

MADELEINE Does she? I suppose you and La Condesa are quite intimate.

RENEE I love her so much.

MADELEINE Yes, an older woman can be such a comfort to a young girl. I can tell you are a superb actress and we must play together. I know the perfect vehicle. I've just optioned a new book on an old subject. The story of Sappho. I play Sappho, a noble Greek woman, passionate, vibrant, a sexual revolutionary and you, my fair one, you shall play her lesbian lover . . .
(Searches for a name.) Rusty.

RENEE Rusty?

MADELEINE I can see the scene. The cameraman lining up the shot. The director calls "Action," the off-screen violinist commences to play. Sappho sees Rusty coming out of the Parthenon, the wind tossing her hair away from her face. Sappho slips her arm around Rusty's waist and silently they . . .

RENEE But I don't . . .

MADELEINE I said silently, they walk down a dark winding street. It's the street where Sappho lives with her grandmother, um uh . . . Lillian. The street is empty. Everyone being at the Olympic games. They look into each other's eyes. Rusty finds herself yielding to the older woman's incandescent beauty. Cameras pan in for a tight shot. They kiss.

They kiss and then Astanté bites Renee's neck until the girl faints.

MADELEINE Kill the lights, call it a wrap.

KING *(In shock.)* You . . . you . . . you're a vampire!

MADELEINE I don't suppose you have a handkerchief.

KING She devil! Fiend! You've killed my Renee.

MADELEINE Nah, she'll come to, but let's say I've taken the bloom off the peach.

KING I'll expose you, I'll expose you as the monster you are.

MADELEINE *(Coolly.)* I wouldn't talk about exposing anyone if I were you.

KING What do you mean?

MADELEINE I happen to know King Carlisle's not your real name.

KING So, many stars change their names.

MADELEINE I happen to know your real name is Trixie Monahan and five years ago the coppers tossed you in the sex tank for impersonating a woman.

KING Drag is a perfectly legitimate theatrical tradition.

MADELEINE That may well be true but not on the corner of Hollywood and Vine.

KING I'd be ruined if anyone knew of my past. I'll be forced to kill myself.

MADELEINE There are other alternatives.

KING Such as?

MADELEINE You can be my personal slave.

KING What would you expect of me?

MADELEINE Lots of things. Escort me to premieres, wash my car, rinse out my dirty panties, but don't you dare let me catch you wearing them. I get plenty mad.

He collapses into despair. La Condesa enters.

LA CONDESA What is this? What have you done to her? Now you've really gone too far. You imagine yourself quite the cunning vixen. You have delusions that you can conquer me. Though I have always found you vulgar, I have never taken you for a fool, until now. Hollywood is my town. For centuries, you have been an albatross around my neck. First in Rome, I claimed

as my bride, the most beautiful of Caligula's courtesans. She was mine until you stole her away to China. Then there was the nun in the dark ages who became my personal slave, stolen once again. We all know what treachery you conspired against me during the Spanish Inquisition but I triumphed. And did I plot revenge? No. Then in the sixteenth century, I had as my mistress, the most desired of Queen Elizabeth's ladies in waiting. You, the ever present vulture snatched her off to the colonies. Even then, did I choose revenge? No. And why? Because I am a great lady. I conduct myself with dignity and grandeur whilst you roll in the gutter, parading your twat onstage and calling it acting. You've got as much glamour as a common street whore and now madame, you have gone too far. I am the queen of vampires and I shall never, never relinquish my hold on Hollywood!

MADELEINE Are you through? As you desire to relive the past, shall we travel even further back in time. Many centuries ago, back in the days of the Bible, there was a young girl, a mere child of fourteen, a lovely girl, full of high spirits. A lottery was held to choose a sacrificial victim for the dreaded Succubus. As fate would have it, she chose the black stone of death. She was dragged by soldiers to the cave of the creature and there left to her desecration. The monster emerged and there under a Godless sky, the creature dug its teeth into the girl's fair flesh. Having gorged itself, the monster retired to its cave, leaving the girl's body to be pecked and devoured as carrion. But the girl did not die. The monster in its fury did not even notice that all the while it was sucking the girl's blood, the child herself had lodged her teeth into a vein of the monster. In her terror she drank. More and more she filled herself with the creature's fluid. And there on that bleached rocky point, left to rot like a piece of old meat, the girl did not die but was transformed, transformed into one of the undead, never to find eternal rest but to stalk the earth forever in search of a victim, forever alone, forever damned. Look at me, I am that girl! And I demand the death of the Succubus!

ETIENNE (*Enters.*) Miss Oatsie Carewe of the Hearst Newspapers.

OATSIÉ (*Enters—a middle-aged gossip columnist gabbed in the narrowly but bohemian manner of Madame Elinor Glyn.*) Darling! And Madeleine Astarté too. What a marvelous surprise. Who'd have thought you two gals would be chums. And they say Hollywood is a heartless town. Magda, I adore the dress. It does wonders for your figure, so concealing. And Madeleine, I just know that must be a Paris creation. I must have a description of it for my column.

LA CONDESA Oatsie darling, may I get you some tea?

OATSIÉ No, no, never touch the stuff. Okay girls, straight from the hip. My readers just gobble up movie star romance. Madeleine, love blooming anywhere?

MADELEINE As my dear friend Gertrude Stein says "My mystery is a mystery is a mystery."

OATSIÉ Hmmm. I wonder if any man has ever pierced your enigma.

MADELEINE (*Tough.*) Let him try.

OATSIÉ And you Magda, a man in your life?

LA CONDESA I still mourn my late husband, the Count Scrofula de Hoya. (*With a heavy castilian lisp.*) How I long for our life in Barcelona. A thity chaturated with thenuality.

OATSIÉ (*Sees King and Renee.*) What's this, King Carlisle, Renee Vain, two stars of tomorrow?

LA CONDESA Oatsie, we were having cocktails and these two lapped up the hooch like hogs at a trough. Look at them, out cold, stinko. I guess I've seen it all.

MADELEINE You certainly have. The poor dear's been around the block so many times, she's been mistaken for a taxi.

OATSIÉ Madeleine, I want to give you a real Hollywood welcome. I just insist you come to my house for dinner. I'm a

demon in the kitchen and you come too, Magda, I insist. What shall I make? A goulash, a nice thick goulash, a native dish of Transylvania. Ever been there Magda?

LA CONDESA Can't say I have. No doubt, Madeleine has on one of her theatrical tours.

MADELEINE Not Transylvania. Pennsylvania. Played the Schubert in Altoona.

OATSIE I adore a good goulash, spiced with plenty of garlic. Either of you have an aversion to garlic?

LA CONDESA I must confess. I have a dreadful allergic reaction to garlic. Strictly *entre nous*, I get terrible chafing.

MADELEINE Indeed, when she lived in Spain, she couldn't keep her legs together for years.

OATSIE Ah Spain. The bullfights, the flamenco dancers, the magnificent cathedrals. One of my great passions is collecting models of the crucifixion. *(She takes out a cross.)* This, Condesa, is a Florentine cross, blessed by the brothers of Santa Giovanna.

The two vampires recoil and twitch with frenzy. Renee awakes.

KING Ah Renee, my precious.

RENEE I must have been dreaming. I dreamt I was being devoured by a horrid black bat. *(Sees Madeleine and screams.)* It was you, it was you!

MADELEINE Can't you shut her up?

OATSIE You can't shut out the truth.

MADELEINE What the . . .

She turns to Oatsie. Oatsie flashes the cross at her causing Madeleine's hips to bump like a burlesque stripper.

OATSIE I've studied your evil legends all my life, I know you both very well but you don't know me. Let me introduce

myself. *(She flings her coat open and throws it to the floor, revealing a man's military jacket covered with medals and polkadotted boxer shorts. She throws off her hat and wig uncovering a shining bald pate. In a thick German dialect.)* I am Gregory Salazar, vampire hunter! God in all of his mercy has cast me in the role of avenging angel to rid the world of your filth.

LA CONDESA You silly little man, you have no power over us. You shall long be dust while we are forever young.

He shows her the cross and she too begins to twitch wildly.

SALAZAR At this very moment, the Los Angeles police are surrounding this mansion. The fire department is spraying the walls with holy water. We've got you cornered. Daughters of Lucifer, your reign of death is over. We shall hold you both in this room until the sun rises, the sun which will transform you both into ancient hags and then decaying skeletons and then dust. I will sweep the dust into the gutter with the rest of the swill. From there your remains will float down the pipes into the public sewer where no one will know the difference between your ashes and the rest of the waste products of the Greater Los Angeles Area.

MADELEINE La Condesa, have you the power to evoke the cry of the banshee?

LA CONDESA I know the ritual but I've never achieved it.

SALAZAR You do not frighten us with your primitive black magic.

LA CONDESA/MADELEINE

Flee from Hades, spirits rare,
We free you from your devils lair,
Paint our victims a deep blood red,
Banshees, phantoms, vampires dead.

SALAZAR Breathe your last, Brides of Beelzebub!