

WHEN THE SUN RISES: A VAMPIRE TALE (A One-Act Play)

Characters:

- **Sebastian:** A world-weary vampire running a brothel behind the façade of a vape shop.
 - **Gina:** A zombie working as a prostitute in Sebastian's brothel.
 - **Tyson:** Chief of Police, desirous of eternal life.
 - **Chase:** A disillusioned man seeking rock bottom
 - **Sheila:** A succubus working as a prostitute in Sebastian's brothel.
-

Scene:

An urban setting. The front of a multi-story building faces the audience, with the entrance center stage. A sign, "Sebastian's Vape Shop," adheres above the entrance. The door opens and Sebastian steps out. He wears fine clothing, most notably a knee-length cape. His skin is slightly pale. It is early morning, not an hour before dawn. Urban lighting illuminates the streetscape. Sebastian closes the door behind him and steps forward. He lifts his chin to gaze above the buildings that obstruct his view of the horizon. For several silent moments, he stares longingly at the expanse of dark sky, which is almost starless due to the city lights' polluting interference.

Sebastian:

Come on out sun. It's been a long time. I'm ready for you.

Gina enters stage right, dragging her right leg behind her. She is mildly decomposed.

Sebastian:

(He breaks his focus from the heavens and turns to face her.) Why so long, Gina?

Gina:

Come on, Bash. You know I need my cigarettes.

Sebastian:

Should it take forty minutes? What if a walk-in client comes while you're gone? You're the only one available.

Gina:

(A bit bashful) It probably wouldn't make any difference. Walk-ins aren't usually interested in me.

Sebastian:

(He softens.) But for cigarettes? Sweet Gina, cigarettes will give you cancer. There's a reason we don't sell tobacco products.

Gina:

I died of lung cancer once already. Do you think cigarettes might kill me a second time? I ain't so worried about that. It's a good thing I went because I met a guy who had trouble finding us. He saw our "vape shop" sign and kept walking. He said he'll come back to see us this morning. We're always looking for new clients.

Sebastian:

Yes, well, we'll see whether he comes.

Gina:

I think he will. You're out here late. You should be tucked in your coffin by this time of the morning. What's going on?

Sebastian:

I'm holding a conversation with our nearest star.

Gina:

What for?

Sebastian:

We haven't seen one another in ages.

Gina:

(She studies him a moment.) You need to keep it that way. Make sure to finish your conversation before he shows his face, all right?

Sebastian:

How's your leg, Gina?

Gina:

(She bends down to inspect it.) It's not getting any better. My body doesn't repair itself anymore.

Sebastian:

Poor thing. Does it worry you that your body stopped healing?

Gina:

There's really nothing I can do about it, so I don't see a reason to worry. You know, the chief has an appointment with Sheila this morning. You hate being awake when the chief comes.

Sebastian:

I expect I'll fail to avoid him today.

Gina:

Why make yourself suffer, Bash? You should have gone to bed. (She looks off stage, stage left, and notices the chief approaching. She exhales audibly.) He's here already.

Sebastian:

(He glances off stage and sees him.) The universe placed him into my life to punish me. I can't say I'm not deserving. (After a moment.) So it begins.

Tyson, a man in his early 50s, enters stage left. He has a strong masculine presence.

Tyson:

Sebastian, you devil.

Sebastian:

Devil? (He shakes his head.) No. They're something different entirely. You know I'm no devil.

Tyson:

In fact, I don't know that. You tell me you're Nosferatu, but how can I be sure?

Sebastian:

You're unsure.

Tyson:

Shouldn't I be? Saturday will be a year since we agreed you'll turn me. But you haven't yet, so you must have SOME reason to hold out. Maybe you're no vampire at all and you're just hellspawn. (A beat.) You remember our agreement.

Sebastian:

I remember.

Tyson:

I've held up my end of the bargain. Metro has taken your house of ill repute completely off the radar. My boys haven't hassled your ladies even once during the past year, have they Gina?

Gina:

No, Chief. It's been easy for us girls.

Tyson:

Yet you're holding out on me, you stingy bastard. When are we going to make this happen?

Sebastian:

When the time is right, Tyson.

Tyson:

(Exasperated) How do you determine that? You and I need to sit down to go over the criteria together, then we can settle on the right day to make me a vampire. We'll mark our calendars.

Sebastian:

Patience. Patience. You have an eternity ahead of you to vampire about. You can vampire all

night every night. Was it so awful to spend one more year as a man? Why this eagerness to shuffle off your mortal coil? Once you do, you never get it back. Enjoy it a little longer.

Tyson:

Isn't it easy for you to tell me to have patience: you're already immortal. I could die today. I could have an aneurism. I could be killed in the line of duty.

Gina:

You do your job from behind a desk, Chief.

Tyson:

Is he stingy with you too, Gina? Or is it just with me? How much of your earnings does he take? Does he leave you any of your hard-earned money?

Gina:

Come on. You already know. Bash takes the customary 100% from all his girls.

Tyson:

(He nods.) Vampires are notoriously slow to share their gift of immortality with others. I know this. But it's even worse with you, Sebastian. With you, we have a vampire PIMP. Which has to make you the stingiest, most miserly person in this whole godforsaken city.

Gina:

That's not fair, Chief. Bash is good to us girls.

Tyson:

I'm not just kidding around. You're not holding up your end of the bargain. I could bring the force here to shut you down any time. We could shut you down today.

Gina:

Now chief. You wouldn't do that.

Tyson:

Necrophilia's a crime in this state, Gina. It's my job to enforce the law.

Gina:

Oh, ha ha. I'm undead. I'm not dead.

Sebastian:

Tyson, calm your mind. Once you live as long as I've lived, you learn not to rush these matters. Immortality isn't something to trifle with. (A beat.) In any case, the time for your transformation is near.

Tyson:

How near?

Sebastian:

(He approaches Tyson and briefly studies him from his feet to his head.) Are you in the physical shape you want for the remainder of your unnatural life? You don't want to lose belly flab or gain muscle mass? Once I turn you, your body's locked. You can't change it.

Tyson:

I've told you I'm ready.

Sebastian:

Diet or exercise won't improve your appearance.

Tyson:

I'm ready.

Sebastian:

You're ready to leave your wife? Your beautiful girls?

Tyson:

Let me worry about my own affairs.

Sebastian:

Tomorrow then.

Tyson:

Tomorrow. (Tyson intently holds eye contact with Sebastian.) Tomorrow. What time?

Sebastian:

This time.

Tyson:

Where?

Sebastian:

We have a walk-in shower inside.

Tyson:

(His face brightens.) All right.

Sheila enters stage right. She's a beautiful, black-haired, pale-skinned woman with small, bat-like wings at shoulder height.

Tyson:

(He laughs in ecstasy.) Yes! (He grabs Sebastian by the shoulders. He's all smiles.) Thank you! (He lets him go.) Tomorrow! Sheila! Sebastian's going to turn me tomorrow.

Gina:

Congrats, Chief.

Sheila stands next to Gina and smiles mysteriously at Tyson.

Tyson:

I'll be one of you. An immortal. Finally. Sheila let's celebrate.

Her mysterious smile remains unchanged.

Tyson:

I only have this morning and tomorrow left with you, babe, before I become... fucking Dracula. Let's make it count.

Sheila approaches Tyson with a sultry walk. She reaches forward to his pectoral muscle and gently taps with her four fingers in a rolling pattern.

Tyson:

(To Sebastian) I'm going to miss these mornings with Sheila. These were the best experiences of my life. I mean that. When you were a man, did you ever have intimacy with a succubus?

Sebastian:

I never had the good fortune.

Sheila takes Tyson by the hand and begins to lead him to the entrance.

Sebastian:

Treat him well, Sheila.

She turns and gives Sebastian a wink. She pulls Tyson through the entrance. The door closes behind them.

Gina:

You're gonna turn the chief tomorrow. You haven't turned anybody in a long time.

Chase, a man in his 30s, enters stage right. He tentatively keeps his distance from Sebastian and Gina.

Gina:

I know you don't like to. Why don't you?

Sebastian:

You're still young, sweet Gina. A long life wears on you. The monotony of it. No, it's not even the monotony. It's existential tiredness. I begin to believe death is our creator's greatest gift to us.

Gina:

You've been saying such things lately. I don't like hearing you talk this way. Aren't you happy?

Sebastian:

After 300 years...

Gina:

Things are good, aren't they?

Sebastian:

That seems not to matter as much anymore.

He looks distressed but turns to her and smiles.

Sebastian:

Things are good.

Gina:

Don't you start thinking about doing anything drastic. I mean it, Bash. (She approaches him, dragging her leg behind her as before. He bends to allow her to kiss his cheek.) The sun will be up soon. I'll see you inside.

Gina opens the door. She notices Chase lingering stage right.

Gina:

That's him.

Gina closes the door behind her.

Sebastian:

Stranger. Is there something I might assist you with?

Chase:

You work here?

Sebastian:

I'm Sebastian.

Chase:

(He gestures to the sign above the entrance.) You sell vapes, Sebastian?

Sebastian:

We have a variety to choose from. Something for everybody.

Chase:

(He approaches.) While I was at the corner store, I spoke to the little goth girl with the leg injury. I'm interested in the other thing you sell. What can you do for me?

Sebastian:

We make fantasies come to life.

Chase:

I noticed that winged girl. Pretty black hair. Nice figure. She's one of yours?

Sebastian:

Sheila's one of mine.

Chase:

I'll go with her.

Sebastian:

What do I call you?

Chase:

Name's Chase.

Sebastian:

You don't want to go with her, Chase.

Chase:

She's gorgeous. I like her wings.

Sebastian:

(He spends a moment contemplating.) I don't normally disclose such things to clients. But it's a special morning in my life, so I'll be upfront with you about my business. Sheila's a succubus.

Chase:

Is that a problem?

Sebastian:

While you have a sexual encounter with her, she slowly consumes your soul.

Chase:

(He considers.) That sounds perfect. Does that cost extra?

Sebastian:

(He shakes his head.) She can't help herself. She's not available at the moment. But I'll pull up the schedule to see who is. (He reaches into an inside pocket for his cell phone.) Might I ask why you find the prospect of having your soul consumed appealing?

Chase:

My life's taken a shit. I'm looking for rock bottom. I intend to find it.

Sebastian:

(He studies the schedule.) Gina is available.

Chase:

The little goth girl?

Sebastian:

Gina's a zombie.

Chase:

Hmm... (He gives a long pause, considering.) No... I don't think my rock bottom involves that. Who else is there?

Sebastian:

There's Nicole. She's a nymph.

Chase:

A nympho?

Sebastian:

She's that too. Sorry. Nicole's out until tomorrow. Cici and Linda are booked through Wednesday. Jennifer's available.

Chase:

Tell me about Jennifer.

Sebastian:

She's an EXCITING female. Fierce and lovely. Just be wary of her fluids. They're venomous. She's a gorgon.

Chase:

I'm terrified of snakes.

Sebastian:

Jennifer won't do. (A beat.) You mentioned you're looking to find rock bottom in response to misfortune in your life. You've set about a goal of... compounding your misfortune?

Chase:

I'm going to crash and burn. I quit my job today. Now I'm looking to blow our saving on hookers and drugs before I end up lifeless in a gutter. You don't deal drugs, do you?

Sebastian:

Only nicotine. How is it a rational response to misfortune to make efforts to worsen your circumstances?

Chase:

Because (he looks skyward and extends the heavens his middle finger) FUCK YOU.

A moment passes while that registers.

Sebastian:

If you're willing to wait a bit, Sheila will free up. It shouldn't be long.

Chase:

Sure. I'll wait for her.

Sebastian:

May I ask what was the misfortune that started you down this spiral?

Chase:

My wife of eight years spent the last two of those sleeping with her boss. She can sleep with him as often as she wants, for all I care. Have at him, Kimberly. He's all yours. Fucking pig.

Sebastian:

(Attempting to confirm Chase's meaning.) She's a pig for giving in to carnal desires.

Chase:

She is. But I was referring to him. It's a derogatory name to call a police officer. I don't have anything against cops. Just him.

Sebastian:

Your wife works for Metro?

Chase:

She's in admin. Her boyfriend is Chief of Police.

Sebastian:

(With intrigue) Ahh. The chief law enforcement officer of our metropolitan police department happens to be present with us this morning. He's inside with Sheila.

Chase:

He's here?

Sebastian:

Tyson.

Chase:

That's right, Tyson. Are you kidding me?

Sebastian shakes his head.

Chase:

(As an expression of surprise, not a name call.) Son of a bitch. He's inside with Sheila. (He again raises his eyes to the heavens. He speaks with defeat in his voice.) Am I fated to always get HIS sloppy seconds?

Sebastian:

Perhaps the stars aligned to allow you to confront him.

Chase:

Yeah. Maybe so.

Sebastian:

Do you intend to?

Chase:

(He nods.) I'll wait until he's done. I heard about your brothel through the Metro grapevine, but I didn't know the chief's a goddamned customer. God, that man. It's not enough for him to cheat on his wife with my wife. He also sleeps with prostitutes. He's unbelievable.

Sebastian:

He'll be a changed man by tomorrow.

Chase:

What do you mean?

Sebastian:

Fundamentally changed.

Chase:

Right. He'll have a moral epiphany. I doubt it. (A beat.) Wait. Are you telling me you're going to turn him into a vampire? (Delivered as, "You ARE a vampire, correct?") You ARE a vampire.

Sebastian:

I'm not going to turn him. Tyson has encountered Sheila quite a number of times. He has only a sliver of his soul remaining. At their next encounter, she'll consume the rest of it. He's booked with her for tomorrow morning.

Chase:

Wow. She'll consume his soul. What effect will that have on him?

Sebastian:

His body will remain alive, but he'll have no consciousness. In common parlance, he'll be a vegetable.

Chase:

He's totally fine mentally, from what I know.

Sebastian:

Souls are funny that way. You don't notice a difference in a person until his soul's consumed entirely.

Chase:

What does that mean for his soul? Souls are supposed to last forever, no?

Sebastian:

I'm not a theologian.

Chase:

You must know more than I do.

Sebastian:

Think of it like eating an apple. Your body breaks the apple down to its basic material, uses what it needs, and discards the rest. The apple is no more. (A beat.) It makes Sheila feel great.

Chase:

Tyson's soul will cease to exist?

Sebastian:

(He shrugs.) Yes.

Chase:

Oh my God. That's WAY worse than death, isn't it? That's an ULTIMATE death. Is that the worst thing that can conceivably happen to a person?

Sebastian:

I'm not a theologian.

Chase:

You're going to allow this to happen?

Sebastian:

I don't like him.

Chase:

Is that reason enough?

Sebastian:

(He grins.) You question the morality of my conduct. Are you surprised at the notion of an immoral vampire? If you wish to save Tyson's soul, you are free to do so. Go ahead, warn him. Tell him never to see Sheila again. But am I incorrect that you have more reason than I to want misfortune to befall the man?

Chase:

No.

Sebastian:

Will you interfere, then? Or let nature take its course?

Chase:

(He takes a deep breath while he ponders. Several moments pass.) He deserves whatever happens to him. It's not my business.

Sebastian:

You still wish to have Sheila yourself?

Chase:

One time can't hurt.

Sebastian:

The question is whether you can resist having her again.

Chase:

You make her sound even better.

The door opens. Tyson steps into view and closes the door behind him.

Sebastian:

Tyson. That was a brief encounter. I trust she gave you as satisfying an experience as you're accustomed?

Tyson:

(He wears a big smile. He's in a great mood. He places an arm around Sebastian, who politely accepts the gesture.) Buddy. Sheila's always amazing. She wasn't the problem. I'm not lasting as long as I used to. (Tyson removes his arm.) Lately when I'm with her, it feels like there's less of me than there used to be. It's hard to put a finger on it. Shoot. What should I expect, right? I'm over 50. I can't complain when age catches up with me a little bit. (He turns to Chase. He doesn't know who Chase is. He gives him a jovial slap on the shoulder.) You'll get there too, brother.

Chase:

God willing.

Tyson:

You here to see one of the girls?

Chase:

That's what I'm here for.

Tyson:

Who you gonna see?

Chase:

Is there anybody you recommend?

Tyson:

Dude. Sheila is magical. I highly recommend you try Sheila.

Chase:

What makes her special?

Tyson:

When I say she's magical, I mean it literally. It's an experience you won't believe.

Chase:

Really?

Tyson:

Listen to me. She gets this look in her eyes and she becomes the most feminine creature, the most feminine entity you could possibly imagine. And she makes you feel like you're the embodiment of masculinity. And you get to dominate her. You get to make her... (he raises a fist to chest level and clinches it) harder than any woman ever could. And it's not even close. Now, afterward, it does leave you a little drained. But anything that good's going to leave you with something of a "come down," you know what I mean?

Chase:

You don't seem to be in a come down. You seem thrilled.

Tyson:

(To Sebastian) I'm looking forward to tomorrow.

Chase:

Tyson. There's something I should tell you. It's important, so please pay attention. You're aware Sheila is a succubus?

Tyson:

The wings give it away.

Chase:

Do you know anything about... what's the word, succubi?

Tyson:

I know my way around Sheila.

Chase:

Are you aware that a succubus consumes your soul when you sleep with her?

Tyson:

(He smiles widely to Sebastian then turns back to Chase.) That's folklore, my friend. I've been with Sheila how many times? (He takes a second to calculate.) Tomorrow makes a baker's dozen. It's been fantastic every time. I don't think we need to worry about my immortal soul. (To Sebastian.) Then again, I guess I am on the road to damnation come tomorrow, eh Sebastian?

Sebastian:

Wherever we vampires are headed, that's where you'll go.

Tyson:

I, for one, don't plan to ever reach that destination. I'm staying in this world for the long haul. I'm comfortable here.

The door opens. Sheila and Gina re-enter the scene.

Chase:

(To Tyson) Listen to what I'm telling you. Sheila's been consuming your soul. One more time with her and your soul will be completely gone.

Tyson:

(He laughs.) Get a load of this guy. Sheila, babe. Tomorrow morning, same time.

Tyson goes in to give her a kiss. She turns her head away and gently raises a hand to block him.

Sebastian:

She's not your girlfriend, Tyson.

Tyson:

(The rejection doesn't dampen his mood at all.) (With pride) I'm her best client. Sebastian. Ladies. I must bid you adieu until tomorrow. (He takes the hand that blocked him and kisses it.) Thank you yet again for another beautiful start to my day. (To Gina.) Gina.

Gina:

Have a good day, Chief.

Tyson:

Yes. Another day maintaining law and order in our great city. (To Chase) Enjoy yourself, bud.

Tyson exits stage left.

Chase:

(To Sebastian) I tried.

Sebastian:

It's a difficult endeavor to persuade a man of a truth he'd rather not believe.

Chase:

He's doomed. But I tried.

Sebastian:

Your effort was noble, but alas, not successful. Now, on to other matters. Sheila, I understand Chase is interested in your company this morning. I know you'll give him excellent value for his money.

Sheila displays her sultry seductiveness as she approaches Chase. She begins to caress his cheek.

Sebastian:

(A flash of surprise in his eyes) You're in luck. She likes you.

Chase:

(He enjoys Sheila's caress for a moment.) You know... I think I feel better. Yeah. I do. I feel better. Thank you, Sheila. But I don't think I need this anymore.

Sebastian:

You no longer desire her?

Chase:

I don't.

Sheila's lips pout in disappointment as she lowers her arm.

Chase:

Things couldn't have gone better for me this morning. I'm glad I came. Thank you to all of you. (He turns and walks to exit stage right but stops just before exiting.) Sebastian, I'm curious. As a vampire, do you kill people for their blood?

Sebastian:

I find pigs' blood just as satisfying.

Chase contemplates Sebastian's response for a moment. He then exits stage right. Sebastian steps forward and turns to watch as Chase, offstage, walks down the block. Sebastian holds his focus on Chase and appears lost in thought, even as Gina speaks.

Gina:

That was strange. You know, at the corner store he told me he wanted to spend his whole savings on girls and drugs. He said he was “hellbent on self-destruction.” He sure sounded committed. Why’d he change his mind?

Sebastian:

“The heart has its reasons which reason knows not of.”

Gina:

Come on, Bash. Really. What happened out here?

Sebastian:

(He ponders a moment.) He may have discovered new value in himself.

Gina:

I told Sheila what you said about your existential tiredness. We’ve come to get you. It’s time to go inside.

Sheila places an arm around Sebastian and rests her head against his shoulder.

The stage lighting changes slightly but noticeably. Dawn is breaking.

Gina:

Sebastian, the sunrise.

Sebastian:

There’s nothing more beautiful.

Gina:

That’s not what I mean. It’s time to go in.

Sebastian returns his gaze to the area of sky above the buildings that obstruct his view of the horizon. Those buildings now shield him from the sun’s lethal rays that have begun to brighten the sky. Sheila’s head continues to rest against his shoulder.

Sebastian:

Three hundred years have passed since I’ve felt the sun’s light on my skin. Three hundred years as a vampire. (Moments pass.) I can, perhaps, go a day longer.

Gina opens the door and enters the building, struggling a bit with her damaged leg, before exiting from our view. Sheila gently ushers Sebastian through the opened door. In the doorway, she turns to face the audience. Her lovely, winged figure is the last we see before the door closes. Stage lights fade.

END