The Cruelest Lie of All A screenplay for short film by Sean Killian

FADE IN ON: INTERIOR: A DELUXE HOTEL SUITE – NIGHT

A tall, slender, handsome MAN with dark hair and dark eyes stands in front of a bathroom mirror combing back his wet hair. As he looks himself over in the mirror, we hear him speak in VOICEOVER.

MAN {Voiceover}

Am I not the sole conductor of my symphony? Yes...I am. You consider the female body a vastly fined tuned instrument, and you consider yourself a sufficiently accomplished musician. You've been borrowing bodies for what - centuries...millenniums now? -you've become quite an expert at how to use them. But you had to learn by trial and error; there are no teachers in this art, just good role models.

The MAN opens his mouth now to check his teeth, and we see he has fangs, and realize he is a vampire. He grabs a toothbrush and begins brushing his teeth, as we hear him in VOICEOVER again.

MAN {Voiceover}

It's a delicate procedure, really. Almost like a juggling act; you must keep them frightened and off balance enough to keep them at bay, but not so frightened and distraught that they become discouraged with your company, or disillusioned with you and go to someone else for comfort. And when you finally tire of them...you cure them.

The MAN walks out of the bathroom and to the bed now, where he has laid out a three piece suit and tie, some black silk socks, and dress shoes. He stands there looking the ensemble over, making sure it is perfect, smiles at his choices. He drops the bath towel from around his waist and begins to dress.

MAN {Voiceover}

Cure them of that never-ending, insatiable hunger that gnaws at their insides from the time they wake until the time they sleep. The hunger you have imposed upon them, infected them with. You hate to do it, but after a body had been used so many times, it begins to wear out. The veins collapse, the body shrivels, the bones become brittle. You must find a new body to survive. Therefore you cure them. Take their soul, end their suffering. You feel it's the least you can do.

The MAN finishes dressing, then goes over to his dresser where he has laid out some jewelry. He has a large ruby ring, a diamond ring, and a silver choker. He picks the diamond ring, slips it on, and he is finally satisfied. He walks over to the door, switches off the light, and exits.

CUT TO: EXTERIOR: A BUSY CITY STREET – NIGHT The MAN is walking along the sidewalk, glancing at the various neon signs flashing around him. We see signs that show they are obviously strip clubs, and he stops in front of one of them, and stares at a poster advertising one of their exotic dancers. The WOMAN in the picture is beautiful, and we can tell he is smitten by her. He walks into the club.

CUT TO: INTERIOR: THE BAR AREA – NIGHT

The MAN is walking through the crowd now, a mixture of MEN and WOMEN dancing to the hypnotic beat of the loud music, and some of the WOMEN obviously notice him and are attracted to him. He takes a seat at the bar, and waves the bartender over.

BARTENDER What can I get you, sir?

MAN Sir? It's been a long time since I was shown such respect.

> BARTENDER I aim to please, sir. What will it be tonight?

> > MAN

Let's start off with a glass of your best red wine, shall we?

BARTENDER

{Rubbing his chin} Hmm...well, we don't have any red wine, but we have red wine spritzers.

MAN

A wine spritzer it is, then.

As the BARTENDER mixes the drink up, the MAN scans the crowd, the CAMERA FLASHING BACK AND FORTH to each WOMAN he checks out. His eyes finally land on a tall REDHEAD with green eyes. As if she feels his eyes on her, she turns to look at him, too. She seems to be almost mesmerized, hypnotized, as if she is in a trance. She moves through the crowd toward the bar.

REDHEAD

{Shouting over the music} You look very familiar. Haven't I seen you somewhere before?

MAN

That's one of the oldest pick-up lines in the book. You could at least try to be more original.

REDHEAD I was being original. You do look familiar.

MAN So do you. I think I saw you in a dream.

REDHEAD

{Blushing} It must have been a wet dream.

MAN {Leaning in close to her face} It was...nice and wet and red.

REDHEAD

I'd love to hear about it.

MAN {Looking deep into her eyes} Why don't I just show it to you?

We see a CLOSE SHOT of the MAN'S EYES as:

DISSOLVE TO: INTERIOR: A CHEAP MOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

The REDHEAD is coming through the door, looking tired and weak. She switches on the bare bulb that hangs in the kitchenette. Her hands are sweating and smell like smoke and spilled cocktails. The clothes she'd put on just six hours ago now hang limply from her exhausted frame. She blinks her heavily made up eyes as she grabs a bottle of vodka from the ancient icebox, and takes a long drag from the bottle, then another. She turns on her small TV set, plops down on the tattered couch, and listens as an ACTOR on a soap opera describes a scene right out of her own life:

TV VOICE

She places the cold bottle against her feverish forehead. Behind closed eyes, visions of wideeyed, thrashing batwings pulse inside her brain. She opens her weary eyes to see *he* is there now - the young, handsome man of her dreams - sitting at her table smiling his trademark smile, his ocean-blue eyes twinkling like sapphires. In her dreams, he resembles one of her favorite actors - Al Pacino - and she wants to stay within this dream world forever. She feels numb; this is all she ever wanted, this dream to come true, a Prince Charming - *her* Prince Charming - to come and take her away from all of this sad, lonely existence.

REDHEAD {CLOSE SHOT} You and me both, babe.

FADE BACK TO:

The MAN'S EYES, as the REDHEAD stands gazing deep into his eyes, rocking back and forth on her feet. The MAN reaches out, places his hands gently on her shoulders, and pulls her to him, whispering in her ear. She looks dazed, but smiles, and they both get up and leave the bar area together.

FADE TO: INTERIOR: THE DELUXE HOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

We see the MAN lying on the bed by himself, staring up at the ceiling. He raises his head to glance around the room, and seeing nobody, lies back down and lights a cigarette.

MAN {Voiceover}

The redhead was okay, as far as sex is concerned, but the last one was better, although weak and weary from life on the streets. A throwaway, yes, but still sexually well educated. A lot of them were out here, being graduates from the school of hard knocks. The streets are all they've ever known, and they've learned the ways of the streets well, have put their talents to good use. Their talent for survival. They really do need a Prince Charming.

The MAN stubs out his cigarette and gets out of bed, walks over to the bathroom. He stands outside the bathroom door, sniffing the air like a hound, then he walks in.

CUT TO: INSIDE OF BATHROOM.

The REDHEAD lay in the bathtub on her back, her eyes still open wide in stark terror, her long red hair matted to her head in a bird's nest fashion. Her MOUTH IS AGAPE, as if caught in mid-scream, the scream having been cut off by her wounds. Her ARTERIES JUT FORTH RAGGEDLY FROM HER THROAT, STILL SPEWING BLOOD FROM THE WOUND LIKE A FOUNTAIN. The flow suddenly tapers off to a slow drip, then ceases altogether. Her BODY TWITCHES SPASMODICALLY for a few seconds, then she lay still.

MAN {Voiceover}

Now you are alone again, and frightened. You hate being alone; always have. That is one of the curses of immortality; an eternity of loneliness, with only occasional and brief moments of companionship. You consider it so unfair; you didn't ask for this, and it always ends up the same. Now you can even identify with your victims.

The MAN opens the cabinet under the sink, pulls out a large plastic tarp, some bathroom cleaner, and a scrub brush. He stares down at the REDHEAD with a look of pity, then begins pulling her out of the tub.

CUT TO: EXTERIOR: BUSY CITY STREET – NIGHT

The MAN is walking along the sidewalk again, looking through windows and reading the various posters. He stops, lights a cigarette, and sits down on a public bench outside a strip club, just watching the world go by.

MAN {Voiceover}

You were just a victim of circumstance, an unwilling participant in a life -long feeding frenzy, the curse brought upon you by birth, by bloodline. But as time went on...well, you acquired a taste for it. It's in your blood. The fear of getting caught terrifies you; being recognized for what you really are; an inhuman being in a human world, an abomination in the eyes of God, and in the eyes of your victims. You know they'll never understand your life style or even try to, know they'll just pass immediate judgment upon you, labeling you a murderer, then dispose of you accordingly. Yet it is all you can do to survive, with no end in sight.

The MAN stands to his feet now, glancing around from left to right, his eyes settling on a strip club across the street. The poster of a tall, long-legged BLONDE catches his eye, and he walks across the street and into the club. Loud music blares as he opens the door.

CUT TO: INTERIOR: INSIDE OF CLUB – NIGHT

The club is packed, with people bumping elbows as they move around. The music blares so loud it is almost deafening. The MAN sits at the bar, waving the bartender over.

BARTENDER What'll it be, pal?

MAN Do you have any red wine in stock?

BARTENDER You're kidding, right?

MAN Any scotch whiskey?

BARTENDER You want that straight up or on the rocks?

> MAN Straight up would be fine.

As the BARTENDER walks away to fix the drink, the MAN glances up and down the bar area and his eyes land on the BLONDE he saw on the poster outside. She is taking a break between shows, sitting there in a long silk bathrobe and slippers. Her EYES meet HIS, and she seems entranced, hypnotized. He gets up and sits down right next to her.

> MAN You look familiar. Haven't I seen you here before?

BLONDE

{Smiling} That's one of the oldest lines in the book.

> MAN Sorry, I'm not used to doing this.

BLONDE

{Looking skeptical} I may be a blonde, but I'm not dumb. Want to try again?

MAN

{Sheepishly} Okay, how about "You look like a girl I had a crush on in high school"?

BLONDE

{Giggling} It's better than the first one, I guess.

MAN

May I buy you a drink?

BLONDE

{Glancing up at the wall clock} Well...I don't think I have the time, I'm back on in about three minutes.

MAN {Sipping his drink} Don't you ever get lonely here?

BLONDE

{Glancing around the room}

You're kidding me, right? The clientele here aren't exactly the picture of moral rectitude, you know.

MAN

No, I mean...don't you ever yearn or hunger for anything else besides this? Don't you ever feel empty?

BLONDE

No, not really. I mean, I feel empty when I get hungry.

MAN

{Looking deep into her eyes} The emptiness you feel isn't from the hunger, it is from loneliness.

The BLONDE seems to be frozen, in a trance-like state, then shakes her head to clear it.

BLONDE

I'm sorry...I have to go now. What are doing after my shift?

MAN

Waiting for you. I have been waiting for an eternity already. Another hour or two won't matter now.

BLONDE

{Turning to leave} Whatever. I'll meet you back here at eleven.

As the BLONDE walks away, the MAN sips his drink again, then we see a CLOSE SHOT of his EYES, and they are slowly filling with tears.

CUT TO: INTERIOR: DELUXE HOTEL SUITE – NIGHT

We see A WIDE SHOT of the open bathroom door, and the MAN is sitting on the toilet seat, with his head in his hands as if he is sobbing. The CAMERA SLOWLY ZOOMS IN ON the MAN as he raises his head now, and glances over to his left. AS he does, the CAMERA follows

his POV as we see the BLONDE lying in the tub IN A POOL OF BLOOD. The MAN bends down and slip his arms underneath the BLONDE, gently lifting her up from her porcelain casket, trying so hard to be careful with her. BLOOD STILL POOLS UNDER HER TONGUE, and her once ocean blue EYES HAVE ROLLED OVER WHITE, like a shark's eyes after biting into human flesh. He has a momentary lapse of coordination as he backs away from the tub, feeling nervous, shaky. Her SPINE CAVES INWARD, HER PELVIS ARCHING FORWARD, the natural blond thatch of her pubis now close to his face, right under his nose. He pauses momentarily to right himself, then carries her out of the bathroom. The CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM as he lays her down on a large plastic tarp that has been spread out on the carpet, then begins to roll her up inside of it. After he has her rolled up, he sits back and begins to sob.

MAN {Voiceover}

You look away from the dead girl to look down at yourself. You look strong; well toned, muscular, your skin a healthy pink again. You feel revitalized, yet weak. You feel euphoric, yet you tremble, as if you were a drug addict in need of a fix. But...you've had your fill of bittersweet, liquid salvation. You shouldn't feel this way. Yet you do. It's as though your system has become immune to the warm, sweet liquid, your veins full but still you feel...an emptiness.

CUT TO: CLOSE SHOT OF THE DEAD BLONDE

Through the clear plastic we see the BLONDE'S EYES are wide open, staring up at nothing. She resembles a doll or a mannequin more than a human. We can hear the MAN sobbing as we see several red tear drops land on the plastic from above. Then we hear her VOICE, speaking to him in his MIND.

BLONDE {Voice} Do you love me? Will you always love me?

MAN

{Shuddering}

My love, in death's stearn realm there is no dissassembling. The false faces of good are clad in their masks of treachery.

BLONDE {Voice}

Answer me; will you always love me?

MAN

Of all the lies I could tell you, the cruelest one is the one they call love.

BLONDE {Voice}

Such sweet lies though...please...don't leave me like this...

MAN

My hours are up now, my love. I must go before daylight comes, or I'll perish altogether.

CUT TO: WIDE SHOT OF THE DELUXE SUITE

The MAN is just finished dressing in a different suit, and is slipping on his shoes. He begins to walk over to the door to leave, then stops and looks back over his shoulder at the DEAD BLONDE. He walks back over to her and bends down over her body, and unwraps the top of the tarp to expose her face. Then he leans in to kiss her.

MAN {Voiceover}

Before you take your leave, you stop to bend over her lifeless body, give her one last kiss; this one not a death kiss, but a gentle kiss, a loving kiss, on her pouty little lips. They resemble a partially open flower, a rose, and even in death they taste sweet, even peachy. Then you turn to leave, not wanting to go, but...once again, it's too late, isn't it? Yes...it is.

The MAN stands to his feet now, walks back to the door and opens it. He looks back longingly as he stands in the doorway.

MAN {Voiceover}

You still have several more hours of darkness left, before the sun rises to swallow the moon, sending you back to your daytime retreat. Several more hours of darkness, and so many lonely ladies looking for that special someone. Ladies that could use a man like you to brighten up their evening, even if it is only briefly. But for you, briefly is good too, isn't it? During that brief time, at least you're not alone, right?

The MAN closes the door behind him.

CUT TO: EXTERIOR: BUSY CITY STREET – NIGHT

The MAN is walking along the street again, his eyes scanning the sidewalks and windows and posters. As he stops and looks at a poster of a pretty brunette, we hear him speak in VOICEOVER for the last time.

MAN {Voiceover}

You walk out into the darkness again now, searching for that special someone, the one who will become your fantasy, your day dream for a few hours. After all, you're the musician, the one who plays the instruments so well, aren't you?

CUT TO: CLOSE SHOT of his face, as tears well up in his eyes.

> MAN {Voiceover} Yes...I am.

SLOWLY FADE OUT.

FADE IN ON: INTERIOR: A SMALL TAVERN – NIGHT

The room is small and cramped, and filled with smoke. Only two PEOPLE are at the bar, and older MAN AND WOMAN sipping draft beer. A tall, strikingly attractive WOMAN with long black hair walks in, and takes a seat at a booth in back. The WOMAN looks solemn, as if she'd like to be left alone. She motions to the BARTENDER, BOB, to bring her a drink.

BOB

The usual?

TALL WOMAN Tonight is my birthday, Bob. Bring me a glass of red wine.

> BOB You don't seem too thrilled about it.

TALL WOMAN You wouldn't be too thrilled either, if you were my age.

BOB

Still looking good, though.

The front door opens and a tall, handsome MAN comes in. He is the same MAN who has been killing the strippers. He glances casually around the room, sees the TALL WOMAN, and strolls over to her booth.

MAN May I join you? The bar area is a bit too smoky for me.

TALL WOMAN {Looking him over and smiling} Sure, have a seat. You don't mind if smoke though, do you?

MAN

{Pulling a pack of cigarettes from his jacket} Not if you don't mind.

The MAN sits down, lights a cigarette, and the TALL WOMAN motions to the BARTENDER to bring him one of what she's drinking.

TALL WOMAN

Hope you don't mind. I thought you could join me in a glass of red wine to celebrate my birthday.

MAN

{Lighting a cigarette} It would be my pleasure.

The BARTENDER brings their drinks over, and she pays for it. The BARTENDER winks at her before he walks away.

MAN

What was that all about?

TALL WOMAN

The wink? I guess he's just happy for me to have someone to help me celebrate my birthday. I more often than not come in here alone.

MAN

{Sipping his wine} And do you leave alone?

TALL WOMAN {Winking at him} That could be up for debate.

MAN

{Raising his glass in a toast} Happy birthday, Miss?

TALL WOMAN

I tend not to give my name to strangers. Besides, isn't a name just a label, a clever way to stereotype a person?

MAN How so?

TALL WOMAN

Think about it. Say your name was...Stanley. One would automatically envision a goofy guy with thick glasses, high-top pants, and a pocket protector. A real geek.

MAN

{Laughing} I never met a real visionary before. You see a lot.

TALL WOMAN

I've had a lot of practice. Sometimes, it isn't what you see, but what you don't see, too, that reveals one's inner self. Look.

The TALL WOMAN points at the big mirror behind the bar. The MAN looks up to see neither one of them are casting a reflection.

MAN

This may be my lucky day after all.

TALL WOMAN

How so?

MAN

Not to rip off someone else's words, but I've been waiting for a girl like you to come into my life.

TALL WOMAN

{Leaning in close to him} This just might be the best birthday I've ever had.

SMASH CUT TO: INTERIOR: THE DELUXE HOTEL SUITE – NIGHT

We see the MAN and TALL WOMAN lying next to each other in bed, under red silk sheets. She is tracing the shape of a heart on his chest and kissing his neck. We can see fresh puncture wounds on both their necks, streaming a thin line of blood. She laps up the blood from his neck as he lets out a sigh of pleasure.

MAN I've never felt this way before, and I've lived for over two hundred years.

TALL WOMAN

Don't mistake lust for love. Pleasure and pain often come in the same package.

The Cruelest Lie of All

MAN You mean...you didn't feel it? Feel the connection?

TALL WOMAN

Yes, but all I'm saying is, we both should have known this wouldn't last forever.

MAN

Why not, pray tell?

TALL WOMAN

Think about it. We are what we are, and we will need human blood to survive. We can't have one without the other.

MAN

{Sighing loudly} What do you suggest? I'm tired of being immortal.

TALL WOMAN

Yes...the emptiness, the loneliness...

MAN And eventually...the hunger.

TALL WOMAN Yes, the hunger. It will always be there, and you know that.

MAN

{Leaning in to kiss her} I'm willing to give this relationship a shot if you are. Who knows what tomorrow will bring?

TALL WOMAN

More of the hunger I'd imagine. But for now, let's celebrate my birthday.

MAN

{Climbing on top of her} Happy birthday.

They begin to kiss passionately as

SCENE FADES OUT.

FADE IN ON: INTERIOR: A SEEDY BAR – NIGHT The MAN and the TALL WOMAN are sitting at the bar, glancing around at the crowd. Most of the MEN and WOMEN in the bar look unhealthy, as if they are chronic alcoholics or drug addicts. The MAN sits shaking his head in disgust.

MAN I think we should have picked another bar.

TALL WOMAN

No, not really. Look around. There's not one human in here capable of putting up a fight.

MAN I was thinking about the chance of picking up a disease.

TALL WOMAN How is that going to affect us, silly? We are already dead.

> MAN {Laughing under his breath} True. Well, which one looks good to you?

TALL WOMAN

{Glancing around} How about that one over there? She looks like she'd be up for a threesome.

CUT TO: A WIDE VIEW OF THE ROOM.

We see a YOUNG WOMAN with long black hair, dressed in very provocative clothing. She appears to be very intoxicated as well, and is weaving back and forth.

MAN Yes, she does appear to very lonely, doesn't she?

TALL WOMAN And so empty, hungry. Shall we make her famous?

MAN

Why not?!

CUT TO: INTERIOR: A CHEAP MOTEL ROOM – NIGHT The MAN and TALL WOMAN are sitting at small table with the YOUNG WOMAN, sipping cheap whiskey from a bottle and talking and laughing, flirting with the YOUNG WOMAN.

YOUNG WOMAN

I'm having a great time, but shouldn't we discuss a price before we go any further?

MAN

{Stroking the YOUNG WOMAN'S hair} That would depend on how much you think you're worth to us.

YOUNG WOMAN

{Kissing the MAN} Oh believe me, babe, I'm worth every penny.

TALL WOMAN We'll be the judge of that.

The MAN leads the YOUNG WOMAN over to the bed, and the YOUNG WOMAN begins stripping off her clothes as the TALL WOMAN does the same, then leans in and BITES the YOUNG WOMAN on the THIGH. The YOUNG WOAMN begins to SCREAM, and the MAN cuts her off by placing a pillow over her face.

CUT TO: INTERIOR: THE DELUXE HOTEL SUITE – NIGHT

The TALL WOMAN is lying on the bed shaking and sweating profusely. Her skin is paler than usual, and her eyes are blood red. She has apparently caught something from the YOUNG WOMAN'S blood. The MAN sits across the room from her, in fear of getting too close.

TALL WOMAN {Talking in a hoarse whisper} Please...come here, hold me.

MAN

{Teary eyed}

I'm sorry...I can't. I don't want to die all over again, immortality is too painful to go through twice.

TALL WOMAN {Sobbing loudly now} Please! I hurt so bad...just hold me!

MAN

I...I can't. Please understand.

TALL WOMAN {Screaming in pain} PLEASE! I hurt so bad...I...I LOVE YOU!

The MAN reluctantly walks over and sits down on the edge of the bed, reaches out to touch her hand. She grasps his hand firmly, and looks into his eyes.

MAN I...I love you, too.

TALL WOMAN Kiss me one more time.

The MAN leans in to kiss her, and as he draws closer, the TALL WOMAN pulls him down close and bites him on the neck, holding a tight grip on him with her teeth. He lets out a howl of pain, and pushes her away.

MAN {Rolling over on his side} Why?! You said you loved me!

The TALL WOMAN rolls over to him and places her arms around his neck, hugging him tight.

TALL WOMAN {Whispering in his ear} The cruelest lie of all is the one they call love.

The CAMERA MOVES BACK SLOWLY from the bed as

FADE OUT / CREDITS ROLL.