

Not Quite Dead

Episode 29

‘What a Catch’

Show-wide Content Warnings

This show is a work of horror fiction frequently places characters in situations which jeopardise their psychological and physical health. In addition, listeners should be aware that this show contains the following throughout:

- profanity
- references to sex
- frequent violence
- traumatic injury
- death, including violent death
- references to medical procedures
- hospital settings

Episode Content Warnings

(text in white, highlight to view)

TRANSCRIPT

Episode Twenty-Nine - What a Catch

This is Alfie Dellon recording on, uh. God. I don't even know what day of the week it is, let alone the date. This is an interview with. um. Sorry, what did you say his name was? Neige?

NEIGE

I didn't. I don't know what his name is.

ALFIE

Oh. Um. Right. Okay. Uh.

SOUNDS OF DISTRESS FROM A GAGGED PERSON

NEIGE

We cannot hear you, much to my regret, of course.

ALFIE

Oh, right, yeah.

FOOTSTEPS

UNIDENTIFIED MAN

Help! Help me, please!

NEIGE

Putain de merde!

ALFIE

Fuck's sake!

GAGGED SCREAMING AND SOBBING

ALFIE

Look, okay, I really don't want to hurt you any more than we've already hurt you so would you just shut up? Please?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN

(muffled)

Okay.

NEIGE

I will rip off your balls and put them in your mouth if you don't stay quiet.

ALFIE

Neige! No! It's taken months to get him! At least let me talk to him first.

NEIGE

I'm sick of it!

ALFIE

Yeah, I know it's annoying! But it's not like anyone can hear him, is it?

NEIGE

What, do I not count anymore?

ALFIE

Of course you count! I just mean nobody is going to catch us if he screams, anyway.

NEIGE

It does make me significantly more likely to kill him. Did you know a vampire can have a migraine?

ALFIE

They can?

NEIGE

Oui. I will testify it in a court of law.

ALFIE

You're such a drama queen.

NEIGE

You love it.

ALFIE

No. Enough of the performance, thanks. You said you'd help. Just do that.

NEIGE

D'accord. Understood.

ALFIE

Wait, what is that?

NEIGE

What?

ALFIE

In your pocket there.

NEIGE

One of your phones. The ones you'd been using to record me in secret.

ALFIE

God-- will you let it go?

NEIGE

It is already gone.

ALFIE

So why are you bringing it up again?

NEIGE

You brought it up.

ALFIE

Ugh, you know what? Fine. Whatever. Just let me speak to him, then you can do whatever you like.

NEIGE

As you wish.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN

(muffled)

Fucking hell.

NEIGE

Manners to your gracious hosts, s'il vous plait.

ALFIE

You going to scream?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN

Uh uh.

ALFIE

Good. Because he will probably actually rip off your balls, you know. I can't stop him. He's like. Ten thousand years old.

NEIGE

Give or take.

ALFIE

Give or take.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN'S GAG IS REMOVED. HE GASPS AND BREATHES HEAVILY.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN

Thank you.

NEIGE

Bien. Better.

ALFIE

There we go. Nobody has to get hurt. Or. You know. More hurt. So. Your name, for the record?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN

Tim. Tim Sherman.

NEIGE

He's lying.

ALFIE

Yeah. Probably. But that's fine really, isn't it? It doesn't matter who he is.

TIM

I know who *you* are.

ALFIE

Oh?

TIM

Not you. Him. Ten thousand years old, at least. Blonde hair. Pretty face. You're him, the ancient.

NEIGE

You think I have a pretty face? My my. I am flattered.

TIM

There's not a vampire alive older than a decade who doesn't know your story.

NEIGE

Oh, my story? My legend? Sang de Neige, Coeur d'hivers. People have called me many things over the ages. This is not why you are here, my friend.

TIM

That's exactly why I'm here.

ALFIE

What do you mean?

NEIGE

He means he is a fool.

TIM

We've been watching you. Counting your kills. That slip up in Leeds. Abducting two of my colleagues. You're sloppier than your legend would tell. Very disappointing for vampire royalty.

NEIGE

I am no king, nor prince. I answer to none, and none answer to me.

TIM

That's not entirely true, is it?

NEIGE

You must really not be overly fond of your testicles, *Timothy*.

TIM LAUGHS

ALFIE

Neige? What's going on?

NEIGE

He's trying to get into my head. Ignore him. Ask your questions.

ALFIE

Um. Okay. Tim Sherman. What do you know about vampires?

TIM

Seriously?

ALFIE

Yes?

TIM

Well. Can you be more specific, maybe?

ALFIE

Uh. Sure. Um. You know vampires are real, correct?

TIM

I know there are creatures, such as yourself, whose traits broadly align with the fictional entities we know in pop culture as vampires. Yes.

ALFIE

Right. And you study vampires. That's your job.

TIM

Yes. Again, you could be more specific. Have you never held a hostage before?

ALFIE

Uh. Yeah. So. What's your job title?

TIM

Lab technician.

ALFIE

At?

TIM

What?

ALFIE

Where were you a lab technician?

TIM

Holden Laboratories.

ALFIE

And what's that?

TIM

It's a laboratory.

NEIGE

Please can I kill him?

ALFIE

No! Look, would you just stand outside? You keep distracting me and he's being deliberately obtuse just to wind you up. He *wants* you to kill him.

TIM

Oh, very good. Nicely done.

ALFIE

Shut up. Or I will let him savage you.

TIM

Nobody *lets him* do anything. He just does. He's a force of fucking nature.

ALFIE

Neige. Please. Wait outside.

NEIGE.

Understood.

FOOTSTEPS. A DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES. ALFIE SIGHS.

TIM

He's indulging you.

ALFIE

I don't care. I'm right. You're winding him up so he loses it and tears your head off.

TIM

I don't mind which of you does it, frankly. The result is the same. It's the same whether I answer your questions or not, too. The way I see it, I'm dead however this goes. What incentive do I have to speak to you?

ALFIE DRAWS A BREATH LIKE HE'S ABOUT TO SPEAK, BUT DOESN'T.

TIM

Rookie error. You need to know what your bargaining chips are ahead of time. Remember, torture is a terrible way to illicit information.

ALFIE

Hmm. I don't know about that.

TIM

It is. Look it up if you doubt me.

ALFIE

I have looked it up, actually. Torture is a pretty terrible way to get a *confession* out of someone. It's a great way to get them to *cooperate* with you, however. That's actually *why* it's so bad in the confessions department, you know? If you make it clear what your bargaining chips are before you hurt someone, you tell them *exactly* what to say to make the pain go away. Hurt them enough, they'll tell you exactly what you want to hear just to make it stop. That's why it's awful for confessions.

Fortunately for you, Tim, I'm not interested in confessions. I'm not interested in you admitting things, accepting responsibility, or placing yourself in a position to incriminate your colleagues. Nope. I just want to know what you know.

TIM

Still contravenes the Geneva convention, though.

ALFIE

It doesn't. Not here. We're not subject to the Geneva Convention because we're not at war.

TIM

Aren't we?

ALFIE

A disparate community of vampires doesn't constitute a state, Mr Sherman.

TIM

Oooh, I'm Mr Sherman now? Charming. Does this mean we're close to letting your friend back in to tear out my throat? Something tells me your not the throat ripping type.

ALFIE

Despite my best efforts, you're incorrect.

TIM

You seem young. Reckless. Two years since you turned, maybe even just one. There's a spryness to you, and a loyalty to him that you'd have lost, if you were any older.

(pause)

I'm right, aren't I?

ALFIE

You seem pretty interested in him.

TIM

He's older than time. Literally, older than the concept of time. Older than agriculture. Older than towns and cities. The things he's seen...

ALFIE

How about this; I ask *you* one. You ask him one.

TIM

You're just going to kill me anyway.

ALFIE

That's how you'll know he's telling the truth. Why lie when you'll be dead in an hour anyway?

TIM

In an hour?

ALFIE

Maybe more, maybe less. Depends on how interesting you make this conversation.

TIM

Depends on how willing you two really are to speak.

ALFIE

Neige? You amenable to that?

NEIGE

Oui, je suis disposé. Si je parviens à le tuer à la fin?

ALFIE

D'accord, d'accord.

NEIGE

Merci, mon petit.

TIM

I don't speak french.

NEIGE

Let the funky music do the talking then, eh?

CHAIR LEGS SCRAPE.

TIM
Wha--

NEIGE
(low, almost soft)
What do you want to know, little man?

ALFIE
Wait, wait, wait. First. Haemapheresis.

TIM
Ah. I see.

ALFIE
What do you see, Tim?

TIM
You found the lab. You saw what we were doing. We left in hurry, didn't destroy the records properly like we were supposed to. That explosion must've happened way after we were all gone. I can't remember how long it was. It's all in pieces, that night. But the call we got from Sarah and Jamie was clear. They saw your car. You must've got to the building before it blew. You know what haemapheresis is.

ALFIE

Describe it. To me.

TIM

Whenever we bring in a Type 2 we process them and assess them for the treatment.

ALFIE

Type 2.

TIM

Yes. The semi-animate corpses are more numerous. Ergo, you. You're Type 2.

ALFIE

Vampires.

TIM

We don't like to use that language.

NEIGE

Why?

TIM

Makes you sound like fairytale creatures. Like you're magic.

NEIGE

We never named ourselves.

TIM

Would you have picked 'vampire' if you had?

NEIGE

No.

ALFIE

Okay. So what happens after you assess the Type 2?

TIM

Hang on. I want to ask my question for him, first?

NEIGE

You just did. I said no.

TIM

But--

ALFIE

Technically you haven't answered my question yet.

TIM

I have. You asked what I meant when I said 'I see', and I told you.

ALFIE

Haemapheresis. What is it?

TIM SIGHS

TIM

A treatment for vampirism.

NEIGE

There is already a cure---

TIM

Not a cure! A treatment, a therapy, an on-going--

ALFIE

What?

TIM

The method uses modified dialysis machines.

ALFIE

To do what, Tim?

TIM

Didn't you read the papers?! Didn't you--

ALFIE

What do the machines do?!

CRUNCH. TIM CRIES OUT.

TIM

Purify the blood! They purify it!

ALFIE

By doing *what*?!

TIM

I think you broke my fucking foot, you psychopath.

ALFIE

How do the machines work, Tim?!

TIM

I want to ask my question! Please! That was the--- please!

ALFIE

Fine, fine!

TIM CATCHES HIS BREATH

TIM

Paris. 1902.

ALFIE

What? That's not a--

TIM

Come on, snowy. You know what I'm talking about.

NEIGE

You want to know about Henri.

TIM
Yes.

ALFIE
Henri?

NEIGE
I mentioned other vampires besides Casper and Bonham had been studying the mechanics. Henri was such a vampire.

TIM
Only. Something happened to him in 1902. Didn't it.

NEIGE
I do not know the whole figure, how many died by his teeth and hand. But it is in the hundreds, I believe. Hundreds he turned and tried to turn. Many half-mades. At least several dozen fully made vampires, kidnapped, bitten, turned in the dark. The-- when his laboratory was uncovered after he died, it-- there was a young vampire on a table. His organs exposed to the air. The top of his head-- none. His mouth, toothless, hands crushed. No eyes, just two voids, crusted with old blood. I remember, the way his lungs moved, I was mesmerised. One was punctured, you see, by a splintered rib.

All this, under his townhouse in Paris. He kept corpses in the basement so we could not smell the vampires and half-mades he had penned into small, hand dug tunnels underneath. I had been to that house many times. I thought Henri a friend.

TIM

Go on, snowy. Tell us what you did to him.

ALFIE

You don't have to. He's goading you, he thinks--

NEIGE

He thinks I will kill him to make him shut up. But I do not care about Henri, I will gladly admit that I let his starving prisoners tear him to shreds. I have no shame in this.

TIM

He's missing something crucial about that though, aren't you, snowy? Because one thing we've learned, one thing Henri knew, and Dr Bonham, and your darling snowball know from experience. Type 2 don't lose consciousness when you take them apart. Nope. They cling onto it, right up to the moment they go insane from the blood lust. You know, I've managed to get one to read the alphabet backwards with just his brainstem in tact. We had his head-stump connected to a blood pump, but because he was disconnected from his lungs we had to make do with lip-reading. But yeah. Entirely functional until the very last sliver of brain was sliced---

WET THWACK. CHAIR LEGS SCRAPE. A THUD. ALFIE BREATHES HEAVILY.

NEIGE

Mon coeur. Please.

ALFIE
(breathless)
Sorry, I'm sorry.

NEIGE
Non. It is okay.

THINGS MOVE. TIM GROANS.

NEIGE
He's present in his brain, oui? Timothée? Bonjour?

SLAP SLAP

TIM
S'fuckin'...

NEIGE

He lives. No harm caused.

ALFIE

Hmm. I think I've broken his cheekbone.

NEIGE

Eh. He will not be using it for much longer.

ALFIE

Might make it difficult for him to talk to us, though.

TIM

(garbled, indistinct nonsense)

ALFIE

Give me your ring.

NEIGE

Do not waste your blood on him.

ALFIE

We need to understand this, don't we? Neige.

NEIGE

Oui.

ALFIE

Give me the ring.

NEIGE

Let me.

ALFIE

Fuck no; he's weird about you. I'm not letting him taste your blood. He can get fucked.

NEIGE

How sentimental.

ALFIE

Not sentimental. Sensible.

NEIGE

We'll see.

ALFIE HISSES THROUGH HIS TEETH.

ALFIE

If you bite my finger, we're castrating you with this.

TIM GROANS

ALFIE

Alright! Enough! Enough.

TIM LAUGHS

TIM

Oh my god. That's-- I've never. The taste. It's more effective when administered intravenously but, the *taste*. I see why Bonham never let us...

ALFIE

You've been dosed with the blood intravenously?

TIMby

Ha. Funny how you call it that.

ALFIE

What?

TIM

'The blood'. Like it's special. Like it's all one thing.

ALFIE

Isn't that your doctor's theory, too? We're all hosts to the same disease. Corpses that it puppets along.

TIM

In a way. You can follow each adapting strain of an infectious organism, kind of like a virus, we think, but not quite. But it becomes more dilute the further it gets from the source.

NEIGE

What bullshit.

TIM

Is it? There must have been a patient zero. Come on, Alfie. You know how epidemics work.

ALFIE

Vampire epidemiology. An intriguing concept.

TIM

Basic biology, isn't it? The source, the origin myth, maybe the story is bullshit. A curse, a demon, whatever. But there has to be a patient zero, there has to be a beginning. It has its own version of a genetic code.

ALFIE

Stop looking at him.

TIM

His blood, if we sequenced it, we could understand---

ALFIE

You better not be including me in that 'we', there.

TIM

Don't you think it's what your Casper would have wanted? If we identify the origin, maybe it's---

NEIGE

It is not me. I am not the first.

TIM

How could you possibly know?

NEIGE

I remember. I am not.

TIM

How could you *possibly* remember?

NEIGE

Your question has been answered. Mon coeur?

ALFIE

Er. Right. Bonham dosed you with the blood? Why?

TIM

To cure us.

ALFIE

Of?

TIM

It was different for everyone. It's my turn to ask.

ALFIE

What was he trying to cure you of?

TIM

It is my turn.

ALFIE

Fine. Fine.

TIM

Before you fed him to his prisoners what did you do to Henri de la Bigne?

NEIGE

I gutted him. Alfie?

ALFIE

You--

NEIGE

This is a distraction. He is goading us. You know this.

ALFIE

Well yeah, but. Gutted. Like a fish?

NEIGE

I used my hands.

ALFIE

Neige...

NEIGE

You do not understand the suffering he-- you do not understand. Imagine we had walked into that lab. Imagine seeing what you saw. Vampires with their organs exposed, punctured, replaced with the organs of animals, rotting inside their squirming bodies. Tell me you wouldn't have responded with savagery. Tell me.

ALFIE

Neige...

NEIGE

If you had walked in and seen they had done this to Casper, and Bonham was there, watching, staring at you. Laughing. Tell me you would not have torn out his insides.

TIM

Not so straightforward is it, Alfie?

ALFIE

What do you mean?

TIM

You still sure you're on the right side of this fight?

ALFIE

Oh, oh fucking hell. You think that--

(Alfie laughs)

You reckon I think we're on the 'side of the angels' or whatever? You reckon I think we're the good guys? Jesus fucking Christ, you *infant*. You have no fucking clue.

TIM

What?

ALFIE

Baby. Sweetheart. He's a liar. He knew Cas was dead for MONTHS. Maybe not for sure, but oh. He fucking knew. There's nothing you can tell me about him that will make me hate him more than that does. I know what he is, and I know what I am too. We're *monsters*. We're here to eat you alive for your fucking sins. We're not the goodies. We're the ones stopping you from killing them.

TIM

So naive.

ALFIE

Oh goodness me. Right. Okay. Sure. Say I'm naive, then. Give me your fucking pitch, Mr Sherman. Poach me.

TIM

Do you want to cure every disease? Not just every *known* disease, but *every single disease* that has been, that will be, that *could* be? There is a secret in your blood which, if we can decode it, could do that. There would be no more sickness. None. No cancer, no common cold, nothing. We could regrow lost limbs, grow new organs. We could heal fractured DNA. The very concept of suffering would be over. And the answer is in *your blood*.

ALFIE

Say for a moment that's true. Do you think that makes it okay to fucking-- to do whatever it is you've been-- to slice the conscious brains of living creatures--

TIM

Arguably living.

ALFIE

We're intelligent! We're cognizant!

TIM

So your argument for your own consciousness is that you pass the Turing Test? What about people with severe head injuries who are unconscious? Are *they* dead?

ALFIE

No. But neither are we.

TIM

Dr Bonham understands it's not true. But he also understands the potential. He thinks---

NEIGE

He's an idiot. He believes he can conquer death. This is not possible.

TIM

How can you say that? You are ancient. You're older than---

NEIGE

Shut up. I know who I am. Do not presume to tell me. One day this planet will die. If I have not perished long before that, I will die with it. If by some cruel eventuality I survive that horror, I will go out with the universe. Death is the god that eats everything. You cannot conquer him. You can only hope to meet him as an equal.

TIM

Maybe not immortality. But tens of thousands of years of---

NEIGE

For what, eh? What do you suppose this would get for you? I am a fucking relic. The only reason I have been able to live is chance, and my willingness to change. What happens if everyone lives forever? What do they do with their time? How do they spend it? I would hope it would lead to prosperity and peace. To green fields and equality. But even then. Change. It is one of life's great wonders. Life is not meant to stand still.

TIM

So why are you?! Why are you so fucking special? What makes you better than the rest of us?

NEIGE

Nothing. I'm not better. I just go on. That is all. There is no greater meaning to it than that.

TIM

Vampires aren't fucking special.

ALFIE

Don't you fucking get any of this? Hardly anyone who is a vampire chose this. You can't, really. You can choose to try, but you can't choose this. The likely outcome of a change is death. You

know that. You fucking know it. I *know* you know because I know you and your idiot lab buddies have been trying to make new vampires, and some of that makes sense to me, sure. You want a way to synthesise more of the blood and you've not found a way to do it outside of a vampire yet. I know THAT from your records. Some of it, though, it just doesn't track. So tell me. What the fuck you're doing. With Haemapheresis.

TIM LAUGHS

THWACK

ALFIE
TELL ME.

TIM
(*slightly thickly*)
We reverse engineered a-- a protein-- it--- it binds to the infection. It decouples it. It's not like with the chemotherapy where the cells are destroyed. But--

ALFIE
But what?

TIM

(laughing)

They fucking die anyway! They die! Or--

ALFIE

Or?

TIM

Revert.

AFLIE

Revert? Explain?

(pause)

EXPLAIN.

TIM

To a different state! We say revert because, we thought it was to Type 1, maybe.

NEIGE

The half-mades in the river.

TIM

We thought they were dead, until the attacks started. We managed to repossess some of the specimens when they were still semi-animate. They seemed like they were Type 1s, but we weren't sure.

ALFIE

What do you mean they *seemed* like it?

TIM

They-- you've seen them! They are just. Insatiably hungry. They can't seem to process human blood the way Type 2s can, but. Ugh. In a Type 1, the infection takes the brain, but not the body. It's like it doesn't take in the meat, but the nervous system responds super well, right? But these. You look at tissue samples, it looks like... I don't know.

ALFIE

It looks like what, Tim?

TIM

Type 1s, you see these sponge-like degradations. Like. Fuck. It's like the infection tried to properly take over the brain, but it failed. In a starved Type 2, you see the same holes forming. We call it synaptical decay. It's more important for the infection that it maintains control of motor function, see, so it's like it--- it pulls from the nearest resources, like pulling up the floorboards to throw it on the fire.

ALFIE

Like with the teeth. It's prioritising the mechanisms it needs to heal the body.

TIM

Right. But. In the haemapheresis subjects. You don't see the decay.

ALFIE

So why do they act like that?

TIM

We don't fucking know! We've-- we tried separating the brain entirely from the body and bathing it in the protein, re-installing, and it-- it still--

ALFIE

It showed no signs of decay. But the bodies did?

TIM

At first.

ALFIE

Fuck, Neige. *Fuck.*

NEIGE

Composure, little love. Composure. You, Timothée, I don't like the way you are watching him.

TIM

Jesus christ, how can I be looking at him wrong!

NEIGE

Look at the ground.

TIM

Fucking fine! Fine!

NEIGE

Alfie. Composure, mon râleur. Composure.

ALFIE

The-- the fucking. Access sites. For haemapheresis. Detail them.

TIM

You have it in the---

ALFIE

Your records only take us up to two weeks before we found your lab and blew it up, fuckhead, you know that, you and your fucking idiot buddies ran off with everything in that research window. I wanted to know why. And now I do. So tell me. Access points.

TIM

We extract from the juglar and infuse through two femoral, two median cubital, two saphenous.

ALFIE IS HYPERVENTILATING

ALFIE

(whispering)

And what is the clinical hypothesis there?

TIM

We can insert a higher gauge needle through the juglar. Sometimes this is internal. At first we'd been using manual cardiac stimulation, but actually, if you just keep the blood moving with external pumps, you don't need the heart, provided you have dispersed infusion sites.

ALFIE

So you extract the blood, add a protein that binds to the infection, and then run it through a centrifuge. The protein and the infection is then siphoned off and the blood replaced.

TIM

Yes. That's the gist of it.

ALFIE

So your patients which seemed to revert to Type 1? What happened there?

TIM

At first we'd run haemapheresis and we'd lose signs of electrical activity in the subjects' grey matter pretty quickly. We increased the infusion speed, mixing the extracted blood with donor human blood, that would keep them going a little while longer. We disposed of the corpses, thinking we'd neutralised them. Then. In our most successful test, one's heart started beating again. She wasn't feeding, she was just. Lying there. And her heart started beating. She started breathing, too. We intubated her, gave her oxygen – she had a blood oxygen level. Do you know how incredible that is? For three hours, her heart was beating, she was breathing. It was amazing. But she was gone too, in just a week. No electrical activity. Signs of decay began to spread.

ALFIE

So what changed in the last four months before we found you?

TIM

Ah. Wouldn't that be telling? Unfortunately, it's my turn to do the asking.

ALFIE

Ugh. Fine.

TIM

Did you know he came to us willingly, snowy? Did you know he said that he was sure you'd follow him? Hmm?

NEIGE

Yes.

TIM

(clearly stumped)

Oh.

NEIGE

I thought you were curious about me. It seems that you are instead a deeply ignorant and incurious creature.

TIM

What did you do to Henri de la Bigne's journals?

NEIGE

Your turn for questions has ended.

TIM

Mine has, yeah, but *he* wants to know too, don't you Alfie? I can see it in your eyes.

ALFIE

Sorry mate. I trust him.

TIM

I wouldn't trust him as far as I could throw him.

ALFIE

Pretty sure I can throw things a lot further than you could, buddy. Bad luck. So you drain them, filter their blood, infuse it with a blend of human blood, it doesn't work. You changed something else though, in those last few months. That's what you ran off with. The only bit of your research you wanted to keep, burn the rest, who cares? So what did you learn in those last few months?

TIM

Your ex boyfriend was extremely helpful in that development process, you know. Extremely helpful.

ALFIE

Don't talk to me about Cas.

TIM

We've been talking about Casper Novotny this whole conversation, haven't we? That's what you want to know. You want to know if he suffered, don't you? Idiots.

ALFIE

Neige is right. You are incurious.

TIM

How so?

ALFIE

Well, here you are criticising me for not reading your paperwork, but you're barely sparing a thought to why you're getting this particular line of questioning at all. We've not asked you how to stop the half-mades which have been showing up all over the city or tried to get you to go into more specific detail about your process – if I'd not read your notes, that's the kind of shit I'd be drilling you for, right? But I'm not. Because I don't care about that and you've not once thought about why.

TIM

Oh. You took a little souvenir. How sentimental of you.

ALFIE

Did you think we'd just leave him there, you fuck? Leave on a slab in cold storage? Hollowed out, filled with holes. Empty. We might be the monsters, Mr Sherman, but you are a fucking *villain*.

NEIGE

I think we're done.

ALFIE

No! Neige, I--

NEIGE

Step out with me.

ALFIE

Don't command me.

NEIGE

Not a command. A request.

ALFIE

Fine, fine.

FOOTSTEPS

ALFIE

Don't go anywhere.

DOOR OPENS AND SLAMS SHUT

NEIGE

Look at me, Alfie.

ALFIE

What.

NEIGE

Look at me. It's done. Okay?

ALFIE

I-- sorry, I'm sorry, I'm going too far, aren't I? I can stop myself. I'm still in control. I'm still present.

NEIGE

Oui. I trust you in this, but he's not going to tell us anything more. Not now.

ALFIE

How do you know?

NEIGE

He has been resistant to cooperation the entire time, and I think we have reached the limits of our bargaining power. We have not caught this man because we have gotten better at finding these lab technicians. Look how he watches you, Alfie.

ALFIE

You think he let us take him.

NEIGE

Oui, I think this.

ALFIE

Why would he let us take him? We killed the last ones. He'd know it is a death sentence.

NEIGE

The same reason Casper's artistic subjects came to him weeks before they were due to die.

ALFIE

He wants to die?

NEIGE

Non. He wants us to kill him, my sweet.

ALFIE

He hates us. He must. Or--

NEIGE

But it is a particular kind of hate. A hate of the other. A child bred of fear and envy.

ALFIE
Yeah.

NEIGE
You still want to try for more, don't you?

ALFIE
Yes.

NEIGE
Okay. Okay.

DOOR OPENS

NEIGE
Apologies for the delay.

ALFIE
It is interesting, how you watch us. There's something in your eyes. A hunger. Almost like you're jealous.

TIM

As if I would be jealous of you. Walking corpses.

ALFIE

Oh shut up. You and Bonham, too, and your whole operation. You're obsessed, the lot of you. It's sick. What's wrong with us, the way we are now? What about our bodies is so wrong to you?

TIM

You can't survive without consuming human blood!

ALFIE

So what?! It can be obtained ethically! If Bonham wants to fucking live his life, maybe he should be campaigning for equality!

TIM

He is.

ALFIE

Oh, fucking hell. Fucking *hell*. His panacea. He thinks-- he thinks that he's dead, but there's a way to fix him. He wants to live forever with none of the fucking caveats.

TIM

The secret is in your blood, Alfie.

ALFIE

Fuck *off*. Fuck off. Maybe it is. But you can't just. MURDER US TO GET IT.

THUDDING AND CREAKING

NEIGE

Alfie, darling--

ALFIE

Shut your face, Neige, you don't own me, I don't owe you anything!

ALFIE IS HYPERVENTILATING.

ALFIE

(whispering)

Tell me, Tim. Are they fucking. Conscious. When you the haemapheresis starts?

TIM

We'll get to that when he tells me if---

ALFIE

Tell me, fuck head, was he conscious when you were draining all of his blood out of him?

TIM

My turn to ask the questions.

CRASHING. BANGING.

ALFIE

WAS HE CONSCIOUS. WHEN YOU DRAINED HIS BLOOD.

TIM

I'm afraid I don't know.

ALFIE IS STILL HYPERVENTILATING

ALFIE
Why?

TIM
Because we removed significant portions of his brain and he was no longer able to communicate. So it's not clear what he'd have felt. If he'd have felt at all.

NEIGE
I've changed my mind.

ALFIE
Oh?

NEIGE
Put him in storage.

TIM

What does that mean?

ALFIE

Yeah?

NEIGE

Oui. We need the reserves, and I don't want to give him the satisfaction.

TIM

What's storage?

ALFIE

Right. Okay.

TIM

HEY!

NEIGE

CASSE-TOI!

A DRAWER OPENS

TIM

What are you doing?

ALFIE

You'll feel a sharp scratch.

TIM

What is-- ow! Is that a cannula! Fucking-- what are you going to--

ALFIE

Hush.

TIM

You're going to drug me?

ALFIE

No. Ah, beautiful. You have excellent veins, Tim. Look at that flow.

TIM

Oh-- oh my god.

ALFIE

Yeah. That will take twenty minutes or so to fill. I'll get a new bag, then. You'll be done in a couple of hours. Storage.

TIM

Fuck. FUCK.

ALFIE

Mmm. And to think. You were so sure you'd get to feel it, weren't you? That sink of teeth into your flesh? A final little moment of ecstasy on your way out of the door. Well. Sorry Tim. Thanks for playing.

TIM

Wait. Where are you going? WAIT!

DOORS OPEN AND CLOSE

TIM IS YELLING IN THE BACKGROUND

NEIGE

Are you okay?

ALFIE

No.

NEIGE

What can I do?

ALFIE

Nothing. You need to stop. Thanks for helping – this doesn't mean-- you can't.

NEIGE

Of course.

ALFIE

Thank you for this, too.

NEIGE

Not at all, little love. Did it help quiet your mind a little?

ALFIE TAKES A DEEP BREATH

ALFIE

He's not rotting, Neige. He's not become a half-made. He's just. Lying there.

NEIGE

We should burn him. Like I told you.

ALFIE

But what if. What if we can bring him back.

NEIGE

My sweet. My little love. I think if he could come back to us he would have done so already, non?

ALFIE

I--- I can't.

NEIGE

You are not ready yet. That is okay. You can hold on as long as you like. We have all the time in the world.

ALFIE

Okay.

TIM CONTINUES TO SHRIEK AND SHOUT

NEIGE

If Bonham had found an answer to this problem, he would not still be hiding.

ALFIE

Yeah. Yeah, you're right.

NEIGE

Are you still recording this?

ALFIE

Shit, probably. Sorry.

NEIGE

No. it is okay. It is a good sign, I think.

ALFIE

What? Me recording this?

NEIGE

Oui. It implies to me that you still have hope.

[END]