

RED LIGHT

Written by

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OVER BLACK:

SFX: A TOURIST CROWD AT NIGHT

SFX: THE CLIP AND CLOP OF CARLA'S SANDALS ON THE PAVERS

FADE IN:

EXT. AMSTERDAM RED LIGHT DISTRICT - NIGHT

The darkness. A narrow cobblestone lane winds along the canal, slick but not wet. The mood is unmistakable. The amber gas lamps of the probably the most famous Red Light District in the world.

The canal water reflects fractured halos of red, gold, and black, and the fractured decisions made long ago.

On both sides, rows of 17th-century brick townhouses loom and lean like tired guardians who've seen it all before.

CARLA CAPPIONI (40) a naturally beautiful Italian woman, stands still, nervous, staring at the display windows across the canal.

Display windows that display young bodies. Young female bodies.

CARLA
(to herself)
Am I really going to do this?

Carla stares at just one. And she is fucking beautiful.

CARLA (CONT'D)
Deep breath.

EXT. AMSTERDAM RED LIGHT DISTRICT - CONTINUOUS

Carla takes the first step. Physically.

SFX: CLIP

And then another

SFX: CLOP

With each brave step, the display window grows larger and larger in Carla's perspective, as do the nerves and the pounding of her heart.

INT. AMSTERDAM BROTHEL - SAME

In a purposely Red-Lit display window, a stunningly beautiful young woman stands, yeah, her body on display.

SASHA SOKOLOV (25), a striking beauty, flawless skin with a porcelain finish and cool undertone, slim hourglass figure with graceful proportions, swan-like neck, delicate collarbones, and a tired blonde die.

She sees the approaching lady.

SASHA

Oh, great. Fucking sex tourists.

Carla stands directly in front of her window.

They stare at each other.

Sasha tries to wave her off with a shake of her head. And a tisk-tisk of her index finger. But the lady isn't moving.

Sasha knocks (more like bangs) on the window.

SASHA (CONT'D)

(loud)

I don't do women!

The lady doesn't seem to give a damn what Sasha claims to do. She just stares.

Sasha turns and steps out of the display, back into the safety of the inner room.

INT. AMSTERDAM BROTHEL - FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

A small vestibule lit in deep amber. The red light from the display window bleeds inward, somehow diffused, somehow softer, but still present.

A chipped bell over the door CLANGS as Carla pushes in.

A laminated placard on the inside wall reads:

"PRIVATE. APPOINTMENTS ONLY."

The door CLANGS behind her.

A plastic chair sits just inside the entry. And in it sits a large specimen of a man.

VIKTOR VOLCHEK (29), shaved crewcut, square on top, square face, and a chiseled Adonis body, double-XL thick neck, stares down Carla.

Viktor speaks, not surprisingly, with a Russian accent.

VIKTOR
Good evening.

Carla swallows her fear of Viktor. Just part of the experience.

CARLA
I want her.

Not even a moment passes.

SASHA (O.S.)
Viktor, I'm not doing any women for you, anymore!

Viktor gives his best "customer service" smile.

VIKTOR
Please, to wait one moment. Only one moment.

Carla nods.

Viktor migrates into the adjoining room.

Carla can only barely hear what's said.

SASHA (O.S.)
No! I told Sammy that---

VIKTOR
You will.

Some non-visible gesture stops Sasha.

SASHA
(mousey)
Ok. Ok.

A moment passes.

Viktor's geography emerges from the adjoining doorway.

He smiles at Carla and motions with his massive arm.

VIKTOR
Please, to join me at the counter.

Carla steps up to the counter and pulls her wallet out.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

Yes. Is three-hundred Euros for one hour.

Carla grins back.

CARLA

Of course.

She plunders the bills from her old worn wallet.

VIKTOR

Thank you. Please to follow me.

INT. BROTHEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A square room behind a locked door. No windows. The red light is no longer ambient – it is the architecture. A single overhead bulb behind a crimson shade casts everything in blood-toned haze. No mirror. No art. Just red.

There's a small narrow bed centered on the side wall. Sasha sits on it, legs crossed, deflated.

The door opens.

Viktor scowls at Sasha as he closes it behind Carla. CLAMP!

Silence.

Carla just stands there, staring.

Sasha just sits, bouncing her leg, not staring.

A moment passes.

CARLA

I don't know what I'm doing here.

Sasha is Sasha.

SASHA

Well, if it's my guess, you're here because you want to get fucked.

Silence.

CARLA

No.

Sasha looks up at her.

SASHA

Then... Oh, you want a little treat
like...

Sasha stands, takes Carla's hand and leads her to the bed.

Along the way, Sasha let's her hand slide on Carla's
backside.

Carla sits on the bed.

Sasha stands tall in front of her. A beanpole in a micro-
bikini.

Carla hangs her head in shame.

Sasha pauses the routine.

Silence.

CARLA

(not looking)

I just want to talk.

A deflated irritated Sasha exhales.

SASHA

Oh, you're one of those.

Sasha begrudgingly pulls another white plastic chair up, and
faces the now emotional Carla on the bed.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Ok. Ok. It's ok. You're ok.

Carla wipes her face.

SASHA (CONT'D)

What's the matter? You never been
with a woman before?

Carla doesn't answer.

SASHA (CONT'D)

It's ok. I have had a lot of
beginners in my life... I'll walk
you through---

Not her voice. But Carla's shaking head that interrupts
Sasha's guided tour.

SASHA (CONT'D)

What.

INT. BROTHEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The darkness swallows Carla as she sits on the bed.

CARLA
I am afraid.

SASHA
Oh, Honey---

This time it's Carla's flat palm.

CARLA
No.

Silence.

CARLA (CONT'D)
When I...
(shakes her head)
When I was fifteen...

SFX: A LOW OMINOUS HUM

Sasha's eyes slowly grow wider.

CARLA (CONT'D)
I had a bab---

Sasha doesn't wait for the next syllable.

SASHA
Oh, Fuck you.

Carla whimpers.

SASHA (CONT'D)
(louder)
Fuck you.

Carla... whimper.

SASHA (CONT'D)
(loudest)
FUCK YOU!

Suddenly Viktor smashes through the door.

Sasha immediately wilts.

SASHA (CONT'D)
(sheepish)
No. No. Viktor... This is how she
likes it.

Viktor thinks twice.

VIKTOR
Oh... Ok.

Viktor doubles back to the door.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
Fuckin' people.

The door closes.

The tense pain in Sasha's face, as it rotates back to a now looking Carla, is immeasurable.

CARLA
I'm so sorry.

The rage in Sasha won't subside.

She takes one step and grabs Carla by the throat.

Sasha raises her open palm up behind her head.

SASHA
You think you're sorry now, huh?

SLAP!

She reloads the open palm.

SASHA (CONT'D)
I'll tell you how sorry....

Sasha stops.

Carla still looking at her, tears running down her face.

Sasha's rage, mysteriously begins to deflate.

She looks at Carla. Now the victim.

A moment of fading tension passes.

And the emotions bubble to Sasha's surface.

Her lip quivers. Her face trembles.

She slowly, carefully, let's go of Carla's throat.

Sasha is overcome. An ugly cry-face comes, with the accompanying child-like frown. She whimpers.

SASHA (CONT'D)
 (soft now)
 Oh, mom.... I'm sorry.

Carla can't wait any longer.

Her 40-year-old arms reach out and hold onto the baby she let go so many years before.

CARLA
 No. No. Baby. It's me. It's my
 fault. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Both women collapse in an embrace to the floor.

And just like each one cannot get enough of the other, they clamor for a more substantial hug. Embrace. And yes, even kisses.

A moment of mutual relief and reunion passes.

They are left spent and exhausted in each others arms on the floor.

INT. BROTHEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

FROM ABOVE

Carla and Sash lie head to head on the floor. Cheek to cheek, they smile.

CARLA
 I can't believe it, finally.

She squeezes a little tighter.

A moment passes.

SASHA
 Mom...

Carla's eyes light up with hope.

CARLA
 Yes, baby.

Beat.

SASHA
 What's my name?

Carla thinks twice and almost cracks. But she get's it out.

CARLA
Beatrice... It means...
(emotional)
Traveler.

Carla whimpers.

Sasha let's her.

A moment passes.

SASHA
I don't want to travel no more.

A moment passes.

CARLA
(through tears)
Let's go home.

Sasha nods.

A moment passes.

INT. BROTHEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Carla and Sasha still lie on the floor, cheek to cheek. The red light buzzes above them.

A long moment passes in silence.
Carla strokes Sasha's hair behind her ear.

SASHA
Do you remember him?
(beat)
My father?

Carla's hand pauses.

CARLA
Not well. Not enough.

Sasha waits.

Carla struggles.
Then:

CARLA (CONT'D)
His name was Luca. He worked at the
port. He...
(shakes her head)
He never saw you.

A long silence.

SASHA

Good.

INT. BROTHEL ROOM - LATER

The bed is messy now. The floor a little cleaner.

Sasha stands in front of the locker. She zips a cheap black duffel bag closed. She's changed - jeans, an old gray hoodie, hair in a low ponytail.

Carla sits on the edge of the bed, watching her daughter transform.

CARLA

That's really all you own?

SASHA

I didn't come with much either.

Carla smiles, barely.

She stands and folds the towel that had been left on the bed. No reason. Just instinct.

CARLA

I'll get you more.

Sasha doesn't answer. But she nods.

INT. BROTHEL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Viktor stands by the front counter, arms crossed. Sasha emerges, duffel slung over her shoulder.

He frowns.

VIKTOR

You quitting?

Sasha shrugs.

SASHA

You could say that.

He frowns.

Looks her up and down. Then at Carla.

VIKTOR
She owes for the week. She doesn't
walk unless the house is square.

Carla steps forward without hesitation.
Pulls out her old, worn wallet.

CARLA
How much?

Viktor considers, maybe throws in a little extra.

VIKTOR
Nine hundred Euro.

Carla counts the cash slowly, all of it.
It's everything she has.

She slaps it on the counter.

CARLA
She's square.

Viktor takes it.
Glances between them.
Nods once.

VIKTOR
She's square.

Viktor looks to Carla. Carla looks right back. Her stare has
changed.

She nods once.

Viktor doesn't argue.

INT. BROTHEL - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Carla pulls the door open. The amber-red street outside glows
like a new world.

Sasha hesitates.

SASHA
What if I totally mess this up?
Then what?

Carla takes her hand.

CARLA
Then we mess it up together,
Beatrice. We do it together.

They step into the night, into life.

The door closes behind them.

FADE OUT.

THE END