

an excerpt from

Soul of Darkness

a vampire love story

Music by Placido Domingo, Jr.

Book and Lyrics by Scott Guy

Additional lyrics by Samantha Domingo

Developed in association with the Academy for New Musical Theatre

The story so far:

In the first two scenes, a young 19th-century heiress, Mary, is haunted by nightmares of demons and vampires; but in her dreams since childhood the vampire is her rescuer and guardian. On the eve of Mary's wedding, the vampire materializes to rescue her from her fiancé, Benjamin, who is being blackmailed by an ambitious prostitute, Polly. As we will soon find out, Polly has trapped Benjamin and in return for her silence, she demands that Benjamin acquire all of Mary's land, and sign them over to her.

Scene Three

BENJAMIN

Look. I know what you want. But from me you shall not receive another red farthing. Do you hear me?

POLLY

Wull, hear me out first and then decide. But I see you got your wind up, so I'll be brief.

(SHE puts the book back. **A Sweet Little
Fragrance.**)

POLLY

Ain't I sportin'? So here's the tab.

YOUR FIANCÉE SHE COME OF AGE JUST THIS MONTH.
SO THE CUP OF GOSSIP...

Well --

OVER SHE RUN'TH.
LANDED GENTRY LASS,
THE GIRL...WOT'S SHE WORTH?
AND HER FIANCÉ?
IS THERE A SCANDAL TO UNEARTH?

WELL, IT TURNS OUT, THERE'S A TRUE LITTLE RUMOUR
WOT, IF IT COMES OUT, DERRING-DO
WOULD WOULD CONSUME 'ER.
COO! IT'S JUST LIKE SCENTED CLOVER TO ME,
COZ SHE WILL ALL HER LAND SIGN OVER TO ME.

BENJAMIN

And why would Mary do that?

POLLY

Simple. One word.

A SWEET LITTLE FRAGRANCE CALLED BLACKMAIL:
A WEAPON WE WORKING GIRLS WIELD.
IT'S WHERE YOU EXACT 'EM A PAYMENT
TO KEEP WOT'S A SECRET CONCEALED.

BENJAMIN

Yes, I know what blackmail is --

POLLY

'COURSE Y'KNOW WOT BLACKMAIL IS
COZ IT'S WOT YOU DONE, I' 'TIS.

BENJAMIN

I have never.

POLLY

BEG Y'PARDON, GUVNOR, I'Z IN POSESSION
OF LETTERS IT LOOKS LIKE YOU SEALED.

(POLLY shows some letters. BENJAMIN pales.)

POLLY

Ah. Gone silent of a sudden.

A SWEET LITTLE FRAGRANCE CALLED BLACKMAIL:
A PUNGEANCE YOU GENTLEMEN PLIES.
THESE LETTERS WAS SENT TO A BARON.
YOU WROTE 'EM YOURSELF, I SURMISE,
TRYING TO EXACT SOME QUID
ON ACCOUNT OF WOT HE DID.
WOT' Y'GIVE TO KEEP MY GIVING YOUR
VIRGIN FIANCÉ A NASTY SURPRISE?

Ooo!, it pales. It's caught, innit, Polly?

BENJAMIN

No such letters.

POLLY

Sooner we conclude this, less chance your fiancée comin' in.

(reads)

"Dear Baron Taukzerein --" pleasantries, pleasantries, "four
thousand pounds else your secret about the drowned parlourmaid
from Dorset --"

BENJAMIN

(snatching the letter)

Let me see that. Ha. That is not my handwriting.

POLLY

No, guv. It's mine. I copied 'em over and hid the originals. Copied 'em, wot, y'thought I couldn't read these lovely leather books? These Miltons, these Drydens? Don't underestimate the ambition of a whore, Mr. Aubin.

BENJAMIN

Where did you get these?

POLLY

Let's just say you're not the only man in England to visit my brothel, and when I knew Taukzerein had a vendetta against you, well, a girl has to hedge her bets, don't she?

A SWEET LITTLE FRAGRANCE CALLED BLACKMAIL:

THE SCENT OF THE CENT THAT YOU OWE.

THE SMART ONES LAY TRAPS FOR THE NOT-SO:

JUST WHICH ONE IS YOU, NOW YOU KNOW.

SHOULDA LOOKED BEFORE YOU LEAPT.

SHOULDA MAYBE NEVER SLEPT.

SHOULA SMELLED A WHIFF O' THREATENOUS PERFUME

COZ BLACKMAIL'S BY FAR THE MOST POWERFUL

FRAGRANCE I KNOW!

Ha!

BENJAMIN

How much?

POLLY

There it is. Come a long way from "not another red farthing," haven't we? Told you I'd be quick.

MARY (off)

Benjamin, do I hear visitors?

POLLY

'Parently not quick enough. Tumpty-tum.

MARY

(entering)

I didn't hear the --

(shrieks when she sees Polly)

POLLY

'Allo, fiancée of duck! M'name's Polly.

MARY

Benjamin, that's the woman in my nightmare. Who wanted to kill me.

POLLY

Mmmm, a nervous sort. That ought make things easier. For me, I mean, not so much you. Your move, Master Aubin.

BENJAMIN

I --

(trails off)

(There's a wisp of wind/black fog at the window. MARY senses it, rather than sees it. SHE snaps her head around to look at the window, but the fog dissipates as soon as it appears. MARY steps in front of Aubin, standing between him and Polly.)

MARY

Look, I do not know who you are or what you want, but I will not have you frightening my husband.

POLLY

Not your husband yet. But I like your pluck, lassie. So here's wot's happening....

BENJAMIN

Polly, have some decency. Allow me to explain the situation to my fiancée myself.

POLLY

Decency. Right. That'll be the day. See, dearie, wot he want to tell you in private is that I'm his whore. And I of caught him in a wot-they-call-compromising position. And now I intends to make him pay for my silence. So, here's your wish, Master Aubin, opportunity to go be decent. I'll be back in a week. That is, the night before your nuptials. One week to get me wot I want, or I'll show them wots-em-a-thingies directly to this sweet confectionery here, and that, as Milton says, is that.

(SHE makes a theatrical exit.)

BENJAMIN

Allow me to explain.

MARY

There is nothing to explain, my love. You are decent. You are forthright. I give no credence to that woman's lies.

BENJAMIN

You astonish me every day, more and more.

MARY

But who is she? How does she come to be here in your home, in your study?

BENJAMIN

Mary. The world is not as good as you wish it to be.

MARY

I know. But you are.

BENJAMIN

No. That I am not. Perhaps, Mary, perhaps it is best this comes out before our wedding day, in case you --

MARY

Sh! No. I never --

BENJAMIN

Mary, let me give you a chance to judge me. And then if you understand and forgive, so be it. But first let me ply you with the facts.

MARY

You frighten me.

BENJAMIN

If I frighten you, perhaps then your vampire will come rescue you from me.

(regretful)

Forgive me. That was uncalled for. That woman has unnerved me. But let me speak before I grow affrighted myself.

MARY

Who is she?

BENJAMIN

What she said is correct. She is a prostitute.

MARY

No.

BENJAMIN

I want to tell you everything.

MARY

How does she know you?

BENJAMIN

(hesitates)

I regret to tell you that I have committed...

(can't bring himself to the whole of it)

...an unethical business transaction involving...involving a Baron. And I coerced from him a great deal of money in exchange for my silence. And...this woman, this prostitute, has found out about it and now threatens to expose me. As a blackmailer. She could ruin me and you now as well if you marry me. This Polly has power over me, and can make me do whatever she wants.

MARY

We must go to the police.

BENJAMIN

That is exactly what we must not do. For in so going, we would make fester the very rumors we would be trying to keep secret. No, Mary, I must now do as she asks. Whatever she asks. And if I refuse her, she will expose me and ruin me and perhaps even get me sent to prison. And then she will come after you. As I say, the world is not a good place. Nor I in it. I do not expect you to understand or forgive. I am unconfident I would. I wish I never had brought this upon you. I have failed you. I have failed us. I cannot -- look you in the eyes, Mary.

(HE leaves; broken.)

MARY

Why did I say nothing? Why could I say nothing? Because...it it is untrue. Because, in the morning, he shall...in the morning....Oh, ten minutes ago was I happy, engaged, and free. And prostitutes existed only in literature and cautionary tales. What has happened? That woman, that woman will ruin everything. She will ruin my husband. Well, I must visit her. I shall find out what she wants, and if it is within my power, I shall give it to her. Anything to save my husband. My dear, good, truthful husband. A blackmailer. No, it cannot be true. It will not be true!

(SHE weeps. The VAMPIRE materializes on the inside of the study. HE approaches Mary. As he approaches, he grows more corporeal, and we can observe his features more closely. Handsome, youthful, but haunted. This is VLADIMIR KROVESCH.)

VLAD

Mary.

MARY

(jolts)

Oh! How did you get in here? Help! Benjamin....

VLAD

Mary, look at me.

(SHE calms. **Chill Wind.**)

VLAD

You recognize me.

MARY

From my dreams.

(curious rather than frightened)

What do you want from me? My husband is in the next room.

VLAD

My name is Vladimir Krovesch. I come from a bloodline of vampires.

MARY

Vampires....

VLAD

Nosferatu. Yes, but truly look at me. What do you see?

MARY

I see...I see...

I KNOW YOU IN MY DREAMS.

I'VE KNOWN YOU ALL MY LIFE.

THE KNIGHT WHO RESCUES ME.

IN DREAMS, I AM YOUR WIFE.

AM I IN DANGER?

VLAD

PERHAPS THE WORST DANGER YOU HAVE EVER FACED.

MARY

And is this a dream then?

VLAD

No. You've come of age. That changes everything.
THOUGH YOU KNOW ME AS A DREAM,
NOW AT LAST TO YOU I'M REAL AS I SEEM.
LONG THE TIME WE'VE BEEN APART.
FIVE HUNDRED YEARS IT'S BEEN.
BUT NOW WE ARE TOGETHER ONCE AGAIN.

THOUGH YOU KNOW ME AS A DREAM
NOW AT LAST I AM AS REAL AS I SEEM.
NOTHING'S STRONGER THAN OUR LOVE.
THERE'S NOTHING I WON'T DO.
I PROMISE I'LL BE ALWAYS HERE FOR YOU.

MARY

I KNOW YOU IN MY DREAMS.
I'VE KNOWN YOU ALL MY LIFE.
THE KNIGHT WHO RESCUES ME.
IN DREAMS, I AM HIS WIFE.

VLAD

WE HAD BEEN WAITING TO WED.
WE WERE TO MINGLE OUR BLOOD.
THE NIGHT BEFORE....
THE NIGHT BEFORE....

The night before we were to have married, a slayer who came for me killed you instead. I went on a rampage, Mary, killing the slayer, his family, his friends, his countrymen. I became monstrous, feared. Preying on all of mankind, bent on revenge for your death. But none of that would bring you back to me. Instead, it left me empty, aching, hollow, longing for you, for your touch, for you to look at me in my eyes once again. So I took a vow, Mary, to do whatever it took to have you return to me. And do you know what that is, Mary? Do you know what brings us together again?

MARY

No.

VLAD

Five hundred years. If for five hundred years a vampire doesn't kill, and if for five hundred years he refuses sustenance of any kind, then and only then can he be cleansed and experience true love. And so have I waited, Mary. So have I waited for you. Five hundred years. And then you returned to earth. I have visited you since your birth, watching you, protecting you as best I could from inside your dreams, waiting for you to come of age. And now you have.

VLAD

THOUGH YOU KNOW ME AS A DREAM,
NOW AT LAST I AM AS REAL AS I SEEM.
LONG THE TIME WE'VE BEEN APART:
FIVE HUNDRED YEARS IT'S BEEN.
BUT NOW WE ARE TOGETHER ONCE AGAIN.
FOR YOU ARE NOW MY DREAM.
MY LIFE, MY VERY SOUL.
ALONE, I'M ONLY HALF.
WITH YOU, NOW I AM WHOLE.

MARY

I KNOW YOU IN MY DREAM.
YOU'RE REAL AS YOU SEEM.
LONG THE TIME WE'VE BEEN APART:
FIVE HUNDRED YEARS IT'S BEEN.
FOR YOU ARE NOW MY DREAM.
MY LIFE, MY VERY SOUL.
ALONE, I'M ONLY HALF.
WITH YOU, NOW I AM WHOLE.

MARY

WOULD YOU HAD COME SOONER.
NOW YOU ARE TOO LATE.
I'M TO MARRY BENJAMIN.
WE'VE SET THE DATE.
I CANNOT BE WITH YOU.
HOW LONG I'VE WANTED TO,
BUT NOW YOU ARE TOO LATE.

VLAD

EVERY NIGHT, MY ANGEL, IN YOUR DREAMS I'D WAIT,
TRAPPED UNTIL YOU CAME OF AGE,
MY LOVE SO GREAT.
AT LAST, THE DREAM IS TRUE
AND I HAVE COME TO YOU:
FOR NOW IT IS YOUR FATE.

VLAD

AT LAST THE DREAM IS TRUE
AND NOW IT IS YOUR FATE.

MARY

I CANNOT BE WITH YOU
AND NOW YOU ARE TOO LATE.

VLAD

I do not accept you belong to another man. Nor...do I have to....

(HE rises up, grows in size, transforms into
a menacing nosferatu.)

MARY

Do not kill him!

VLAD

No, I cannot.

(softening, but still imperious)

But again: look at me. What do you see? What do you feel?

MARY

(shivering; but thrilled)

SUCH A CHILLING WIND!

I FEEL THAT WIND IN MY DREAMS,

IT CHILLS ME AND WARMS ME AT THE SAME TIME.

(echoing the wind)

AH....

VLAD

AH....

MARY and VLAD

AH....

MARY

(pulling away)

I cannot be with you. I am to marry Benjamin come Saturday next. Yet I must be with you. Yet I cannot be with you. Oh, why did you come to me? Why did you not stay in my dreams, where you belonged, where we were safe, where we were together? We cannot be together here in this world, Vladimir. I must go to my husband.

MARY

OH WHAT EXQUISITE ANGUISH....

(MARY runs away; conflicted. VLAD is alone.)

VLAD

I WILL BE PATIENT, MARY.
FIVE CENTURIES I'VE WAITED.
SO I CAN WAIT A LITTLE MORE.
TO THOSE WHO LOVE, TIME IS ETERNAL.
THOUGH YOU KNOW ME AS A DREAM,
NOW AT LAST I AM AS REAL AS I SEEM.
LONG THE TIME WE'VE BEEN APART:
FIVE HUNDRED YEARS IT'S BEEN.
BUT NOW WE ARE TOGETHER ONCE AGAIN.
FOR YOU ARE NOW MY DREAM,
MY LIFE, MY VERY SOUL.
ALONE I'M ONLY HALF.
WITH YOU NOW I AM WHOLE.

(HE rises into the air, flies out the window
and into the night. Lights change to:)