

Blood Moon Rising Episode 12 Transcript

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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 5th 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 01:00

Good evening everyone, 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 going to be dealing with the fallout from some very interesting events in our previous episode. But before we can get around to that, let's do some character introductions. To my right:

M

Mike (Marcus) 01:23

Hi, this is Mike and I'll be playing Marcus Voss of Clan Brujah, who's had a wonderful evening so far. Except for all the squishing sounds.

S

Storyteller Rina 01:34

So much squishing. Young vampires these days, I tell you.



M Mike (Marcus) 01:41
Right?

S Storyteller Rina 01:41
And to Marcus's right:

J John (Vince) 01:43
Hi, I'm John, and I'm playing the aforementioned young vampire, Vince Markevich. And Vince is going through a time. He's dealing with some stuff. He's great.

S Storyteller Rina 02:00
Nothing too serious. Just a bit of light murder. Nothing existential. Absolutely not. And to Vince's right:

T Teagan (Rahm) 02:09
Hi, my name is Teagan and I'm playing Rahm the Shaman and I am getting back into the groove of things. And I suspect nothing bad could possibly happen to me.

S Storyteller Rina 02:22
Nothing whatsoever. Why would you even think that? And at the end of the table:

A Ali (Katerina) 02:29
Hi, this is Ali playing Katerina Bogdanovich of Clan Toreadore. And I have gotten a boatload of information that needs to be addressed.

S Storyteller Rina 02:43
Yes, I'm certain it doesn't affect your coterie whatsoever. Not a bit. And to my left:

T Tiffanie (Alex) 02:54
This is Tiffanie and I play Alex Giovanni. And when you ask me not to ask questions, but don't give me a full body, I cannot do my job.

S

Storyteller Rina 03:05

Just gotta let the bodies hit the floor, am I right? Alright. So let us resume our evening in San Francisco, and we will begin with one Katerina Bogdanovich, who has perhaps picked up some information that they technically speaking shouldn't have. So, Katerina, you were spending some time with Vera Giovanni, who gave you a good bit of her life story and perhaps a little something extra, and you've had tea, you've sat and chatted for a bit, she seems a lot calmer now. A lot more back to her old self, very elegant, very gracious, the hostess of Clan Tremere. And it's probably about time, socially speaking, that you brought your visit to an end, lest you be taken for a vampire of loose morals.

A

Ali (Katerina) 04:07

I will say my goodbyes. And as I'm getting ready to leave, I'm going to offer my hand to her again.

S

Storyteller Rina 04:23

She takes it.

A

Ali (Katerina) 04:25

I will kiss the back of her hand on her knuckles and depart.

S

Storyteller Rina 04:31

You get a very high eyebrow raise from that. But she smiles at you and she signs, without needing Paula's interpretation this time,

V

Vera 04:41

See you later.

A

Ali (Katerina) 04:44

I'm learning. I'm learning. Slow process.

S

Storyteller Rina 04:48

You're doing well. So you set off into the evening. It's about 10pm at this point, so you've got plenty of night ahead of you. What would Katerina like to do?

- A** Ali (Katerina) 05:04
She's on a mission at this point now. She is going to find the nearest phone, payphone, wherever she needs to, and she is going to call Marcus first and if he doesn't answer, she'll call Alex after that.
- S** Storyteller Rina 05:24
Okay, so Marcus, Alex has given you the information they gathered from the corpse, what little there was to gather, and you've heard this loud sobbing coming from the bathroom where you banished Vince to clean himself up, and while you're dealing with all of that, your phone rings.
- M** Mike (Marcus) 05:48
Ok, I likely look at in the direction of the bathroom, and then pick my phone up, kind of just slow walk to the bathroom.
- M** Marcus 06:02
This is Marcus.
- K** Katerina 06:04
This is Katerina.
- M** Mike (Marcus) 06:08
Good evening.
- K** Katerina 06:11
Less of a good evening. I have information that the coterie needs to know. And let's just say that some correction needs to take place.
- M** Mike (Marcus) 06:25
Would you care to meet? Alex and Vince and I are at the office, if you care to join us.
- K** Katerina 06:35
That is not the kind of place we should meet. But I have no way to get the hold of Rahm. And we will need a private space, away from any humans.

M Marcus 06:52
Understood. I mean, I have the space here in the office for several hours.

M Mike (Marcus) 07:01
I'm time checking again, really quick, Storyteller, it's about, what, 10 now?

S Storyteller Rina 07:05
It's about 10pm. And you told Marie to come back around 11.

M Mike (Marcus) 07:10
Ok.

M Marcus 07:12
Alright. Let me speak with Alex and Vince. I'll be back in contact with you as soon as possible.

K Katerina 07:19
You have my pager.

M Marcus 07:21
I do.

A Ali (Katerina) 07:22
And I will hang up the phone and I will head back towards the bakery.

S Storyteller Rina 07:27
So you go back to the bakery, and there's a couple holding hands walking out, they're each carrying a bag of cookies. It looks like one of them looks fairly drunk and keeps trying to make out with his partner as they're coming out of the bakery and the partner keeps pushing him like "not now, you idiot. Wait, we're in public. Oh my god." But this is a fairly common occurrence at

this time of night, especially in your area. But there don't appear to be any other Kine around as you go in, just this couple that's come in for cookies and left at 10 o'clock at night. What would you like to do?

A Ali (Katerina) 08:16

I'm going to check the back and just see how everything's going, check in on Lucy really quick.

S Storyteller Rina 08:31

Lucy looks up from the stand mixer, industrial-sized stand mixer where she's making a ton of sugar cookies, it looks like, and she smiles up at you and says,

L Lucy 08:44

Hey Katerina, having a good night? It's been so quiet. A bit worrying.

K Katerina 08:52

Sometimes that is what we need. What I want you to do after that batch of sugar cookies sells, we are cutting them off for the season. We will be starting something akin to this pumpkin spice, but not quite.

L Lucy 09:17

Oh yeah, that's always super popular. Like last year we just couldn't keep them on the shelves. Like that couple, did you see the couple that walked out? I heard them asking the girl at the front desk when we were getting the pumpkin spice back.

K Katerina 09:32

Yes. Which is why I want you to disregard the tarts and sorbet for tonight and do a couple of batches of those cookies so they're all set. And then I will add those to the production tomorrow night for Cora so you don't have to worry about those unless you have extra time.

S Storyteller Rina 09:58

She nods.

L Lucy 10:00

Yep, got it. Got it. I can do that in my sleep. I could even do it in torpor, if I wanted to, I bet.

S Storyteller Rina 10:05
And she smiles, then her brow creases a little bit.

L Lucy 10:10
Have you seen Cora? She hasn't come in tonight.

K Katerina 10:15
She is doing something else for me.

L Lucy 10:19
Ok, I was just a little, little worried because she normally comes in and checks in on things and all of that, but I haven't seen her.

K Katerina 10:27
No, shall be alright.

L Lucy 10:29
Ok.

K Katerina 10:30
I usually am in contact with her once a day or so. And she will be in the next three nights. And if she's not, you must contact me on my pager immediately, you understand?

L Lucy 10:47
Yep, got it. Got it. All good.

S Storyteller Rina 10:50
Lucy has been a lot more restrained since the tongue lashing you gave her a few days ago. So she's a lot more calm. And she doesn't seem as chatty as she used to be.

A

Ali (Katerina) 11:04

Well, in some ways, that is basically what Katerina expects. I really need her to be more professional at work. And sometimes she was having a tendency to talk and her hands were still when she should be working, meaning her hands should be moving.

S

Storyteller Rina 11:32

Yes, she's definitely working the whole time that she is talking to you. And she says,

L

Lucy 11:39

Do you think...I know I don't ask very often, but do you think I could have some of the Red Velvet tonight? I don't get the craving very often. But I miss cake tonight. All I can think about is cake.

K

Katerina 11:52

Yes. You and Cora know that you're welcome to an to any of the products, within reason, obviously. But yes, of course.

S

Storyteller Rina 12:05

She smiles and nods.

L

Lucy 12:07

Thanks. I just wanted to just make sure because, you know, I was just being careful. Are you going to be in for the rest of the night or you got other plans? I just want to know if I should continue on on my own or if you're going to be here or...

K

Katerina 12:24

No, unfortunately, I have some other business I must take care of. I am sorry to be so absent lately. But I do trust you and I trust Cora to get everything done. I will update production sheets nears the end of the night right before I go upstairs.

S

Storyteller Rina 12:49

Her face lights up when you say that you trust her. But she wisely refrains from commenting on it.

L Lucy 12:56

Great! I'm in the groove. Do the kids say that anymore? I guess not. I know what I'm doing. I got this. You know, you've been doing this a long time, you deserve some nights off. Don't worry. I got it. And of course when Cora comes in, you know, we'll take care of things together too. So it shouldn't be any problem. It's so quiet tonight.

K Katerina 13:18

I would not expect her tonight. But tomorrow for sure.

L Lucy 13:23

Ok, you got it. I'm so excited for the pumpkin spice.

S Storyteller Rina 13:26

As she starts grooving a little bit, just like doing a little dance as she's working on the last batch of the sugar cookies.

L Lucy 13:35

Have you had a fresh human when they've just been ingesting pumpkin spice? It's so much like fall, it's the best thing.

A Ali (Katerina) 13:45

I will just wave at her as I go up to the as I go up to my haven. And I have all these boxes of people that you know have been screened and approved for the services of the bakery. And it's about time they've gotten some overhaul. So I'm going to start working on that while I'm waiting for my pager to go off.

S Storyteller Rina 14:20

Ok, so you sit down you start working through your boxes, and we will leave you there with your research and your overhaul and have a check in on our friendly neighborhood Malkavian shaman. So Rahm, you have fed enough to take the edge off your hunger a bit; you're still hungry, but you know that if you go any further, you're going to do damage instead of starting to heal Mickey. So you finish up as you go as close to the edge as you think you can safely do and then you use your saliva to heal up the wound, and perhaps it starts taking a bit of the edge off that scar tissue that's around his throat as well. And, Mickey, when you tell him it's ok to okay to go for the evening and he can come back next week, he looks in the mirror, and he's a little dizzy, but he touches his throat.

M Mickey 15:24
Whatever you're doing, it's, I think it's working.

R Rahm the Shaman 15:29
Good. Yes. Just make sure that you take the steps very carefully. I don't want you to slip out there. And, you know, the process does kind of affect the nervous system a bit.

M Mickey 15:43
I've, I've got an, I'm gonna take an Uber. Adam wouldn't let me drive. And he was...oof. Probably right.

S Storyteller Rina 15:52
He says as he sways slightly.

R Rahm the Shaman 15:56
Absolutely. Preethi, can you help me help Mickey out to his vehicle?

S Storyteller Rina 16:05
Preethi comes in through the beaded curtains and she puts an arm around Mickey's back, drapes one of his arms over her shoulders, and syas,

P Preethi 16:16
I got it, don't worry. His Uber's outside already.

R Rahm the Shaman 16:23
Very good. Excellent.

T Teagan (Rahm) 16:26
And as Mickey leaves, I'll just make sure I don't have any red on me.

S Storyteller Rina 16:34
No, you're looking as pallid as you normally do.

T Teagan (Rahm) 16:39
I feel better. I really do.

S Storyteller Rina 16:42
You feel a bit more centered.

T Teagan (Rahm) 16:44
I do. You got that right. I am gonna go ahead and check my messages and see if anybody's tried to reach out to me.

S Storyteller Rina 17:01
You look through your messages, and you have a couple post-it notes from both Preethi and Eric that you assume are a couple days old. Just "this customer cancelled their order," "this client showed up, but we couldn't find you," etc, etc. notes that they must have left you and forgotten to throw away. But other than that, you don't really have any messages from anyone. It doesn't seem like your coterie is looking for you.

R Rahm the Shaman 17:36
I mean, that can be a good thing. No, absolutely. Um, in that case, I think I'm going to, if everybody's good at the house, then I think I'm going to head out.

S Storyteller Rina 17:56
As you're going through your messages and figuring out what you want to do for the rest of the night, you hear a polite cough behind you, and Eric is standing in the doorway. He's looking a little tired, and he's still covered in facial piercings, shirtless, dreadlocks, all that kind of thing. But he's like,

E Eric 18:24
Master Rahm, it is good to see you. It has been a few days. And I was wondering if you could give me some of the essence. I sleep better, you know, and I was going to ask three days ago, or three nights ago, and you weren't here. So would you mind?

R

Rahm the Shaman 18:51

Absolutely. Yes, Eric, you don't look like you're at your best and I can completely understand how that feels. Why don't you come over to the common areas here? There was a vinyl that came in for me last week I've been wanting to listen to anyways, and we'll take a moment and see if we can recenter ourselves.

S

Storyteller Rina 19:25

Eric nods and he's very stoic. He doesn't smile very often but you see just the hint of a weary smile.

E

Eric 19:34

I appreciate it, Master Rahm. You know I don't like to ask for things but it's, it's been a while. And I just, I don't sleep well.

R

Rahm the Shaman 19:47

Communication is key.

E

Eric 19:50

Yes, yes, of course.

S

Storyteller Rina 19:52

And he goes into the common area with you. So describe what this scene looks like, when you give your vitae to one of your ghouls. What is this process for you? What is the scene?

T

Teagan (Rahm) 20:08

No, absolutely, it involves me sitting down across from Eric, in this case, and we start having a conversation. Because everything Rahm does involves talking. And I'll go ahead and open up a vein in my left wrist. And as I'm having the conversation and I'm explaining to him my own interpretation of the relationship between vampire kind and humankind, in this case, I will take a smear of that blood from that, that vitae from that vein, and I will place it across his lips. And what I'm explaining while I go through this ritual practice, is something that would be very heretical, I imagine, to other vampires, this concept of mutual codependence and my belief that vampire kind is meant to, Kindred are meant to guide and help groups of people, groups of tribes, in order to help them achieve their best selves. And that's the process that I go through

that and I've wrapped this all up in a package of, whether or not I believe it or not, this pseudo a bit of Abrahamic religion, a bit of the Baghavad Gita, just all of that kind of wrapped together. And that's what I do psychologically as well as physically to bind them to me.

S Storyteller Rina 22:19

Oh, you put on your new vinyl; what is Rahm listening to while he has this cult ritual?

T Teagan (Rahm) 22:28

Actually, it's weird because it's, it's um, it's just the original soundtrack to Star Trek: Picard season 1 in a very decorative art vinyl, but there's some really great pieces in there. So he wanted to check it out. So I imagine visually, it's very incongruent with the moment. But that's Rahm, so that's fun.

S Storyteller Rina 22:51

You have this soft swelling, music playing, the lights are dimmed. The common room is closed, closed off, you've pulled the curtains, there's no doors in your tribe's home, just curtains, other than the door down to your basement. And so you pull the curtains, there's a few candles around the room, very ritualistic, that part is very important to you. And so you both sit cross-legged on the floor on these brightly-braided rugs that you picked up from a market stall guy who said they were made in Nepal. And whether or not that's true, you feel like it's true, and therefore it is. So it's enough as long as you believe it to be so. And so you start talking through the process, in this very calm, gentle tone, it sort of lulls Eric into a bit of a trance almost, between the incense and the candle smoke and the music and your voice, which you put a lot of power into. And he closes his eyes as you draw a cut across your wrist and let the blood begin to ooze out of the wounds. And he bends his head towards your wrist, and he begins to drink greedily. And as you're talking through him and you feel him feedings, it's kind of powerful for you, that your tribe, your children really would engage in this kind of ritual and trust you with this. And there's just a bonding moment between the two of you. And then he pulls his head back and cracks his neck and there's blood around his mouth. And you can see that he looks stronger already. His eyes fly open; you don't see the dark circles anymore. There's a flush in his cheeks. His muscles look slightly bigger, or maybe that's just you, you're not sure. But he looks enlivened. And he wipes away the blood from his lips with the back of his hand. And he puts his palms together, and he does a little bit of a head bow, and says,

E Eric 25:26

I will begin my meditations, as we normally do, Master Rahm, but thank you. It was most enlightening.

R Rahm the Shaman 25:38

Very good. I'm hoping that you being here is as beneficial to you as it is to everyone in the house and to myself.

nouse and to myself.

E Eric 25:54

I am honored, Master Rahm, to be part of your tribe.

S Storyteller Rina 25:58

And he draws his hands across his face in a calming gesture and he crosses his legs and closes his eyes and he begins to meditate. We'll leave Rahm sitting with Eric for a bit in your traditional meditative practices post providing an essence of yourself to your tribe. And let's cut back over to Marcus, Vince and Alex.

M Mike (Marcus) 26:31

I walked back into, after the very short conversation, I can continue through to the office, hang up the phone and then try to figure out what has become of Vince and his, shall we say, galoshes.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 26:50

Yeah, I was gonna say I probably, while he walked out, I probably was walking towards the bathroom.

S Storyteller Rina 26:58

You open the door, Alex, and you can hear the sobbing from down the hallway. It does not let up. And as you open the door, you see Vince curled up on the floor, on the cold tile floor in the fetal position. There's a bloody towel off to the side, and there's water splashed around the floor, a couple of puddles, but he's just curled up and his head is buried in his knees and he is sobbing as if his heart is breaking.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 27:35

I'm going to bend down and pick Vince up by the shoulders, have him stand up, grab some paper towels or whatever and clean up his face. And I will look him in the face and tell him, like look him in the eyes and tell him,

A Alex 27:59

You have nothing to be sad about.

V Vince 28:04
I killed her. I lost control and now she's dead. I could have stopped and I didn't.

A Alex 28:10
And how do you feel? Not your feelings feelings. How does your body feel?

V Vince 28:20
I mean, I mean I've never felt so strong, but...

A Alex 28:28
You will...you would have outlived her.

V Vince 28:34
I could have done it without killing her. Could have done it without making her disappear for for everyone she knew. I mean...

A Alex 28:47
Do you really think that she knew a lot of people that way?

V Vince 28:55
I think no.

A Alex 28:56
Why do you think that they are our food? Because they are less than us.

V Vince 29:07
We were all them. We were all them once. It's not like any of us are just born this way because we can't be because we're dead.

A Alex 29:17
Yeah, because someone chose you and saw something in you. But you feel better. You are

stronger. Look at, look in the mirror, look at your skin. You look better.

J John (Vince) 29:34

He looks in and he's just like, just can't look himself in the eye. He just like looks at his reflection. He's like,

V Vince 29:43

I could have just gone with bags. I could have just bagged.

A Alex 29:47

No. Not in the state you were in, and you know it. Why do you think you went ahead and did it? Because we all need to every now and again.

J John (Vince) 29:59

He's hyperventilating to some extent, he's kind of trying to, he's like,

V Vince 30:09

You don't get it, Alex. Don't get it. I help people die well. I gave her a terrible death. There was no closure for her. It came out of nowhere.

A Alex 30:22

Do you think we ever get closure? Do you think Luther got closure? Do you think Felix is feeling ok? Death is death. It happens to us all.

J John (Vince) 30:42

And he just looks Alex in the eye, and he's like,

V Vince 30:45

I'm not, I'm not going to forget that woman.

A Alex 30:48

You will

you will.

V Vince 30:49
Her name was Veronica. She was a person. I won't forget her.

A Alex 30:56
You will. It's been how many years for you? Not that many. Trust me, I have a lot of years behind me. And I could not begin to tell you the name of the first person I killed. I don't even know if I asked.

V Vince 31:17
I won't forget.

S Storyteller Rina 31:22
Marcus, you hear Vince and Alex talking in the bathroom. But at least the crying is stopped.

M Mike (Marcus) 31:30
I step in near the doorway.

M Marcus 31:34
Hey Vince.

V Vince 31:36
Marcus, hi. Sorry about the state I came in. Thanks for the t-shirt.

M Marcus 31:43
Now, don't thank me, thank your fellow members of Longshoreman's Union, who are always happy to assist those who are in need.

J John (Vince) 31:53
Quietly gives a little nod. He's just like,

V Vince 31:55
Yeah, sure, I guess.

M Marcus 31:59
What are you, size maybe eight or nine?

V Vince 32:05
Eight and a half.

M Marcus 32:06
Yeah, I'm gonna find you some boots. You can't wear those shoes anymore. They need to get bagged.

V Vince 32:17
Don't worry, the blood is mine.

M Marcus 32:20
That's why I'm worried.

V Vince 32:23
Oh, no, it turns out that, uh, when I don't feed, I...do you know that I was an atheist before I turned? Yeah, it's, it's really weird when you all of a sudden develop stigmata. So I have so many questions right now.

M Marcus 32:51
Well, luckily for you, you won't have any time to even answer them. Because we have something to do. So I'm gonna get you a new pair of boots, and a garbage bag, and maybe a few Clorox wipes and you are gonna go to absolute town near for the next five minutes before we find a place so we can have a friendly, private chat amongst the coterie. That was Katerina on the phone, and she's requested because of some new information that's come to light, that we gather together again and sort it out.



A Alex 33:32
sarcastic Wonderful. Where are we meeting?

M Marcus 33:39
That's what we have to decide. I offered us the opportunity to meet here but she wasn't keen on the idea, given the mortals that occasionally frequent the location.

A Alex 33:53
But don't you have control on whether or not they're here?

M Mike (Marcus) 33:57
I do, Alex, I simply didn't want to argue with the Toreador tonight. I don't want to make her uncomfortable. So we just need to find a relatively calm and quiet location, many of which I could offer near the docks as well. I have other facilities that might be useful.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 34:19
I just want to point out when you said you don't want to make her uncomfortable, Alex's face probably looks a little confused, like "I don't get it. But ok."

J John (Vince) 34:30
Why wouldn't you want to keep someone on the backfoot? Why wouldn't you want to keep them off balance?

M Marcus 34:38
I think we're fairly certain that Vince's place is a little maybe too spooky for some people. It's also not a place that has...we'll say it's a place that only has prying ears and likely eyes.

V Vince 34:58
Mina can definitely see.

M Marcus 35:00
I don't think it's a good idea to return where we were a few nights ago. After all, I've just gotten the place cleaned. And yeah.

J John (Vince) 35:09
What about, is there some kind of neutral ground we could go to?

M Marcus 35:13
It's called Elysium, Vince.

V Vince 35:15
Oh, yeah. The place we went to?

M Marcus 35:18
The issue with Elysium is that it's not private at all. I suppose that's kind of the point. And there are even more ears. So while it might be safe, depending on your perspective, it isn't necessarily private. In fact, I'd argue that it's not. A lot of the, well, a lot of neonates do tend to frequent Elysium because it is safe and someplace they can pick up on, well, Kindred society. At least in the method the Camarilla presents it as. Not that that's always correct, either. All they show you is what they want to show you.

A Alex 35:58
Well, I agree with you that maybe we should just use one of our facilities nearby. And maybe that'll be good enough.

S Storyteller Rina 36:09
The one stable Elysium in San Francisco is the Vampire Club, run by one formerly known as Oscar Wilde. And while it is a safe place, no breach of etiquette has ever happened on the premises, it is definitely not quiet or private. And all of y'all showing up in one group would definitely be remarked upon by pretty much everybody there.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 36:35
I've probably never been there.

S Storyteller Rina 36:39
Yes. Hecata is not known for frequenting the Vampire Club.

M Mike (Marcus) 36:43
Yeah, the last person that Marcus wants to tip off to the coterie even being together would be the Harpy, because the Harpy is going to ask a ton of questions.

S Storyteller Rina 36:53
Oh, absolutely.

M Mike (Marcus) 36:55
The problem with the Harpy is that you can't get around to them socially, right? It's impossible. Because they can, they help control court statuses. And that's not something I want Marcus to have to mess with. So I'm gonna give a phonecall to Katerina and I'm gonna give her some relatively quick directions.

M Marcus 37:15
What we need is to get a hold of Rahm and have him meet us in the same place. And if he doesn't have a vehicle, we need to fetch him.

S Storyteller Rina 37:26
Alright, so you give Katerina an address. So Katerina, your pager beeps with an address down near the docks but not exactly on the docks and not in the labor office. And Marcus, are you calling Rahm? Are you asking Katerina to call Rahm?

M Mike (Marcus) 37:45
Oh no, I wouldn't ask Katerina to call Rahm. I'll call Rahm.

S Storyteller Rina 37:50
So Rahm, as you finish your meditative practices with Eric and then Eric gratefully gives you a hug and goes off to do whatever it is he plans to do with the rest of his evening, probably eat a lot of pizza, your phone rings.

R Rahm the Shaman 38:11
Hey, Marcus, what's up?

M Marcus 38:15
We need to get together and talk, the five of us

R Rahm the Shaman 38:19
You got something new?

M Marcus 38:22
Someone certainly does.

R Rahm the Shaman 38:26
Gotcha. Understood. Where am I going?

M Marcus 38:29
Pier 32 Park, near the north portion of it. And then take a walk. I'll come find you.

R Rahm the Shaman 38:38
Ok. You need me to bring anything?

M Marcus 38:41
I don't think so. What would you bring?

R Rahm the Shaman 38:47
I don't know. Trash bags?

M Marcus 38:52
Probably couldn't hurt.

R Rahm the Shaman 38:54
Ok. I'll get some from under the sink. Be there soon.

M Mike (Marcus) 38:59
I hang up. I'm going to page Katerina and then wait.

S Storyteller Rina 39:10
So Katerina, you've gotten the page.

A Ali (Katerina) 39:15
I will give Marcus a call.

M Marcus 39:20
Katerina, I'm going to supply you with an address. I've gotten in touch with Rahm and he's meeting us at a relatively quiet location.

K Katerina 39:34
Very good.

M Mike (Marcus) 39:36
And I'll give her a very similar directive.

S Storyteller Rina 39:41
Ok, so everyone has been informed as to where to meet Marcus. You can leave a note for Marie telling her when you'll be back.

M Mike (Marcus) 39:49
I do so.

S Storyteller Rina 39:50
And you can all set out for the meeting place. So Marcus, Vince and Alex, you obviously arrive there first because it's fairly close to your locale. A little bit later, Katerina comes in off the public transportation system, and Rahm shows up via Uber about five minutes after that. Rahm, do you have the presence of mind to have the Uber drop you off a couple minutes from the address? Or do you literally pull up to the address in the Uber?

T Teagan (Rahm) 40:20

Oh, no, I have perfect presence of mind. I, of course, I take a walk down the pier.

S Storyteller Rina 40:28

Ok, so Rahm's Uber drops him off just a few minutes walk from the actual location, and he comes strolling in looking a little calmer than he did the last time you saw him, a little more put together, and you have all assembled.

M Mike (Marcus) 40:45

So we've assembled in what appears to be a collection of shipping containers, the inside of which have been retrofitted slightly with what looks like thick padding. The floor doesn't clank, the walls are muffled when you get inside. It's not at all opulent. It seems much more Spartan, as if it's purpose built. But it is a little deeper than a single container or two and the bolt locks on the main door are fairly heavy. This is as private as I could make it. There's probably a collection of chairs, maybe some pretty simple tables or something like that.

T Teagan (Rahm) 41:47

Rahm brought a box of Great Value black trash bags.

M Marcus 41:53

So?

M Mike (Marcus) 41:53

And I look at Katerina.

K Katerina 41:57

So, I had a chat with Vera Giovanni earlier this evening. And she gave me some very interesting insight. Apparently....

R Rahm the Shaman 42:15

Who's that?

K Katerina 42:17
Keep your mouth fucking shut for once in your life.

T Teagan (Rahm) 42:23
Rahm puts their hands up and sits down.

K Katerina 42:27
So there is a lot of irrelevant information that she told me, but her father was murdered in Italy. But I do not think it was a murderer. Because there was a lot of blood. And he was having nightmares, much like our other victims. And they started about two weeks ago. He was here at the time. So this is strong enough to go literally a whole continent away, whatever ritual this is.

A Alex 43:18
If it is a ritual, or it was something that started here. And if it started, you cannot escape it by leaving.

K Katerina 43:28
It is hard to tell. I was also told that we have a Ventrue coming from Chicago by the name of William Mallet.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 43:42
Alright. Well, I can't say that I'm surprised.

S Storyteller Rina 43:48
The two older vampires, you can give me a roll for this name, because you're old enough to perhaps know who this is. So you can give me say, Intelligence and Awareness. There isn't really a history skill, unfortunately.

A Ali (Katerina) 44:13
No, usually for something like that, most people just roll straight INT.

S Storyteller Rina 44:18
Yeah, but I want to give people a better chance of succeeding at this

mean, but I want to give people a better chance of succeeding at this.

A Ali (Katerina) 44:21
That's fair.

M Mike (Marcus) 44:27
Jeez. Ok. I would like to, if I may, use a point of Willpower and re-roll my failures.

S Storyteller Rina 44:37
Ok. You may do that.

M Mike (Marcus) 44:40
Very good. I have 4 successes, one of which is a 10.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 44:44
I have 2.

S Storyteller Rina 44:47
Alright, so Alex, you know the name and you recognize the name as one of the very high-ups in the Camarilla. A very, very powerful vampire. And he hasn't been seen in years, he tends to keep to himself. He doesn't emerge except for council meetings, and sometimes not even then. He hasn't been seen in a good 30-40 years. And he hasn't left Chicago in longer than that.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 45:23
What was the name again?

S Storyteller Rina 45:25
Mallet, like the hammer. And Marcus with your roll, you know exactly who William is. He used to be known as Guillame Malet, and he invaded England with William the Conqueror. He's very old.

M Mike (Marcus) 45:51

Yeah, nearly 1000 years. So we're talking like Battle of Hastings stuff?

S Storyteller Rina 45:56

Yes. He has been meddling in various Western cultures ever since. But when the Internet age began, he kind of went underground for the most part. And you've heard various things through your criminal connections, let's say, about power brokering and some things on the dark web. His name has come up a few times, but he's been referred to in the underworld as Billy the Hammer. And it's bad news if he's leaving Chicago and coming here, very bad news.

T Teagan (Rahm) 46:48

Do I notice anything across your face when you think of this guy?

M Mike (Marcus) 46:52

So if I may, then, bad news, in what way, right? So he's a very powerful Ventrue, who's going to physically move from wherever he's at. He's a near 1000 year old vampire, who's going to come directly to the city. There are a lot of reasons why he could be an issue. But unless he's purpose built to come in here and crush a bunch of shit, he's still going to have to adhere to the Prince's rule over the city.

S Storyteller Rina 47:26

So things you know, especially with that critical, he's very high up in the Camarilla. And it's likely he's coming here partially because of Felix Conrad's murder. But if he's coming with any purpose from the Camarilla, it could destabilize the current regime. Usually, when a vampire of that power is sent into a place, it's because the Camarilla is having some kind of misgivings about the current power structure. So there's that aspect of it. But you also know that he doesn't tend to care what kind of chaos he causes.

M Mike (Marcus) 48:18

Yeah, so he's a...

S Storyteller Rina 48:23

he has destabilized regimes, both human and in the Kindred world, for centuries, him and his friends, his little inner circle.

M Mike (Marcus) 48:35

Ok. That's, yeah, I probably wouldn't be able to think or get more than that in the moment after

the name is mentioned.

S Storyteller Rina 48:44
Exactly.

T Teagan (Rahm) 48:46
Does any of your shock or recognition come across your face?

M Mike (Marcus) 48:52
Oh, certainly. I'm not a, I'm not an oil painting, like some people. So I'm very much a creature of emotions. So I probably look concerned. Then I probably do a fair bit of like, looking around, like with my eyes, not my head.

R Rahm the Shaman 49:13
You two obviously know who they're talking about.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 49:18
Oh, I I don't show that. I'm just like,

A Alex 49:23
I'm not surprised that they would send somebody higher up. When Felix is gone, Trevor, even in his best day, was not suitable to fill that position.

M Marcus 49:43
It's not just that though. William is a...he's not just a powerful vampire who has been around for hundreds of years. Which he is. It's not that he's well connected with his own clan, which he is, or well funded, or likely carries with him an entire cadre of underlings and ghouls. Not simply in the art of making war, but finance and information. It's like moving. It's like a pestilence. That's what it will be like. If he comes in decides to stay, he'll chew up all of the information he can; suddenly, none of your Kindred or Kine contacts will want to talk to you, because they'll talk to him, because they fear him. And given that he's whom he is, anyone who he doesn't like, he'll simply smash. He's called The Hammer for a reason. And it could be because higher ups in Camarilla society are unhappy with what's been going on in San Francisco. Or maybe they view the Anarch problem in Oakland as far too close to losing another stronghold in the west. And they see William as a potential stabilizing force. And that means that Neonates and others will get squashed. It's the worst kind of Kindred bomb. It's the worst kind of directed control over a

domain. It's the worst part of Kindred society. It's the Tower coming in and playing, playing God, choosing who rules like they always do, but in a direct way, not in a secretive way. The Prince is powerful in San Francisco, Rahm, but they don't hold a candle to William, and they won't. And if it's a direct confrontation, forget it.

R

Rahm the Shaman 51:58

So what are we going to do about it?

M

Mike (Marcus) 52:01

Well, we're going to have to try to determine how long until he gets here. We need to wrap up our investigation, we need to come to a conclusion point. We've gathered some facts, the moon is not yet full. We have to get closer and work harder to get it solved. Because if we can at least put it to bed and rest before William gets his full complement of abilities at hand, we might be able to get out of the way, at least some of us who've distanced ourselves from Kindred society, especially Camarilla society, might be fortunate or they might not just keep in mind, a new Prince can choose to remove the right of domain. They can just tell you you can't live here anymore. That goes for everyone. And don't think because William is a member of clan Ventruie, they won't look directly at clan Brujah first. It's a big threat. We'll have to treat it as such.

A

Alex 53:04

I suggest we all keep our heads down, then. And stay very, very quiet.

K

Katerina 53:10

Well. That brings us to the most important part of this meeting.

A

Ali (Katerina) 53:18

And I'm going to look at Rahm, and I'm going to use Daunt. So for Rahm, you'll need to roll Resolve and Composure.

T

Teagan (Rahm) 53:31

Is this where the trash bags come in?

A

Ali (Katerina) 53:34

Perhaps.

S Storyteller Rina 53:39
And Ali you're rolling Presence plus Intimidation?

A Ali (Katerina) 53:43
Correct.

S Storyteller Rina 53:46
Just for the listeners. So, Ali, how did you do?

A Ali (Katerina) 53:52
I got 3 successes with 2 criticals.

S Storyteller Rina 53:55
Yeah... So how are you Daunting him?

A Ali (Katerina) 54:01
I'm going to be extremely outwardly furious. And I'm going to be standing over him as he's sitting in a chair, and my eyes are fixed on him.

S Storyteller Rina 54:13
So Rahm, Katerina stands up as she's talking, and you're just like, "ok, things are happening. Ok, bad things." And then all of a sudden, this tiny 5'2 or 5'3 vampire is somehow looming over you. It's like she's grown three or four feet. She's so much taller, it feels like, the presence of her. And you try to lock eyes with her because you don't understand. You don't know why she's looking at you with the fury of 1000 suns. And so you try to look back and you lock eyes with her, you're able to do that but this is where that messy critical is going to come in. She's looking into your soul is what it feels like. And you physically shrink back, which you are not used to doing. You are usually in control. You are usually in charge. But this tiny, usually quiet Toreadore has intimidated you to the point where you physically push yourself back from her.

T Teagan (Rahm) 55:31
Absolutely. I'm going to just mumble and ramble.

K Katerina 55:39

Shut your fucking mouth. Do you have any idea how much danger you've put all of us in? You are the biggest fucking blabbermouth that anyone has seen. And then of course, because you're a fucking Malkavian, it is part of the whole the whole clan because of your powers. And this is why I don't trust Malkavians as a general rule, because I also found out from my contact that not only did you tell her, but she knows far too much about this investigation, she should not be able to ask me questions because of your carelessness. You are very lucky that I am not ripping your throat out right now. If the Prince finds out, if they haven't already, you will be lucky to survive. From here on, if I find out that you have spilled any more information at all, I will bring you to the Prince myself and watch them cut off your head. Do you understand?

R Rahm the Shaman 57:14

Yes, I understand.

K Katerina 57:18

Good.

R Rahm the Shaman 57:20

Have you considered that the Prince asked a Malkavian and to be a part of this coterie because they wished to have use of the network that we all share.

K Katerina 57:40

Yes, it has been considered. But that does not give you the right to blab and run your fucking mouth. Keep our investigation quiet because I would almost guarantee that the Prince, they'll have your head.

R Rahm the Shaman 58:02

Understood.

S Storyteller Rina 58:04

So the rest of you are watching this literal Toreador explosion. And I imagine the look on John's face through all of this is Vince's facial expression.

J John (Vince) 58:18

Sometimes alee sometimes terror ves

Sometimes grief, sometimes terror, yes.

T Tiffanie (Alex) 58:22
I'm just casually leaning against the wall, like waiting for it to be done.

A Ali (Katerina) 58:30
Which is totally fair. I'm not mad at you.

T Teagan (Rahm) 58:34
Alright. Rahm is definitely interested in appeasing Katerina with sincerity. Though at some point in them, they still believe that, although they are not going to say it out loud, that they are doing what was desired of them. But obviously not saying the quiet part out loud.

M Marcus 59:03
That brings us back to the same question, which is what do we know about what's killing the vampires of San Francisco?

A Alex 59:13
Well, considering our conversation, I think we might have a new lead. I still have to get ahold of my contact and ask about the high level Tremere that was supposed to be in town.

M Marcus 59:35
We just lost a relatively high level Tremere right?

A Alex 59:38
No, no. Well, yes. Yes. But this was a different one. You know, they travel in packs.

M Marcus 59:54
I gotta tell you, I don't know much about the inner workings of clan Tremere. They like it that way.

A Alex 1:00:00
— .

They do.

V Vince 1:00:03
A lot of secrets.

J John (Vince) 1:00:03
And he just, Vince just nods with everybody.

A Alex 1:00:07
But sometimes family is family.

M Marcus 1:00:11
Certainly. Secrets get out, too.

R Rahm the Shaman 1:00:15
Last time we were all together, we thought that it might be some sort of ritual. Is there any leads on that?

M Marcus 1:00:25
I haven't heard anything specific.

A Alex 1:00:28
That's what I was just talking about.

M Marcus 1:00:32
So I suppose, perhaps, then, we're waiting to hear back from whatever information may come our way. Has anyone spoken with the Prince since our meeting? Has anyone communicated with them in any way? Perhaps they asked for any sort of update? I haven't heard anything, but that is my concern. At some point, they're going to come rapping on our doors asking for a solution.

R Rahm the Shaman 1:01:04

— Have we set aside a correspondence secretary?

M

Marcus 1:01:08

No, I don't believe so. We essentially got our marching orders and were promptly kicked out.

R

Rahm the Shaman 1:01:14

I nominate myself for treasurer.

M

Marcus 1:01:17

Alright. Well, barring any of that, then, we know what we know about the bodies. We know that there's some sort of self-inflicted wounds that eventually cause the deceased to do some rather gruesome things. The body that I had you take a look at wasn't Kindred, though. It's mortal. So we don't know if there's any connection there.

A

Alex 1:01:47

Well, that's why I think maybe it's something that the furballs are doing.

M

Marcus 1:01:58

Ok. Anybody know any werewolves offhand?

A

Alex 1:02:02

Well, aren't they, I mean, aren't we all just best friends with them?

M

Marcus 1:02:06

Right.

A

Alex 1:02:07

I'm not saying it's going to be easy. I'm just saying it's another point. And even if it is something they're doing, I don't know how much we're going to be able to do about it. Unless we can get some hardcore evidence and slide it to William's direction and let him take care of it.

—

M Marcus 1:02:28
Yeah, I'm not necessarily willing to just abdicate all of our responsibilities to the Prince and William, when he, if and when he arrives.

A Alex 1:02:36
Yes, but if you need some cannon fodder, he's the one you send over.

M Marcus 1:02:42
There's other potential cannon fodder we can absolutely send William's way. Question will be is, will he take the bait if that happens?

A Alex 1:02:52
Well, that's why we need to see if we can find some actual evidence.

M Marcus 1:02:57
Agreed. So we know that it struck clan Ventrue. We know that. Obviously, our Gangrel Sheriff, former sheriff was cursed with this as well. And well, potentially, then Vince's Sire.

A Alex 1:03:15
And Trevor, which, he's Felix's childe.

V Vince 1:03:21
Possibly the Prince's clan sibling?

M Marcus 1:03:27
Certainly.

V Vince 1:03:29
He may have also been a victim of it.

M Marcus 1:03:31

All of these victims share a pretty common trait, right? A couple of them. Vampires, obviously. Their wounds were seemingly self inflicted, yes?

V Vince 1:03:50

In most cases, yes. We don't know if...we don't know about Karen.

M Marcus 1:03:56

We don't. But I think, I think that Karen, with all due respect, might have been trying to figure out a way to get it out. What if all this is is just dirty blood? What if there's something infectious in this blood? And it's used as some sort of, it's just, it's like a vampiric version of COVID?

V Vince 1:04:26

Except that it's a chemical weapon? Or a bio weapon?

M Marcus 1:04:31

I hate, I hate to break it to you if I am, but the Kindred of, of not just San Francisco but of the entire world have an awful long list of enemies. There are a whole lot of people that know about us that don't want us around.

A Alex 1:04:45

That, and you've got to assume that they're sharing the same herd.

M Marcus 1:04:51

Not necessarily.

A Alex 1:04:52

Or do you think they're...or they would have to know their movements enough to affect humans that they're going to come across?

M Marcus 1:05:00

Right. That's exactly what I'm saying. I'm saying it's targeted.



A Alex 1:05:04

So you think that that body, that mortal was somebody that...would we assume that that body of the mortal was supposed to be aimed at? Maybe you? And you didn't get it on time, per se?

M Marcus 1:05:21

I mean, quite frankly, I'm not...I don't think I'm as important as some of the other people who've fallen, clearly.

A Alex 1:05:32

I would assume, since you found it, it was near you.

M Marcus 1:05:37

Came pretty close to home, so to speak.

A Alex 1:05:41

I mean, Trevor's not that important either, but he seems to be infected, too. I mean, he's sort of important.

M Marcus 1:05:48

Trevor's Sire is important ,yes?

A Alex 1:05:49

Well, yes.

R Rahm the Shaman 1:05:52

What if this is a demonstration? Sort of test? Trevor just got mixed up in it?

A Alex 1:05:59

Or an experiment?

R Rahm the Shaman 1:06:01

So the...you...you...that kind of...it's...

Do the werewolves have that kind of ability?

M Marcus 1:06:09

I quite honestly have no idea how to answer the question. I don't know enough about werewolves other than we tend not to circle together. There's a fairly long standing history of animosity between the two cultures.

A Alex 1:06:25

But I would also be surprised to see them in the city.

M Marcus 1:06:29

But, well, this begs back to the question of the Gangrel, right, where a lot of this all started. Dina goes and gives a vision to both the City and the Country Gangrel, right? And afterwards, there's a fight that spills Kindred blood. After Kindred blood gets spilled, for whatever reason, things are broke up. And the Country Gangrel give the big peace sign and head to the hills, right. And quite frankly, in a lot of historical ways, when Gangrel and Nosferatu leave an area, it's usually a canary in a coal mine situation. Other Kindred are put on notice because those who are going to hear when bad things are gonna happen first are gone. I mean, for ages, the Nosferatu and the Gangrel have been Kindred society's early warning system. The early warning system here went off days ago. We might be the only ones listening. If it is infected blood aimed at Kindred, perhaps injected through mortals and into their feeding areas, right? I know a little bit about Ventrue, most of them have very specific feeding practices, for good reason. So the question is, do we know where Conrad and Trevor fit?

A Alex 1:08:02

No, as far as I know, they picked people at the club. As far as I could tell, at least Trevor did. Felix, who knows? I mean, I was just, I just worked out a deal to get more information about him. But now that he's gone, it doesn't matter.

M Marcus 1:08:22

But Trevor's still around right?

A Alex 1:08:25

Barely.

M Marcus 1:08:29

That means that Trevor's still around right?

I think you can interrogate him?

A Alex 1:08:32

I have tried to talk to him. He is...he's close. We're gonna lose him.

M Marcus 1:08:39

Then we better act fast. He might be the only live lead we have in this investigation. I use live as a relative term.

A Alex 1:08:50

Well, that's why I wanted to keep him around so that maybe he would talk or see something different or something. Right now he's locked in my closet.

M Marcus 1:09:05

Seems strange, given the fact we're in San Francisco.

A Alex 1:09:09

Agreed, but it's the safest place for him, as it is for some people, some other people, ok?

M Marcus 1:09:20

Well, I would just ask this then: anybody really good at questioning people here? Everybody's talents to bear that's what we're going to need.

A Alex 1:09:30

So you want to interrogate him?

M Marcus 1:09:33

I think *we* want to interrogate and it doesn't have to be in a medieval way, it can be in a nuanced way.

R Rahm the Shaman 1:09:41

I can Compel people, is that useful?

M Marcus 1:09:55

It might be. So why don't the two of you arrange a discretionary chat with Trevor and see what you can get out of...anything. Because right now we have nothing else to go on. There are no other leads.

A Alex 1:10:14

Well, that's why I kept him around.

M Marcus 1:10:19

I'm certainly going...

A Alex 1:10:20

I can try. That's also assuming that he's still alive when we get there. I have to make a pitstop for him though, on the way back. So how about you give me, I don't know, about an hour, and I will see what I can get out of him.

A Alex 1:10:41

Okay, and you're taking Rahm?

A Alex 1:10:44

Sure.

T Teagan (Rahm) 1:10:46

I wave.

M Marcus 1:10:48

I have some matters at the office to attend to. But Vince, you're welcome to stop back there with me.

A Ali (Katerina) 1:10:57

Vince needs to go read to Mina before she gets real, real mad

Vince needs to go read to mind before she gets real, real mad.

V Vince 1:11:04
Yeah, guys, I gotta go home. It's been a few days.

M Marcus 1:11:08
Very well.

V Vince 1:11:10
But thank you for the offer, Marcus.

M Marcus 1:11:12
Certainly. From now on, if we need a quiet place to talk, this should do.

K Katerina 1:11:22
Vince, may I accompany you?

J John (Vince) 1:11:28
And if vampires can blush, Vince does. He's just like,

V Vince 1:11:33
Sure. Yeah. I have no objection.

K Katerina 1:11:39
Very good.

V Vince 1:11:41
But I should warn you that my house does have a ghost. And we are relatives. Oh, and she absolutely views herself as the landlord and me as a tenant. So just be aware of that. And also, I haven't been home in a few days. So there might be spiders everywhere, but they're not real spiders as far as I can tell, psychic projections of spiders.

K Katerina 1:12:03
This is all fine. I just have something I wish to discuss with you.

V Vince 1:12:10
Ok...

K Katerina 1:12:12
Not in the same manner as Rahm.

J John (Vince) 1:12:14
relieved Oh, ok. Well, yeah, that's fine. I have some work to do at home anyway. So yes, I can even help you with it. No, that sounds fine.

S Storyteller Rina 1:12:31
Ok, so the meeting breaks up, now that you have some plans. Alex and Rahm set off for Alex's apartment, making a stop along the way. Katerina and Vince make their way back to Vince's bungalow. And Marcus, you just take the short 10 minute walk or so back to your office. And the light is on as you go in. Marie is still there. It's about 2:30 in the morning right now. So she's still there. And you can go in. She's sitting at the desk, she's got a coffee takeaway and she's eating what looks like a donut. She sits up when you come in.

M Marie 1:13:22
Oh, sorry. I wasn't expecting you till 3. I don't normally eat at the desk. Oh my, powdered sugar everywhere, sorry.

M Marcus 1:13:32
Again, it's your desk. You can eat there.

M Marie 1:13:38
I just don't like the mess. I was gonna have it cleaned up before you got back but...is everything ok?



M Marcus 1:13:46
Yeah, everything is as good as it can be.

M Marie 1:13:53
Great.

M Marcus 1:13:53
Your notes on the the case, they seem seems pretty open and shut for us.

M Marie 1:14:00
That's really dumb that they're taking this to court. I mean, they're gonna lose and they really really should settle out of court. I guess they just don't want the optics of settling. Because you know, whenever someone settles and then it's obvious they did something wrong, but just dumb. Should have just paid her and kept going, whatever.

M Marcus 1:14:24
I've been giving a lot of thought to something. Why don't you see to the cleanup and meet me upstairs?

M Marie 1:14:32
Oh, ok, sure. I'll be right there.

S Storyteller Rina 1:14:38
And she starts hastily brushing powdered sugar off the desk and off the front of her shirt. And you can hear her finishing clean up as you go up to your office.

M Mike (Marcus) 1:14:50
I'm gonna go into my office into the refrigerator and I'm going to extract a wine bottle, the one I used last time. The wine bottle is mostly empty. Except while she's cleaning up, I'm going to add a little bit of something to this wine bottle before she arrives.

S Storyteller Rina 1:15:09
Alright. So you go through your procedure, fill up the wine bottle, put out a glass for her, and you hear a knock at the door of the office

you hear a knock at the door of the office.

M Marcus 1:15:25
Come in.

S Storyteller Rina 1:15:26
She comes in. She looks much more awake than she did when you saw her a bit earlier. She must have drank a lot of coffee. She's like,

M Marie 1:15:34
Don't worry, I'm not twitchy. That's not my thing. I think my blood is mostly caffeine at this point.

M Marcus 1:15:41
Is it?

M Marie 1:15:43
Well, I mean, ever since college, I gotta have at least six cups a day or I'm not functional.

S Storyteller Rina 1:15:52
She sits down on the couch.

M Marcus 1:15:56
The end of the day with a drink, it's the best thing for me. That levels me off a little bit. I find after a lot of our union deliberations, it's exactly what I need.

M Marie 1:16:14
Yeah, it gets really stressful sometimes. I get that it's really hard to unwind, especially when you get there's just so many things to get worked up about. I mean, just you see so many horrible people. And the leeches like that R4 guy and the others like him. Sometimes I think those guys travel in packs, because every time one of them goes away, there's just a whole bunch more of them that pop up. It's like, how can they do this to people?

S

Storyteller Rina 1:16:38

And she's getting a bit physically worked up.

M

Marie 1:16:40

Like see what I mean? God, I love the work. It's good work we're doing. but God some of these idiot humans. I mean, I'm a human, but I hope I'm not that idiot. I try to be a good person.

M

Marcus 1:17:00

And I think it's all you can do, right? Is try to be a good person. At least with the time you have.

M

Marie 1:17:08

I try. And this is all we got, right? One life.

M

Mike (Marcus) 1:17:15

I'll pour a glass of wine for her and then for myself. I'll take it over to the couch and sit down next to her, much as I did last time. And say,

M

Marcus 1:17:15

That's what they say.

M

Marcus 1:17:37

The men and women who taught me what it meant to be part of this union had a lot of old traditions. And you probably have heard of one of the older bosses that used to come around, David, hasn't been many years of course, because he's long since passed, but we had a lot of traditions. And one of them was to commiserate with one another after a long shift. It's part of the bond that makes up a union. And even by its own definition, right, a union is meant to unify and pull people together especially during stressful times. I remember hearing stories about Bloody Thursday in 1934 here and watching as police and their associated thugs murdered union workers to try to prevent them from continuing on in this all the struggle that we'll likely continue to face for a long time. Your work here has been invaluable to that union and it does not go unnoticed. And to union members and the type of union members that I have been a part of, we have a very special way to inaugurate members such as yourself

S

Storyteller Rina 1:19:19

She lets out a little half giggle, half chuckle.

M Marie 1:19:24

it's like being an A that was in a sorority in college it was it sounds kind of like that, but you know better, because there's not hazing and getting really stupid drunk and all the other stuff. I don't know if you were in a fraternity or anything but they're really dumb. Yeah, kind of sounds like that.

M Marcus 1:19:46

It's a little bit like that, but it's a pretty special and exclusive club and tonight I'm going to offer you a membership in it.

M Mike (Marcus) 1:19:56

And when I say this, I'm going to project out with Awe. I just kind of like, let my presence fill the room.

S Storyteller Rina 1:20:04

Her eyes get a little wider.

M Marie 1:20:06

That sounds great. I mean, this is the best job I've ever had. Yeah, I've worked some really soulless kind of corporate work, but I, everyone feels like people here, you know, and I'm really happy to be part of it. Because I don't feel like a robot, you know, just going through an assembly line kind of thing. Like, it's hard work, but it's good work. And even, you know, with Greg getting annoying, and you know, sometimes Phoebe cries too much. But you know, we're, we're a team. It's. It's great. Yeah.

M Marcus 1:20:49

You're a passionate person, I can tell. I think that's an important part of what we do. Passion through strength. You found that here. And you're not alone. In fact, I can assure you after tonight, you'll never be alone. Your union will always be with you.

M Marie 1:21:14

That sounds great.

S Storyteller Rina 1:21:17

S Storyteller Rina 1:21:17
She, her handshakes a little bit.

M Marie 1:21:21
It's pretty much all I got.

M Mike (Marcus) 1:21:24
I reach out and I take her hand and just try to reassure her.

M Marie 1:21:32
Ok, so do I need to do anything?

M Marcus 1:21:39
There are no unspeakable oaths for you to swear to, if that's what you mean. Your service here is important. And what you signify by drinking with me tonight is that you'll agree to be within this union as long as it will have you.

M Marie 1:22:03
Absolutely. That's not even a question.

M Marcus 1:22:07
It's a very important question, actually. Because there are things that go on to protect the people and the workers of San Francisco that we're going to have to do. And there's no longer an I do, it is a we do to understand.

S Storyteller Rina 1:22:25
She pauses for a minute. And then she straightens up her shoulders and looks up at you through her glasses and her chin sets.

M Marie 1:22:37
Honestly, given everything that's happened since 2016, and with what I saw the other night, and just the more people who come in, like R4 and other people like him. Honestly, we need to take the fight to them, I think, sometimes, and if that's what we got to do, if that's what you do,

then I want to help. We're in a position to help and we should help because if we don't, we're failing. Right?

M Marcus 1:23:13

Right. So just keep that in mind, though. You've already, you've already figured out the solution to the problem. People like R4 come and go. The union lasts forever.

M Mike (Marcus) 1:23:29

I raise my glass.

S Storyteller Rina 1:23:30

She raises her glass, her hands shaking slightly, but she doesn't break eye contact with you. And she clicks her glass against yours in a toast.

M Mike (Marcus) 1:23:40

Yeah, I don't break eye contact.

S Storyteller Rina 1:23:43

And she takes a deep drink from the glass.

M Mike (Marcus) 1:23:49

I would watch her reaction with great interest.

S Storyteller Rina 1:23:53

She draws deep from this glass. And you can see the muscles around her eyes tightening in confusion. And she finishes the swallow and then she looks at the glass. And she looks back at you and says,

M Marie 1:24:18

What is that?

M Marcus 1:24:22

Oh, that's fortified wine. It's some of the oldest in San Francisco.

M Marie 1:24:29

Never had anything like that. I feel like you put speed in there or something.

M Marcus 1:24:36

It's personal vintage, actually, from the union.

M Marie 1:24:44

I see why you keep it for special occasions.

S Storyteller Rina 1:24:47

And you can hear her heartbeat is getting stronger. It's getting faster. You're sitting so close to her that you can feel it and she looks at the glass and she looks back at you and says,

M Marie 1:25:01

rBottoms up!

S Storyteller Rina 1:25:02

She drains the rest of it.

M Marcus 1:25:05

Good girl.

M Marie 1:25:07

Let's take on the lawyers.

S Storyteller Rina 1:25:11

And that is where we will end tonight's session. Thank you very much everyone for joining us for another very interesting episode of Blood Moon Rising. We look forward to your listening ears again next time. Thank you and good night.

