

Special But Lame

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TEASER

INT. NEAL'S BEDROOM (DREAM) - NIGHT

An album is placed on the bed. We are close enough to see the pictures inside it - a young boy and his parents. A soft, tiny, pearl-like hand appears. A boy's hand. He's putting some new photos into the album, most of which are of him and his mom.

THE CAMERA PULLS AWAY TO REVEAL THE BOY'S FACE.

This is NEAL, 10 years old, a beautiful young boy, delicate and fragile, like a china doll.

Neal puts the photos into the album carefully like they are his treasures. He stares at these photos intensely.

CLINK. We hear a loud noise from somewhere downstairs. Neal is startled. He stands up and exits the room quickly.

INT. KITCHEN (DREAM) - LATER

The light is off. We can vaguely see fragments of broken plates and glasses on the floor.

YOUNG NEAL (O.S.)
Mom? What's wrong?

Young Neal steps into the kitchen and turns on the light.

YOUNG NEAL (CONT'D)
Is it a power out--

He finds his MOM lying on the ground, passed out. There's some blood around her neck. It looks like she's been bitten by something.

Neal approaches his mom and kneels down. He tentatively shakes her.

YOUNG NEAL (CONT'D)
Mom? Can you hear me?

No response. Neal is scared. He shakes her harder.

YOUNG NEAL (CONT'D)
Come on, Mom...

He almost cries. Suddenly, Neal's mom trembles a bit. It looks like she's regained consciousness. She opens her eyes slowly and looks at Neal.

YOUNG NEAL (CONT'D)
 (relieved)
 Oh thank god... What happened?

CU ON NEAL'S MOM'S FACE.

Her face is very pale. She stares at Neal for a few seconds, and smiles. She embraces him hard. Almost too hard.

Neal is confused. The embrace is almost strangling him.

YOUNG NEAL (CONT'D)
 Mom...?

CU ON NEAL'S MOM'S FACE AGAIN.

She opens her mouth to reveal fangs. She bites Neal.

CUT TO BLACK.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 ...Ladies and gentlemen, we are
 arriving at Kingston airport. The
 local time is 1:05PM, for your
 safety...

INT. PLANE - DAY

NEAL ERDMANN, 15 years old, older than we see him last time, but still too boyish to be a man, opens his eyes. It was just a dream.

CU ON HIS NECK - WE CAN SEE A SHALLOW SCAR HERE.

JAMES (O.S.)
 You wake up? We'll be landing soon.

Neal turns and sees his dad, JAMES ERDMANN, who's sitting next to him. James, late 40s, very different energy from his son, is a tough man, too tough to be a parent.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 It's been 5 years. Too long for a
 homecoming.

NEAL
 Has it? I feel like it was just
 yesterday.

JAMES
 Our sense of time is different.
 Time moves slower for young people.

NEAL

Or maybe it's just because I'm
homesick. I think about it all the
time... Even in my dreams.

Neal sits up and checks his phone. A TikTok notification pops
up - "Hi, NENIGHT9NINE, Eliza Vlad just posted a video."

JAMES

I never knew you wanted to come
back. I didn't expect you to come
with me.

Neal stares at the notification for a beat, then clicks on
it.

NEAL

It is my home town after all.

CAMERA PULLS CLOSER TO HIS PHONE AS THE VIDEO STARTS PLAYING.

On his phone, we see the title card: SPECIAL BUT LAME.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE**INT. BATHROOM (VIDEO) - DAY**

A teenage girl looks at us. She is about 15 years old, dresses like a vampire - silver hair, pale skin, red contact lenses, and we can see fangs in her mouth when she speaks. This is EMILEE OLSON, but she refers to herself as --

EMILEE

(waves to the camera)

Hi everyone, it's me, Eliza Vlad,
the only real vampire you can find
on internet!

She holds a toothbrush and a rinse cup in her hands.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

Dental hygiene is important, even
for vampires. In fact, sometimes
it's even more important for us! So
today I'll talk about how vampires
take care of their teeth. The way
we clean teeth are very different
from how humans do...

Someone clicks stop. The video pauses.

KAREN (O.S.)

I don't think this will work.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL THAT WE WERE LOOKING AT
SOMEONE'S LAPTOP.

In a small office, Emilee sits side by side with her manager,
KAREN BURNS, late 20s, headstrong and smart. They watch her
latest video. She shoots Emilee a look of dismay.

EMILEE

(angered)

What's wrong this time?

KAREN

If all you are going to talk about
is how you clean your teeth...
That's not what people are
expecting. You are a vampire. Not a
dentist, it's not your job to give
health advice.

EMILEE

But I AM talking about vampires.
You wouldn't believe how much time
vampires spend on their teeth! They
even have their own toothpaste
formula--

KAREN

I don't care - nobody cares. I know
you are serious about it, but
vampires are just fairytales to us.
We are all humans, we don't have
fangs, we can't test these things
out.

She sighs and shows the documents she's holding to Emilee - a
lot of charts and data.

KAREN (CONT'D)

You really should be careful - all
your recent videos have less than 1
million views, that means you're
losing fans. If people don't watch
your videos, there will be no
sponsorships, and we'll have to end
your contract.

EMILEE

(discouraged)

I'm trying my best. Nobody knows
about vampires better than me, at
least not on TikTok.

KAREN

It has nothing to do with your
knowledge, it's just not fun... You
can't just talk about vampire
trivia all the time. People are
getting tired of it.

EMILEE

(folds her arms)

But I don't have much choice. I'm a
vampire. You can't let me do food
tours or in-store visits like the
other influencers...

Karen snaps her fingers - a look of inspiration on her face.

KAREN

Wait... We can actually do that.

EMILEE
 (dumbfounded)
 You're serious?

Karen taps on her phone and shows a page to Emilee.

KAREN
 If there are places for humans,
 there are places for vampires!

On her phone, we see an article: "10 Real Urban Legends in Kingston." Beneath it, we see a picture of a haunted house: "The haunted house," 429 Lazarus St, Kingston, NY.

CUT TO:

EXT. HAUNTED HOUSE - DAY

Neal stands right in front of the "haunted house" in the article. The house is a mess and the yard is full of grass.

Neal pushes the fence door open and enters.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE - LATER

Neal climbs the stairs. We recognize this as the house we saw earlier - the one Neal and his mom used to live in. The house is much emptier now, and everything is old.

Neal stops at the bedroom for a moment, then enters.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

It's relatively empty, except for a bed frame and an armoire which is fixed on the floor. Neal walks over and opens it. There is nothing inside. Neal bends down to open a small box hidden in the corner, and we see an old photo album - the same one we saw earlier. Neal opens the album and looks at the pictures, entranced.

CLUNK. There are some noises downstairs. Neal is startled. He puts the album into his bag, then quietly leaves the room.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Emilee, or Eliza Vlad, is in the house. It looks like she broke in from the back door. She holds a selfie stick in her hand, filming as she goes.

EMILEE

(to the camera)

Okay, here I am, like a thief. If I get arrested for this, it's all on my natty manager and her stupid idea... Sorry Karen, but never mind, I'm not streaming anyway.

She looks around to observe the environment.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

(to the camera)

So this is the most famous haunted house in Kingston. Some believe a vampire lives here, but it's probably bullshit. Vampires are not stray dogs, we care about livability...

She steps into the kitchen.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Similar to the other rooms, the kitchen is almost empty but still a mess - there are some stains on the floor and walls that look like... BLOOD.

EMILEE

(to the camera)

Wow, did someone get murdered right here? I'm starting to understand why people say it's haunted. But it's more likely to be haunted by a ghost than a vampire. Vampires won't let blood spread like this, it's such a waste...

While taking in the scene, Emilee doesn't realize someone is approaching behind her.

NEAL (O.S.)

Stay where you are.

Emilee is stunned. She reflexively turns and sees Neal pointing something at her - it looks like a gun. Emilee drops her phone and selfie stick to the floor.

NEAL (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

EMILEE

Uh... I'm sorry, I don't mean to trespass...

(MORE)

EMILEE (CONT'D)
I-I'm not trying to steal anything
- please, don't shoot!

Neal examines her face carefully.

NEAL
Are you... Eliza Vlad, the TikTok
vampire?

Emilee is surprised. Neal looks at her carefully again.

NEAL (CONT'D)
You must be Eliza. I'm a fan.

Neal points the gun away from her and presses the trigger to
reveal it's a water gun.

EMILEE
(relieved)
Jesus, you scared me to death...
This is your place?

Emilee picks up her equipment and checks them.

NEAL
Oh sorry, I didn't mean to scare
you.
(then)
Yeah, this is my old home...

EMILEE
Someone said it's a haunted house,
so my manager asked me to do a
"haunted house tour."
(sarcastic)
What a genius idea!

NEAL
(chuckles)
What's that, a new campaign? What
about the vampire trivia series?

EMILEE
(shrugs)
Trivia seems to be too intellectual
for my audience. So I'm trying
something new.

NEAL
That's too bad. Your knowledge
deserves to be appreciated. It's so
authentic.

Emilee raises her eyebrow - this sounds suspicious.

EMILEE
Authentic? You think vampires are
real?

NEAL
(nods)
Guess what? I've seen one before.

They look at each other. We can feel tension between them.

EMILEE
Seriously?

NEAL
You know why people say this place
is haunted? It's because someone
was turned into a vampire...

Neal slowly points his finger at where Emilee is standing.

NEAL (CONT'D)
Right here.

Silence. Emilee almost holds her breath. Then Neal starts
chuckling. Emilee chuckles too.

EMILEE
Geez. I almost believed you!

NEAL
I love folklore and myths.
(reaches out his hand)
By the way, I'm Neal.

EMILEE
(shake his hand)
Eliza. What's your TikTok username?
I'll follow you back.

They take out their phones and exchange contact information.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The Olson family are having dinner together. On the table,
there is only human food for Emilee, all the others are
enjoying what look like blood bags.

In stark contrast to how we've seen her before, Emilee has
removed all her makeup and looks like an ordinary high school
girl. She stares blankly into space and stirs her food with
her fork like she's playing with it.

ISABEL (O.S.)

Emilee, you don't like your food?

Emilee's startled. She pulls herself together.

THE CAMERA PULLS AWAY TO REVEAL THE REST OF THE OLSON FAMILY.

Emilee looks over at ISABEL, 50s, Emilee's mom, caring, but a little bit dominant.

EMILEE

Oh no, I'm just thinking about my video ideas.

CAMERON, early 50s, Emilee's dad, always dead calm, perks up.

CAMERON

Why don't you just give yourself a break? You've spent the whole weekend on it.

EMILEE

Dad, it's a job. I can't just leave it aside and let it be...

ISABEL

But why do you need a job? You're just a high school freshman... Do you need money for something?

EMILEE

It's not about money - it's activism - social media activism.

CAMERON

Activism for what?

EMILEE

For vampires! I want people to know more about our community. I'm doing this for us. For everyone!

Everyone looks at Emilee like she said something ridiculous.

CAMERON

Um... That's very ambitious. But we can't expose ourselves - it's in our non-aggression pact with humans. If we want to live in the human world, we can't let people find out who we are. You don't want to move to the forest, do you?

EMILEE

We can trust people a little bit more. People are more accepting now...

ISABEL

Emilee, I know you care about us. But you are SPECIAL - you have choices. You can live like a human.

KAINE smirks. He looks like a 11-year-old boy, but he's actually the oldest one in this family.

KAINE

And if you want to be more like a vampire, you should quit social media first!

EMILEE

(rolls her eyes at Kaine)
Eat your food, you little rascal!

Emilee peeks at GWEN, the older daughter, physically late 20s, lazy and cynical. She sips her blood bag like she's drinking a Capri Sun pouch while playing on her phone.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

Gwen, what do you think? You love TikTok, you must have watched my videos.

Gwen doesn't move her eyes from her phone.

GWEN

My only opinion is you look like Lady Gaga in *Born This Way*. Sooo cliché.

Emilee is disappointed. She puts down her fork and goes silent. Isabel notices she's feeling down.

ISABEL

We are not against you. We'd love to support you in anything you want to do, as long as it's not about vampires.

Emilee is sullen. She puts her hands on the table and stands up.

EMILEE

It's just so frustrating that you don't even care about your own group being underrepresented.

(MORE)

EMILEE (CONT'D)

(stands up)

I'm not hungry. I'm gonna take a nap.

She leaves her seat and heads to her bedroom. The rest of the Olson family look at each other, speechless. Kaine shrugs.

KAINE

What's this? Teenage angst?

Gwen takes a sip of her blood bag without moving her eyes from her phone.

GWEN

Humanity.

INT. EMILEE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Emilee steps into the bedroom and collapses on her bed. She lies in bed, looking very depressed. Her phone buzzes. Emilee checks the message. It's a DM from Neal --

Neal: "You can use my old home if that's your only option"

Emilee: "It's okay. I don't want to mislead people, and you don't wanna see any more trespassers at your place, do you?"

Neal: "So have you come up with any new ideas?"

Emilee: "Not yet unfortunately"

Neal: "Why don't you ask your fans what they wanna watch? Maybe you can even find another TikTok vampire like that LOL"

Emilee looks at his text as an idea dawns on her. She starts typing.

Emilee: "GOOD IDEA, you are a genius!"

She jumps off the bed, walks up to her desk and starts putting on makeup.

INT. NEAL'S BEDROOM - LATER

Neal sits on his bed with the photo album on his legs, going through the pictures.

His phone buzzes. Neal picks up the phone and finds Eliza Vlad just posted a video. He clicks on the video.

EMILEE (ON VIDEO)

Hello, everyone! It's me, Eliza Vlad, your only vampire friend! If you are a monster and want to make your voice heard, let's make videos together! Just DM me and send me a link to your video reel. Can't wait to work with you!

She winks, and the video ends. Neal smiles and likes the video. He puts the phone back and is about to turn the page on the photo album when -

The album falls and an envelope drops from it. The envelope looks new, like somebody put it in the album recently.

Neal is dumbfounded. He hesitates a beat, then picks up the envelope and opens it, revealing a letter inside.

The letter reads: "WELCOME BACK NEAL, MOM."

Neal is shocked. He looks at the letter carefully and turns it back. There is no other information.

Neal concentrates on the letter so hard, he doesn't even realize when a message comes in from Emilee.

CU ON THE PHONE.

A message from Emilee: "Hey, wanna be my collaborator?"

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**EXT. GRAVEYARD (FLASHBACK) - DAY**

James kneels in front of a grave. He puts a bouquet of Easter lilies down next to it.

On the grave, we see BETHANY L. ERDMANN - Neal's mom's name.

Neal stands behind James, holding a flower bouquet in his hand. Neal stares at the Easter lilies, clearly in his own head.

JAMES

Neal, why don't you come closer and say hello to your mom?

Neal breaks from his trance and squats down. He puts the flowers next to the Easter lilies. He looks down at the ground beneath the grave.

NEAL

(turns to James)

Dad, does resurrection ever happen?

James is confused for a second, then smiles.

JAMES

I hope it does. But nobody knows. What do you think?

NEAL

I don't know... But maybe the world is more magical than we thought?

JAMES

Probably. But we still need to come to terms with reality.

Neal turns back and stares at the grave. After a moment, he can't help but reach his hand to the bottom of the stone.

EMILEE (PRELAP)

Hey. Don't be a slacker!

INT. CAFE - AFTERNOON

Neal comes out of his trance. He sits next to Emilee at a cafe. They look at Emilee's laptop, where a "self-tape" of a guy who looks like a werewolf plays. The guy is trying very hard to make himself look like a real monster. He shows how hairy his arms are, but it's still clearly fake.

EMILEE
He's just acting. Pass.

Neal takes notes. Emilee plays the next video.

NEAL
Are you sure this is worth your
time? We're on the 66th tape now.

EMILEE
You don't know what will happen
until the end.

She doesn't even move her eyes from the screen.

EMILEE (CONT'D)
Pass. Another faker.

Neal sighs and takes notes. Emilee clicks on the next video.
She looks at the video for a few seconds. Her eyes light up.

EMILEE (CONT'D)
(loudly)
This one! She's the real deal!

Her shout draws attention. They all look at her. Emilee
smiles to them apologetically.

Neal looks at the screen, he sees an Asian girl who seems to
be their age. The girl seems pretty normal, similar to Emilee
nobody would give her a second glance.

Neal turns to Emilee, confused.

NEAL
How do you know--

EMILEE
First, her skin - she looks pale,
and it doesn't look like cosmetics,
more like Anemia. And pay attention
to how she speaks...
(plays the video)
She never stops to take a breath.
Because she doesn't need to. Also,
she doesn't sound like a young
girl. The words she uses are sort
of old-fashioned. She must be way
older than she looks.
(turns to Neal)
If she can fake all this, she
deserves an Oscar.

Neal is still not convinced, but he's intrigued.

NEAL

I've been thinking, how did you learn all this? Are you living with a real vampire or something?

Emilee's smile stiffens for a beat.

EMILEE

(feigns being serious)

Nice try, but wrong... My entire family is vampires!

They stare at each other. A beat. Both start laughing.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

(stops laughing quickly)

I wanna meet her. What's her name?

(looks at the file)

LAYLA LUM... And her username is...

She takes out her phone and starts messaging Layla.

NEAL

When are you gonna meet her? I'll go with you.

EMILEE

What? No, I'll meet her alone, keep the meeting private - build up some trust between us.

NEAL

You sure? But what if she's up to no good...

EMILEE

I have a plan. Don't worry. I'm a pro, always prepared!

NEAL

(sighs)

Okay, but bring this with you.

He takes out something that looks like a personal alarm keychain and puts it on the table. Emilee's confused. She takes it and examines it.

EMILEE

Personal alarm? Isn't that for young kids?

NEAL

It can do more than you think, and it's never wrong to be prepared.

EMILEE

Okay. Very thoughtful.

She puts the keychain into her pocket.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

How much is it? I'll give you money for it.

NEAL

You can pay me with your vampire knowledge. I want to learn everything you know, like how to tell if someone is a real vampire or not.

EMILEE

So that's the tuition fee? You are so calculating. I should hire you as my bookkeeper.

She smiles radiantly. Neal can't help dodging her eyes.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

It's almost evening. Emilee leaves her bedroom with a small backpack. When she passes by the kitchen, she hears Isabel working inside.

EMILEE

Mom, I won't be home tonight. Gonna hang out with friends.

ISABEL (O.S.)

You made some friends? Awesome!

She pauses a beat, and then remembers something.

ISABEL (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Don't forget your amulet!

Emilee pats the back pocket on her jeans.

EMILEE

It's there!

(murmurs)

Why are you all nagging me like I'm a scatterbrain?

She opens the door and leaves.

EXT. KARAOKE BAR - LATER

Emilee rushes out from a subway station, and walks into a karaoke bar.

INT. KARAOKE BAR - CONTINUOUS

Emilee walks up to the counter. She shows her ID to the staff.

EMILEE

Hi, I have a reservation.

The staff looks at her ID and passes her the key to the room.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Emilee leaves in a rush, unaware that Neal is behind her, dressed like a different person and covering his face with a hat.

INT. PRIVATE KARAOKE ROOM - LATER

Emilee sits in the room, finishing putting on her makeup. She has become Eliza Vlad.

Her phone buzzes. It's a message from Layla.

Layla: "I'm downstairs!"

Emilee grimaces. She collects her makeup kit and hides it behind the sofa.

Someone knocks on the door. Emilee finishes pulling herself together. She responds to the knocking awkwardly:

EMILEE

Come on in!

An Asian woman LAYLA LUM, 17 years old, not overtly beautiful, but bright piercing eyes that could catch anyone's attention, walks in.

Layla walks up to Emilee with her arms open.

LAYLA

Eliza!

EMILEE

Layla!

They hug each other as if they haven't seen each other for decades.

LAYLA

Oh my god, I can't believe it. I'm meeting Eliza Vlad, the real one!

EMILEE

Am I that famous?

LAYLA

Everyone is watching you, you are a superstar!

Emilee grins, flattered.

EMILEE

That's a little bit creepy. But we shouldn't talk about me. Let's talk about you! It's your show now!

Layla giggles and sits down. They start chatting. At the same time, we notice someone is peeping at them through the small window on the door. It's Neal.

CUT TO:

INT. KARAOKE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Neal leans on the door, eavesdropping. Suddenly, he feels someone patting him on the shoulder. He turns and sees the MANAGER.

MANAGER

What are you doing here?

NEAL

(embarrassed)

I'm just... waiting for my friend.

MANAGER

Why don't you just knock on the door and talk to them?

NEAL

Um... I-I don't want to...

MANAGER

Stalking is a criminal offense, you know. Leave now, or I'll call the police.

Neal is stunned and doesn't know how to respond. He blushes.

CUT TO:

INT. PRIVATE KARAOKE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Layla and Emilee are enjoying their conversation.

LAYLA

You don't know how difficult it is to be a vampire when you're Asian! Everyone assumes vampires are all white.

EMILEE

I know how you feel. That's why I need you in my project, we need to show people what the real monster world is like!

LAYLA

You really are an activist, you're gonna rock the world!

EMILEE

(chuckles)

I like the title. Activist. Hmm.

They hear the voice of the manager and Neal. Emilee listens to the voice and recognizes it.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

(stands up)

Sorry, just give me a few seconds.

She rushes out of the room.

INT. KARAOKE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Emilee confronts the Manager and Neal.

EMILEE

(to the manager)

Hi, he's my friend. No need to call the police.

MANAGER

Oh, okay. I'm sorry...

The manager glances at both of them, and leaves. Emilee glares at Neal and drags him to a corner in the hallway.

EMILEE

You followed me? Is... Is that what the keychain is for?

NEAL

I-I'm just curious if Layla is a real vampire, and I also want to help you...

EMILEE

So you stalked me like a paparazzi and tried to scare the shit out of me? That's your idea of helping?

This hits a nerve.

NEAL

We are teammates! We should be doing this together! I'm just trying to do my job and be useful... You don't have to act suspicious of me!

Emilee sighs. She puts her hands on Neal's shoulder.

EMILEE

Listen, Neal. I really thank you for all your help. I always wanted to get in touch with my fans, and I'm happy that you're here for me, but we've only known each other a few days. You've gone too far and you've invaded my privacy!

Neal is speechless.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

Just go home and mind your own business. I'll give you credit for this video and I'll split 50% of the income with you, okay?

She turns and heads to the private room, leaving Neal alone.

CUT TO:

INT. PRIVATE KARAOKE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Emilee enters the room. Layla is waiting for her.

LAYLA

What happened?

EMILEE

It's just a friend of mine... I heard his voice, so I came to say hello to him.

LAYLA

You make friends with humans? That's so brave. I'm scared just thinking about it.

EMILEE

(shrugs)

They rule the world, and you have to team up with them if you want to make a name for yourself in their society.

LAYLA

That must be tough. You must have suffered a lot for that.

She approaches Emilee and gives her a hug. Emilee is moved, she embraces Layla. A beat.

EMILEE

Oh, I almost forgot it. Let's talk about the video, We gotta hurry up-

-

Sting. Something feels weird around her neck. Emilee turns and sees Layla holds something in her hand - a syringe. She just gave her an injection.

Emilee is shocked. She wants to break free from Layla, but she feels faint, like she's losing her strength. Her vision is blurred and she starts seeing double.

EMILEE'S POV --

Layla releases Emilee, letting her fall on the sofa. An evil grin spreads across her face.

LAYLA

You're right - it's not bad to learn from the humans, like how to lie.

She morphs into numerous vampires and they engulf Emilee.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. KARAOKE HALLWAY - LATER

Neal sits on the ground, feeling down. Suddenly, he hears a weird noise - like some animals waving their wings. He notices the door of the private room Emilee was in has been left open.

Something is wrong. Neal stands up and charges to the room. When he looks into the room, he freezes. Nobody's there, but Emilee's belongings are still on the sofa.

NEAL
(speaks to himself)
Oh fuck.

INT. PRIVATE KARAOKE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Neal rushes into the room, looks around, and finds the window open.

Neal grabs his phone and tries to call Emilee, but no one answers. He taps another app. A map shows up with a GPS tracker. There is a red dot on the map named "Eliza Vlad."

CUT TO:

INT. DARK ROOM - LATER

Emilee wakes up. The space is so dark she can't see anything.

Suddenly, someone lights a candle. Emilee squints. She can see her surroundings. She finds she's somewhere that looks like a dining room. She's tied to a chair. Something is lying next to her feet.

Emilee looks down and screams - it looks like human corpses.

LAYLA (O.S.)
Welcome to the vampire world!

Emilee turns and look at who's speaking. It's Layla - she's sitting on the sofa opposite Emilee.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE**INT./EXT. TAXI - NIGHT**

Neal sits in the taxi, staring at his phone. On the GPS tracker, the red dot stops moving. That's where Emilee is.

There is a traffic jam on the street. The car is stopped and hasn't moved an inch for a while. Neal is extremely nervous and he's sweating like a pig. He looks outside the car window, checking where he is.

He sees a church. It reminds him of something.

NEAL
(to the driver)
You can drop me off here. Thanks.

He opens the door and gets out of the car.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - SAME TIME

Emilee is tied up to the chair, peeking at the "corpses." They look like a middle age couple.

She stares closely at their throats and noses. *They are still breathing.* Emilee's relieved: *They're just in coma.*

Emilee eyes Layla, who's also observing her.

LAYLA
Care about yourself first, human girl.

She winks and looks into Emilee's eyes, as if she's reading Emilee's mind. Emilee dodges her eyes.

EMILEE
I can't believe it. I trusted you and you drugged me.
(glares at Layla)
You fucking asshole.

LAYLA
It's your fault trusting someone you just met.

EMILEE

I was trying to be sincere. I wanted you to trust me, so I trusted you first...

Layla makes a venomous sneer.

LAYLA

Shut the fuck up. Who are you working for? Vampire hunters? The government? The Christians?

EMILEE

I don't work for anybody. I just want to do something for the vampires, like you said, it's activism... I'm one of yours!

LAYLA

Bullshit. You are 100% human.

EMILEE

I'm not lying. My father... My biological father is a vampire, but my mom is a human, and I was born as a human... My mom abandoned me when she realized what my dad was. Then I was adopted by my current family.

Layla starts laughing. She claps.

LAYLA

Very imaginative, you are gonna be the second Anne Rice. But just FYI, all vampires are infertile.

EMILEE

I know, but it did happen...

LAYLA

(shouts)

WHATEVER!

(leans closer to Emilee)

I don't want to hear your baloney. If you are a human, you are not my people. STAY OUTTA OUR WAY.

Emilee is scared. She holds her breath.

LAYLA (CONT'D)

Listen, quit what you are doing. It does us no good.

(MORE)

LAYLA (CONT'D)

We are living in the dark, we need no drama, no activism. If you want to die, die alone, DON'T GET US IN TROUBLE.

Emilee remains silent. *It clearly hurts her to hear this.*

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - SAME TIME

Neal stands in front of the door of the house. He wears a delivery man's uniform and carries a big delivery box.

He checks the mailbox in front of the house. It's Mike and Gloria Jefferson's place. He checks the GPS tracker on his phone. He's right in front of the red dot now.

Neal bites his nails, thinking about what to do next.

INT. JEFFERSON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A tear drops from Emilee's cheek.

EMILEE

Okay. I'll do what you ask me to. I'll make an announcement on TikTok and tell people the truth. Is that enough?

LAYLA

Deactivate your account, and don't ever think about coming back.

EMILEE

I won't. But...

(beat)

Promise me you won't hurt them.

She motions to Mr. And Mrs. Jefferson, who are still in a coma.

LAYLA

You think you can bargain with me?

She grins, showing her fangs, threatening her.

EMILEE

I bet you won't like the taste of my blood.

(MORE)

EMILEE (CONT'D)

And you can't have more than one
prey each time when you hunt, or it
will be considered overhunting.
You don't want the Senate to know
about this, right?

They stare at each other. A moment of tug-of-war.

LAYLA

You know a few things.
(folds her arms)
Who told you that?

Emilee hesitates. She doesn't know if she should tell Layla
about her family.

Ding Dong. At this very moment, the door bell rings.

Layla turns to the door, hesitating. She looks back at
Emilee, as if she's asking her what's going on.

Emilee shakes her head - she has no idea.

Ding Dong. Ding Dong. Ding Dong. The ringing continues.

NEAL (O.S.)

Hello? Mr Jefferson? Food delivery!

Ding Dong. Ding Dong. Ding Dong.

NEAL (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You chose to pay in person. I can't
leave until I get the money!
(keeps rings the bell)
Please, show some mercy to your
delivery man!

Layla rolls her eyes.

LAYLA

Pay in cash for food delivery? Sooo
Y2K.
(to Emilee)
Don't do anything. Don't try to
play any tricks on me.

She walks up to the door. When Layla is out of sight, Emilee
starts to reach her hands to the back pocket of her jeans.

Layla opens the door and finds Neal standing outside. Neal
smiles and passes a box of pizza to her.

NEAL

Here you are. Your delivery.

Layla shoots him a look of suspicion. But she gets the pizza, then takes out a 20-dollar bill and passes it to Neal.

LAYLA
Keep the change.

She is about to slam the door, but is stopped by Neal.

NEAL
Oh, I forgot...

LAYLA
(impatiently)
What?

Before she can finish her sentence, Neal splashes something on her face - with a cross on the bottle in Neal's hand, we know it's holy water.

Layla grimaces, screams, and starts struggling. The skin on her face is corroded, like someone poured acid on her face. At the same time, Neal breaks into the living room and reaches Emilee. He unties Emilee with a knife.

EMILEE
Neal? How--

NEAL
Let's go!

He grabs Emilee's hand and is about to run out, but when they look at the entrance, they find Layla has already pulled herself together - even though there are still wounds on her face, we can see it's regenerating.

LAYLA
(furiously)
You motherfucker!

She charges at Neal, ready to attack. Neal is scared, but he still stands in front of Emilee, trying to protect her.

Emilee takes something out of her pocket and removes the cover - it's a silver cross. With the moonlight, we see the metallic glow is filling up the whole space.

Layla stops moving. For the first time, we see fear on her face. Emilee holds the silver cross up and moves towards Layla slowly.

EMILEE
Leave! Get the fuck out of here!

LAYLA
 (flaunts)
 You think I'm afraid of this? It's
 just a toy...

But she's retreating.

EMILEE
 FUCK OFF! NOW!

At the same time, we hear a police siren.

LAYLA
 (scowls)
 You guys are lucky. But this won't
 happen again.

Layla morphs into a group of bats and leaves out the door.
 Emilee sighs in relief. She looks back at Neal.

EMILEE
 Did you call the police?

Neal shakes his head while he gathers all his belongings
 together.

NEAL
 We gotta run - can't let them see
 us.

He looks around and tries to see if there is another exit. At
 the same time, we hear the police siren getting closer and
 closer. They're almost here.

We hear the sound of the window cracking open. Neal and
 Emilee look at where the sound came from - a big window
 leading to the backyard.

Neal grabs Emilee's hand again. They rush out the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - LATER

Emilee and Neal arrive at a bus stop out of breath. Luckily,
 there is nobody there. They collapse on the bench.

EMILEE
 (gasps)
 Oh my god - oh my god.

NEAL

(gasps)

You okay? Did you get hurt?

Emilee shakes her head.

EMILEE

I'm okay... I'm just... I'm sorry.
I rejected your help because I
thought I could handle it. But
you're right. I should have trusted
you.

She looks at her feet, feeling down.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

Maybe I really should quit this. No
one can benefit from this. Nobody
needs it--

NEAL

You're not doing this to make
people like you, right?

Emilee looks at him surprised.

NEAL (CONT'D)

You wanna be an activist. Activists
argue, protest, and fight. They
don't care if people like them or
not, they only want to make things
change.

He reaches his hand to Emilee.

NEAL (CONT'D)

The more enemies you have, the more
you need to do. And you always
stand strong, right?

Emilee looks at his hand, and smiles. She holds his hand.
Neal helps her up.

EMILEE

You really have a way with words.

The bus is arriving. They both peek at the bus.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

Oh, my bus is coming...

NEAL

Just go home and get some rest.
It's been a long day for you... for
both of us.

Emilee hesitates. The bus is now boarding.

EMILEE

Okay... But thank you. Thank you
for being here.

NEAL

(smiles)
You're welcome, Eliza--

EMILEE

It's EMILEE.

Neal looks at her surprised.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

Call me Emilee. My real name.

NEAL

Okay, Emilee. It's a good name.

Emilee gives Neal a hug, gets on the bus, and waves to him.
Neal waves back.

CUT TO:

INT. OLSON'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Emilee enters the house and heads to her room. When she
passes by the living room, she sees all her family members
are watching an old fashioned vampire film together.

She frowns. *Where on Earth were you when I was in danger?* But
she doesn't speak it out loud.

Isabel hears Emilee's footsteps. She turns and looks at her.

ISABEL

How was the party, you have fun?

EMILEE

(sarcastically)
It was exciting. SO exciting! I
felt like I was getting kidnapped.

CAMERON

That's a weird metaphor.

EMILEE
(rolls her eyes)
Anyway, I'm super tired and need to
go to bed. Enjoy your movie!

She goes upstairs to her bedroom.

THE CAMERA PUSHES CLOSER ON KAINE.

Kaine is not watching the film, he's watching something on
his phone - it's Eliza Vlad's profile page.

KAINE
How long do you think she can keep
doing this? It looks like she's not
scared.

Gwen is engrossed in the film while sucking her Capri Sun
blood bag.

GWEN
If she doesn't want to stop, why
bother? She's a teenager, she wants
to be special.

KAINE
(smirks)
She IS special.

GWEN
Special, but lame.

CUT TO:

EXT. "HAUNTED HOUSE" - LATER

Neal stands in front of his old home. He has changed his
clothes back. He looks at the house for a few seconds, then
enters.

INT. NEAL'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Neal opens the closet. He takes out an envelope and leaves it
there. He exits the room.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM CLOSET - LATER

SOMEONE'S POV --

We don't know how long it has been since Neal left.
Everything is in dark.

Suddenly, someone opens the closet and picks up the envelope.
They take out the letter.

Under the moonlight, we see the words on the letter: "WHERE
ARE YOU, MOM? I MISS YOU. NEAL."

We see the letter is held by a pair of pale hands - it looks
like the hands of a vampire.

The vampire tears the letter into pieces.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG**INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - NEXT DAY**

Emilee steps into the hallway after class, writing something in a small notebook.

She goes straight to her locker, getting ready to leave. Suddenly, she hears some other girls giggling. She turns and sees some of her female watching her videos. She makes a slight smile, until she hears --

NEAL (O.S.)

Hey Eliza.

She turns and sees Neal, who is waving to her. She shushes Neal and looks around. Fortunately, nobody heard him.

EMILEE

(glares at Neal)

I told you, don't call me that here!

Neal covers his mouth.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Emilee and Neal walk along the street.

NEAL

So, what are we gonna do today?
Brainstorm new video ideas?

EMILEE

I'll introduce you to my manager
and get your start paperwork going.

NEAL

You have a manager? You are so
professional.

EMILEE

I AM Professional. What do you
think I am, an amateur? I have more
than 70K fans!

NEAL

So what am I, your apprentice?

EMILEE

I'm Sherlock, you are Watson.

NEAL

You need to be smarter to be a
Sherlock. No Sherlock on Earth
needs Watson to save her ass.

EMILEE

Shut the fuck up!

As they walk up the street, their conversation fades, as
we...

FACE TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE