

TRUE BLOOD - 01-01

Strange Love

Written by Alan Ball

FADE IN:

1 EXT ROAD/INT. CAR - NIGHT

A car zooms along the two lane country road. SORORITY GIRL drives while her FRAT BOYFRIEND sits in the passenger seat. They're bored. She proceeds to hand-pleasure him, but when he sees a sign with "WE HAVE TRU BLOOD" next to a GRABBIT QUIK MINI-MART/LIQUOR store, he loses interest in sex and excitedly asks her to pull over.

2 INT. GRABBIT QUIK MINIMART - NIGHT

A television blares an interview between NAN FLANNAGAN, Vampire League representative, and BILL MAHER. Nan says vampires deserve equal rights with humans. They pay taxes, etc.. She insists people have nothing to fear now that synthetic blood has been developed in Japan. CAJUN BIKER CLERK sits behind the counter watching TV while a REDNECK HUNTER browses the refrigerated drink case. The twenty-somethings come in and ask if they really carry Tru Blood here. The CLERK pretends to be a vampire and scares them, but "Billy Bob" is the real vamp. The twenty-somethings run out, and Redneck threatens to kill the attendant if he ever pretends to be a vampire again.

TITLES

3 EXT. MERLOTTE'S BAR NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

4 INT. MERLOTTE'S BAR - SOOKIE STACKHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sookie, a beautiful 25-ish blonde in skin-tight Merlotte's tee-shirt, delivers a burger and fries to a customer. Along the way, she listens in to the minds of the folks around her. What they are thinking would shock us, but Sookie takes all the head-junk with grace, never showing she hears it. She drops a beer off to an alcoholic who is praying to God to make it just one. She drops the burger with a kid who's mentally screaming to get out of this small-town hell. Sookie advises him to do it soon, before he's trapped like all the rest of them. The family looks shocked by her comment, especially the kid who can't believe she read his mind. Sookie pivots and tries to squeeze all the thoughts from her head.

5 INT. SAV-A-BUNCH HARDWARE STORE - CONTINUOUS

TARA THORNTON gives an obnoxious CUSTOMER a hard time. TARA, an angry young black woman (the racial issue will play out

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later), is trying to read a book on her break. The customer complains to the manager, but Tara quits before he can fire her. She storms out.

6 EXT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Tara calls Sookie. INTERCUT:

7 INT. MERLOTTE'S BAR - SAM MERLOTTE

Answers the phone behind the bar, gives the phone to Sookie who tells Tara's not to call her at work. Tara says she quit her job, and she needs a drink. She's coming over, and she tells Sookie Sam doesn't mind Sookie getting a call at work. He's in love with her. Sookie retorts that Sam's her boss. That's all. ARLENE FOWLER, an middle-aged waitress, passes by, complaining she can't help all the calls to her. She's got a family.

DAWN GREEN, another waitress, tells Sookie that the local white-trash, MACK and DENIES RATTRAY, have taken one of Sookie's tables. Sam advises Sookie not to listen in. There's more than a hint he knows she's a telepath.

The Rattrays are obnoxious. He's thinking, "Jump my bones," and his wife is thinking Sookie is an imbecile.

8 INT. MERLOTTE'S KITCHEN - LAFAYETTE REYNOLDS

Sookie comes back to tell LAFAYETTE to drop the Rattray order on the floor before he plates it. He tells Sookie to ignore the creeps. He's gay, bright and sassy. Dawn advises Sookie to turn on the charm. Arlene's now on the phone, and we learn she's divorced, kids, with new guy, Rene.

9 INT. MAUDETTE'S PLACE - NIGHT

JASON STACKHOUSE, Sookie's brother, is 28-ish with ripped abs. He learns his current lover, MAUDETTE PICKENS, has had sex with a vampire. He says he won't sleep with somebody who sells herself to vampires, but when she says she's got a tape of sex with one, he stays to watch.

10 INT. MERLOTTE'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

BILL COMPTON enters, asks for a True Blood. Sookie says Bill, 35-ish and handsome, is their first vampire customer. Nobody else seems to realize Bill is a vampire, but Bill notes that Sam does. It's the first hint that Bill and Sam see each other as "other." Bill orders wine so he has an excuse to stay. Mack Rattray leans over from his booth, informing Bill that Sookie is a little off in the head (right in front of her).

11 INT. MAUDETTE'S PLACE - NIGHT

Maudette seduces Jason as he watches the vampire sex tape.

12 INT. MERLOTTE'S BAR - NIGHT

Sookie notes Bill has taken a seat with Rattrays, and she overhears their thoughts. They are "drainers" only interested in selling Bill's blood. Sookie races to the bar to get help from Tara, but she doesn't think a vampire needs help. Neither does Sam. Sookie suddenly realizes the Rattrays and the vampire are gone. She races outside to find them. Sam tells Tara to mind the bar for a bit and hurries out.

13 EXT. MERLOTTE'S BAR - NIGHT

Sookie can't see them, but she locates them with her mind, grabs a long steal chain from a truck bed and hurries away.

14 INT. MAUDETTE'S - CONTINUOUS

Jason is having sex with Maudette. He's being rough like the vampire in the sex video to turn her on and accidentally chokes her lifeless.

15 EXT. MERLOTTE'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

A COLLIE watches as Sookie whips the chain around Mack's neck, and he goes down, choking. She is then cornered by Denise who threatens her with a knife. Sookie manages to get the knife and orders Denise and Mack to get lost. Denise promises to kill Sookie the next time they meet. On the ground, Bill is immobilized by a long silver chain, blood from his arm flowing into an IV bag. Sookie removes the chain, and Bill's burned skin instantly begins to heal.

The Rattrays' truck tries to hit Bill and Sookie, but she pulls him into the woods. Does he want to leave now? He admits he's too weak. The COLLIE comes and licks Sookie's face. Bill says the dog's checking on her, and she says it must live nearby, but she clearly doesn't know it. Bill, on the other hand, does know something about it.

She tries to help him take off the rubber tourniquet, and he misreads it as greed. She jumps back, then suddenly realizes she can't read his mind and is astonished. He reminds her she should be afraid. She wraps the silver chain around her neck protectively, insisting she's not afraid of him.

He asks if she wants to drink the blood they stole or sell it? That disgusts her. He says it apparently makes people healthy and improves their sex life. She's disgusted further and warns him to treat her like lady or she'll leave. He streaks to her side, a blur. In her face, he demands to know what she is. She says she's Sookie Stackhouse, a waitress.

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She learns his name, then laughs at the plainness of it, Vampire Bill. She thought it would be some aristocratic French name. She wonders about the silver chain, thinking it only worked on werewolves in the movies. He seems to find her so fascinating and innocent. Please keep what she's learned to herself. Vampires don't like their weaknesses known.

Going back to the bar, Sookie finds Sam waiting anxiously. She says not all vampires can take care of themselves, then goes inside.

16 INT. MERLOTTE'S BAR - LATER

Sam thanks Tara for taking care of the bar while he was outside. She hits him up for a job. He refuses, reminding her she's a hothead. She says she can watch Sookie for him. She knows Sam's in love with Sookie. Besides, Tara already knows how to mix drinks. Her mom's an alcoholic as long as Tara's been alive. Jason enters looking for Sookie. As he stares past Tara, she reminds him they've know each other since childhood. Sookie's her best friend. Not interested, Jason nods then sees Dawn Nuzzling her, he makes a date. They leave. Tara is disgusted by his sexual antics.

17 INT. ADELE STACKHOUSE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sookie greets Gran, who's been sitting with the cat on her lap, reading a Charlaine Harris paperback. Guess what? Gran looks hopeful. Sookie got a date. This is old territory. Sookie ignores it and tells Gran she met a vampire. Gran asks if he bit anybody, then settles to the real question. Did Sookie like him? She says he was "real interesting." Then she turns the subject to getting sleep.

18 INT. SOOKIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She's putting on her nightgown when she peers out the window and spies Bill on the lawn below, looking up at her. She hurries out.

19 EXT. GRAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sookie hurries out. Bill remove his shirt, and Sookie says she never dreamed she'd have sex with a vampire.

20 INT. SOOKIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sookie wakes up suddenly, safe in her bed... a dream.

21 EXT. GRAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Sookie, in bikini, suns herself. Jason drives up, gives Sookie a hard time about going after the Rattrays. Sookie tells they tried to drain Bill and threatened her with a knife. How did Jason find out?

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He says HOYT, a co-worker, went to buy some weed, and Denise made him drive them to the hospital for it. Jason doesn't care if a vampire dies. He's already dead. She says that's not the vamp's fault. He worries Bill is the vamp from the sex video, but described, realizes he's not. Gran invites Jason to lunch.

22 INT. GRAN'S KITCHEN - DAY

Jason's stealing food from Sookie's plate when Gran comes in and says the phone call was a neighbor. Maudette has been killed. Sookie can't believe it. She went to highschool with Maudette. Jason blurts out Maudette was a fangbanger. Gran doesn't know what that is, and Jason says girls who sell their bodies to vampires for sex and blood. Sookie's practical. They get a grand for lying around while she gets pennies for tips working her ass off. Doesn't seem fair. Suddenly Sookie reads his mind. He's in some kind of trouble. He tells her to get the hell out of his head.

23 EXT. ROAD CREW WORK SITE - DAY

Jason's on the phone with Dawn, trying to set up another date. She says he's not the only guy around. He retorts that he's the best. She gives in and sets their date for after work. SHERIFF BUD DEARBORN and DEPUTY ANDY BELLEFLEUR come out and bust Jason for Maudette's murder. Co-workers HOYT FORTENBERRY, RENE LENIER, AND Lafayette wonder what's going on.

24 INT. SOOKIE'S BATHROOM - DAY

Gran wonders if Bill is old enough to have been in the Civil War. She'd like him to talk to the Descendants of the Glorious Dead. Sookie thinks he might have a hard time meeting the group at noon. Gran says they can work around his schedule. She's even volunteer to meet him at night and tape his recollections. Sookie grins. Clearly that's something Gran would do. She says she'll ask if she sees Bill again. Gran gives her a big kiss.

25 INT. MERLOTTE'S - AT THE BAR - NIGHT

Tara is back to reading her books again. She's ignoring a customer (doesn't she always?) when Lafayette sees her, can't believe Sam hired her. She goes into a rant with the customer about being ordered/asked to serve him, including telling everyone the irony of a black girl being named for Gone with the Wind's slave plantation, Tara. Her momma (ironic since "momma" is actually the writer, Charlaine Harris :) must have been nasty or just plain dumb. After he says sorry, she serves the customer, then learns from Lafayette that Jason has been arrested for Maudette's murder. She defends Jason. Lafayette is only interested in Jason's body. He says she's the one with the thing for Jason. She's got a real chip on her shoulder.

26 INT. MERLOTTE'S BACK ROOM AND THEN BAR - NIGHT

Dawn has told Sookie that Jason's been arrested. Arlene is with Rene, her boyfriend, and Hoyt. They decided not to mention the arrest to Sookie. Sookie stands up for her brother and asks why they didn't tell her. Dawn asks, didn't you just "know" already? Sookie says she's not psychic.

She storms out to Rene, Hoyt and Arlene, who are playing pool. Why the hell didn't Rene tell her? He shuffles... says he promised Jason. Hoyt stands up for Jason. Sookie says Jason's egotistical, self-centered, but not a killer.

When Bill enters, Sookie seems to sense him and then only has eyes for him. While Sam steams and worries, the rest of the bar clientele have their own nasty opinions about how Sookie looks at Bill. Tara says Sookie looks like she's walking down the aisle to him.

Sookie greets Bill and asks if he wants a bottle of True Blood. Sam has now stocked it. Bill takes her hand, and suddenly, wonder of wonders, Sookie's head is filled with silence. He apologizes for his cool touch and says other men's hands must be warm to her. She again says, what men? He says she's more than a waitress... more than a human.

He asks if he may "call on her." His old fashioned speech reminds her of Gran's request. Bill agrees to meet Sookie behind the bar after work. He points out the whole bar is staring at them. She says it must be because her brother was arrested. Did Bill know Maudette Pickens? No, he didn't, but he believes the roomful of stares are because she's human and he's vampire. She doesn't care what they think, but he does. He's going to make Bon Temps his home. As he goes, everyone's annoying psycho-babble hits her again.

27 INT. MERLOTTE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Sam drags Sookie into his office and insists he won't let her put herself in danger. He cares about her... in fact his thoughts say he loves her, but he can't figure out how to tell her straight out. Tara rushes up, begins ordering Sookie to take care of herself. This thought slides into fear for Jason. Sookie erupts, declaring Jason will never love Tara, and Sookie will do what she wants to do. She exits, slamming the door behind her.

28 EXT. MERLOTTE'S - NIGHT

Contrite, Sam asks if Sookie wants him to wait with her for Bill. She affirms she's fine. But when he's gone, she's attacked and beaten to within an inch of her life.

THE END