

FAITH

"Voice Of Reason"

by
Michael Jay

Based on characters created by Joss Whedon
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And characters created by Jason Scott
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TEASER

FADE IN:

1

INT. ASYLUM - PRYOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

1

A scattered array of PAPERS fall out of frame, revealing NOA sitting in front of the middle drawer of a file cabinet.

Behind her, hovering over another stack of paperwork and mail, is RUTH, who stares at Noa with a bewildered expression.

Their eyes meet.

NOA
(irritated)
What?

RUTH
I... thought we were supposed to be organizing Pryor's mess, not making it worse.

NOA
You know who'd be really great to organize Pryor's work?

She SLAMS the drawer shut, startling Ruth.

NOA (cont'd)
(icily)
Pryor.
(sighs; whining)
Remind me again why we got stuck doing this? Not like Pryor's been any kind of useful lately.
(muttering to herself)
Thought the first time he withdrew was bad.

Ruth blinks. She's not following.

RUTH
What do you mean, 'first time'?

NOA
(rolls eyes)
Never mind. Let's just finish up.

Ruth nods and they silently get back to work. This lasts maybe ten seconds before:

RUTH
You can't possibly be this pissed off at Pryor. At least, not just him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Noa's bouncing a small stack of papers on her legs to straighten it.

NOA

How about we not go there?

RUTH

(ignoring her; soothing)
I'd be upset too if I were in your place. I'm here if you want to talk.

NOA

(screaming)
I'm not upset!

Again, the sudden noise startles Ruth. Noa takes another moment to get herself under control.

NOA (cont'd)

I'm not. And I don't wanna talk. I wanna be held in someone's arms. Someone to play with my hair.

Ruth's expression softens again as Noa continues.

NOA (cont'd)

Give me a reason to smile. Like, genuinely smile.

Noa pulls the file drawer open again, fingering through a few folders.

RUTH

We all want that. Someday.

Noa files the top paper on her stack in one of the folders, then continues searching the drawer, not looking towards Ruth.

NOA

(deadpan)
Apparently, I'm not meant to.

RUTH

Noa, you're still young and -

NOA

(cutting her off)
It's not about how old I am. I just...
(sighs)
A lot's happened the last few years.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NOA (cont'd)

And while I like to think that I
can still come here every day and
put on a smile is a good thing, it
gets tiring.

Ruth comes over to Noa kneels down by her. Noa still doesn't
look at her, staying with her work as if it were having a
calming effect.

RUTH

Tiring?

NOA

Yeah. You think it's easy being
this pretty?

They share a smile. Ruth's is genuine. Noa's clearly isn't.

NOA (cont'd)

Some days, I come in and I don't
feel like smiling. I do it anyway
because everyone expects me to, but
those are the days when it's
wonderful to have that person. The
guy that makes you smile for real
even when you don't want to. And it
sucks that I don't get to have
that.

Ruth places her hand on top of Noa's and gives it a light
squeeze.

RUTH

Yeah, it does.

Noa smiles, ever so slightly. This time it's real. Ruth pats
her hand and moves back over to her pile.

She picks up a letter and frowns when she notices who the
sender is.

RUTH (cont'd)

(scoffing)

Huh. Pryor must be a mess if he
hasn't opened this yet.

NOA

(turning to her)

What is it?

Ruth rips the envelope down the side and pulls out the letter
contained within.

RUTH

It's from the city council about
Pryor's application.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (3)

1

NOA
(frowns)
Application for what?

Ruth's eyes scan the letter.

RUTH
A preservation grant for the
Asylum. A few months ago, he
requested it be declared a city
landmark and...
(finishes reading; smiles)
... they approved it.

NOA
Great!
(beat)
That is great, right?

RUTH
(nods)
Huge tax break, from what I
remember Pryor telling me. I gotta
show him this.

She rushes out of the room before Noa can respond.

2 INT. ASYLUM - PRYOR'S LAB - NEXT

2

Ruth practically bursts through the door into Pryor's lab.

RUTH
Pryor, you here? You've gotta read -

She scans the room with her eyes. It's completely trashed!
Furniture, papers, test tubes, beakers. Name it and it's
likely on the ground in several pieces.

RUTH (cont'd)
(horrified)
Oh, my God...

She rushes to a phone on a corner desk (the only piece of
furniture in the lab still upright) and picks up the
receiver, but another hand SLAMS down on hers, trapping it on
the desk.

She looks up, right into the eyes of a completely vamped out
PRYOR!

A flash of LIGHTNING from outside casts a creepy light on his
visage, which is partially veiled by the hoodie he's wearing.

Before she can scream, he clamps his hand over her mouth and
slams her into the wall next to the desk.

(CONTINUED)

She struggles, but his new found vampire strength easily holds her in place.

He leans in close to her, staring right into her wide, fearful eyes.

PRYOR

Ssh...

He's being chillingly calm, so much so that Ruth can help but close her eyes and let out a muffled SCREAM.

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 INT. ASYLUM - EMPLOYEE LOUNGE - NIGHT 3

FAITH is sitting in a chair with her feet propped up on the table. Her arms are crossed against her chest and her head's down. Sleeping.

A loud clap of THUNDER snaps her to consciousness, and she barely manages to keep from falling out of the chair.

She yawns and stretches her arms, then abruptly drops them when she hears a SCREAM echo through the hall. She briefly looks to the door before shaking her head.

FAITH
(muttering to herself)
Probably just a patient.

She rolls her neck, still trying to get the sleep out of her when:

RUTH
(screaming)
Someone help!

FAITH
(squints)
Ruth?

She bolts out of the chair and runs out into:

4 INT. ASYLUM - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 4

Faith's at a dead sprint, picking up speed when she hears the sound of breaking glass! A high pitched ALARM sounds just as she reaches:

5 INT. ASYLUM - PRYOR'S LAB - CONTINUOUS 5

Faith skids to a stop just inside the doorway.

FAITH
(shocked)
Whoa!

The table in the center of the lab is on FIRE! She spots Ruth laying face down on the floor in the far corner.

Faith frantically looks around the room until she spots the fire extinguisher hanging on the wall in a nearby corner.

She circles around the flaming desk to get to it and quickly puts the fire out.

(CONTINUED)

Just as she finishes spraying, VI and JERRY rush into the lab, taking in the mess.

JERRY

Faith, what happened?

A non-answering Faith drops the extinguisher and quickly moves to Ruth, who groans as she comes to.

JERRY (cont'd)

Ruth!

Vi and Jerry rush to Ruth's side as well. Faith and Jerry kneel down and help her sit up. Vi stays a few feet back, her eyes surveying the damage throughout the lab.

She notices the shattered window across the room, the source of the alarm.

Ruth's got a nasty gash on the top of her head that's bleeding pretty badly, and another one on her left arm.

JERRY (cont'd)

Are you okay?

Ruth looks up at him with tears in her eyes and shakes her head.

Vi walks over to the broken window and quickly pokes her head outside.

FAITH

Who did this? Did someone break in and attack you?

Ruth shakes her head.

VI

(also shaking her head)

No, someone broke out.

Faith looks to Vi, who is still looking over the lab.

FAITH

What?

VI

The window was broken from the inside out. Someone escaped through it.

Faith looks back to Ruth, who confirms Vi's conjecture with a nod of her head.

RUTH

It was Pryor.

(CONTINUED)

Faith's jaw drops.

JERRY
Are you sure?

RUTH
I'm positive. But he -
She trails off, not wanting to say it.

FAITH
He what?

Ruth looks to Faith with sadness in her eyes.

RUTH
He's a vampire, Faith.

Faith stands up and steps away from Ruth. She meets Vi's eyes, who has the same look of disbelief. Jerry looks up to Faith, reading his daughter's expression.

JERRY
(to Ruth)
Think you can walk?

RUTH
Yes, I'm fine. Just a headache.

Jerry helps her to her feet and puts his arm around her, leading her out of the room.

JERRY
Come on. Let's get you patched up.

He looks to Faith and gives her a curt nod. Faith watches him leave before turning back to Vi.

FAITH
We need answers. Let's start digging.

Faith looks around the lab, throwing her arms up. No clue where to start.

VI
Faith?
(off her look)
Do you believe her?

Faith looks away, contemplating her answer. She swallows a lump in her throat.

FAITH
I don't want to.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (3)

5

Not much of an answer, but it's all she's willing to give right now. They silently start searching for... anything.

6 INT. ASYLUM - INFIRMARY - NEXT

6

Ruth is sitting on a wax paper covered bed, with Jerry looking over her.

JERRY

Your head's not bad.

(picks up a rag)

It's not a deep cut, just long.

Should clot on its own. Think your arm's gonna need stitches, though.

RUTH

(sarcastic)

Hooray.

Jerry opens his mouth to say something, but thinks better of it and looks away, picking up a roll of gauze.

RUTH (cont'd)

What is it?

JERRY

(dismissive)

Nothing. Forget it.

Ruth seems to pick up on the unasked question as Jerry starts wrapping the gauze around her head.

RUTH

I'm sure it was him. I'm sure he's been turned.

JERRY

(nonchalant)

Right.

Ruth grabs Jerry's hand to stop him, forcing him to look at her in the eyes. Her eyes are welling up with tears again.

RUTH

Do you really think I'd make a mistake like that? It's... it's Pryor.

Her lip starts trembling. Apparently the full reality of the situation just hit home.

RUTH (cont'd)

(sobbing)

Oh, God...

(CONTINUED)

Jerry sighs and pulls her into a tight hug, gently stroking her hair.

JERRY
Ssh. It's okay. We'll get this
figured out and we'll do...
something.

Ruth looks up from his chest and sniffles.

RUTH
Something?

JERRY
(softly)
Yeah. We'll -

His eyes glance up towards the window behind them just as a flash of lightning illuminates PRYOR just outside the window, staring at them!

JERRY (cont'd)
(eyes bulge)
Pryor!

Ruth follows his eyes to the window and GASPS when she spots Pryor. Jerry rushes over to the window just as Pryor runs off into the stormy night.

Jerry watches him leave, a grim expression on his face.

Faith sitting behind her desk with Vi, Jerry, Ruth, and several ORDERLIES scattered around the room. No-one is saying a word.

There's a knock at the door. Jerry opens it to let Noa wheel herself in.

VI
Alright, is this everyone?

FAITH
Not everyone.

JERRY
Rachel?

FAITH
(shaking her head)
Tried her, but her phone's going
straight to voicemail.

VI

Think she mentioned a thing with
Scott tonight.

FAITH

(bitter)

Nice to know she has her priorities
straight.

JERRY

Faith, it's not like she could've
known -

FAITH

(holds up her hands)

I know, I know. I'm just...

She trails off, running her hands through her hair.

With a flash of light, DAWN materializes in the middle of the
room, earning yelps and gasps from everyone except Faith.

FAITH (cont'd)

Okay, now everyone's here.

VI

(to Dawn)

Since when can you get this far
from the Gateway?

DAWN

(shrugs)

Been practicing.

Faith slaps her hands on the desk, getting everyone's
attention. Vi moves over to stand in the front of the desk.
All eyes go to the two Slayers.

FAITH

Okay, let's get started.

Vi gestures across the scattered notes they've recovered from
Pryor's lab as she speaks:

VI

A few months ago, Pryor was
experimenting with vampire blood,
trying to come up with a chemical
weapon.

FAITH

Vi saw him pouring it all down the
drain after a crash and burn on a
field test. Figured that was the
end of it.

(sighs)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FAITH (cont'd)

Near as we can figure, some of that blood got into his system.

Everyone in the room swaps shocked looks.

RUTH

You mean Pryor did this... to himself?

VI

It was an accident.

RANDOM ORDERLY

I thought you all said for someone to get... to get... what's the word?

ANOTHER ORDERLY

Sired.

RANDOM ORDERLY

Right. Sired. To get sired, the vamp had to drain the victim, then the victim had drink...

VI

The drain is a misconception. Victim just has to be close enough to death for the vamp's blood to infect fast enough. Picked that up from the Council.

FAITH

(moving on)

Pryor's been infected for months. I guess since he was relatively healthy, it... it took longer to take effect.

The room falls into silence. No-one knows how to respond.

JERRY

You're sure he wasn't just sired by a vampire? Your digging in the office turned all this up?

FAITH

We didn't have to do much digging.

Faith pulls something from her pocket. A small RECORDER.

FAITH (cont'd)

We just listened.

She sets the recorder on the desk and presses PLAY.

(CONTINUED)

PRYOR
(through recorder)
*Secondary test proves conclusive.
The test for early stage
vampirism...*
(beat)
Positive.

Faith fast forwards the tape.

PRYOR (cont'd)
*Three months into infection.
Sensitivity to light has expanded
to photo toxicity. Prolonged
exposure renders up to second
degree burns. Rapid healing
abilities aid in recovery, but
future experiments have been halted
out of my safety.*

A horrified Ruth covers her mouth. Noa is holding her other hand.

PRYOR (cont'd)
*Five months into infection.
Avoiding contact with Asylum staff
at all costs. The lust for blood is
quickly becoming too much to bear.
Normal foods and water are no
longer satisfactory.*

Faith stops the tape.

FAITH
There's more, but I think you all
get the point.

Another silence falls over the room.

NOA
So what do we do now?

FAITH
He's out there. We find him before
he hurt someone...
(eyes flick to Ruth)
... else.

She gets up from her desk and pulls a small box from the floor. From it, she starts handing out TASERS to various people.

RUTH
And then what, Faith? We just stake
him and that's it?

(CONTINUED)

VI

No, that's not it. Some of Pryor's log... he talked about how scared he was.

FAITH

We all know he's been ducking us lately. Now we know why. I don't think he wants to hurt anyone.

Jerry scoffs and points to Ruth.

JERRY

(angry)

I guess that's out the window now.

FAITH

(snapping)

If he wanted to, he could've easily killed Ruth. He hurt her, but hauled ass out of there instead and I don't see any bite marks on her.

RUTH

No.

(beat)

He'd been gone a few minutes before Faith showed. He left on his own.

VI

It's Pryor. We're not giving up him yet.

FAITH

(pointed)

We're not giving up on him at all. He wouldn't give up on us. Everyone hit the streets and start looking.

(to Dawn)

You and Noa stay with the Gateway. See if you can find him from there.

DAWN

(reluctant)

I don't know if I can track him without something to work off.

Vi picks up a corked test tube of BLOOD from the desk and hands it over.

VI

It's Pryor's. He constantly ran tests on himself to see how bad the infection had spread. Could help.

(CONTINUED)

Dawn nods and disappears in another flash of light. Noa wheels herself out the door.

FAITH

Everyone check in every fifteen minutes. If you find him, defend yourself if you have to, but no stakes. Nothing lethal. Got it?

All heads in the room nod. Faith strides out of the room. A woman on a mission.

The rain is really coming down now, leaving most of the streets empty.

Pryor pulls his hoodie tight around his body, keeping his head down.

A HEARTBEAT thumps over the sound of the rain. Pryor's face is back to normal and he seems to be panting. He briefly looks to a woman briskly crossing the street to a parked car.

He's not looking where he's going and runs into a STOCKY TEENAGER. Both men fall to the ground and Pryor's hood falls off of his head.

STOCKY TEENAGER

Watch where you're going!

They get back to their feet.

PRYOR

I'm sorry. I -

The teenager roughly SHOVES Pryor back. Pryor catches himself on a parking meter.

STOCKY TEENAGER

Damn right, you're sorry, you clumsy bastard.

The THUMPING gets much louder. PUSH IN on the teenager's neck.

Pryor ROARS and charges into the teenager, driving him backwards into an alley. The teenager tries to wrestle him off, but Pryor's strength is superior.

PRYOR (V.O.)

(through recorder)

*Six months into infection.
Exhibiting exponential increase in
physical strength and speed.*

Pryor pins the teenager against a wall and starts battering him with vicious PUNCHES.

PRYOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
*Also, heightened senses.
Particularly smell, sight. Emotions
are also overwhelming. Particularly
those of anger and violence.*

The teenager slumps over, half knocked out. Pryor yanks him back to his feet and yanks his head to one side. The teenager is gasping, scared out of his mind.

PRYOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
*Gained the ability to change visage
at will.*

Pryor VAMPS OUT. His victim's eyes go wide and his breathing gets heavier. The thumping gets louder and much FASTER.

PRYOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
*The bloodlust has become too much
to overcome. Resorted to using
contacts at a local blood bank to
satisfy cravings.*

Pryor sinks his fangs into his victim's neck! The teen tries to scream, but can only let out ragged gasps.

PRYOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
*Not sure how long I can hold out
without... human blood.*

Pryor and his victim sink to the ground, Pryor's fangs still buried in his neck.

PULL AWAY from the attack as the victim's legs start to convulse.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

9

INT. RESTAURANT - DINING AREA - NIGHT

9

The thunder continues to rumble outside as the storm rages on.

Soft cello music plays throughout the extravagant restaurant. PAN ACROSS the various guests to RACHEL and SCOTT in a corner booth, enjoying a nice meal.

They're sitting in total silence. Scott slurps from a bowl of soup.

RACHEL

Umm... how's the soup?

SCOTT

It's good.

(beat; clears throat)

A little salty.

(beat)

How's your... what was it called again?

RACHEL

Oh, um... moussaka. It's basically eggplant casserole.

(nods)

It's good.

Another awkward silence. One would think they're a couple of teenagers on their first date.

SCOTT

Good.

Scott's phone RINGS and he checks the caller I.D.

SCOTT (cont'd)

Sorry. I need to take this.

RACHEL

(pulling out her phone)

Oh, that's okay. I'll just check my messages real quick.

SCOTT

(into phone)

Jacobs.

(listens)

Yeah. Yeah, no problem, I can be there in thirty.

Rachel, staring at her phone, frowns.

(CONTINUED)

SCOTT (cont'd)
(hanging up)
I'm sorry. I need to go.

He signals for their server, who quickly comes over.

SERVER
Yes, sir?

SCOTT
We'll take our check please.

The server pulls a slip of paper from his check presenter and sets it down.

SERVER
Of course. Would you like to take
the food home with you?

Scott and Rachel share a look.

RACHEL
We're fine, thanks.

Scott hands the check back with his credit card and the server walks off.

SCOTT
I'm sorry. Something just came up
on an investigation I'm working.

RACHEL
It's fine. I've got a dozen texts
from Faith. Something must be
wrong.

SCOTT
You don't want to take the mou...
mou... casserole?

RACHEL
(shakes her head)
No. It's terrible.

The server drops the credit card slips off. Scott pulls a pen from his jacket.

SCOTT
(signing the slip)
Yeah, my soup was cold. Let's never
eat here again.

They share a smile and get up from their table.

10

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

10

Rachel walks along the bike trail, the large golf umbrella keeping her relatively dry.

A hand grabs her shoulder from behind and frightens her. She turns around and breathes a sigh of relief.

FAITH

What the hell took you so long?

RACHEL

Cabs were running slow.

Faith hands her a flashlight and a taser. Rachel accepts them all with a confused look.

RACHEL (cont'd)

What's all this for?

FAITH

We're looking for Pryor.

RACHEL

We need tasers for that?

FAITH

He's a vampire.

Rachel's umbrella slips out of her hand and falls to the ground. She quickly picks it back up.

RACHEL

What? How did that happen?

ZOOM OUT from them to a bridge over a small stream running through the park.

Pryor is there, still in vamp face. He licks a small speck of blood from his bottom lip.

BACK TO Faith and Rachel.

FAITH

So that's the deal. We're checking in every fifteen minutes. Make sure you do too. Check out the rest of this park and two blocks north. I'm moving south.

Rachel nods and walks off. Faith starts to go in the opposite direction, but she PAUSES and looks around.

Her eyes go to the bridge off in the distance, but no-one's there.

11 INT. POLICE PRECINCT - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

11

Scott's entire team are assembled with DARK AMBROSIA standing in the middle of them all, holding a clipboard that they're all looking at.

Scott enters the room and freezes when he sees Dark Ambrosia. His eyes dart around. He instantly knows something is up.

SCOTT

I was in the middle of a pretty good dinner. I hope this is good.

Dark Ambrosia clears her throat and when she speaks, it's under the guise of:

AMBROSIA

The office wanted a progress report.

SCOTT

(incredulous)

'Progress report'? You're kidding, right? I've checked in with you people regularly.

AMBROSIA

Really? Hmm... because you failed to report...

She FLINGS the clipboard down the conference table to Scott's end. He picks it up and flips through it.

AMBROSIA (cont'd)

... the recent, mysterious deaths of some of their staff. The ones with questionable causes that were officially deemed 'accidental.'

Scott doesn't look up at her, continuing to flip through the paperwork.

AMBROSIA (cont'd)

Not to mention the fire that happened there a couple of hours ago. The one that hasn't been called in to the fire department yet.

Ambrosia takes a seat in a chair at the head of the table. Scott's team scatters off to either side, letting the face off unfold.

(CONTINUED)

SCOTT

(icily)

Don't you have homework to do or something?

AMBROSIA

You and this investigation are my homework, Detective Jacobs. Of course, if you had any inside sources at the Asylum, I'm sure -

Scott flips the clipboard down on the table, cutting her off.

SCOTT

I guess I should be using yours, since your intel is so much better than mine. Where are you getting your info from, if you don't mind my asking?

AMBROSIA

Mayor Wilkins has his ways. As do you, apparently.

SCOTT

What's that supposed to mean?

Ambrosia leans back in her chair, coolly in command of this conversation.

AMBROSIA

I'm just saying that maybe if you were pumping Rachel Hagerman for information instead of just, you know, pumping her, this whole investigation would be a lot further along.

Scott's jaw drops as do those of his team members. Busted. Ambrosia crosses her hands over her mouth in a mocking "oops" gesture.

The storm continues with no sign of letting up. Rachel sweeps her flashlight beam through the torrential downpour, but the visibility's too poor to spot anything.

A RUSTLING sound draws her attention to a nearby set of bushes.

She tucks the flashlight under her arm and pulls out the taser, slowly approaching the hidden commotion.

She gasps when a CAT bounds out of the bushes, stopping to hiss at her before darting off.

She breathes a sigh of relief before gasping again when a BICYCLIST zips past her. The fright gets her to drop her flashlight.

RACHEL

Who the hell rides bikes in the
friggin' rain?

She bends down to pick up her flashlight. Behind her, Pryor slowly stands up from behind the bushes the cat was behind!

He growls, which is about all the warning Rachel gets before he POUNCES on her!

Rachel SCREAMS as she falls under Pryor's body weight. She quickly twists to her back and smacks him in the jaw with her flashlight, knocking him off.

She scampers to her feet and runs for her life, digging her phone out of her purse.

Pryor is after her in a flash, effortlessly closing the distance between them as she frantically tries to make a call.

She gets the phone to her ear before he TACKLES her from behind, causing both of them to slide a couple of feet into a puddle.

The phone drops from Rachel's hands when they hit the ground and she desperately reaches for it. Pryor notices and SLAMS his clenched fist into the phone, shattering it!

Rachel's really scared now and tries to kick him off, but he pins both of her wrists above with one hand and roughly shoves the forearm of his other arm under her chin, pushing her head back and exposing her neck.

RACHEL (cont'd)

(sobbing; strained)

Pryor... please...

Pryor's not listening. The lust for blood practically oozes from him.

PRYOR

(sincere)

I'm sorry.

(leans in)

I can't fight it any more.

He starts to lean in for the kill, Rachel whimpering beneath him...

... and out of nowhere, Faith flies into frame, CRASHING into Pryor and knocking him off of Rachel!

(CONTINUED)

Both Slayer and vampire are on their feet in a heartbeat, circling one another.

PRYOR (cont'd)
So is this it, Faith? All these years and you're just going to kill me like I'm some random demon?

FAITH
It doesn't have to be.

Rachel is sitting up in the puddle, keeping her distance from the other two.

RACHEL
Like hell it doesn't!

FAITH
(sharp)
Shut up, Rachel!
(to Pryor)
We know what happened to you. We want to help. We'll find a cure.

PRYOR
(shakes his head)
Don't you think I've tried that already? There is no cure. I've spent months trying to find one.

FAITH
Science caused this problem.
Science can fix it. Pryor, let us help you!

Pryor responds with a quick right cross that staggers Faith back. He presses his advantage, throwing straight power punches.

Faith, being the better fighter, blocks them all, but the brute force of the attacks is driving her back.

She ducks under them all and shoulder rams into Pryor.

Rachel shrieks and rolls out of the way as Pryor splashes down into the puddle she was sitting in.

Faith pounces on Pryor, but he pulls his knees to his chest and flips her over him with his legs. He follows her over so he's on top and drops three vicious punches on her.

Faith pops her hips her, knocking him off balance. She rolls to her left, flipping Pryor to HIS back and getting back on top.

RACHEL

Faith!

Faith looks over and catches the STAKE Rachel tosses her. She holds it up, ready to deliver the fatal strike, but she PAUSES.

It's not long, a second at the most, but it's long enough for Pryor to ZAP her with a taser he scooped out of the puddle. Rachel's taser!

Faith convulses and falls off of Pryor, allowing him back to his feet. He GROWLS at Rachel before running off into the night once again.

Rachel rushes to Faith's side.

RACHEL (cont'd)

Faith! Oh God, oh God...

Faith is face down in the puddle, not moving.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Back where we left them. Ambrosia cockily smirks back at Scott, who is nervously twiddling his fingers.

AMBROSIA

Well? Care to explain yourself?

Scott looks away, his face tightening up.

SCOTT

I, uh...

(looks back to everyone
else)

I needed to get close to get the intel I needed.

AMBROSIA

Oh, really? So you're not interested in her?

SCOTT

(huffs)

Of course not. I'm a detective. It's called 'undercover work.' Do it all the time.

AMBROSIA

(slaps the desk)

Well, that's awesome to hear!

Ambrosia kicks her feet up on the table.

AMBROSIA (cont'd)
Why don't you tell us what you got
so far, huh?

Busted. Again.

SCOTT
I... don't have my notes.

AMBROSIA
(waves that off)
Oh, that's fine. Just a few
highlights.

SCOTT
I'd prefer to make a formal
presentation. Collate my evidence
and divulge a full case.

Ambrosia nods, taking that blatant bluff in.

AMBROSIA
The Mayor won't be happy, but I
think we can give you maybe... a
day to put it all together?

SCOTT
(blinks)
A day?

AMBROSIA
Yeah. If you have all this evidence
as you say, shouldn't take more
than a day to gift wrap it for
everyone, right?

SCOTT
Yeah.
(beat)
Right.

Ambrosia slaps the desk again and stands up.

AMBROSIA
So it's settled, then. We'll do the
whole briefing or whatever you
people call it tomorrow. I'll let
the Mayor know. He'll want to be
here personally for it.

SCOTT
(fake smiling)
Great.

AMBROSIA
(also fake smiling)
Great!

She almost bounces out of the room, clearly overdoing the cheery facade.

AMBROSIA (cont'd)
Have a good night, Detective.

Scott's team follows her out, leaving him alone in the room. Up shit's creek with a paddle.

14 INT. JIMMY'S CORNER - NIGHT

14

PULL AWAY from the window of the bar most aptly described as a dive. Outside, the storm is finally dying down.

Jerry leaning over the bar, showing a picture to the BARTENDER.

JERRY
Sure you haven't seen him around?

BARTENDER
(shakes his head)
Can't say I have, pal. Beer?

JERRY
(waves it off)
No, I'm good. Thanks.

Jerry pulls a business card from his jacket and hands it to the bartender.

JERRY (cont'd)
If you should happen to spot him,
please call.

BARTENDER
You some kind of cop or something?

JERRY
No, just a concerned friend.

The bartender nods and moves down the bar to help a customer.

Jerry's phone RINGS, and he answers it.

JERRY (cont'd)
Hey. I'm over at Jimmy's Corner in
the Square. Nothing yet.

RUTH
(filtered through phone)
Rachel just checked in.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RUTH (cont'd)
She and Faith had a run in with
Pryor in Central Park.

JERRY
They have him?

RUTH
No, he got away.
(beat)
After he got Faith with a taser.

Jerry's jaw clenches and his brow furrows.

JERRY
Is she okay?

RUTH
You know Faith. She's fine even if
she isn't.

JERRY
(sharp)
That's not what I -
(beat; exhales)
Is she really okay?

RUTH
Rachel says she's a little shaken
up, but nothing major.

JERRY
(cold)
Good.
(beat)
I'll check in soon.

He hangs up before Ruth can respond and walks out to:

Jerry crosses the street and slides his car keys into the
door of his jeep.

He opens the door and has it SLAMMED shut by Pryor, who
appeared without making a single sound!

Jerry immediately throws a punch that Pryor ducks. He grabs
Jerry from behind and thrusts him face first through the
driver side window!

The glass cuts up Jerry's face.

PRYOR
I guess you'll need another
reconstruction, won't you?

He grabs Jerry by his neck, yanks him out of the car, and HURLS him into the middle of the street. Jerry lands on his side and rolls to a stop.

Pryor stalks towards a prone Jerry, licking his lips.

PRYOR (cont'd)

Guess we're in the right area.

(beat)

Because I really need a drink.

He walks into the camera, causing a:

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

16

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

16

A badly cut and bleeding Jerry rolls to his back, seeing Pryor (in his normal face) coming right at him.

JERRY
(coughing)
Pryor, please. We can help you.

PRYOR
(icily)
Save it. Seems you've been helping yourself already. I saw the two of you...

He pauses to KICK Jerry right in the ribs!

PRYOR (cont'd)
... together!

MALE VOICE
Hey!

Two large male BYSTANDERS step out into the street.

BYSTANDER #1
(threatening)
Hey, man, you got a reason to be roughing this guy up?

CLOSE UP on Pryor's fiery eyes.

CLOSE UP on one of the men's necks.

BYSTANDER #2
(cracks his knuckles)
Or do we need to beat your ass and call the cops to play clean up?

Slowly PUSH IN on Pryor, seething with rage.

PRYOR
(through clenched teeth)
He... owes me money.

Both of the bystanders stop instantly and look down at Jerry.

JERRY
(pained)
He's... he's lying...

One of the men KICKS him right in the jaw!

(CONTINUED)

BYSTANDER #1

Shut up, bitch!

(to Pryor)

Hey, want some help?

Pryor smirks up and holds up his hands.

PRYOR

I've got it. Thanks.

The two men shrug and leave. Pryor yanks Jerry to his feet and holds him by the lapels of his coat.

PRYOR (cont'd)

Now, where were we?

JERRY

(woozy)

Pryor, your condition... it's affecting your judgment...

Pryor HEADBUTTS him, knees him right in the liver, and drops an elbow on the back of his neck when he doubles over in pain.

PRYOR

Actually, I don't think I've ever seen things so clearly.

(another kick to the ribs)

I don't know how I ever got along without this level of clarity.

JERRY

Nothing happened with Ruth!

PRYOR

Oh, I know that.

(mounts Jerry)

But it's no thanks to you. She's actually loyal!

An incoming car BLARES its horn. Pryor stands up, vamps out, and ROARS at the car, which swerves around and burns rubber down the rest of the street.

Pryor turns back to Jerry, who is trying to crawl away. Pryor stomps down on his back to halt his movement.

PRYOR (cont'd)

You've been after her from day one, you conniving bastard.

JERRY

(gasping)

If you're gonna kill me, just do it.

(CONTINUED)

PRYOR

(icily)

Oh no, this isn't about hunger pains. I could drain you, but I'd rather beat every drop of plasma out of you and lick it off the ground later.

(beat)

I want to enjoy this.

He turns Jerry over to his back with his foot and starts delivering mounted punches as we PULL AWAY and CUT TO:

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NEXT

Vi steps into frame, looking left and right. She blows a mouthful of air out and puts her phone to her ear.

VI

(into phone)

Noa, I've got nothing. Not even sure Pryor frequented Times Square. You guys set up yet?

(listens)

Alright, well get back in the Gateway. I'll check in with...

She pulls away when the phone BEEPS and looks at the face, then pulls it back.

VI (cont'd)

(into phone)

It's Ruth calling, I'll check in with you later.

(presses a button)

Ruth, hey.

(listens)

What?!? Where? Is she okay?

(listens; exhales)

Good. What about Jerry? I just tried to call him before Noa and I didn't get an answer.

(listens; frowns)

Really? Just a few minutes ago?

Well, I'm not taking any chances.

Where did he say he was?

(listens)

Okay, I'm heading over right now. Call Faith and Rachel. Tell them to get over there.

Vi hangs up and takes off running.

18

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - ALLEY - NIGHT

18

Jerry's body crashes into a dumpster and slumps to the ground. His blood is all over his face now. His clothes are ripped. He's in bad shape.

Despite that, he gamely gets back to his feet, staring down an arrogant looking Pryor with blood oozing from his mouth.

He throws a badly telegraphed punch that Pryor sidesteps. That punch was seemingly the last of Jerry's energy, since he falls flat on his face after he misses.

Pryor leans down and smears some of Jerry's blood onto his finger. He tastes it and spits it out a second later.

PRYOR

Hmm... a little bitter, but it'll
do for now.

Pryor takes a menacing step forward - and Vi leaps in and POUNCES on Pryor's back!

Pryor stumbles around, trying to shake her, before he leaps back and pancakes her against the wall.

Dazed from the blow, she loosens her grip around his neck. Pryor reaches back, grabs Vi by the back of her shirt, and hurls her over his shoulder into a dumpster.

Vi shakes off the rough landing and finally get a solid look at Pryor's vampire visage.

There's a long tense moment as they hold a staring contest. Vi gets back to her feet, keeping her eyes on Pryor the whole time.

PRYOR (cont'd)

Walk away, Vi. I don't want to hurt
you.

VI

Can't do that.

(re: Jerry)

And I can't let you do that.

Jerry looks up at the two of them and coughs up a mouthful of blood.

PRYOR

(growling)

The bastard deserves it.

VI

For what?

(CONTINUED)

PRYOR

He tried to steal her! Tries to woo
her away from me, right under my
nose, and didn't think I'd
notice... well, I noticed!

He KICKS Jerry again, and that's the opening Vi needs to dive
in and attack.

Pryor sees her coming and SWATS her aside, sending Vi flying
to SMACK hard into the wall.

Vi COUGHS as her head spins - and Pryor GRABS her by the
lapels, hauling her to her feet.

PRYOR (cont'd)

Stop fighting me!

VI

Stop... fighting back...

PRYOR

You don't understand, Vi! This is
out of my control now! Can't you
see that?

He DROPS her, and she collapses onto the ground. Pryor backs
away, fierce demeanour fading.

PRYOR (cont'd)

I can't stop myself...

He DE-VAMPS, features returning to normal at last. Pryor
looks round as Jerry COUGHS weakly behind him.

PRYOR (cont'd)

Oh, no...

It starts to sink in at last - just as he hears:

FAITH (O.S.)

Hey!

Pryor spins - and FLASHLIGHT BEAMS fall on him. He VAMPS OUT
with an angry growl.

Faith and Rachel tear down the alley towards him - but Pryor
takes off at full speed.

He LEAPS inhumanly high into the air, sailing over a wire
fence.

He hits the ground running, tearing off and disappearing
through a plume of smoke from a vent.

(CONTINUED)

Faith slides down to the injured Jerry's side as Rachel helps the winded Vi up from the floor.

FAITH (cont'd)
Jerry? Jerry! Hang on, man, we'll
get you some help, alright?

JERRY
(weak smile)
Hey... kiddo...

FAITH
(to Vi)
Pryor did all this?

VI
Think so. Got here halfway through
the second act, but I'm pretty sure
he'd have gone all the way if I
hadn't stopped him.

She WINCES, rubbing the back of her head. Her fingers come
away bloody.

VI (cont'd)
Maybe 'distracted' is a better
word.

RACHEL
I'll get Jerry to St. Vincent's.
You two get after Pryor.

Faith looks back down at Jerry, who finds her hand and
SQUEEZES.

JERRY
I'll be alright... you have to find
him. He's trying to fight it.

FAITH
(grim)
He's not trying hard enough.

Faith rises, new determination etched into her features. She
reaches for her cell phone:

INTERCUT WITH:

And down with Dawn and Noa as Noa's phone RINGS. She answers.

NOA
Hello?

(CONTINUED)

FAITH

It's me. Pryor got Jerry.

NOA

(gasps)

Oh, my God! Is he -

FAITH

Beat up pretty bad. Rachel's getting him to the ER.

NOA

(sighs)

Whew. Thought you meant 'got' like, you know... 'got.'

DAWN

Who? What's going on? Who got who?

FAITH

Any luck finding me a location?

Noa flicks her phone to speaker and holds it towards Dawn.

DAWN

Okay, here's the thing. I kind of know how this works from the inside, on account of being a... Gate-Ghost, or whatever I am, but I'm not a hundred per cent on how your side of it works, so -

FAITH

Dawn, can you find me Pryor from that blood sample or not?

Dawn glances at Noa, then inhales.

DAWN

Yes.

FAITH

Good. Then do it.

Dawn steps up to the PEDESTAL, and nods towards Noa. She rolls up close, taking the blood sample and emptying its contents into the pool of liquid within the pedestal.

Dawn then holds her hands over some of the glass tubes around the pool, closing her eyes.

FAITH (cont'd)

Anything?

DAWN

Ssh! Gimme a sec...

(CONTINUED)

Dawn's hands start to move - and the tubes emit soft CHIMES as she does so.

DAWN (cont'd)
I think... I may have something...

Her hands move faster, the chimes blending into one discordant note - until Dawn SNAPS back from the pedestal!

DAWN (cont'd)
Woah!
(takes a breath)
That was... is it always that intense when you do it?

FAITH
(impatient)
Dawn!

DAWN
Okay, okay! He's heading for Lower Manhattan. He's up on a rooftop overlooking Ground Zero.

NOA
I'll get onto the maps, see if I can narrow it down to the most likely places.

DAWN
What about Ruth?

FAITH
Haven't checked in with her yet, gonna do that when I'm done talking to you.

DAWN
Oh. Right.
(beat)
Um... I think we're done.

END INTERCUT:

FAITH
Thanks.

She snaps her phone shut, turning to the others.

FAITH (cont'd)
(to Jerry)
You okay to move?

JERRY
(waves it away)
I've been hurt worse. Trust me.

(CONTINUED)

FAITH

Rache, you know the cover story?

RACHEL

(nods)

Mugging, innocent bystander, didn't get a good look, got it.

(beat)

Uh... what should I do when we get to St. Vincent's? You want me to stay, or come back out and -

FAITH

Stay with him. Pryor might come after him again.

Rachel GULPS. Faith exhales, walking up to her.

FAITH (cont'd)

Worst, worst case scenario. Alright?

Rachel nods, but doesn't look convinced.

Faith watches Jerry hobble away, leaning heavily on Rachel for support, before turning back to Vi.

FAITH (cont'd)

You good?

VI

Yeah...

(rubbing back of head)

I think I need stitches.

FAITH

We'll get 'em later.

She brings up her phone, quickly dialling:

FAITH (cont'd)

(into phone)

Ruth?

She waits - then hangs up.

FAITH (cont'd)

Voicemail.

VI

So where the hell is she?

They exchange a look - then both hurry off down the alley.

20

EXT. ROOFTOP - NEXT

20

GROUND ZERO stares back at us, irregular girders and rubble jutting out of the ground, sitting alongside fresh construction work and rebuilt structures.

PULL BACK to find the edge of a rooftop, the glittering New York skyline in every direction.

And then Pryor, sitting in a crouch, staring out into the mix of blacks and colour.

He lowers his head - features still vamped out - and buries his face in his hands.

He SOBS softly, hands running over his features, testing the ridges of his vampiric face.

RUTH (O.S.)

It won't be forever.

He WHIPS round, SNARLING - but if Ruth is afraid of him, she doesn't show it.

She's standing at the far end of the rooftop, hair buffeted by the stronger winds up here.

Pryor turns away from her, hunching down further like a frightened animal.

PRYOR

Go.

RUTH

I'm not leaving.

PRYOR

I said go.

She starts to advance.

RUTH

I could sense the demon within you.
That's how I found you before the others.

PRYOR

Ruth, please...

RUTH

But I can also sense how it hasn't taken hold of you yet. You're still fighting it.

PRYOR

Ruth, I won't ask you again!

(CONTINUED)

RUTH

That's how I know...

She's within a few feet of him now. Slowly, Pryor turns to face her, rising to his full height.

She smiles, taking a step closer and reaching out a hand. He flinches away from it, but she moves closer still...

... and runs her hand down the side of his face. Pryor lets out a heavy SIGH, his features shifting back to normal.

RUTH (cont'd)

... I can still save you.

Pryor doesn't lift his eyes to hers, even as she steps up to face him.

RUTH (cont'd)

It's time to come home, Pryor.

She SMILES, Pryor unable to meet her eyes, and we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

21 EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

21

Back with Pryor and Ruth, as he suddenly turns away from her, walking up to the edge.

RUTH

Pryor, listen to me.

She approaches, but decides to keep a respectful distance.

RUTH (cont'd)

What's happened to you isn't normal, even for vampires. The way I understand it, you need to be near death in the first place for the vampire's blood to take over.

PRYOR

I wish I could say that being healthy did me any good, but as you can see...

He turns to face her - and VAMPS OUT. She suppresses a SHIVER at the sight.

RUTH

How did it happen?

PRYOR

Faith's probably worked it out by now - did she go through my lab? Find my notes and my voice recorder?

RUTH

She did... but I want to hear you tell me.

PRYOR

I was working late, trying to find out why that anti-vampire serum I'd been developing failed so spectacularly, and...

He runs a hand through his hair, trying to keep his rampaging emotions under check.

PRYOR (cont'd)

Something broke. I already had a few open cuts I'd left from an altercation earlier in the night, and I just...

(CONTINUED)

He rubs his hand self-consciously, and Ruth nods.

RUTH

So it was all just a terrible accident.

PRYOR

(bitter laugh)

I always thought the phrase 'happy accident' was something of an oxymoron anyway.

She smiles, taking a step closer.

RUTH

You still sound like yourself at least.

His half smile drops, replaced by something darker as he meets Ruth's eyes at last.

PRYOR

I didn't sound like myself when I tore a man's throat out a few hours ago.

She freezes, hand going to cover her mouth.

PRYOR (cont'd)

I wanted to kill him, Ruth. I wanted to taste his blood, to drink my fill and flood my body with power again...

He leans his head back, eyes closed, and SIGHS.

PRYOR (cont'd)

... and I enjoyed it.

He looks back to her, and now she can sense the malice radiating off him.

PRYOR (cont'd)

So don't stand there and try to fool me into thinking there's any part of what used to be Pryor Webb left inside me. Now there's just this... thing wearing his face.

He looks down at his hands - half-twisted into claws thanks to his change.

PRYOR (cont'd)

(snarls)

Just another monster!

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

With that, he starts to CLAW at himself, tearing through his clothes and ripping into his skin!

RUTH

Pryor!

She rushes forward, grabbing his hands and trying to stop him.

RUTH (cont'd)

Pryor, please! You have to fight this! I know you can!

He relents, looking into her tearful eyes - and his features melt back to human again.

PRYOR

(choked up)

Ruth...

He sinks forward into her arms, SOBBING freely as she cradles him. They sink to their knees, Ruth holding tight.

22 EXT. STREETS - NEXT

22

Faith and Vi are racing at full speed down into the outskirts of Lower Manhattan now - all skyscrapers and steel.

Faith has her phone pressed to one ear, slowing at a junction and looking both ways.

FAITH

(into phone)

Now where?

INTERCUT WITH:

23 INT. GATEWAY - CONTROL ROOM - NEXT

23

Noa has her laptop open across her knees, scrolling round a city map as dawn hovers nearby.

NOA

Just hang a right onto Vesey and then head for the subway.

FAITH

I can't see a subway station!

NOA

(impatient)

You won't yet, you have to take that right turn first!

Faith and Vi run on as we CUT TO:

24

EXT. ROOFTOP - NEXT

24

Pryor suddenly pulls away from Ruth, both their faces stained with tears.

PRYOR

You have to go now.

RUTH

No! Pryor, I meant what I said!

She gets to her feet, moving close behind him.

RUTH (cont'd)

I'm not leaving you. I came back from a whole other world for you, didn't I?

PRYOR

That was when you thought it was me you were coming back for.

RUTH

It still is you. You're just confused. Your mind's trying to fight off an infection, it doesn't know what's real and what isn't.

She turns him to face her - and KISSES him. Just for a brief moment. He's stunned as she pulls away.

RUTH (cont'd)

That's real.

She takes a step back, letting that gesture sink in.

RUTH (cont'd)

Come back to the Asylum with me.

PRYOR

(shakes head)

That'll never work. A vampire sharing the premises with two vampire Slayers? I don't need my math degree to tell me the answer to that equation.

RUTH

Faith wants to help you as much as anyone.

PRYOR

She has a different kind of 'help' in mind, I think.

(CONTINUED)

RUTH

You helped her. When she first came to New York, you gave her a job. A purpose. When you let her into your world, made her part of your team... you saved her. I think she'll want to return the favour.

PRYOR

I don't... I don't know...

RUTH

And if you come back willingly, they'll know you're serious about getting help.

Pryor's torn now, and Ruth steps forward to take his hand.

RUTH (cont'd)

You know I'm right.

He looks up, and she smiles back as we CUT TO:

Faith and Vi reach the subway station Noa aimed them towards, and start scanning the rooftops nearby.

FAITH

(into phone)

Dawn, can you give me the angle he's seeing Ground Zero from?

DAWN

(filtered; through phone)

Uh, hang on...

Soft CHIMES sound through the cell phone as Dawn uses the pedestal again.

DAWN (cont'd)

South side. A little to the right.

VI

(points)

There.

She's spotted the most likely building, and she and Faith take off towards it.

Pryor looks down at Ruth's hand in his.

PRYOR

I must say, I've had a whole new insight into what we're up against with all this.

RUTH

How so?

PRYOR

The hunger, for one.

She looks a little disturbed, but Pryor doesn't notice.

PRYOR (cont'd)

It consumes every fibre of you. You only have one thought, and that's to feed. No matter how risky, how dangerous or how... forbidden.

RUTH

You... you don't feel that now... do you?

He looks up - and his gaze lingers on her neck for a fraction longer than she'd like.

PRYOR

No, no. I've...
(bitter laugh)
I've fed tonight. I think that's how it works.

RUTH

Well... good.

PRYOR

But it's not just that. It's the lack of any conscience. Your moral compass... well, it just points at the next thing you want and that's all there is to it.

Ruth's starting to feel very uncomfortable now, as we CUT TO:

Still supporting the wounded Jerry, Rachel barges through into the foyer of the ER.

RACHEL

I need some help over here!

Two NURSES hurry over, the eyes of other patients scattered around the waiting area falling on them.

NURSE

What happened?

RACHEL

I saw him getting mugged. I called for help and the guy ran off, I didn't get a good look at him.

JERRY

(through gritted teeth)

She means what happened to me...

RACHEL

Oh! Right. Sorry. Uh... coupla kicks to the chest, I think, some punches. He got thrown about pretty bad.

NURSE

Alright, miss, we'll take it from here.

They ease Jerry into a wheelchair and push him forward, through the sliding doors that lead into the ER proper.

28 INT. BUILDING - STAIRWELL - NEXT

28

WHAM! Faith KICKS a fire door open, and she and Vi clatter up the stairs, heading for the roof.

29 EXT. ROOFTOP - NEXT

29

Pryor turns away from Ruth, eyes closed - and SNIFFS, inhaling deeply.

PRYOR

And your senses...

He opens his eyes, a distant look in them.

PRYOR (cont'd)

It's like you're connected to everything. Your hearing is sharper, your smell is sharper, everything feels like it's right there in front of you...

He extends a hand towards the skyline.

PRYOR (cont'd)

... you just have to reach out and take it.

Sensing a change in his mood, Ruth tugs at his hand.

(CONTINUED)

RUTH

We should go. Faith and the others
will catch up to me soon enough,
and I want them to see how -

PRYOR

To see how I'm still worthy of
being saved? Is that it?

He pulls his hand from hers.

RUTH

(pleading)

Pryor...

PRYOR

(shakes head)

No, no... I've gone too far to come
back now.

He turns away from her.

PRYOR (cont'd)

I killed a man tonight, Ruth. I'd
have done the same to Jerry if Vi
hadn't stopped me.

RUTH

(gasps)

Jerry? Is he...

Pryor turns, eyes narrow with suspicion.

PRYOR

Tell me you have no feelings for
him?

RUTH

What?

PRYOR

Sorry. It's this whole 'lack of
conscience' thing. It's removed the
filter between my brain and my
mouth.

(beat)

Answer the question.

RUTH

I... he's my friend, we...

Pryor takes a step forward, and she blurts out:

RUTH (cont'd)

No!

(CONTINUED)

Pryor stops. Ruth's fearful mood nudges back towards indignance.

RUTH (cont'd)
No. I'm pretty sure he's attracted to me, but... it's not reciprocated.

PRYOR
Oh. Well. Good.

RUTH
(beat; smiles)
You know I love you.

He blinks, taken aback, and we CUT TO:

Faith and Vi are almost at the roof now, slowing and keeping quiet as they approach the fire doors that lead outside.

VI
(whisper)
How are we gonna play this?

FAITH
Move fast. Take him down and restrain him first. Then we ask the questions.

VI
If he tries to bite us?

A beat - and with a solemn expression, Faith draws a STAKE from her jacket.

VI (cont'd)
Right. Got it.

Faith grips the stake as she mounts the last few steps, and we CUT TO:

Pryor takes a step towards her. Ruth's smiling again.

PRYOR
You... you love me?

RUTH
Oh, don't act so surprised. After everything that's gone on in the last few days, I'd have thought this would be the smallest shock of them all!

PRYOR
No, no, I mean... sorry, you've
just... really?

RUTH
(nods)
Really.

Pryor now starts to smile, moving closer.

RUTH (cont'd)
I knew it when I went to take
Jaleena to our new home. When I
looked into your eyes as I was
leaving, and realised how much it
hurt me here...

She lays a hand over her heart.

RUTH (cont'd)
... to know I wasn't going to see
you again for a while.

PRYOR
You don't say...

He grins, taking her hands in his.

RUTH
Actually, you can thank Jaleena for
it. She saw how I was pining away
for you and practically ordered me
to come back. Said if I didn't, she
was going to come here herself and
drag you all the way out there.

He's in close now. This time, she shows no fear.

PRYOR
Why didn't you say anything?

RUTH
I was looking for the right moment.
And, you've been a little scarce
lately.

He leans in and KISSES her - slow, lingering.

PRYOR
(whispers)
I love you too.

He KISSES her again, and then hears:

FAITH (O.S.)
Get away from her, Pryor.

And in an instant, Pryor changes back - he GRABS Ruth and pins her against his chest with one arm, features VAMPED OUT in a flash!

Shocked, Ruth gapes as Faith and Vi move across the roof towards them, Faith with her stake ready.

RUTH

Faith, no! Please! I've got this under control!

FAITH

Yeah, looks like it, too.

PRYOR

(snarls)

Stay back! Stay back, Faith... don't make me have to do this!

VI

Then let her go.

FAITH

Nobody's making you do anything, Pryor.

Vi edges closer, getting Pryor's attention, as Faith circles round to the other side.

VI

Just let her go, and we'll talk about this back at the Asylum, okay? We found your notes. We can put the Lab back together. We can still fix this.

RUTH

Vi, please... don't...

Pryor's grip round her throat tightens.

PRYOR

It's too late for me now, Vi.

VI

Don't say that! It's never -

And Faith tries to GRAB Ruth and pull her away!

PRYOR

No!

Pryor BITES into Ruth's neck viciously, BLOOD spraying as she SHRIEKS in pain!

FAITH

Ruth!

Pryor TEARS AWAY from her, letting Ruth's limp body slump to the floor as he turns and runs for the edge.

Vi is at Ruth's side as Faith races after Pryor, who's heading at full speed for the edge of the rooftop:

And he JUMPS! He sails into the air and plummets from view, Faith forced to pull up sharply to avoid following.

FAITH (cont'd)

Damn it!

She turns back - and her jaw drops in horror.

FAITH (cont'd)

Oh, no...

Vi is cradling Ruth, her eyes wet with tears. Ruth's skin is like porcelain - and dark red BLOOD stains her neck and blouse.

VI

She's... she's gone...

Vi's lip trembles, and she wipes her eyes, smearing Ruth's blood across her face.

Faith sinks to her knees, staring in mute shock at Ruth's lifeless body as we CUT TO:

Another street, back near Ground Zero itself.

A series of CLANGS ring out from off screen - until Pryor drops into view, landing hard.

He rises, face twisted with rage and pain as he starts to limp away, one leg obviously broken.

He makes it as ten metres down the street before a BLACK LIMOUSINE pulls to a stop before him.

Pryor freezes, watching as the passenger door slowly opens - and out steps MAYOR WILKINS, fixing up an umbrella against the light rain.

WILKINS

(smiles)

Howdy, neighbour!

Pryor just stares back, breathing fast and ragged. Wilkins paces slowly towards him.

WILKINS (cont'd)

I was just in the neighbourhood, cruising back from visiting some of my homeboys, or whatever they insist on calling themselves, when I heard that a distinguished former opponent of mine was in the market for a career change.

He stops a few feet short of Pryor.

WILKINS (cont'd)

Now, I thought to myself, there's a man who could make a valuable contribution to my team. Someone with scientific expertise, with leadership qualities, and above all a wholly unique opportunity to discover more about both himself and the creatures he's up against.

PRYOR

I don't want anything you could possibly have to offer me.

WILKINS

Let me put this another way, sport - if your friends find you after what you just did, then the last thing you'll feel is a stake plunging into that old heart of yours.

PRYOR

How... how could you possibly know what I -

WILKINS

(grins; shrugs)

A magician never tells. Especially when he just pays people to know these kinds of things.

(beat)

So what do you say?

He gestures back towards the waiting limo.

WILKINS (cont'd)

Are you coming with me, or do you plan on taking your chances out here in the city, waiting for Faith and the gang to find you?

Pryor stares at the Mayor, then the limo, for a long, agonising moment...

... and then slowly hobbles towards it. The Mayor beams.

(CONTINUED)

WILKINS (cont'd)
Attaboy.

PRYOR
This doesn't change anything.

WILKINS
(chuckles)
Whatever you say, Mr. Webb. Or can
I call you 'Pryor'? Seeing as we're
now on the same team and all that.

Pryor stops, turning back to glare at the mayor - but the Mayor's expression tells Pryor that the deal hasn't changed.

With a resigned sigh, Pryor resumes his limp towards the limo, leaving the Mayor behind as he clambers in.

The Mayor pauses to take a deep breath, appreciating the brisk evening air.

WILKINS (cont'd)
Pleasure doing business with you.

And as he heads into the limo, we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF SHOW