

PALE FLESH

by
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FADE IN:

EXT. PUBLIC BATH HOUSE - NIGHT

Palm trees blow in the breeze. Ocean waves CRASH from a distance. Flood lights shine down on a loan bath house.

The sound of LAUGHTER as HOT BLOND, an almost empty bottle of Jack Daniels hangs in her grip, and SHORTY, tomboyish sidekick, stumble up the beach boardwalk.

HOT BLOND

Oh my God, I'm so drunk.

SHORTY

I'm bush-trained and all but I'm glad to see a bathroom. Bout to bust.

Hot Blond stops, turns the Jack up, swallows the last bit, tosses the bottle into the sand dunes. Follows Shorty into the bath house.

INT. PUBLIC BATH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dim lit from a single fluorescent. Shorty enters a stall. Hot Blond heads for the mirror.

Someone else enters the bath house unnoticed as Hot Blond applies eyeliner. HOOD MAN, ageless, covered mostly by his dark hoody, his face ghostly pale, is right behind her. He moves closer, sniffs her hair, closes his eyes, a predisposed pleasure until -- eyeliner smudges across her cheek.

HOT BLOND

Shit! You scared me!

She spins around to bitch him out, but his hand lands tight over her mouth. Her eyes widen, scream fear. A muffled attempt to yell is drowned out when Rihanna's *Diamonds* blares from a cell phone which falls to the floor. Vibrates.

BATHROOM STALL

Shorty looks down. The iPhone vibrates across the floor as the ring-tone sings.

SHORTY

Uh. Hello? Aren't you going to get that?

A puddle of blood surrounds the iPhone, its vibrating muffled. Shorty looks down, SCREAMS as the door to the stall is forcefully kicked open.

INT. THE UNDERGROUND - NIGHT

Black paneling. Dragon sconces. A glow in the dark galaxy adorns the ceiling in the dingy hang out. Gothic rock pounds the atmosphere.

RAVEN, 16, facial piercings, black hair with hot pink highlights, slurps what's left of a shamrock shake.

Sitting on a crushed velvet couch across from her is LILITH, 15, blue-black emo hair, and STORM, 16, ice-like eyes, short black punk-ish bob.

RAVEN

Call me lame, but I'm gonna check out early tonight.

LILITH

Hot date?

Raven stands up, slips a pair of black fingerless gloves over her hands, cracks her knuckles.

RAVEN

Chemistry test tomorrow.

STORM

Lame.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Potholes. Dumpsters. A place shadows never leave. Hood Man leans against the brick wall.

EXT. THE UNDERGROUND - CONTINUOUS

The door swings open. Music pours out, as does Raven.

She fingers the keypad on her smart phone.

EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Unaware of anything but her text messaging in progress, Raven strolls down the walk.

She passes the alley without a glance, picks up a tail as someone follows. Hood Man closes in. He nears enough to catch her scent. He closes his eyes before the kill --

-- Raven spins around, runs right into him. Unafraid, she looks into his face. Reaches up.

RAVEN
Your liner's smudged.

Her finger wipes a spot on Hood Man's face. Almost in shock, not sure what to do, he just watches through his dead eyes as she licks her finger and buffs the spot on his face again.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
Must be waterproof. Oh well, I tried. Nice eyes by the way. Contacts? I forgot my backpack.

He doesn't speak, just stares at this strange person who seems so normal until the 'urge' hits him. He cracks his neck, closes his eyes.

When he opens them, she's almost to the entrance of The Underground. She swings the door open, hollers back.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
Hey! What's your alias?

She stands there, door open. Lilith peers outside. Sees Hood Man standing almost statuesque.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
Your name?

DAMON
Damon.

Raven pushes a nosy Lilith back into the joint.

Damon runs down the sidewalk away from The Underground.

EXT. CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

A patio full of tables and chairs. Damon grabs three salt shakers off the tables, pockets them.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Damon sits against the brick wall. Cracks a hole into the salt shaker, draws a circle out of the salt around him.

Laughter catches his attention. He panics, watches from the darkness. The voices grow closer.

LILITH (O.S.)
Who was he? Come on, tell us.

RAVEN (O.S.)
Just some guy. Goth. Like us.

Damon rocks nervously. Covers his ears with his hands. Black blood shoots through the veins on his pale hands like a living tattoo.

The girls come into view. He downs his face. Looks at the ground below. They laugh, talk as they pass by.

As the chatter fades, he looks up at the moon. His pale face now covered with a mesh of inky veins, almost gray-ish. His eyes, bloodshot, his whole iris black as night. He groans.

INT. RAVEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A tidy, modest place. Raven tosses her backpack on the couch.

MOTHER (O.S.)
You're late. I thought you had a test tomorrow.

Raven flops down beside the bookbag, pulls out a notebook. Flips the TV on. A news flash catches her attention.

REPORTER
(on TV screen)
The recent disappearance of two teens has this small town on edge. There is speculation of drowning, however investigators cannot rule out foul play due to a phone they discovered in the local bath house near east beach.

She rids the TV of boring. A punk music video takes place of the newscast.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

A full moon shines over a tombstone dotted lot. A light fog descends the night.

Through the misty yard comes Damon. He stops at a giant tree beside an old marker. On the stone: MARIA BERONE *Beloved wife and mother*. A tiny stone marked: BABY BERONE lies parallel.

Damon pushes the hoody from his face. His skin has returned to its pale state, his eyes are not bloodshot. He squats into a sitting position up against the big tree.

DAMON

I met somebody tonight. A strange girl I'd say. But a kind one. For the first time in ten years I actually felt like...I dunno different. Unjudged.

He looks up at the moon. The light bounces off his pale flesh. His lips are a blue-ish. Dark circles accentuate his tired eyes. He shakes his head.

DAMON (CONT'D)

And then it was everything I could do to keep from consuming her. Her brain, it had this intellectual but quirky scent. And then she spoke.

He puts his head in his hands.

DAMON (CONT'D)

Something inside me was telling me no. The urge was there though. Luck had it she forgot something. And disappeared for just a minute.

A flowering weed catches his attention. He picks it, places it on the baby's grave.

DAMON (CONT'D)

So I used the old salt trick. I know I shouldn't feel this way, but I wanna see her again.

Damon stands, shuffles about picking wildflowers. He places a small bundle under each of the headstones.

DAMON (CONT'D)

Maria honey. It's been ten years. You told me to move on. You don't mind if I...if I pursue this girl...do you?

He puts his hands in his pockets. Turns to walk away but stops and faces the two stones.

DAMON (CONT'D)

I would risk everything if only to feel that way one more time. You understand. I know you do.

He tucks his head, walks stiff-legged away disappearing into the foggy night.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

A non-busy store. The CLERK reads a book behind the counter as a door bell JINGLES.

Damon walks in, grabs a shopping basket.

CLERK
No hoodies in here.

He disregards her request. Heads down the food aisle.

She watches him best she can. He takes a carton of Morton Salt from the shelf. Then another. Then rakes all remaining salt cartons into the basket.

He unloads the contents on the counter. The clerk looks up, rolls her eyes at the hoody still in place. Closes her book, *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

CLERK (CONT'D)
Juiciest book I've ever read. Have you heard about it? They're making a movie ya know? Talking about letting that Vampire Diaries guy star in it.

She smiles. He pushes the salt closer to the register. Avoids eye contact as she rings him up. She pauses before the last one is put in the bag.

CLERK (CONT'D)
There's one I'm just in love with. Black hair. Blue eyes.

The veins in Damon's face start to pulse, an inky hint appears near his jaw. He's got to get out fast or else.

DAMON
It's Damon. Damon and Stephan are the two vampires in the show. Vampires are so overrated.

He reaches up, wipes a small sore on his face. She drops the last salt carton in the bag. He divvies up. Leaves.

She waves at him.

CLERK
Hey, wait, your change.

EXT. THE UNDERGROUND - NIGHT

The door is propped open. Music seeps out into the night.

Just down from the entrance, Damon stares at a couple drunkenly trying to open their car door. He looks back at the Underground entrance.

He walks towards the couple until a distinct scent in the air catches his attention. He turns to see Raven making her way towards The Underground. She notices him.

RAVEN

Damon! That you?

He spins around, pulls out a vial of pure salt, pours it in his mouth. His eyelids purse at the strong bite, then he turns back to face her.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

Get down here.

Apprehensively, Damon strolls towards Raven. She grabs his hand at the door. They disappear inside.

INT. THE UNDERGROUND - NIGHT

Raven leads Damon back to the corner. Signals 'two' to the COUNTER GIRL.

RAVEN

It is Damon, right?

He shakes his head 'yes'. They sit. Counter Girl brings over two shamrock shakes.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

Here. If you haven't tried them, you're in for a treat. Get out of that hoody man, someone's going to call you Travon in here.

He's slow to do anything, so Raven reaches over, slides his hood down. Reveals his shoulder-length black hair, piercings go all the way up one of his ears.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

There. Wow. Those eyes are bitchin'. I don't know how you deal with contacts though. I tried for months. Mine were lavender.

Raven leans in, looks at his eyes. He leans back to keep his distance as best he can.

She slurps her green shake through the straw. He watches, mimics her. She squints her eyes, holds her breath.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
Ugh! Brain freeze.

He looks up. That word hits him like adrenaline. His face screams anxiety. He pulls a vial out of his pocket. Pours white granules into his shake. With the straw he sucks up the salt. Calms back down.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
What's that? Some kind'a new drug?

DAMON
Salt.

She stares at him like 'are you serious'. He smiles.

DAMON (CONT'D)
Low blood pressure.

Raven walks over to the digital jukebox, pops a handful of quarters in. As she's walking back, The Cure's *Love Song* comes on. She flashes Damon those puppy dog eyes.

RAVEN
You dance?

He shakes his head 'no'. She pulls him up onto his feet. He tries his best to keep his distance. She steps in closer.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
It's a slow song. Get it?

She moves in, puts her arms around him, her head on his chest. He closes his eyes. For a second they look like any other normal couple dancing until the urge comes fighting back. Small ink-like veins crawl up his neck. Spiderweb around his wrist. His fingernails turn a dark gray.

His eyes open, glassy, dead. He sniffs her hair. She leans back, makes a funny face. He leans back.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
Do I stink or something?

DAMON
No, you smell almost delectable. I don't want you to regret this. I gotta go.

She looks at his eyes, steps back. A spiderweb of black veins snake around his neck and chin.

RAVEN

You ok? Your neck...

Damon takes off towards the bathrooms. Disappears inside the men's room. Lilith and Storm walk in, make their way back to the hangout corner.

STORM

You look like you saw a ghost.

Raven grabs her shake, curls up Indian-style on the couch. Looks back over her shoulder towards the bathrooms.

RAVEN

(whispers)

He's here.

It's like a girl huddle.

LILITH

Do tell.

STORM

I don't see him.

Raven points towards the bathrooms. The three gossip girl talk. Lilith looks up, signals.

LILITH

Hope that's not him, cuz if it is,
he's ditchin' you.

Damon skulks stiffly towards the door.

STORM

Does he have something, like, wrong
with him. I mean, not in a bad way,
but the way he...

LILITH

Storm, drop it.

Raven jumps up.

RAVEN

I'm out girls.

Raven storms off towards the exit.

LILITH

See, you pissed her off. Why did you say that? You are so brash Storm. The guy could be handicapped or somethin'.

Storm rolls her eyes 'whatever'.

EXT. THE UNDERGROUND - MOMENTS LATER

Raven births the exit. Looks left. Then right. Sees Damon trailing down the sidewalk. She follows.

RAVEN

Hey Damon. What's wrong?

She trots up to him. He's inattentive. She grabs his arm. He turns to her, hood up over his head.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

Oh my god, your like ice cold. Are you...

DAMON

Leave me alone Raven.

RAVEN

Uh. What did I do?

He pulls his arm loose. Coldly walks away.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

If it's Storm and Lilith, we could go somewhere else.

She follows. His face is white as a sheet. The black veins pulse, scream hunger. His eyes glassy, cold.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

Just stop!

He can't fight it. Reaches into his pocket, the last vial slips from his shaky grip, falls to the pavement, shatters on the sidewalk.

Raven bends over, recovers the container and what's left of the salt inside. When she stands, he's so close to devouring her every brain cell -- his neck veins are black, bulging. Dark circles under his eyes seem darker. His lips a dead-ish blue.

She extends the vial and left over salt. He knocks it out of her hand. It goes flying. Blood surfaces a wound from the sharp glass. She sucks the blood off her finger.

He raises up. Closes his eyes. In an almost demonic voice...

DAMON

Stay away from me! I'm not what you think I am! Now go!

Shocked, she stammers backwards, mouth agape as he turns and storms away so stiff he appears to have a limp.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

An empty parking lot. The store looks dead from outside.

Damon stares from a distance. A 'fix' in sight.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Like deja vu, Damon walks in. Clerk is buried in her *Fifty Shades* book. He heads for the salt aisle.

CLERK

No hoodies in the store please.

He stops at the empty spot where the salt cartons used to be. Grunts almost animal-like at the empty shelf.

CLERK (CONT'D)

Can I help you?

Damon doesn't respond, scans the store. Spots a condiment corner near the hot dog cooker. He walks over. Grabs a salt packet -- but doesn't stop at one.

CLERK (CONT'D)

You have to buy a hot dog to take the condiments, Sir. Sir?

He puts every last salt packet in his pocket. Turns for the door. Clerk stands up, closes her book.

CLERK (CONT'D)

Oh, it's you. I have your change from the other day.

He ignores her. She waddles around the counter. Stands between him and the front door.

CLERK (CONT'D)

First you clean the salt off my shelves. Now you want to walk out with all my condiments. I'm not going to sit back there and....

His arm wraps around her, hand over her mouth, her eyes scream fear as he drags her kicking and struggling behind the first aisle.

Standing on the outside looking in, we see Raven's reflection in the glass storefront.

An animalistic GROWL. Blood splatters cereal boxes. We see Clerk's feet kick, struggle, then jerk before going dead still. A puddle of blood swells around her legs.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Damon walks out of the store. Blood covers his face. Drips down his front. He runs off into the night.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Raven stands at the edge of the boneyard. Watches quietly from a distance as Damon paces beside the two headstones.

He carries on a conversation. We cannot hear what he says.

Damon falls to his knees. GROANS loud. It echoes.

Raven, hand over her mouth, watches in shock as Damon appears to be sobbing on his knees. A tear swells in her eye, runs down her cheek.

She wipes her face. Then leaves.

EXT. RAVEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Raven stands on the front porch. She puts her hand on the doorknob, begins to turn it when her phone beeps...a text message. Text messages between her and Lilith:

RAVEN

No he isn't a vamp. He's undead.

LILITH

Like a zombie?

RAVEN

Duh. And ur a witch, so give me a spell.

LILITH

Here's one to turn the dead into the living. Never tried it.

RAVEN

You think it'll work?

LILITH

Only 1 way 2 find out.

She takes one last look at the door, then turns and disappears into the night.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

It's late, dark, foggy. Raven creeps through the yard concentrating stepping over the dead.

She reaches the big tree. Damon lays asleep, his head resting on Baby Berone's grave. She stares at him with empathy.

Empty salt packets litter the area. His hood off, his face looks paler than ever. Blood spatter on his skin.

Raven looks down at her phone. Fingers the keypad. The glow lights up her face. Damon tussles. She crawls down on the grassy ground beside him 'it's going to be ok'.

Half asleep, like instinct, he takes her into his arms. She looks up at him. Flashes the glowing phone at him. His eyes slowly open.

RAVEN

(whispers)

I have something to help you. I want to help you.

DAMON

You shouldn't be here.

RAVEN

I want to be here.

DAMON

You don't know me. The real me, Raven. I'm not...

He strokes her hair. Coagulated blood dried in his fingernails. His eyes closed. They lay there.

DAMON (CONT'D)

You make me feel different, Raven.
But you can't change what I am.
Sleep, just sleep with me. You can
go in the morning. No you should
go. You need to go. Trust me.

She closes her eyes, nestles in his chest. He sniffs her scent. Closes his eyes. Black blood runs through every vein in his neck and face. Blood rushes into the whites of his eyes, swirls around until. She whispers.

RAVEN

I do trust you. You have to trust
me. Let me help you. Make you....

The urge is too strong. He grasps her skull, buries his teeth into her flesh. Bites a chunk out of her head. As the life seeps out of her she mumbles one last word.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

Human.

Her eyes glass over. Blood clumps soak her soft hair. He looks like a junkie that just got his fix.

He holds her cradled in his arms. Her eyes glassed over, frozen open. Her body limp. He sobs.

DAMON

What have you done?

He lies her head gently on the baby's grave. He strokes her bloody hair and then --

-- her hand suddenly reaches up, grabs his wrist.

FADE TO BLACK.

