

THE VAMPIRE DIARIES

"Pilot"

Written by  
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Based on the book by L.J. Smith

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ALLOY ENTERTAINMENT  
OUTERBANKS ENTERTAINMENT

ACT ONE

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATE NIGHT

Long. Winding. Lined with thick forest. A lone set of HEADLIGHTS appears down the road. An SUV comes into view.

INT. SUV - NIGHT

A YOUNG COUPLE sits in the front seat. DARREN, 24, has that cute-I'm-probably-gonna-die-soon look. Beside him is BROOKE, 24, pretty, smart-faced. Has that I'll-probably-live-longer-than-my-boyfriend look. MUSIC PLAYS.

THROUGH THE FRONT WINDSHIELD - Headlights pierce darkness.

DARREN

An hour drive to hear that crap,  
wasn't even a band; guy with  
guitar. An hour -- each way.

BROOKE

He wasn't that bad.

DARREN

He sounded like James Blunt.

BROOKE

What's wrong with that?

DARREN

We already have a James Blunt.  
One's all we need.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD -- A misty fog starts rolling by.

DARREN (CONT'D)

You owe me so much sex for this  
night.

The fog grows thicker and thicker. It becomes difficult to see the road in front of them.

BROOKE

What's with the fog?

DARREN

It'll clear...give it a sec.

BROOKE

You could slow down.

There's nothing but white all around them. The road's almost completely gone from view. Then, all of a sudden...

THE FOG LIFTS. They can see again.

DARREN

Told ya.

Brooke SCREAMS.

BROOKE

Watch out!!!!

WINDSHIELD - POV - A MAN STANDS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD.

Darren HITS the brakes. Not fast enough -- THEY CRASH INTO THE MAN.

His body goes up and over the JEEP, rolling off the top, hitting the ground behind them.

Darren YANKS THE WHEEL, sending the Jeep into a tailspin across the road. It comes to a SCREECHING HALT.

Everything goes silent. Darren turns to Brooke.

DARREN

Are you okay?

BROOKE

We hit someone, oh god...

She's in full panic. Starts CRYING. Darren reaches for his cell phone. Starts dialing. Opens the door.

DARREN

Jesus. Shit. Stay here, okay?

BROOKE

Please, let him be all right.

Darren hops out of the car. Leaving Brooke shaking. She peers out the window, but she can't see anything. The HEADLIGHTS are pointed to the woods.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Please, please, please...

She turns to look out her side window when...

A FACE APPEARS IN THE WINDOW. Brooke LEAPS OUT OF HER SKIN.

It's Darren.

DARREN  
I can't get reception. Try your  
phone.

And he's gone.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD

Darren races across the road, where the MAN lies. Still.

DARREN  
Oh god...

Slowly, he approaches the man. Kneels down...

BESIDE THE BODY. It's not moving. Darren knows this isn't good. He finds his hand -- lifts it. Feels for a pulse.

DARREN (CONT'D)  
Please be alive.

We glimpse a ring on the DEAD MAN'S FINGER. It's unusual. ANTIQUE. A LAPIS STONE.

He peers down to the MAN'S FACE. Unable to see him at all. It's pitch black.

He flips his cell phone around and hits the touch pad, it lights up his LCD screen. Uses it as a LIGHT when...

IN A FLASH -- HANDS REACH OUT.

IN A FLASH -- THE MAN RISES UP

IN A FLASH -- Darren's head YANKS BACK, neck exposed.

IN A FLASH -- SHARP. GLEAMING. FANGS.

Rip into Darren's throat. He's dead in an instant. No scream. NO NOISE AT ALL. A vicious, silent death.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

Brooke gets out of the car with her cell, having no idea what's happened just yards away. She's having trouble getting reception as well. She walks around to the front of the car. Calls out.

BROOKE  
Mine doesn't work either.

Her eyes search the darkness. There's no Darren. No man either for that matter. Brooke looks around.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Darren?

She turns back to the car. Frightened. Terrified. A NOISE behind her. She turns. Just as...

DARREN'S BODY FALLS ONTO THE CAR'S HOOD. From above. Out of nowhere. It lands with a resounding THUD. Sprawled across the hood -- his neck a raw and bloody mess.

Brooke is paralyzed in horror. A FIGURE emerges behind her. A MAN silhouetted in the headlights. His face shadowed.

She senses his presence. She spins around. No one's there. Because, now he's on the other side of her. How did he get there? Impossible.

She spins around again. He's gone again.

Brooke turns and begins to run. Down the center of the road. SCREAMING HYSTERICALLY. Trying to put distance between her and whoever is out there...

She keeps running and running...directly into the fog.

Everything becomes blurry real fast. Brooke keeps moving, not looking back, disappearing further into the hazy mist.

A POV TRACKING SHOT BEHIND HER...TRAVELING LIGHTNING FAST. IT CATCHES UP WITH HER.

Suddenly, Brooke's feet leave the ground as her entire body takes flight. Her SCREAM echoes through the night as something much faster and stronger YANKS HER ENTIRE BODY OUT OF SIGHT. Then, her SCREAM is cut short. A deadly silence.

SWIRLING FOG FILLS THE FRAME...

From it, appear the following words...

## THE VAMPIRE DIARIES

FADE UP:

EXT. ELENA'S HOUSE - DAY

Morning. Birds chirp. Sun shines down on a big family home. A veranda wraps around the front. All charm. No sense of last night's horror.

ELENA (V.O.)

*Dear Diary...today will be hell.*

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

ELENA GILBERT, 17, faces herself in the mirror. A silent assessment. Fresh-faced, perfect features.

ELENA (V.O.)  
*But, I'm ready. I can deal. I have a plan. I will smile. It will be believable. Genuine. My smile will say, "I'm fine, thank you." "Yes, much better." "Time heals everything."*

Elena is now at her desk writing in her journal.

ELENA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*They will see that Elena is alive and well.*

As she writes, the CAMERA moves around her room. Taking inventory of her life. Items of an over-achiever; awards, certificates, ribbons, etc.

ELENA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*And if I can convince them, then maybe, just maybe, I can believe it myself.*

Snapshots and framed photos. Friends in funny, happy poses, reflecting the life of a popular and well-adjusted girl. These are personal photos -- they mean something.

Her parents, brother -- obligatory family photo. Linger on it for a beat. There's a story there.

INT. ELENA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The morning news is muted on a small TV in the background. Photos of Darren and Brooke flash ON SCREEN. MISSING COUPLE.

JENNA MOYER (29) stands at the fridge. Grad school smart. A little scattered in a brainy way. A thinker in sweats. Which works for her. It's sexy.

She opens the fridge door. Studies its contents. Jenna is not domestic. She never will be.

JENNA  
 Toast. I can make toast.

She's talking to Elena who just walked in. Goes straight for the coffee pot. Pours a cup. Elena drinks it black.

ELENA  
It's all about the coffee, Aunt  
Jenna.

Jenna nods, of course.

JEREMY  
Is there coffee?

JEREMY (15) enters the kitchen. Cool look; has an original  
take on grunge punk, nothing extreme. Tinkers with the nail  
polish and eye-liner, but won't commit. A bit of a mess.  
Outcast cute.

JENNA  
Your first day of school and I'm  
totally unprepared.

She grabs TWO POWER BARS. Hands 'em out. Reaches for her  
purse, finds some cash. Elena declines. Jeremy takes it.

JENNA (CONT'D)  
Lunch money. Anything else? A No.  
2 pencil? What am I missing?

She's trying to get it right.

ELENA  
Don't you have a big presentation  
today?

JENNA  
I'm meeting with my thesis advisor  
at --  
(checks her watch,  
realizing)  
Now. Crap.

ELENA  
Go.

Jenna disappears in a flash. Elena turns to Jeremy.

ELENA (CONT'D)  
You good?

JEREMY  
Don't start.

Jeremy exits the back door. Uninterested and annoyed. Left  
alone in the kitchen, Elena SIGHS. Steeling herself for the  
day.

EXT. MYSTIC FALLS/INT. PRIUS - MORNING

A small Virginia town. Quaint, picturesque. A place you'd like to raise a family. Southern in its hospitality, northern in its attitude.

A Prius makes its way past Main Street. Mom and Pop. A couple restaurants. A hardware store. A church.

Elena rides beside BONNIE (17). Light, bubbly, and adorable. A loyal friend with a big heart. She's in chatty Cathy mode.

BONNIE

So Grams tells me how I'm psychic because we're descendants of the Celtic Druids; I know, right? I wasn't buying it either until I remembered my uncanny accuracy. I predicted Obama, I predicted David Cook, Heath Ledger, Britney's comeback and I still think Florida will break off and become little resort islands. I think there's something to it.

She glances over at Elena who is staring out the window, not listening. She's in another world.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Did I tell you about the orgy? I had the football team over. Threw a blindfold on. I still don't know who took my virginity -- ELENA! BACK IN THE CAR!!!

Elena JUMPS when she hears Bonnie YELL her name. She quickly snaps out of her daze.

ELENA

I did it again, didn't I? I'm sorry, Bonnie. You were saying...

BONNIE

What? C'mon, you can do it...

ELENA

(thinking hard)  
Something about being psychic.

Bonnie TOOTS the horn. They both LAUGH.

ELENA (CONT'D)  
 Okay, then, predict, what's in  
 store for me? Give it up.

Bonnie is turning a corner. She holds one hand out, waving  
 it like a magic wand. In complete goof mode.

BONNIE  
 I see puppies and daffodils and a  
 naked Ryan Gosling...

SUDDENLY, SOMETHING FLIES INTO THE WINDSHIELD. Bonnie JERKS  
 the steering wheel. The car goes SKIDDING.

She SLAMS ON THE BRAKES.

BONNIE (CONT'D)  
 What was that? Oh god...

Bonnie turns to Elena.

BONNIE (CONT'D)  
 Elena? Are you okay? I'm so  
 sorry.

Elena sits frozen in the front seat.

ELENA  
 I'm okay. It happens.

BONNIE  
 No, I'm so sorry, it was like a  
 bird or something. It came out of  
 nowhere.

ELENA  
 It's okay. I can't let cars freak  
 me out for the rest of my life.

She shakes it off. Determined not to let it cloud her day.  
 Bonnie gets it. Appreciates it.

BONNIE  
 I predict this year is gonna be  
 kick ass. And I predict all the  
 sad and dark times are over. And  
 you're going to be happier than  
 happy. With some hot sex too.

Elena smiles. Touched by all Bonnie says.

ELENA

That's all good. Just one thing.  
If you're psychic, how come you  
didn't predict the bird?

Bonnie grins. HITS the gas and they're off.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Bonnie's Prius takes off down the road. The CAMERA PANS to a telephone pole. Where an ominous BLACK CROW sits, perched at the top. Deadly still.

EXT. MYSTIC FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

A small town high school. Nothing special. Just real.

A GUY enters frame, moving across the parking lot. We don't see his face. He passes through other arriving STUDENTS. Slowly a few people start to turn, noticing this new arrival.

EXT. MYSTIC FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - MORNING

Bonnie and Elena move down the hall when...

CAROLINE TRUITT (17) approaches. Extremely pretty in a manufactured way. Hair, make-up, wardrobe, she's done to death. Bit of a queen bee persona.

She sees Elena and immediately goes to her, embracing her, holding her tight.

CAROLINE

Hi girls. Elena, my god, how are you? It's so good to see you.

ELENA

(as rehearsed)

Thanks, Caroline, I'm fine.

Caroline is genuine. In her own way, she truly cares. Elena busies herself with her locker.

CAROLINE

Have you seen Matt yet?

Elena shakes her head.

BONNIE

They broke up, Caroline.

CAROLINE

I know that. But they can still talk.

ELENA

He was at his Dad's all summer.

CAROLINE

So what's the status? Friends, cordial, awkward at best?

Elena shrugs just as MATT (17) comes waltzing around the corner. Everybody's All-American. Handsome jock. Even-tempered, gentle eyes.

He sees the three girls.

MATT

Hey, guys...

His eyes go straight to Elena. She smiles. Friendly.

ELENA

Hi, Matt.

He gives her an awkward nod and takes off.

MATT

Good to see you. Later.

Caroline watches him go.

CAROLINE

In case you missed it, you two are awkward at best.

She heads off. Bonnie gives Elena a supportive smile. *Hang in there, girl.* Then, she takes off with Caroline. Elena turns back to her locker -- doing exactly that.

INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY - DAY

The mysterious new guy walks down the hall, turning into the ADMINISTRATION OFFICE. We catch a half-glimpse. Chiseled profile. Sunglasses.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - MORNING

The empty football field. Empty bleachers.

JEREMY (V.O.)

Don't take more than 2 in a 6 hour window.

EXT. DUMPSTER AREA - MORNING

Behind the bleachers of the football field, near the storage garage, hidden by dumpsters is -- THE PIT. As in a stoner's pit stop. Where you come to partake in all things illegal. Every small town school has one. Jeremy hangs with some STONERS.

VICKI (18) stares at two pills in her hand. Sexy hot. A little on the trashy side. She's very desirable And she knows it. Depends on it -- in that sad way.

She takes two and pops them in her mouth and swallows.

VICKI

What are they?

JEREMY

You might wanna reverse the order next time, ask first, swallow second; Alprazolam, a mellow and breezy descendant of the benzodiazepine family.

VICKI

What happens if I take more than two?

JEREMY

You'll shave your head and lip sync for the rest of your life.

Someone passes Jeremy a lit joint. He takes a toke. Turns back to Vicki just as...

TYLER STRATTON (18) saunters up. Athletic, attractive, arrogant. He goes straight for Vicki.

TYLER

I knew I'd find you here, holding court.

VICKI

(flip)  
With my fellow crack heads.

Tyler notices Jeremy -- sees the joint, takes it from him.

TYLER

Hey, Pete Wentz called. He wants his eyeliner back.

Jeremy doesn't miss a beat.

JEREMY

Pete Wentz, huh? How old school  
TRL of you. Carson Daly fan?

Tyler starts to lunge. Vicki pulls him back.

VICKI

Be nice. That's Elena's little  
brother.

TYLER

I know who he is, I'll still kick  
his ass.

He does a fake-out lunge. It makes Jeremy jump. Tyler  
LAUGHS. So does Vicki. That burns.

Tyler takes a big toke of the joint. Then, leans over and  
kisses Vicki -- shotguns his toke. It's sexy.

And it drives Jeremy mad. Deflated, Jeremy turns back to the  
STONERS, takes another hit. Bummin' hard.

INT. MYSTIC FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - ADMIN. OFFICE - DAY

The back of the new guy as he interacts with the secretary.

SCENE INTERCUTS:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Caroline passes by, then stops.

CAROLINE

Who's this?

She and Bonnie peer through the window.

BONNIE

I can only see his back.

CAROLINE

It's a hot back.

The secretary looks up at Stefan.

SECRETARY

Your records are incomplete.

STEFAN

Are they?

SECRETARY

You're missing immunization records, transcripts, parental contact information...

THROUGH THE WINDOW -- THE GIRLS CONTINUE TO WATCH.

CAROLINE

There's style there. Check out his boots. California? New York?

Bonnie closes her eyes -- calling on her psychic abilities.

BONNIE

I'm sensing Seattle. And he plays a guitar.

CAROLINE

Turn around, turn, turn...

INSIDE THE OFFICE

The secretary is shaking her head.

SECRETARY

We really prefer a parent to come in and meet with us in person. And we insist on transcripts.

Stefan slowly lowers his sunglasses. We still don't see his face, but the secretary looks up at him, suddenly transfixed. He speaks in a low, soft tone.

STEFAN

Please look again. I'm sure everything you need is there.

The secretary looks back down, scattered. Slightly frazzled.

SECRETARY

Well, you're right. So it is.

BONNIE

No fugly, no fugly...

Slowly, he turns. On Bonnie and Caroline's reactions. We still don't see his face. But, it's definitely thumbs up.

DOWN THE HALL

ELENA is at her locker. She sees Jeremy walk by with his STONER FRIENDS. He's shuffling his feet, swaying some, definitely stoned. He disappears into the Men's Room.

A flash of anger from Elena. She SLAMS her locker shut and charges off.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

Jeremy is at the sink, putting drops of Visine in his eyes when Elena storms into the bathroom.

TWO GUYS at the urinals complain.

PEEING GUY

Whoa, pants down, chick.

Elena ignores them. She storms up to Jeremy and spins him around, pushing him against the sink. She grabs his hands and SNIFFS them. She SNIFFS his face. Yes, he reeks of pot.

A look into his eyes reveal they're bloodshot. Reefer red. Jeremy jerks away. Embarrassed in front of the OTHER GUYS.

ELENA

Great. First day of school. And you're stoned.

JEREMY

No, I'm not.

Elena starts digging through his coat pockets, trying to find his stash. He jerks away, but she's fast and tough. She has her hands inside his coat jacket, feeling his pockets.

ELENA

Where is it? Is it on you?

JEREMY

You need to chill yourself.

ELENA

*"Chill yourself." Oooh. Stoner talk. Dude, you're so cool.*

She's searching his back pants pockets now. A COUPLA GUYS continue to watch, LAUGHING. "Cavity search" "I'm next."

JEREMY

There's none on me. Stop it--

He pushes her away. But Elena doesn't back down. She stands there -- determined.

ELENA

No, I'm gonna be all over your ass every single time, so before you take that next bong hit think to yourself, is it worth it? Is it worth the hell hath no fury of my crazy sister? Because I will be there to ruin your buzz every time. Got it?

Pause. Jeremy says nothing. He's stoned. Embarrassed.

Elena backs off a little. Did she go too far? Her anger gives way to hurt. She has nothing but love and concern for her brother.

ELENA (CONT'D)

I know who you are and it's not this person. Don't be this person.

Jeremy's eyes soften. A brief flash of vulnerability. That of a frightened boy. But it doesn't last. He jerks away.

JEREMY

I don't need this.

He takes off, defiant, blasting out the door. Elena watches him go. Her face pained.

INT. CORRIDOR - HIGH SCHOOL

Stefan exits the office. We still have yet to see his face. We see his feet, shoulders, back of his head.

Bonnie and Caroline follow him. We notice OTHER STUDENTS turn and glance at the NEW KID. Reactions vary. He moves to a door. Just as he approaches it, it opens, revealing...

ELENA. She stops in her tracks when she sees Stefan. And, finally, we see his face.

He's a gloriously, amazingly, epic-ly beautiful young man. Elegant and ageless, in a hanging on the wall of the Louvre kind of way.

He bumps into her. Steps back.

STEFAN

Pardon me.

He removes his sunglasses, revealing his gorgeous eyes. Looks at the door. Checking that it's the Men's Room.

Elena is mesmerized in the moment by his presence. He looks back to her.

STEFAN (CONT'D)  
Is this the Men's Room?

ELENA  
Yes, I was...long story.

They both move at the same time, bumping again. She goes the other way, when he does too, they almost bump again. He stops and allows her to pass. She smiles, embarrassed.

Elena starts off, but she can't help but turn back. The door slowly closes. But not before she locks eyes with him again.

ON ELENA -- Who was that guy?

TIME CUT:

INT. MYSTIC FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Elena is in class. The teacher, MR. TANNER, 40's, drones on. History -- Civil War. Ugh.

MR. TANNER  
Since our own home state of Virginia was a border state during the war, it played a significant role in the outcome...

Elena steals a glance to her right. Stefan is several desks away. He looks up, meeting her gaze. She quickly averts her eyes. When she dares to look up a moment later, he's looking at her again. Two desks back, Bonnie stealthily sends a text.

Elena's purse vibrates. She slides out her phone. FROM BONNIE: HAWT-E. STARING @ U.

She looks back to Bonnie and they share a smile. Then, she glances right and sees Matt staring at her. He looks away. She looks at Bonnie -- who shrugs.

EXT. MYSTIC FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - FIELD - DAY

Elena, Caroline and Bonnie approach the football field. They carry practice POM POMS.

CAROLINE  
His name is Stefan Whitmore. He lives with his great-uncle in the old Whitmore Boarding House.  
(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

He hasn't lived here since he was a kid. Military family. They traveled a lot. He's a Gemini and has a scratched retina and that's why he wears the shades inside.

BONNIE

You got all that in one day?

CAROLINE

I got all that in between bells after third period. So, bagsies. He's all mine. I saw him first.

BONNIE

I say we both throw ourselves at him and whoever he picks gets him.

CAROLINE

That's the same as saying he's mine.

BONNIE

Ouch. Bitch.

Elena looks to the field. Sees the CHEERLEADERS warming up. The FOOTBALL TEAM running drills. Beat.

ELENA

You know what, guys? I'm gonna skip out.

CAROLINE

What do you mean? It's Freshman tryouts.

BONNIE

It's better than IDOL.

ELENA

You guys enjoy. I'll catch up with you later.

Elena throws them a smile and takes off.

CAROLINE

You can't just...

BONNIE

Let it go.

Bonnie motions to Caroline. *Don't make a big deal.*

EXT. CEMETERY - LATE AFTERNOON

A sprawling, ornate cemetery filled with enormous mausoleums, and rows and rows of well-tended tombstones. This town is rich in history, and its dead are revered.

ELENA (V.O.)  
*Dear Diary. I made it. I got  
 through the day in one piece.*

Find Elena leaning up against a tombstone, writing.

ELENA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Okay, so I wasn't feeling the pom  
 pom's. But I think that could be a  
 good thing...*

A closer look reveals that the pair of tombstones are labeled GRAYSON GILBERT and MIRANDA SOMERS GILBERT. LOVING PARENTS.

ANGLE THROUGH A NEARBY CRYPT

Someone is watching Elena. Lurking. She looks up, noticing...

There's a CROW perched on her mother's tombstone. Large, black, still. It stares at her, like it knows her.

ELENA (CONT'D)  
 Okay...hi, bird.

It doesn't move. Just watches her. Unblinking.

ELENA (CONT'D)  
 Not creepy or anything. Big black  
 crow in a cemetery.

A slow, thick FOG creeps in, settling in around Elena. She notices it. Weird. She stands up.

ELENA (CONT'D)  
 And cue the fog. *Jesus.*

The crow still stares. Annoyed, she waves one hand at it.

ELENA (CONT'D)  
 Shoo...or whatever.

It doesn't move. She looks at it. Then makes a sudden LUNGE for it. Startled, the crow flies away.

ELENA (CONT'D)  
 That's what I thought.

She turns around and GASPS --- THE CROW IS ON THE TOMBSTONE BEHIND HER. Its eyes burning into her. Her head whips in the direction she saw it fly and then back to the tombstone.

ELENA (CONT'D)

How did ---

Freaked out, she bends over to pick up her bag, but the crow suddenly takes flight again, fluttering its enormous wings. Elena holds back a scream.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Screw you.

She briskly walks away. The fog is getting thicker... murkier. And there's the crow again, perched in a low tree.

She picks up her pace, almost running. The fog swirling around her. She loses her bearings, trips over a vine...

She goes to the ground. Shit. She rights herself, wincing. Have scuffed her leg. She looks back and sees...

THE FIGURE OF A MAN through the fog. What the...?

That's it. Elena hauls ass. She takes off in the opposite direction, running, racing through the cemetery when she...

RUNS SMACK INTO STEFAN. Elena SCREAMS.

STEFAN

Are you okay?

Elena scrambles back, freaked.

ELENA

Were you following me?

Confused, she looks behind her. Where the FIGURE was.

STEFAN

No. I mean, yes, sort of. I saw you fall.

ELENA

(suspicious)

You like to lurk in graveyards?

STEFAN

I was visiting...I have family here.

She sags. Embarrassed. Suddenly nervous in his presence.

ELENA

Oh wow. Tactless, I'm sorry. I'm not thinking clearly, it's the fog, made me foggy and there was this bird and it was all very Hitchcock there for a second -- it was Hitchcock, right, the bird movie?  
(beat, stopping herself)  
I'm Elena.

Stefan smiles at her nervousness.

STEFAN

I'm Stefan.

ELENA

I know.

He reaches over and brushes her hair to the side. Pulls a small leaf from it. Elena almost trembles.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Thank you...

There's something electric in this moment. As he pulls his hand away, Elena notices a RING ON HIS HAND. An antique. With a lapis stone at its center. We've seen it before.

ELENA (CONT'D)

(dry)  
Nice ring.

STEFAN

Family ring. I know it's weird.

ELENA

It's just, there are rings and then there are RINGS.

Stefan stops suddenly, head tilting. As if smelling the air.

STEFAN

Did you hurt yourself?

Elena looks down and sees her pants are torn. She leans down and lifts her pant's leg to reveal...

BLOOD COMING FROM A SMALL CUT. Stefan's eyes FIXATE on it.

ELENA

Oh, yeah, look at that.

She inspects it. Blood drips down her ankle. Stefan can't tear his eyes away. His breath gets ragged.

STEFAN

Get away.

ELENA

(looking up)

What ---

He spins away from her, hiding his face. Elena doesn't see, but we glimpse something -- a vein pulsating? Something in his eyes? It's so fast, we're not quite sure.

STEFAN

(fierce)

I SAID GO.

Stunned and confused, Elena retreats a few steps. But then stops and looks back. Stefan is gone.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. WHITMORE BOARDING HOUSE - DUSK

A turn-of-century home set deep in the woods. A gorgeous arched window on the upper floor...A MALE VOICE. Stefan.

STEFAN (V.O.)  
*I lost control today.*

INT. WHITMORE BOARDING HOUSE - STEFAN'S ROOM - DUSK

He sits at an old desk, writing in a journal.

STEFAN (V.O.)  
*In an instant. My veins were on fire, I couldn't resist her.*

INT. WHITMORE BOARDING HOUSE - BATHROOM - DUSK

Stefan stands under the streaming jets of his shower.

STEFAN (V.O.)  
*I never should have tried to enter her life. What would she do if she ever learned the truth? About me...and why I'm really here.*

INT. WHITMORE BOARDING HOUSE - STEFAN'S ROOM - DUSK

Stefan, dry and shirtless, paces the room. Restless.

STEFAN (V.O.)  
*I should stay away. But I don't know if I can.*

He stops at his desk, picking up a book. It's ELENA'S JOURNAL. He stares at it for a beat.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITMORE BOARDING HOUSE - STEFAN'S ROOM - DUSK

Fully dressed, Stefan steps to the ledge of the enormous window that lines the wall of his room and JUMPS...

EXT. WHITMORE BOARDING HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

...falling the fifty feet to the ground. He lands effortlessly. And heads off into the woods.

INT. ELENA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - EVENING

Elena puts a bandage on her cut leg. Jenna stands in the doorway chatting with her.

JENNA  
Maybe blood makes him squeamish?

ELENA  
This guy is not the squeamish type.  
This guy has DANGER tattooed  
somewhere on his body.

Jenna eyes her watch.

JENNA  
Aren't you meeting Bonnie?

ELENA  
I'm gonna stay in. I'll call her.

JENNA  
You should go. Don't sit home.  
Keep it up. You're doing good.

Elena smiles. Appreciates this. She puts the bandage box back in the medicine cabinet. She stops, pulls out a prescription bottle. She shakes it, opens it. Suspicious.

JENNA (CONT'D)  
What's the matter?

ELENA  
Dr. Henderson prescribed these  
after the accident.  
(off Jenna's nod)  
I took two.

She tilts the bottle so Jenna can see. It's almost empty.

ELENA (CONT'D)  
I'm gonna kill him.

JENNA  
I got this one. He'll be home  
soon. Let me handle it.

Jenna is resolute.

INT. MYSTIC GRILL - EVENING

A cozy neighborhood bar and grill. JEREMY is at a video game, playing and eating at the same time. Vicki, in a waitress apron, passes by. She barely acknowledges him.

AT A BACK BOOTH

Vicki sets down a burger plate in front of Matt. He's sitting with Tyler.

She gives Tyler a side-long glance before walking away. Tyler subtly checks out her ass. Matt busts him.

MATT

Please tell me you're not hooking up with my sister.

TYLER

I'm not hooking up with your sister.

MATT

(knows he's full of shit)  
You're not an asshole, either.

INT. MYSTIC GRILL - BACK ROOM - EVENING

Vicki fills a tray with supplies. Jeremy enters the room.

VICKI

You can't be back here.

JEREMY

What's your deal? This summer you're one way, school starts and you can't be bothered.

VICKI

I'm ignoring you.

JEREMY

(challenging)  
Ignoring implies caring enough to avoid.

VICKI

What implies total lack of interest? Look, Jeremy, I appreciate all the attention and the pharmaceuticals, but you can't follow me around like a lost puppy.

JEREMY

When was the last time you had sex  
with a puppy?

Vicki looks to the dining room to see if anyone's listening.

VICKI

Keep it down.

JEREMY

What does it matter who knows?

VICKI

Because I'm a senior and you're  
not. I don't wanna tell the world  
I deflowered Elena's kid brother.

JEREMY

And deflowered and deflowered.

VICKI

We hooked up a few times in a drug-  
fueled haze. Now, back off before  
you ruin things with me and Tyler.

JEREMY

The guy's a douche, he only wants  
you for your ass.

VICKI

Yeah? And what do you want me for?

She blows by. On Jeremy, pissed off and hurt. He exits...

INT. MYSTIC GRILL - NIGHT

...makes a beeline for the door. Vicki watches him go out of  
the corner of her eye.

INT. ELENA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Elena grabs her purse and keys, heading out. She opens the  
front door to find...

EXT. ELENA'S HOUSE - VERANDA - NIGHT

...Stefan standing on her porch.

ELENA

(startled)

Oh.

STEFAN

Hi. Sorry. I was about to knock.  
(beat)  
I wanted to apologize for earlier.  
I know it was strange.

ELENA

That's an understatement. How did  
you know where I lived?

STEFAN

It's a small town.  
(then)  
I thought you might like this back.

He hands over her journal.

STEFAN (CONT'D)

You must have dropped it in the  
cemetery.

ELENA

Thank you.

She's wary, but intrigued.

STEFAN

I didn't read it.

ELENA

You have more restraint than most  
people.

STEFAN

I wouldn't want anyone to read  
mine.

ELENA

You keep a journal?

STEFAN

(simply)  
Memories are important.

Elena knows this.

ELENA

Yeah.  
(re: the journal)  
I'll just...

She heads inside to put the book away in her school bag. Stefan lingers at the door. Eyeing the threshold. Unable to enter. Elena calls back to him.

ELENA (CONT'D)  
You don't have to stand out there.

Not exactly an invitation.

STEFAN  
I'm fine.

She returns to the front door. He notices her purse.

STEFAN (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, were you going somewhere?

ELENA  
I'm meeting my friend.

She stares at him. Considering.

ELENA (CONT'D)  
Do you want to come?

He smiles at her. A smile you could get lost in.

INT. MYSTIC GRILL - NIGHT

Bonnie slides into the booth with Matt. Grabs a fry.

BONNIE  
Five minute heads up. I'm meeting Elena.

MATT  
How's she doing? I can't get a read.

BONNIE  
Her mom and dad died. How do you think? She's putting on a good face, but it's tough. It's only been four months. She needs time.

MATT  
I get it. That's what I'm gonna give her.

Suddenly Bonnie's face shifts. He turns to follow her gaze.

AT THE FRONT DOOR

Elena and Stefan enter together. Matt's look hardens. He quickly turns back around.

ON ELENA. She saw Matt's reaction. She hesitates at the door for a second, uncertain.

ON MATT AND BONNIE

As Caroline appears at their booth. She's staring at Stefan with Elena. She looks to Matt.

CAROLINE

Could you do something about your girlfriend? I'm getting really annoyed with her lack of respect.

MATT

She's not my girlfriend.

Matt gets up. Just as Elena and Stefan arrive.

ELENA

Matt, have you met Stefan yet? He's new and I was telling him how this was the spot.

Stefan holds out his hand. Pause. Matt shakes it.

MATT

It's the only spot.

STEFAN

Hey, how ya doin'?

Matt returns to Tyler. Avoiding more awkwardness.

INT. ELENA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jeremy enters the kitchen from the back door. Jenna finishes setting the table.

JENNA

Great, you're just in time for dinner.

JEREMY

You actually cooked?

JENNA

All your favorites.

Jeremy sits down. He looks at his plate, startled.

JEREMY

What is this?

The plate contains an assortment of pills, pot and various accoutrements. All laid out like separate courses.

JENNA

I found the main course in your sock drawer. The sides, courtesy of your dress shoes. Oldest trick in the book, by the way.

She points at a small bong.

JENNA (CONT'D)

Under the mattress.

Rolling papers.

JENNA (CONT'D)

DVD cases. We'll save the girl-on-girl porn you hid in Iron Man for another conversation.

JEREMY

I can't believe you went through my room.

JENNA

Technically it's my room. Your parents left it to me, along with the responsibility for you.

JEREMY

I guess that was their mistake, wasn't it?

Jenna exhales. Keeping her anger in check.

JENNA

Look. Four months ago I didn't even know how to keep a plant alive. So I'm not pretending to be some expert on parenting. Because, let's face it, I'm better at being the cool aunt who looks the other way. But the jig is up. School's started and I know how it can go one way or the other for someone like you. So we're gonna go textbook on this one.

JEREMY  
Yeah, what's that?

JENNA  
You're not leaving this house for  
two weeks. School, home, every day.  
And that's law.

She's firm. Intense. On Jeremy, not happy with Jenna's new disciplinarian persona.

EXT. MYSTIC GRILL - NIGHT

Through the front window, we see a group of teens crammed around a table together.

INT. MYSTIC GRILL - NIGHT

Caroline and Bonnie sit across from Stefan and Elena.

BONNIE  
Why Mystic Falls?

STEFAN  
I was born here. I missed it.

CAROLINE  
Parents?

STEFAN  
Both my parents are dead.

Elena registers this. So does everyone at the table, with all eyes finding their way to Elena.

ELENA  
That's terrible. I'm sorry.

STEFAN  
Thank you.

Something else that connects them. Caroline doesn't like it.

CAROLINE  
No siblings?

STEFAN  
None that I talk to. I live with my  
great-uncle.

ANGLE ON TYLER AND MATT

Playing pool. Both of them very aware of Stefan's table.

TYLER  
They're throwing looks. She's into it.

MATT  
Don't want to talk about it, Tyler.

TYLER  
Just sayin', man. Looks like she's coming out of her "I can't be with anyone" phase. You might wanna try to get back in that before it's too late.

MATT  
You might wanna shut your mouth.

But Matt's troubled by it. Tyler can tell.

TYLER  
Watch this.

He heads for the booth just as Vicki arrives with a tray full of soda refills. He gives her the slightest nudge.

Her tray spills all over Stefan.

VICKI  
Jesus, Tyler.

Elena gets up, glaring at Tyler. Bonnie and Vicki try to wipe up the mess.

ELENA  
What the hell was that?

TYLER  
(smirking)  
Sorry.

Tyler stares at Stefan. Wanting Stefan to instigate the fight. But Stefan won't take the bait.

STEFAN  
It's fine.

TYLER  
Are you sure? Cuz I'd understand it if you were mad.

Stefan glares. But he still won't take the bait.

BONNIE  
Your shirt.

She tries wiping it off. But when she touches him, she stops. Her face clouds for a second. She looks up at him, slightly troubled. No one else picks up on it.

STEFAN  
It's only a shirt. It's about time  
I get going anyway.

He looks at everyone. Poised. Polite.

STEFAN (CONT'D)  
It was nice meeting you guys.

Then to Elena.

STEFAN (CONT'D)  
Goodnight, Elena.

She smiles goodnight. Then, Stefan turns and exits. It takes a moment for Elena to shake it off. But then she turns to Tyler. Disgusted.

ELENA  
Really nice.

Tyler ignores her, happy with himself.

INT. WHITMORE BOARDING HOUSE - STEFAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Stefan is writing in his journal again. A KNOCK on his door breaks his reverie. An OLDER MAN, PETE (70's) enters. He carries some papers.

PETE  
I filled 'em all out. If that  
school needs anything else, have  
them call me.

STEFAN  
Thanks, Pete.

Pete sees Stefan's conflicted face.

PETE  
What's wrong with you?

STEFAN  
I think I've made a mistake  
exposing myself.

PETE

It was your choice. You wanted to be near her. To know her. Either leave or make the most of it.

He heads for the door. Turns back. Smiles.

PETE (CONT'D)

It's just teen angst. You'd think after 200 years you'd know that, Uncle Stefan.

Pete exits. Stefan's smile goes away. He can't quite shake his turmoil. He goes to a big armoire. Finds the key, unlocks it.

Inside are his private KEEPSAKES and stacks of OLD JOURNALS. From the last two hundred years.

He pulls out one particular journal -- an older one.

Aged leather, thick paper, written in quill pen. He flips to a page. It's a drawing of a girl. **She looks identical to Elena.** How is that possible?

Only a closer look reveals the inscription: ***Katherine, 1864.***

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. MYSTIC FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Mr. Tanner is in the middle of a discussion. He's a brittle, ornery man who is determined to "teach you" at all costs.

MR. TANNER

The Battle of Willow Creek. Took place right at the end of the War. In our very own Mystic Falls. How many casualties resulted in this battle? Miss Bennett?

BONNIE

Uh...a lot, I'm not sure...but like a whole lot.

MR. TANNER

Cute becomes dumb in an instant, Miss Bennett.

Bonnie shrinks in her seat. That wasn't nice.

MR. TANNER (CONT'D)

Mr. Donovan?

Matt looks up. Uh-oh.

MR. TANNER (CONT'D)

Would you like to take this opportunity to overcome your embedded jock stereotype?

MATT

That's okay, Mr. Tanner, I'm cool with it.

MR. TANNER

Elena. Surely you can enlighten your friends about one of this town's most significant historical events.

ELENA

I'm sorry. I don't know.

MR. TANNER

I was willing to be lenient last year, for obvious reasons, Elena. But the personal excuses ended with summer break.

Elena's eyes widen. No one can quite believe Mr. Tanner went there. Suddenly, someone pipes up:

STEFAN

There were 346 casualties, unless you're counting the local civilians.

Everyone looks at him with surprise. How did he know that?

MR. TANNER

You're correct, Mr....

STEFAN

Whitmore.

MR. TANNER

Whitmore? Any relation to the original Mystic Falls settlers?

STEFAN

(wry)  
Distant.

MR. TANNER

Very good, sir, except there were no civilian casualties in that battle.

STEFAN

Actually, there were twenty-seven. Confederate soldiers fired on a church believing it to be housing weapons. They were wrong.

(beat)

The Founders' archives are stored in Civil Hall, if you'd like to brush up on your facts. Mr. Tanner.

Point, Stefan. Elena stares ahead, trying to hide her smile.

EXT. MYSTIC FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Lunchtime. STUDENTS mingle, eat, chatter. Matt and Tyler throw a FOOTBALL around with some other PLAYERS.

Elena and Bonnie sit together, snacking on chips. Bonnie points across the quad. To where Caroline walks with Stefan, chatting him up.

ELENA

She's relentless.

BONNIE

Like a pit bull. She's inviting him to the pop up party.

ELENA

There's a pop up party?

BONNIE

Tonight. Caroline decided. She wants to be the first one this year.

ELENA

Why didn't she tell me?

BONNIE

It just popped up. And she's pissed at you.

ELENA

Because of Stefan?

BONNIE

Because you breathe, Elena. Because the teacher chose you to erase the chalk board in the first grade. Because it's who she is.

They continue to watch as...

ACROSS THE QUAD

Matt hurls the football. He gets tackled right as he lets go. The ball sails off course.

Elena sees that the ball is heading right for Stefan and Caroline. She opens her mouth to shout a heads up...

...but at the last second Stefan turns, catching the ball with ease. As if he heard it coming.

Elena and Bonnie exchange a look. That was hot.

ON STEFAN AND CAROLINE

As Matt jogs up to them. Begrudgingly impressed.

MATT

Nice catch.

STEFAN

(handing the ball back)  
Thanks.

Matt heads back to his buddies.

ON ELENA AND BONNIE

BONNIE

So, party. You in? I mean, I understand if you're not feeling it.

ELENA

I'm in.

Elena doesn't tear her eyes away from Stefan. Bonnie registers this.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MYSTIC FALLS - THE FALLS - NIGHT

A stunning waterfall, lit up by the rich moonlight. We see how the town got its name.

Through the trees, a wide clearing. A BONFIRE roars in the center. TEENS enjoy their impromptu party.

Stefan arrives. He scans the sea of people. It's crowded. He tilts his head, listening.

PUSH IN ON HIS EAR as it filters through the sounds of the party. The ROARING BONFIRE...a couple GIRLS rolling a joint. A GUY picking up on a GIRL...

A CACOPHONY of CHATTER. And then, the voice he's listening for.

CAMERA PUSHES AT HIGH SPEED THROUGH THE PARTY, arriving at Elena. She's talking to Bonnie.

BONNIE

It was more like a vibe.

ELENA

What kind of vibe?

BONNIE

Like a dangerous vibe. I debated even telling you.

ELENA

Aren't you taking this psychic thing a little too far?

BONNIE

All right, maybe I'm not psychic,  
but I do have good intuition. And  
when I touched Stefan, I felt  
something.

BACK WITH STEFAN. He's overheard their conversation. Not  
sure what to think of it.

He starts moving in their direction, but Caroline waylays  
him. She has a drink in her hand. Clearly not her first.

CAROLINE

You made it.

STEFAN

I did.

CAROLINE

Let's get you a drink.

He's too polite to say no. They head off. Across the way,  
Elena still talks with Bonnie. Unaware that he has arrived.

INT. ELENA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jenna works on her laptop, papers spread out all around her.  
She rubs her eyes, bleary. Gets up.

INT. ELENA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY/JEREMY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jenna knocks, then opens Jeremy's door.

JENNA

I'm ordering pizza. What...

She realizes Jeremy's not there.

JENNA (CONT'D)

Unbelievable.

EXT. BONFIRE - NIGHT

The party is raging. And Jeremy is right in the center of  
it, helping himself to a drink at the keg. He sees Vicki and  
makes a beeline for her.

VICKI

(dismissive)

Is that for me?

She takes the drink from his hand. He lets her.

JEREMY

What's got you so screwed up? I know my problem, but what's yours? Mom? Dad? That golden retriever brother of yours?

She LAUGHS. Takes another drink.

VICKI

Don't read into me. Sometimes a crack whore is just a crack whore.

JEREMY

Why do you talk that way about yourself?

VICKI

It's a joke.

JEREMY

Lacking in humor and self esteem. And, for the record, sex is not your calling card. Not with me. We had fun this summer and you know it and it sucks that you can't admit it.

BAM! Suddenly, Jeremy is RAMMED FROM BEHIND. By Tyler. It knocks the wind out of Jeremy. Who almost keels over.

Tyler is there to LAUGH HIMSELF SILLY.

TYLER

Now why is it I always see you hovering around this beauty?  
(to Vicki)  
Does he think he has a chance?

Vicki locks eyes with Jeremy. There's a connection there. However brief. Then, Vicki LAUGHS.

VICKI

Yeah, right...

Together, Tyler and Vicki saunter off as Jeremy watches.

ON ELENA AND BONNIE

BONNIE

No sign of Stefan?

ELENA

Mr. Danger Vibe?

BONNIE

All right, all right, I take it back.

ELENA

Can your psychic powers tell me if he's coming?

BONNIE

Go ahead, make fun of me. I'm sure the Druids were laughed at too.

But Bonnie closes her eyes, concentrating. Tipsy. Elena watches her, amused.

ELENA

Is anything happening?

BONNIE

Just give me a minute. I'm supposed to concentrate...

ELENA

You need a crystal ball. Wait --

She grabs a beer bottle from the ground. She places it in Bonnie's hands. They touch. Suddenly, Bonnie's face shifts. She grabs Elena's wrist.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Ow. Easy --

Bonnie stares into nothing. Like she's in a trance. Elena pulls away -- snapping Bonnie out of it.

BONNIE

Okay, that was weird.

ELENA

Ya think? What happened?

BONNIE

I don't know. I'm drunk. It's just, when I touched you, I saw a crow.

Elena stops cold.

ELENA

What?

BONNIE

Yeah, I saw this black crow and...

ELENA

What else?

BONNIE

(remembering)

I felt scared -- or more like I should be scared...because the crow brings death. Wait, that's not it...the crow brings the man and the man brings death. Yeah, that's it.

Elena is disturbed. For that matter, so is Bonnie.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

I need a drink.

She heads off. Elena turns around. Stefan stands right in front of her.

ELENA

Oh...

STEFAN

I did it again, didn't I? Sorry.

He smiles at her, charming and sheepish. Then notices her face.

STEFAN (CONT'D)

You're upset about something.

ELENA

It's nothing. My friend...she thinks she's ---  
(shaking it off)  
Never mind. Hi. You're here.

She seems glad to see him. As is he to see her.

STEFAN

I'm here.

ACROSS THE BONFIRE

Jeremy throws back a drink. Drains it. Then, looks over to see his sister Elena with Stefan across the way. He ducks out of sight.

He moves through the crowd, recognizing his Stoner friends. He heads over -- just as a GIGGLING Vicki disappears into the woods with Tyler. They're both drunk.

ON ELENA AND STEFAN

They stroll through the party, not really going anywhere, just being together. The FIRE CRACKLES behind them, casting a romantic glow.

ELENA

You're kind of the talk of the town.

STEFAN

Am I?

ELENA

New guy, tragic past. Very mysterious.

STEFAN

How do you know it's tragic?

ELENA

You lost your parents.

To her it's that simple. Stefan nods, agreeing.

STEFAN

What about you? What's your sad story?

ELENA

What makes you think I have a sad story?

STEFAN

We met in a graveyard.

ELENA

Technically, we met in the Men's Room.

They both smile. Then, she turns to him quietly.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Last Spring, my parents' car went off a bridge into the lake. I was in the backseat. I survived. They didn't. That's my story.

Silence.

STEFAN  
 Thank you for telling me.  
 (then)  
 You're right. It's tragic.

ELENA  
 Yeah...it is.

On both of them, united by tragedy.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Jeremy is shit-faced. He stumbles through the woods. He finds a spot, unzips and pees.

He can hear a COUPLE making out. He quickly finishes and zips up -- moving towards the NOISE. Through trees and brush, he comes upon...

VICKI AND TYLER

He has her up against a tree. They're all over each other.

ON JEREMY -- completely bummed out. He starts to leave when he hears...

VICKI  
 No way, Ty.

ON VICKI AND TYLER

He's laughing, enjoying himself. It's all fun and games with him. Vicki pushes him away with little success.

VICKI (CONT'D)  
 I am not having sex against a tree.

TYLER  
 C'mon, it'll be hot.

VICKI  
 For who? Not going to happen. Not here like this. No, no, no...

But, Tyler is persistent. Aggressive, even.

VICKI (CONT'D)  
 Ow, now that hurt.

Jeremy comes out from the trees.

JEREMY  
 Leave her alone.

Tyler pulls back. A little breathless.

TYLER  
You're starting to get on my  
nerves, Gilbert.

VICKI  
Just go, Tyler, get the hell away  
from me.

Tyler gathers himself. Playing it cool.

TYLER  
Vicki Donovan says no. There's a  
first.

What a dick. He heads off. Vicki adjusts her clothing.

VICKI  
I didn't need your help.

JEREMY  
Seems like you did.

VICKI  
He was just drunk.

JEREMY  
I'm drunk. Am I throwing myself on  
you?

VICKI  
No, you're worse. You wanna talk  
to me. Get to know me. Really,  
truly, deeply. See into my soul.  
Be dazzled by my intelligence. And  
screw and screw and screw until  
you're done with me.

Beat. Jeremy stares at her. Thrown by her drunken and very  
honest outpouring.

JEREMY  
Is that what you think?

VICKI  
It's what I know.

And with that Vicki takes off through the woods.

EXT. BONFIRE - NIGHT

Stefan and Elena are sitting by themselves, away from the crowd.

They see Caroline with Bonnie nearby. Caroline is trying not to look at them, but she can't help herself.

STEFAN

I like Bonnie. She's seems like a good friend. Very loyal.

ELENA

Yes, the best.

STEFAN

You might have to explain Caroline to me.

ELENA

She's one of my oldest friends. She's just playing some role she thinks she's supposed to. As seen on TV. But it's not really her.

STEFAN

And Matt? Who can't keep his eyes off of us.

Elena looks around. Sure enough, Matt is with a GROUP OF GIRLS, but he keeps glancing their way.

ELENA

Friends since pre-school. Good friends. But, somewhere along the way we had this notion we should be more than that, so we started to date. It was comfortable, but not...

STEFAN

Passionate.

ELENA

No, it wasn't passionate.

Elena looks directly into his eyes. Then, she leans over and touches his face, brushing his bangs aside. A current moves between them. It's potent. Stefan takes a deep breath. Struggling a little.

STEFAN

Are you thirsty?

ELENA

A little.

STEFAN

Me too. Here, let me.

He takes her cup and then walks off, disappearing into the crowd. Elena waits, a little confused by his abrupt exit.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Vicky is walking drunkenly through the brush. A THICK, MOVING MIST begins to swirl around her feet. In moments the ground is covered by a blanket of fog.

She looks around. The fog is everywhere. Rising to waist level. A RUSTLE OF LEAVES makes her spin around.

VICKI

Jeremy?

The BLACK CROW SWOOPS down from the trees. Flying by her.

VICKI (CONT'D)

Jesus.

Her eyes dart up to the trees. What the hell was that? Suddenly, WHOOSH. She's YANKED down, disappearing.

A BLOOD CURDLING SCREAM. And then SILENCE.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. BONFIRE - NIGHT

Elena approaches the keg. Looking around. She doesn't see Stefan anywhere. But Matt's there.

MATT

Looking for someone?

She doesn't know what to say. He pours a cup of beer, offers it to her. She takes it. *Thank you.* An awkward silence.

MATT (CONT'D)

Elena, I'm not so good with the awkward.

Elena nods. She's not either.

MATT (CONT'D)

It's not us. It never has been. That was the cool thing. We were always easy.

ELENA

Yes, we were--

MATT

You know this isn't the way I want things to be. But what I want isn't as important as what you need. I'm your friend, Elena. So, I'm here. For you. Okay?

A long silence. Elena smiles softly. Grateful. Matt smiles too. There's a special bond between these two.

ACROSS THE FIRE

Caroline sees Stefan heading for Elena. Waylays him.

CAROLINE

There you are.

She moves closer. She's drunk and forward.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Have you been down to the falls yet? It's really cool at night, I can show you...if you want.

STEFAN

Are you drunk?

Caroline GIGGLES.

CAROLINE  
Very drunk. C'mon, let's go, if  
the water's warm we can...

STEFAN  
It's not going to happen.

CAROLINE  
We can stay here if you want.

STEFAN  
You and me. We're not going to  
happen. I'm sorry, Caroline.

Caroline is stung. Not accustomed to rejection. He gives  
her a polite smile and walks away.

He heads for Elena, leaving Caroline in the dust.

ON STEFAN AND ELENA

As they come together. Elena's amused.

ELENA  
I was wondering who abducted you.  
Now I know.

STEFAN  
Is she like this with all guys?

ELENA  
You're fresh meat. She'll back off  
eventually.  
(noticing something)  
You've got to be kidding me.

FOLLOW HER LOOK

Jeremy is stumbling through the crowd. Hammered.

STEFAN  
What is it?

ELENA  
My brother.

STEFAN  
The drunk kid?

ELENA  
That's the one. Excuse me?

STEFAN  
You want help?

ELENA  
Trust me. You don't wanna witness  
this.

Elena hurries off. She sees Jeremy heading into the woods.  
Follows him.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

He weaves into a couple making out against a tree. The GUY  
pushes him away.

MAKE-OUT GUY  
Bounce, moron.

JEREMY  
My apologies.  
(under his breath)  
Douchewheel.

He stumbles down the path. Elena is gaining.

ELENA  
Jeremy. Jeremy!

He keeps moving deeper into the woods. Calling out.

JEREMY  
I don't wanna hear it.

ELENA  
Too bad.

She picks up her pace. Jeremy tries to run, pushing through  
the brush. He suddenly TRIPS and falls. Over a BODY.

It's Vicki. Her eyes are wide open. Staring into nothing.  
Blood is everywhere.

JEREMY  
Holy shit. Vicki.  
(shaking her)  
VICKI.

Elena reaches them.

ELENA  
Oh my god.

Suddenly Vicki lets out a RAGGED GASP. It's a horrifying sound. Her hand GRABS Jeremy. Her eyes pleading for help.

EXT. BONFIRE - NIGHT

ELENA  
Somebody help!!

ANGLE ON ELENA as she comes out of the woods. Jeremy is carrying Vicki in his arms. Everyone begins to take notice. Matt pushes through the crowd.

MATT  
What the hell -- Vicky!

He races to help his sister. Instant panic. Chaos. A DIN OF VOICES as everyone reacts. Bonnie calls 911, Matt takes Vicki, lays her down. OTHERS crowd her, trying to help. Tyler is freaked.

TYLER  
What happened to her?

On Stefan, staring in shock at the sight. PUSH IN ON HIS FACE as ONE VOICE cuts through the all else.

ELENA  
(tunneled)  
Her neck. Something bit her. It's bad, she's losing a lot of blood.

Stefan is stunned. He slowly backs away. Freaked out.

Matt, tending to Vicki, catches a glimpse of Stefan's face. He shakes it off, focused on his sister. But he'll remember it later.

Stefan lets himself get swallowed up by the crowd. And then, with everyone's attention elsewhere, he RUNS.

INT. WHITMORE HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Stefan races into the house. Pete is surprised by the ferocity of Stefan's entrance.

PETE  
What's going on?

STEFAN  
You said it was quiet here. That I was the only one.

PETE

Mystic Falls hasn't been active in years. I'm certain of it.

STEFAN

A girl was attacked tonight.

PETE

Do you think it was...?

But Stefan doesn't respond, he's already up the stairs. Pete watches. Worried.

INT. WHITMORE HOUSE - STEFAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stefan enters his attic loft to find the huge bay window open. Curtains blowing. He stops. Senses something amiss.

He walks slowly across the room towards the window when...

A BLACK CROW COMES DARTING THROUGH. Stefan ducks, as the crow disappears into the rafters. Crossing back and forth, up and down. Manic.

Stefan watches it flutter about madly -- not seeing the FIGURE THAT APPEARS IN THE WINDOW BEHIND HIM. But, then Stefan stops in his tracks. Sensing it. Slowly, he turns and comes face to face with--

A DARKLY HANDSOME MAN. (23)

Stefan's eyes burn with distaste.

STEFAN

Damon.

The Man's piercing eyes glitter smugly.

DAMON

Hello, brother.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. WHITMORE HOUSE - STEFAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The CROW SITS on the window sill watching...

Stefan pace across his bedroom floor. While Damon can be seen through the bathroom door, washing up.

STEFAN

When did you get here?

Stefan is very pointed and reserved around his brother. While Damon is just the opposite. Damon is deliberately light. Casual. Endless charm.

DAMON

I couldn't miss your first day of school.

STEFAN

How did you find me?

Damon stops. Looks at his brother. Really? Do I really have to answer that?

DAMON

Your hair's different. I like it.

STEFAN

It's been 15 years, Damon.

DAMON

Time flies. Thank god. I couldn't take one more day of the 90's. That horrible grunge look. It didn't suit you. It's important to stay away from the fads, Stefan. Always opt for timeless.

Damon dries his hands. Was that blood he was washing away?

STEFAN

Why are you here?

DAMON

I missed my brother.

STEFAN

You hate small towns. It's boring. There's nothing to do.

DAMON

I've managed to keep busy.

Beat. Damon smirks.

STEFAN

You almost killed that girl tonight.

DAMON

Ya know I like the pill-poppers. Nice buzz. Don't worry, I made it look like an animal. They'll blame a bear or mountain lion. You're safe.

STEFAN

You didn't come all the way back to Mystic Falls just to play games.

DAMON

Maybe. Maybe not. I would ask you the same question, but I'm fairly certain the answer is all summed up in one word: Elena.

Stefan's jaw clenches at the mention of her name. Damon grins. He knows he's hit his target.

EXT. MYSTIC FALLS - ACCESS ROAD - NIGHT

Matt climbs into the back of the AMBULANCE before it pulls away. POLICE question the remaining PARTIERS.

An ANIMAL CONTROL UNIT pulls in.

Bonnie comes up to Elena. Her face tense and drawn.

BONNIE

We're gonna go mainline coffee and wait for news.

ELENA

I have to get Jeremy home.

Bonnie nods, understanding. Elena starts to go but senses Bonnie is very withdrawn. Haunted.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Bonnie? What is it? Are you okay? Don't freak yourself out with this psychic stuff.

Bonnie nods.

BONNIE

I know, I know...but, I'm getting this crazy feeling that whatever happened tonight...is just beginning.

Elena stares at her friend. What is she talking about?

ON JEREMY

He sits under a tree. Glassy eyed. Watching the scene unfold before him. He watches the AMBULANCE take off. He sees Elena walking over to him.

ELENA

Let's go.

Jeremy staggers to his feet, silently. Together, they walk towards the road. Suddenly...

TYLER APPEARS -- ATTACKING JEREMY.

TYLER

You sonofabitch. Why did you leave her?

Elena tries to break them apart. But Tyler's too big, he has Jeremy on the ground, straddling him, choking him.

TYLER (CONT'D)

You were the last one with her. You left her in the woods.

ELENA

Tyler, stop. Get off him.

Suddenly, TWO COPS appear -- they pull Tyler off Jeremy. Jeremy sits up. Elena looks at her brother, but he's staring at the ground. Guilt-ridden.

INT. WHITMORE HOUSE - STEFAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Damon moves around the room, perusing Stefan's books and pictures, etc.

DAMON

I suppose I should go down and say hi to Pete. Are we calling him our great uncle? So much clutter. Do you save everything?

Stefan is at his desk, closing his journal, putting it away.

DAMON (CONT'D)

She took my breath away -- Elena.

Stefan turns to his brother.

DAMON (CONT'D)

She's a dead ringer for Katherine.  
Is it working, Stefan? Being next  
to her? Being part of her world?  
Does it make you feel "alive"?

STEFAN

She's not Katherine.

DAMON

No? Let's hope not. We both know  
how that ended.

Stefan's eyes narrow. His anger flaring. He reins it in.  
But Damon sees it. Smiles.

DAMON (CONT'D)

Tell me something, brother. When  
was the last time you indulged?

Stefan says nothing.

DAMON (CONT'D)

Really? When was the last you had  
something stronger than a squirrel?

Stefan is disgusted by his talk. By his ribbing.

STEFAN

Stop it, Damon. I know what you're  
doing and it's not going to work.

DAMON

Yeah? C'mon, don't you crave a  
little? Let's do it. Together.  
You and me, I saw several little  
tarts tonight...

STEFAN

Stop.

Damon WHACKS him on the head. A playful but hard thunk.

DAMON

Whaddya say? Let's cut to the  
chase and go straight for Elena.

THUNK. He pops him again. Stefan tries to dodge him, but Damon keeps coming at him.

STEFAN

Stop it.

DAMON

Make me. You know you want to.

Damon keeps taunting his brother, pushing him across the room, knocking his head.

DAMON (CONT'D)

I bet you can barely resist her now. Imagine what her blood would taste like. I can.

He gives Stefan another tap, but he's gone too far. Stefan WHIRLS on him. EYES rimmed with blood, VEINS protruding from under his translucent skin. Full of fury.

STEFAN

I said stop.

He RUSHES Damon, literally leaving the ground. They both go CRASHING through the enormous window.

EXT. WHITMORE HOUSE - NIGHT

Shards of glass rain down as they land on the ground with a thud.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

EXT. HOUSE - SIDE YARD - NIGHT

Stefan lies flat on the ground. SHATTERED GLASS all around. He rises, rubs his head. He's back to himself. He stands. Looks up to the attic. Sees the broken window. Turns to find Damon leaning against a tree.

DAMON

I was impressed. I give it a six. Missed on style, but I was pleasantly surprised. Really good with the whole face *ARRGGGGHHH*.

STEFAN

Stay away from her.

DAMON

You just proved you can't make requests. So, this Elena. You think she'd go for an older man?

STEFAN

Everything is fun and games with you. But wherever you go, people die.

DAMON

That's a given.

STEFAN

Not here. I won't allow it.

DAMON

Where's your ring?

Stefan stops cold. Looks to his hand. His ring is missing. Instant panic. Anger.

DAMON (CONT'D)

Couple of hours, the sun comes up, and poof. Ashes to ashes.

Stefan tries to keep his anger in check.

DAMON (CONT'D)

Relax. Here.

Damon holds his hand out. The ring lies in his palm. We notice Damon has the exact same one on his hand. Stefan goes to him, takes the ring, slips it on when...

DAMON GRABS HIM BY THE THROAT - COMPLETELY PICKING HIM UP AND THROWING HIM ACROSS THE YARD WITH INHUMAN STRENGTH.

He hits the side of the house. Freefalls to the ground. Damon walks to where Stefan lies. For the first time, Damon's face turns PURE EVIL. Without question -- he can go there.

DAMON (CONT'D)  
 You should know better than to think you're stronger than me. You lost that fight when you stopped feeding on people. I wouldn't try it again -- brother.

And, instantly, Damon is back to his charming self.

DAMON (CONT'D)  
 I think we woke Pete up.

Damon walks away, leaving Stefan in a crumbled heap.

INT. MYSTIC GRILL - NIGHT

Bonnie and Caroline nurse cups of coffee. Caroline is still visibly drunk.

BONNIE  
 Are you sober yet?

Caroline pauses -- thinks about it. Shakes her head.

CAROLINE  
 Nope.

BONNIE  
 Keep drinking. I gotta get you home. I gotta get me home.

Caroline is lost in drunken thought. Beat.

CAROLINE  
 Why didn't he go for me? How come the guys I want never want me?

BONNIE  
 I refuse to answer that. You may remember it.

CAROLINE  
 (answers herself)  
 I'm inappropriate.  
 (MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)  
 I always say the wrong thing.  
 Elena always says the right thing.

Caroline hiccups.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)  
 She doesn't even try. And he picks her. She's always the one everyone picks. And I work so hard and I'm never the one...

Her voice trails off. As she sits there in her stupor. Sad. Vulnerable. Bonnie doesn't know what to say.

EXT. ELENA'S HOUSE/INT. ELENA'S CAR - NIGHT

Elena pulls the car into the drive. She and Jeremy sit there. Neither in a hurry to get out of the car. Then...

ELENA  
 People are gonna stop giving you breaks, Jer, because they don't care anymore. They don't remember our parents our dead. They're too busy living their lives. The rest of the world has moved on. You have to try too.

JEREMY  
 Like you? I've seen you at the cemetery. Writing in your diary. Is that you moving on?

Silence. Elena shrugs. She's at a loss.

ELENA  
 Mom and Dad wouldn't want this.

JEREMY  
 Then it's a good thing they're not here.

And with that Jeremy gets out of the car. Still angry, still restless. Still on a dangerous path. And from the look on Elena's face, she knows it.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Vicki lies in her hospital bed. Spots of blood seep through the bandages on her neck. Matt sits by her side. Worry etched on his face.

Vicki's eyes flutter open. Matt leans in, relieved.

MATT

Vick. It's okay. You're okay.

She looks at him. Voice raspy.

VICKI

Matt...

MATT

What did this to you?

Her hand finds his, gripping it tightly. Eyes full of fear. She struggles to speak -- her wounds excruciating. In the faintest whisper, she manages to speak one word...

VICKI

Vampire.

INT. ELENA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY/JEREMY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jenna is standing in the hallway when Jeremy exits the bathroom. She looks at him with disappointment. But love, too. Lots of love.

Jeremy gives an apologetic shrug. Then, disappears into his bedroom. It's enough for Jenna. For now.

ELENA (V.O.)

*Dear Diary. I couldn't have been more wrong.*

Jeremy falls back onto his bed. Rolls over. His eyes fall on a picture of his parents. A long look.

EXT. ELENA'S HOUSE - VERANDA - NIGHT

Elena sits out on the veranda, curled in a blanket, writing in her journal.

ELENA (V.O.)

*I thought that I could smile and nod my way through it. Pretend like it would all be okay.*

INT. WHITMORE HOUSE - STEFAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Stefan returns to his room. Takes stock of the mess of broken glass.

His voice takes over from Elena's.

STEFAN (V.O.)  
*It seemed like a good plan. Let go  
of who I was. Create a life as  
someone new. Someone without the  
past.*

ELENA (V.O.)  
*Without the pain.*

Stefan and Elena's voices join.

STEFAN/ELENA (V.O.)  
*Someone alive.*

INT. MYSTIC GRILL - NIGHT

Bonnie heads to the bathroom, leaving Caroline alone.

ELENA (V.O.)  
*But it's not that easy. The bad  
things stay with you.*

STEFAN (V.O.)  
*They follow you.*

A MAN is sitting at a nearby table, his back to the camera. When Bonnie crosses, he turns, eyeing Caroline.

It's DAMON. Caroline catches his stare. The looks begin...

STEFAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*You can't escape them. As much as  
you want to.*

EXT. ELENA'S HOUSE - VERANDA - NIGHT

ELENA (V.O.)  
*All you can do is be ready for the  
good, so that when it comes, you  
let it in. Because you need it.*  
(beat)  
*I need it.*

Elena stands, opens the front door. Then, from offscreen.

STEFAN  
Elena.

She turns. He's standing on her front walk.

ELENA  
Stefan.

He walks towards her, joining her at the door. Stopping just inches from the threshold. She stares at him, drinking in his face.

STEFAN

I know it's late. But I needed to know that you were okay.

Elena has to smile to herself.

ELENA

You know, for months that's all anyone has wondered about me. If I'm okay.

STEFAN

What do you tell them?

ELENA

I tell them I'll be fine.

STEFAN

Did you ever mean it?

ELENA

Ask me tomorrow.

Their eyes connect. Two lost souls drawn to each other. Elena shivers.

ELENA (CONT'D)

It's warmer in the house. We can talk...

She walks away from the door, but once again Stefan can't enter. Until Elena turns...

ELENA (CONT'D)

Don't you want to come inside?

Stefan smiles. Genuine, heartfelt.

STEFAN

Yes.

He steps into the house. Elena has invited her vampire in.

As the door shuts...

FADE OUT.

END OF PILOT