just as if he doesn't get much sunlight. He's got a close cropped buzz cut, and he's wearing scrubs. You're not sure if he walked in with them or if he took them out of someone's locker, but he's dressed as if he's a nurse. And he's just standing there with his arms crossed, and he's got his head tilted to one side. He's looking at you just like,

L 46:49
Oh, I got customers need it now. Really. And you know, I'd, I'd hate for anything to happen. You know, buddy, you know, I'd really, really, really, really hate for it to happen. And you'll pardon me for visiting you at your place of work, but like I said, it's kind of an emergency and I hadn't heard from you since last night. So here we are.

V Vince 47:21
Yeah, sorry about that. Just...just had a patient who died.

J John (Vince) 47:32
Ok, so out of character for a second. Would it be possible for me to know...well, I know Mr. Perkins' room is empty. I know that room is completely empty.

S Storyteller Rina 47:44
It is completely empty.

J John (Vince) 47:46
So I was gonna ask you if I knew an empty room. So I'm gonna be like,

V Vince 47:50
I'll tell you what. If people see you around, someone's gonna ask you who you are. Because we all know each other, you know that. Go to room 204. The guy in there just died. They've moved his body by now. It should be completely empty. I'll get the stuff. I'll come to you.

L L 48:10
Ok. I knew you'd come through for me, old pal. I knew it.

S Storyteller Rina 48:15
And he claps you on the shoulder with a very heavy hand, which in the old days would have made you wince, but you barely notice it now. And he smiles, revealing very uneven yellowed teeth. Some of them are broken, at least one is missing. He just says,

L L 48:36
10 minutes. That's all I can give you. I'll wait.

V Vince 48:40
That's all I need.



L 48:42

Okay. I knew you could do it, old buddy, old pal. I knew you could.



Vince 48:46

Yeah, don't worry about it. I'll get it. I'll be there.



Storyteller Rina 48:49

And he puts in some earbuds and picks up a mop and walks out into the hallway, whistling a tune as if he's just a night janitor going about his business. But he's headed in the direction of the the sign pointing to room 204.



John (Vince) 49:10

Vince like, sticks his tongue into his cheek and he's just nodding. He's like,



Vince 49:15

I can deal with this. I can do something about this. I can get out of this. Except...that I can't.



John (Vince) 49:26

So what Vince is going to do, some courts would call this premeditated attempted murder.



Storyteller Rina 49:37

Oh, would they now?



John (Vince) 49:39

I think they would. Vince is going to...he has 10 minutes. He is going to grab a scalpel. He's going to grab his thermos and he's going to go and get to the trolley. And it's gonna...it's got the the roll of bags, but it's not gonna...he's gonna make sure that it's an empty one, and he's just gonna run it down. As he goes up to the room, he's going to feed. And then he's going to cut just like the back of his thumb, get some blood on the scalpel blade. And he is going to attempt to use some of his blood sorcery, it shouldn't be too taxing. I would attempt to cast Scorpion's Touch. So this is one of the later lessons his sire has taught him in the in the world of blood sorcery, and the way she explained it is that it is possible for a vampire to convert some of their blood into a paralytic poison. And the effects sound an awful lot to Vince like some of

the more potent and awful neurotoxins that can be injected into a human being. Scorpion's Touch seems a little out of date to him, he thinks it's more like a cobra's venom, or maybe a jellyfish sting, but he appreciates the poetry of it. Effectively what this does, is it incapacitate mortals. It can affect vampires too, but mortals specifically it just...well, they can't do shit once they get once they get a brush of this.

S Storyteller Rina 51:33

You're going to need to make a Rouse check. Basically, you're trying to summon the power of your blood. And you need to succeed on this Rouse check. So roll 1d10; you need a 6 or above.

J John (Vince) 51:50

A 9! So I guess that'll do.

S Storyteller Rina 51:53

Ok, it's powerful enough for you to essentially fill your mouth with poison blood, or poison vitae. So you can choose to coat your scalpel with it, or you can hold it in and choose to try to spit it at him when you enter the room.

J John (Vince) 52:16

Vince is going to try and spit it; he figures that the scalpel will leave obvious mark, whereas what he's planning...better not to use that.

S Storyteller Rina 52:28

Alright, so as you're slowly making your way towards this room, you Rouse the Blood and conjure up your blood sorcery. And you can feel the heat of this now poisoned blood filling your mouth, and you can feel the power just flooding through you, and it makes you feel strong. A few moments ago you were feeling weak, you were feeling helpless, you were feeling scared because you didn't know what you were going to do. But with this successful burst of magic, which you know was successful, you know what the taste of this Scorpion's Venom blood tastes like, you can do anything. You got this. And you put your hand on the handle of the door, you open it and L is standing near the window with back to you. He turned he turns as you enter.

L L 53:34

Ah, buddy. You got it? You got the stuff?

S Storyteller Rina 53:39

As you click the door.

J John (Vince) 53:42

Vince actually goes in backwards. He's got the cleaning trolley as I said and he, you know, he looks like he's kind of pushing himself back in so that it's not visible and he just gives a thumbs up over his shoulder.

S Storyteller Rina 53:52

And the door softly click shut up and you can you hear L moving up behind you.

L L 53:58

Come on, come on. I don't got all night. Come on.

J John (Vince) 54:02

He's just gonna stand, he's gonna like from fiddle with some stuff on the trolley. And he holds up his fingers just like, one more minute, one minute, one minute, but without saying a word. His mouth is full and he's ready to go.

L L 54:18

Come on, Vince, come on! I got people waiting for me.

S Storyteller Rina 54:24

And you feel a heavy hand on your shoulder.

J John (Vince) 54:28

So with that, as soon as the hand comes down, Vince spins round and just sprays the venom in his face.

S Storyteller Rina 54:38

You spin around and you spit this blood into his face. And so I'd like you to make a Dexterity plus Athletics roll. This is going to be your attack on him. We're going to see if he can dodge this, which is going to be harder for him because he's right up in in your face, so...

J John (Vince) 55:05
I got a 10, a 7 and a 9.

S Storyteller Rina 55:09
Okay, so essentially with that, and he had 2 Fails anyway, you spit it full on in his face, and because he's human, it's not going to be something he can contest. He immediately staggers back and start to like, scream a little bit like,

L L 55:36
What the...Jesus fuck, man?! *gurgles*

S Storyteller Rina 55:40
And then it's almost like his throat is closing up a bit. And his whole body starts shaking as your poisoned blood streaks down his face. And he collapses unconscious to the ground in a heap.

J John (Vince) 55:56
Vince turns off the lights in the room.

S Storyteller Rina 56:00
And as you turn off the lights in the room, you hear a slow clap.

i 56:10
Oh shit. Like, he just breathes it. He knows that whoever is there probably heard it. But uh, he's like,

V Vince 56:22
You gonna get in my way?

S Storyteller Rina 56:24
The curtain that had been pulled around Mr. Perkins' bed just gets pulled aside and even in the dark, with your vampire night vision, you see another vampire, very obviously another vampire. His fangs are protruding far more than a healthy, satisfied vampire's fangs should, his skin is

pulled almost taut against his face, making him look slightly skeletal. But he's got these lean, fox-like features. He's small, but he moves with a very feline grace as he comes towards you. He's wearing a long trench coat and a rumpled up, somewhat dirty looking suit. It looks like a very expensive suit, though it looks like he hasn't changed in a couple days, and a battered fedora askew on his head. And he looks at you with these big eyes.

L Luther 57:29

feral laugh Good one there, Vince. You got him. You got him good. You gonna eat him now?

J John (Vince) 57:38

Do I recognize this vampire?

S Storyteller Rina 57:40

You do. Because of your previous interactions with the Prince, you recognize Luther Garibaldi, who is a Gangrel and is the Prince's Sheriff or Enforcer. But he looks...he looks a little tired. There's these deep dark circles under his eyes and he definitely looks almost feral. Normally, he's very well put together, at least the times you've seen him, even with that kind of animalistic energy radiating off of him. His suits are usually nicely pressed, and he moves with an economy of grace. But tonight, he almost looks half animal himself. As he's looking at you.

L Luther 58:32

Whatcha do with him? You gonna eat him? Finally taste the living blood? Whatcha gonna do?

J John (Vince) 58:40

Vince takes off the mask. He's learned that vampires kind of prefer the face to face because we're not gonna get an illness from each other, not that I know of, and, like, just, he's got a tick of just like sticking his tongue into just the little corner of his lip. He's just like,

V Vince 59:07

Um...I mean, I was gonna kill him. Do you want to? I think he can still hear us. So I mean, look, you look like you got a need.

L Luther 59:20

I can take care of him for ya. Yes, yes, I can take care of this whole little mess. He'll disappear and no one will ever know he was here.

S Storyteller Rina 59:34

And he licks his lips long and slow and you can see his fangs gleaming in the dark. And he kind of hunches a little bit and his fingers are extending and retracting into his fist, almost like claws as he's reaching towards the the unconscious L and then pulling his hands back and he arches his shoulders and tilts his head to look at you.

L Luther 1:00:02

But, but I was here for a reason. *snarls*

S Storyteller Rina 1:00:08

He takes in this deep sort of scent. He keeps looking at the body on the floor and he holds onto himself almost, you can see his long nails digging into the palms of his hands as if he's trying to restrain himself.

L Luther 1:00:30

I want, I want... Yes. Blood, blood. Blood. No. Something about...unofficial. Yes. Ah, blood. Blood. I need something from you, Vince. Ah, yes. That's what it was.

V Vince 1:00:54

Garibaldi, I don't...I don't know I have anything that you, that would be of any use to you. I mean,

J John (Vince) 1:01:02

And he, he actually does put one hand on his hip and he scratches the back of his head. He's like,

V Vince 1:01:07

I really don't think I have anything that, that's you know, someone as high up as you could want. I mean...

L Luther 1:01:15

snarls Yes, I was...investigating.

- S** Storyteller Rina 1:01:22
And you can see the muscles in his throat rippling and he's trying to hold himself back from something.
- L** Luther 1:01:30
Investigate, investigating. A murder. Yes, yes. And she. She was there! Karen! Yes, that's right. Your Sire. That's why I'm here.
- S** Storyteller Rina 1:01:49
Those beady little eyes just sort of light up with realization for a moment as he's overcoming his hunger momentarily to give you this this information.
- L** Luther 1:02:02
Someone killed a Nosferatu, another vampire. The prince's Clan Brother, and we found this!
- S** Storyteller Rina 1:02:15
And he holds out to you a small book, very small, leather-bound, black leather. And it has your Sire's personal seal on the inside on the front page. You've seen that book before. Karen never goes anywhere without it.
- L** Luther 1:02:37
Oh, why was she there? Does she know? We? I? We, I, I can't find her. We need her. Vince. We need her. She knows things.
- S** Storyteller Rina 1:02:55
And he starts trembling, like his whole body is shaking from the inside out as he's looking at you. And he's crouching lower and lower to the floor, almost as if he's about to pounce. But on who or what, you're not sure.
- J** John (Vince) 1:03:08
Vince's first reaction to the book is just "fuck". And he turns to Garibaldi, and he's like,
- V** Vince 1:03:18

Mr. Garibaldi, I think you need to feed.

L Luther 1:03:22

snarls hungrily

V Vince 1:03:26

Sir, you can take him away elsewhere or you can do it here. Umm....

S Storyteller Rina 1:03:32

With great restraint again, he reaches into his coat and he pulls out a small card. It's a bit battered, it looks like there's stained blood on the edge but it has a phone number. He's like,

L Luther 1:03:50

grunt call me with anything you find.

S Storyteller Rina 1:03:54

And he thrust the card at you. And in an instant he turns away and he leaps on to the unconscious form of L and you see him reaching out a clawed hand for L's throat just as L's eyes fly open. And you can see L's terror and dawning horror as he looks up at this thing that's on top of him. Luther Garibaldi doesn't even quite look human anymore. He's long and lean and his nails look sharper and more claw-like from what you can see, and it looks like there's more hair along his whole body. And he slams L down into the into the ground, cracking L's head against the floor. And L tries to cry out, but the paralysis is still partially in effect and he can't, and you can't look away. You can't. Something is holding you to this scene as you watch Luther throw his head back, as if he's howling, but no sound comes out. And then these fangs are all you can see of his maw as he reaches down. There's a sickening crunch as he rips L's throat out.

L Luther 1:05:33

feral eating sounds

S Storyteller Rina 1:05:41

And blood begins to pour into his mouth. And there is blood everywhere. So much blood. And the scent of it is strong and heady in your nostrils as you are standing there in horror. And I'd like you to make me another Rouse check.

J John (Vince) 1:06:02
Oh, no. A 1!

S Storyteller Rina 1:06:05
So with that Fail, you take one point of Hunger. It's, it's harder for you to resist the scent of this blood. You're not used to being so close to it in this way; the predator that you're watching is rousing something in you. And I'm going to give you the chance to resist the urge you feel to actually feed. I want you to make me a Willpower Roll, minus 1 because of your point of Hunger. So you're going to roll 5d10 and you're going to need 3 Successes here.

J John (Vince) 1:06:56
3 Successes: 7, 8, 8.

S Storyteller Rina 1:07:00
Ok. So you hold on tightly, you close your eyes, and try to close your ears against the sickening sound of another vampire feeding in a frenzy. You can't quite block the smell, that iron rich, delicious scent of fresh blood. But you force yourself to stay calm. And you block it out. And then, as you keep your eyes closed, the slobbering slowly recedes. And you hear a

L Luther 1:07:43
Call me!

S Storyteller Rina 1:07:45
And it sounds like a window opening and a bit of a crash. And you open your eyes. The window is open, the body is gone, Luther is gone. But there's still a giant puddle of blood on the floor that you're going to have to take care of somehow. And that is where we will leave our session tonight. Thank you everyone for joining us. Thank you, John, for introducing us to Vince. And we will be back shortly with our first full cast episode. So thank you for listening along thus far and I can't wait to bring our entire coterie to you in one room. Thank you and have a good night.