

Tomorrow Never Dies

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Characters

KARINA	A 25-year-old woman living alone in the city and feels misunderstood and doesn't fit in.
ZARA	A vampire, ostracized from society, she feels scorned and at her breaking point.
COMPANY OF MEN	Some bad drunk men harassing Karina.
MIKE HUCHI	Karina's neighbor.
LANDLADY	Zara's landlady.
BYSTANDERS	three people by a newsstand talking about the murders.
SUS LOOKING MAN	A man that looks suspicious and bothers Karina.

Act I**SCENE ONE**

New York City Alleyway

Setting: 4 streetlamps line across the middle of the stage horizontally, lighting does not reach past the lamps.

(At Rise: Entering from left, KARINA walks nervously across the stage. a COMPANY OF MEN, drunk, leer after her.)

MAN #1:

Hey, baby! Let me show you a good time.

MAN #2:

Yeah, and I'll have a turn.

KARINA:

(stops in the middle of the stage at their words)
Leave me alone.

MAN #1:

Aw don't be that way, baby. We're nice men, I promise.

COMPANY OF MEN:

(Agreeing)

MAN #3:

(catches up to KARINA and holds her arm tightly)
And don't you think about making noise.

KARINA struggles helplessly as the COMPANY OF MEN start surrounding her. MAN #1 holds her mouth shut. Suddenly, one of the men is pulled into the dark behind the lamps and we hear a thud.

MAN #2:

(Releasing KARINA)
Who's there? Who did that?

MAN #4:

(nervously stepping back into the shadows)
I think we should go. There's someone out there.

From the shadows something pulls MAN #4 in and he screams. Then silence. MAN #3 shouts in surprise and slowly walks to the shadows and then he too is pulled in. MAN #2, noticing something's up, runs away, but as he passes the 3rd streetlamp, he too is dragged in. Silence.

KARINA:

(huddled on the ground)

Hello? Who's there?

KARINA slowly walks toward the dark behind the street lights. The stage lights follows her and we see ZARA drinking blood from MAN #2. KARINA gasps. ZARA hears, drops the body, and turns around. Their eyes meet, spotlight shines on the two of them as they have their moment™.

KARINA:

(timidly)

Are they dead?

(nods towards the dead men littering the stage)

ZARA:

(dryly)

You're welcome.

(begins walking towards right stage)

KARINA incredulously watches ZARA walk off. She quickly looks around the stage and shouts after her.

KARINA:

Wait! You're just gonna leave? You just fuckin' killed four men!

ZARA:

(stops, turns around and looks at KARINA)

And what about it?

KARINA:

Well-

(starts walking but stops. winces. reaches down to touch her ankle)

ZARA:

(monotone)

You're hurt.

(steps closer to KARINA who steps back)

Seems like a sprained ankle. You shouldn't be walking on that.

KARINA:

You were about to leave me alone, so why do you care?

ZARA:

I saved you, didn't I?

Beat. KARINA doesn't respond. Just looks at ZARA as she offers out her arm.

Come with me.

KARINA:

(Reluctantly)

Why should I trust you? You just killed four guys. How do I know I'm not next?

ZARA:

Those four guys tried to rape you.

KARINA:

That doesn't change the fact that I literally saw you eat that last guy. What are you?

ZARA:

(snaps back)

What are *you*?

KARINA:

(low)

I'm Karina.

ZARA:

(rolls eyes)

I asked *what* you are, not *who*.

KARINA:

What do you mean 'what' am I?

ZARA:

(as if proving a point)

Then why'd you ask me?

KARINA:

(annoyed)

You know what I mean.

ZARA:

(playing dumb)

Do I?

KARINA:

(crossing her arms)

You're not... normal.

ZARA:

What's normal?

KARINA:

(throwing her hands in the air)

We'll I don't know! People who don't eat other people?

ZARA laughs and finally walks until she is face to face with KARINA. ZARA studies KARINA, eyes narrowing in contemplation.

ZARA:

How about this, I'm a *vampire*. Wanna know more?

(holds her arm out again)

PAUSE.

KARINA:

(protesting)

But-

ZARA:

No, no. I won't say anything until we reach my apartment. Now are you ready?

ZARA looks at KARINA who bites her lip,
reluctant. Finally, KARINA locks her arm
around ZARA'S and they walk off towards
right stage.

KARINA:

(looks at ZARA)

So, what's your name?

ZARA:

(softly)

Zara.

Black Out.

SCENE TWO*Zara's Apartment*

Setting: *an ornate couch towards the left of the stage, an obviously antique table nearby, barstand to the right. Further off to the right, a door, and a bed to the right of that, near the end of the stage.*

(At Rise: KARINA and ZARA are sitting on an ornate couch. KARINA has her foot on ZARA'S lap as she massages it, every now and then she winces.)

ZARA:

Stop moving.

KARINA:

(complaining)

It hurts!

ZARA gives KARINA a glare. KARINA shuts up and watches as ZARA binds her foot with gauze.

KARINA:

(quiet)

Are you gonna tell me what you meant by vampire? Is it some kind of metaphor or something?

ZARA:

Yeah, vampire is a metaphor for vampire.

KARINA:

(perplexed)

But vampires aren't real?

ZARA:

Says who? We're shy creatures, you know.

KARINA:

(turning fully to face ZARA)

You're not messing with me, right? Like, you're being deadass?

ZARA:

(dryly)

Deadass.

KARINA:

(nodding, but still perplexed)

Okay.

ZARA:

(finishes binding ankle and stands)

I know it's a difficult thing to accept, vampires being real and all. You can ask me anything. Trust me, I've heard it all.

KARINA:

(dry laugh)

I don't even know where to start.

KARINA watches as ZARA walks over to the bar and pours a glass of whiskey. She heads back to the couch and hands the glass to KARINA.

ZARA:

Here, I think you need this.

KARINA:

(takes the glass, sips and coughs loudly)

Thank you. So, um, if you're a vampire, how old are you?

ZARA:

(sighs loudly and looks up in contemplation)

About 700, give or take.

KARINA:

(gapes at ZARA)

And in all that time, you've never been found out?

ZARA:

(leans back into couch and crosses her legs)

A couple times, yes. Like, the Spanish Inquisition? They weren't looking for witches, they were looking for us. Many of us burned in the flames. I managed to escape to the New World before the worst of it happened.

KARINA:

(echoing)

The New World. Wow. And what? You've been here in New York ever since?

ZARA:

No, no. The trick is to move from one place to another every few months or so. Bigger cities are better, people don't notice as much.

KARINA:

(looks sadly at ZARA)

You've been constantly on the move for centuries?

ZARA looks uncomfortable at KARINA's look. She stands up and walks over to the big windows that show the New York skyline. She looks briefly at the view before turning back to look at KARINA.

ZARA:

I have to. People always treated us as murderers— monsters. I used to care about laying low, not feeding from humans, but humanity has proven to be selfish. Why am I not allowed to be selfish? So at one point I decided to be the monster they wanted.

KARINA doesn't say anything. She turns away from ZARA's unnerving gaze and looks at the floor. ZARA smiles bitterly. She slowly walks over to KARINA. Like a hunter stalking its prey.

ZARA:

Does that bother you?

KARINA:

(looks up at ZARA and stands unsteadily on her feet facing her)

What those men tried to do to me, that bothered me. You? No.

ZARA cracks a smile and they share a moment.
KARINA looks shyly away after a moment.

KARINA:

700 years is a long time. You've been alone all this time?

ZARA:

It's not appealing, seeing all your loved ones die while you move on. So why bother?

KARINA:

What about other vampires?

ZARA:

(shakes her head solemnly)

Vampires are independent creatures. Besides, two vampires draw a crowd. Too much blood going missing.

KARINA:

(showing great interest)

But, are there other vampires in New York? It's a big city.

ZARA:

(shakes her head, nonchalant)

As far as I know, I'm the only one here. Some come and go, but we respect each others territory.

KARINA:

(smiling longingly)

It must be so nice, going wherever you want, whenever you want, no rules and no one to stop you.

ZARA:

(shrugs)

I have no complaints. At some point it almost feels like I'm always running away though.

KARINA:

(earnestly)

From what I saw tonight, I don't think you're the type to run away from anything.

ZARA:

What about you? What was a girl like you doing walking alone so late at night? Especially in this city?

KARINA:

Can't a girl go for a stroll at night?

ZARA:

No. Not with scum like that in the world. Like I said, they think people like me are the monsters. They fail to see it in themselves.

KARINA:

(defensive)

Well, what about you, huh? What were you doing out so late at night?

ZARA:

(smiling wickedly)

Hunting. Good thing I was, wasn't it? You'd be dead in a ditch if I hadn't saved you.

KARINA:

(said jokingly, but body language showing sincerity)

My hero.

(beat, as if embarrassed she said that)

So how long have you been here? In New York?

ZARA takes the glass of scotch from KARINA'S hands. Their hands brush. ZARA takes a sip before speaking.

ZARA:

A couple months. I'm starting to like it here. I mean look at this view. Isn't it stunning?

ZARA turns to look at the window. KARINA looks at ZARA.

KARINA:

I've seen better.

ZARA:

(laughs, oblivious to KARINA'S gaze)

I guess so. When you've lived as long as me, you learn to appreciate every view.

ZARA finally meets KARINA'S eyes and takes a slow breath when she realizes how close they are. KARINA inches closer, tilting her head to the

side, neck exposed, and before they kiss, ZARA pulls away and changes the subject.

ZARA:

Don't stand on that foot too long. Keep it elevated for a while.

KARINA:

(disappointed, lowers herself back onto the couch)

Right.

ZARA goes to the bar stand and puts the glass of whiskey on the counter. She puts both hands on the counter and sighs deeply. KARINA watches her from the couch, biting her lip. The vampire turns around after a while.

ZARA:

It's very late. You need rest and I sleep most of the day. No light and all. I have a guest room where you can sleep, come with me.

ZARA helps KARINA stand up and they walk towards the bed. The other lights illuminating the couch and bar turn off. The spotlight turns to them. KARINA turns to look at ZARA again before opening the door.

KARINA:

(with an adoring gaze, then shifts to awkward stuttering)

Thank you. So much. For the saving me and everything... So, um, I'll see you tomorrow?

ZARA:

(brushes a strand of KARINA'S hair from her face, slowly)

Goodnight, little human.

KARINA opens the door, as she enters the room, she looks back at ZARA, before entering completely and shutting the door behind her. She turns around, back to the door and lets out a dumbstruck sigh. ZARA, on the other side of the door, stares at it piningly as she places a

simple hand on it. They both stare at the door as if waiting for the other to do something, say something, anything. Neither does.

ZARA walks over to the bar stand and picks up the glass of whiskey. She stares at it and smiles fondly.

ZARA:

(amused)

Karina.

The spotlight turns off on ZARA. Shifts to KARINA. She gets in bed, shifting around a bit before settling in. As she drifts off to sleep she whispers a final word to herself.

KARINA:

(smiling, as if telling a secret)

Zara.

Black Out.

SCENE THREE*Karina's Apartment*

Setting: the bed, with KARINA still asleep in it, has been moved to the far back left of the stage. Two doors face the audience in the middle of the stage. KARINA's apartment is lightly decorated, with a painted scene by the bed of a window showing a sunny day. A mirror faces her bed from the side. The back of the vanity facing the audience. The mirror is just an open frame.

(At Rise: KARINA is lying in the bed asleep. She wakes up.)

KARINA:

(sitting up in bed, confused)

What? Was I dreaming?

KARINA gets up from the bed and looks around. She sits back down on the edge of the bed. Feeling a crinkle in her pocket, she reaches into her pants and takes out a slip of paper.

KARINA:

(reading out loud)

Karina, I'm sorry I didn't say goodbye. I hate saying goodbye. And I don't want to say bye to you. But I have to. The couple hours we spend together meant more to me than the last hundred years did. Maybe we'll meet again someday. For now, know that I will keep you in my heart. Always yours, Zara.

Holding the paper tight in her hands, like it's a lifeline, KARINA blankly looks around the room. She stands up and walks towards the window for a moment. She winces and looks down at her foot, its wrapped in gauze from last night. She looks shocked and starts pacing back and forth across the room and stop in front of the mirror, holding onto the vanity to keep steady as she speaks to her reflection which is just facing the audience.

KARINA:

What the fuck, what the fuck. Vampires are fucking real? Jesus, vampires are real. Does that mean Jesus is real? Fuck, ok. So, the girl I was flirting with last night was a vampire?

KARINA (Cont.)

Oh god, she killed those four guys. I mean, they deserved it, right? Right? Fuck. Why am I so turned on right now?

KARINA begins to pace in front of the mirror, still speaking to her 'reflection.'

KARINA:

And how the hell did I get home? Does she have magic powers too? And what did she mean goodbye? I don't want to say goodbye. I like her. I *really* like her. What the hell do I do? Ok. ok. I'll go to her apartment.

(pause)

Yeah, that's it. I'll go to her apartment, I'll tell her how I feel and then... and then... What the hell do I do then? Tell her I like her and I want to go with her? I'm human. She wouldn't want me. Even if she said yes, where would we go? I can't leave my family, can I? Fuck it, they barely speak to me anyway. Fuck it, I'm gonna go and we're gonna talk. Fuck goodbyes.

KARINA walks to the closet and grabs a coat. She opens her door and steps out only to be met with MIKE HUCHI, stepping out of his apartment.

MIKE:

Karina! Good afternoon!

KARINA:

Afternoon?

MIKE:

It's 3 in the afternoon.

Silence as KARINA processes. She mouths "three pm" silently a couple times until MIKE continues)

MIKE:

Hey, what happened to your leg? Are you alright?

MIKE and KARINA look down at KARINA'S bandage.

KARINA:

Oh... yeah, Mike. It's nothing. You know I should get going-

MIKE:

Be careful out there, Karina! There's a murderer on the loose.

KARINA's eyes widen in shock and feigns surprise
to not be caught.

KARINA:

M-Murderer?

MIKE:

Yeah. Four men were brutally murdered in an alley last night.
Heard they were drained of all their blood. How does someone do
that to four grown men?

KARINA:

(smiling nervously)

Wow, that's crazy. Well, I'll, uh, I'll keep an eye out. Nice
seeing you! Gotta go!

MIKE:

Take care of yourself out there, Karina!

MIKE saunters right off stage, while KARINA
rushes left off stage.

Black Out.

SCENE FOUR*Outside Zara's Apartment*

Setting: a fancy hallway, a door, center stage, facing left stage. The New York skyline from Zara's apartment in the back right of stage facing the audience.

(At Rise: KARINA enters from left stage and runs to the door. She pounds on it and waits for ZARA to open. When she realizes that no one is coming, she pounds on the door again.)

KARINA:

Zara open the door! I know you're there.

Silence. She pounds on the door one last time before deciding to grab the door handle. To her surprise, the door opens and she bursts into the room. It's empty. She walks hesitantly around the room before stopping at the window. She stares at the New York skyline.

KARINA:

(muttering to herself)

She's gone. She's already gone.

KARINA slams her fists against the 'windows' and screams.

KARINA:

Damn it!

As KARINA leans on the 'window', forehead pressed on the glass, a LANDLADY enters from left stage and goes to the door, confusion on her face. She peers into the room and sees KARINA.

LANDLADY:

Can I help you, young lady?

KARINA:

(turning around quickly)

Uh, sorry. Would you happen to know what happened to the woman that lived here?

LANDLADY:

(confused)

She moved out this morning. She left quickly, seemed to be in a hurry.

KARINA:

(desperately)

Do you have any contact info? Anything at all? A phone number? Forwarding address?

LANDLADY:

No, sorry sweetie. She paid in cash and left.

KARINA:

(downcast)

That's all right. I just really wanted to tell her something.

Black Out.

SCENE FIVE*Newsstand*

Setting: A Newsstand at the corner of a busy New York City street. The newsstand is centerstage. A painted setting in the back of building façades. Audio plays of busy street and honking cars.

(At Rise: Three people and ZARA stand around the newsstand, reading the morning paper. ZARA is standing slightly off to the side, one eye on the people, listening to them speak.)

BYSTANDER #1:

This is terrible! Four men dead!

BYSTANDER #2:

(agreeing)

What kind of monster would do such a thing?

BYSTANDER #3:

Are the police even doing anything?

ZARA gets a stricken look on her face. She lowers the newspaper a bit and looks downcast. The bystanders are getting increasingly angry.

ZARA:

(pitches in)

What if they were bad guys? What if they deserved it?

BYSTANDER #2:

(scandalized)

What an awful thing to say! No one deserves such a monstrous death.

ZARA:

(quietly)

They did.

The bystanders don't seem to hear ZARA and shift the conversation back to the murders. ZARA starts to shift away from them.

BYSTANDER #3:

I heard that they got caught in the middle of a gang war.

BYSTANDER #1:

That's not what I heard. Some people say that it was a monster.

ZARA:

(dryly)

Well if that's the case it might as well be aliens.

BYSTANDER #1:

Well, then what do you think it was if you're so damn smart?

ZARA:

I think it was a vampire.

ZARA walks off from the newsstand towards the center of the stage, leaving the bystanders dumbfounded. The lights then shut off in the back, leaving only light in the front of the stage, especially on ZARA.

ZARA:

I can't do this anymore. I try so hard to disappear and simply watch as mortals doom themselves into extinction. But I'm done. I may be the monster, but they act like ones. I want to live. I want to have fun and dance and scream and, and... love. I want to love. Why am I not allowed to love?

ZARA looks back at the bystanders, who have a spotlight placed on them for a moment until ZARA looks back towards the audience.

I've been to thousands of places, but have I actually seen anything? When did I let that happen? Why? There's something beautiful on every corner- statues, trees, pets, lamp posts, signs, flowers, girls. There's something beautiful here. Someone. I haven't felt like that in a long time. Alive.

(short laugh as she moves back to the center of the stage.)

If being alive means I get to be selfish, I'll do it. I've had to give everything up time and time again. It's my turn now. It's my turn to be human.

ZARA smiles to herself, a look of determination set clearly on her face as she stands and faces the audience, but not looking directly at them. She runs offstage.

Black Out.

Scene SIX

Alleyway

Setting: *the alleyway from Scene 1, with 5 lamps this time.*

(At Rise: all the lamplights are on, KARINA sits by lamp 2 from the left, speaking to herself.)

KARINA:

I could run away? Join the circus. Be a clown. A trapeze clown! Sounds good to me.

From the left side of the stage a SUS
LOOKING MAN walks out and stops when he's
about one streetlamp away from KARINA. He
leans back a bit and openly leers at her.

SUS LOOKING MAN:

What's a pretty little thing doing in an ugly street like this?

KARINA:

(unimpressed)

This is an alleyway, not a street.

SUS LOOKING MAN:

Ooh, feisty. I like it. What's your name, baby?

KARINA:

I'm not interested.

SUS LOOKING MAN:

You don't even know me, I could be the man of your dreams.

KARINA:

(looks him up and down)

You don't look like a girl to me.

KARINA and the man don't notice, but ZARA
enters the scene from the right. She walks
silently behind the man.

ZARA:

I think she told you to leave her alone.

KARINA looks up in surprise from her spot on
the ground. She stands up in a mix of

happiness and surprise. The man looks back and forth between them and gives a disgusting grin.

SUS LOOKING MAN:

Oh, I see, I see. Mind if I join? I think that's so hot, I love girl power.

ZARA, who had been staring at KARINA, looks back at the man in disgust. She grabs him by the shirt, and the man looks surprised by her strength.

ZARA:

Get lost or I'll make you wish you had.

SUS LOOKING MAN:

(raising his hands in surrender)

Alright, alright jeez. Stupid bitch... I was just being nice...

The man walks off stage and then ZARA and KARINA are finally alone again. They face each other.

KARINA:

I thought you left.

ZARA:

I was going to. Someone wouldn't let me.

ZARA moves closer to KARINA until they're face to face under the third street light. KARINA looks down, seems embarrassed with ZARA'S intense stare. The streetlights begin to slowly shut off starting from the outer 2 and moving in, very slowly.

KARINA:

How'd you know I'd be here?

ZARA:

I followed your scent.

KARINA:
(*astonished*)

Really?

ZARA:
No.

ZARA laughs at KARINA'S expression and shows her amusement by walking to be right in front of KARINA.

ZARA:
I had a feeling you'd be here. We're connected you know.

KARINA:
(*kinda flirty now*)
Oh yeah, in what ways?

ZARA:
Well, I killed for you. I'd do it again. And you get me. Like no one else has.

KARINA:
(*smiling*)
Oh?

ZARA:
You like it? I'm done running from who I am.

KARINA:
(*disappointed*)
I thought I told you, you don't have to be a monster again. Fuck everyone!

ZARA:
No, I mean it's time to be Zara again.

KARINA:
(*hopeful*)
And what is this Zara like?

ZARA:
(*grins happily*)
Free. I'm free and I want to run. Not run away. Just run. Live.

KARINA deflates, the 2 outer lamps are completely off by now.

KARINA:

(with a faltering smile)

That's great Zara! Where are you going first?

ZARA:

Well, I don't know. Why don't you choose?

KARINA:

Me? Maybe you won't like what I choose.

ZARA:

I have forever to explore the world. One place won't kill me.

KARINA:

(wistfully)

Wow... to have forever. What I would do if I had forever...

ZARA:

Forever's not always a friend. To be so lonely, forever? You lose yourself. The Zara from last millenia is not the Zara now. Forever can change you.

KARINA:

What if I'm looking for change?

ZARA:

(warningly)

What if you don't like the you that comes out from the other side?

KARINA:

Then teach me.

ZARA takes a step back, as if by standing too close she'd contaminate KARINA.

ZARA:

I won't curse you with this. You have a life. You have your time. You're meant for the sun. Karina was not born for the shadows.

The 2nd and 4th lamps are completely off by now, leaving only a spotlight on KARINA and ZARA from the 3rd lamplight.

KARINA:

(taking ZARA's hand in hers)

What you don't see, Zara, is that I was born for it. Why do you think I was walking alone so late at night? I crave the shadows. I've been an outcast my whole life. My own family doesn't want me.

ZARA:

Karina, If I do this....

KARINA:

You'll never have to be alone again. We can have forever, together.

ZARA:

Ok. ok. Close your eyes. Think of where you want to go. Got it?

KARINA nods and closes her eyes. She's smiling. ZARA steps so close, KARINA can feel her breath on her face. ZARA caresses her face. ZARA grabs KARINA by the waist and dips her. Very romantic. ZARA sweeps the hair from KARINA's neck and tilts her head to the side.

ZARA:

(unsure)

Karina-

KARINA:

(assuredly)

Zara.

ZARA leans into KARINA'S neck.

BLACK OUT.