

How to Save a Human Bonus Scene

Alice Winters

**Should be read after How to Save a Human.

River

“Well... this is it,” Bentley says.

“What is?” I ask curiously from where I lie beneath the fluffy body of Amara, my dog, and Banshee, my cat. Banshee is currently beating the shit out of Amara’s tail, like it alone was the monster behind her family’s murder (I’m not quite sure her family was actually murdered, but with this much hate in her life, something tragic had to have happened in her back story). Amara couldn’t give a fuck, she loves everything and anything, alive or not.

“It’s the last time I can pretend like the people I work with are semi normal in front of you. They’ve asked us to go out to eat and then... something special,” Bentley says. “Do you know what something special means?”

“Drugs?” I guess.

He looks concerned. “What? No...?”

“Oh. Fine, fine. No drugs.”

“No drugs,” Bentley says as he raises an eyebrow. “I’m not sure what the special thing is.”

I shrug. “Ah well, that sounds fun. Tonight?”

“In an hour because they’re good at planning. You want to go?”

“Of course! I like being around them. They’re fun vampire mobsters,”

I say.

“They’re not... really in the mob, you know that, right?” Bentley asks, like he’s concerned.

“Hmm...” I think back to the threats, the maimings, the torture... and I’ve really only known these guys on a friendly level for like a month.

“Sure. Yep. I’m going to get a shower. I bet I could shower much better if you showered with me.”

“I bet I could help you with that,” he says as he grabs my arms and tries to drag me out from under my pets with only a minor bloodletting from Banshee.

When we walk into the restaurant at dusk, we're taken back to a dark corner where no light could leak through so I can take my protective jacket off. Finn and Marcus are already waiting and Finn beams when he sees us.

"River! I'm glad you could make it. Bentley sounded really reluctant when I asked. It was kind of 'Are you sure Marcus is going to be there? Does he *have* to be there?'" Finn says.

Marcus glowers at Bentley. "Excuse me?"

"That never happened," Bentley says.

"Aww! You brought the baby vampire!" Claude says as he comes up behind me and grabs me in a bear hug. "You're so cute. Alexei, isn't he cute? Wittle baby with evil fangs."

"Fucking adorable," Alexei growls as he sits down next to Finn. Once Claude is done squeezing the life out of me, he sits next to Alexei and drags me down beside him. "This better be worth my time, *moj zanuda*, I had plans."

"Probably the same plans as Marcus," Finn says. "Brood, snarl at innocent humans, suckle blood, and brood some more."

"Yes, and I barely got through the first bit of brooding before you dragged me off," Alexei says without cracking a smile.

The waitress comes over with a smile. "Are the rest of you ready to order?" she asks.

What there is to order beyond blood, I'm not sure, but she writes it all down and Finn tells us he ordered when he arrived so we didn't have to wait on him for so long.

"Really, you should just be the meal, Finn," Alexei says.

"I do feel kind of special sitting in the middle of my vampire harem," Finn says as he beams at us.

"Excuse me?" Marcus asks. "There is no way I'm going to be in the same harem as Claude."

"Yes, Marcus, I'd prefer not to have my brother anywhere near my orgy, either," Claude says. "You're far too pessimistic. Everyone would be having a great time and you'd be all grumbly and growly. 'You dare flash your titties at me! And you! With the big bush! Did you look my way?'"

Finn is laughing harder than he probably needs to but Marcus just stares at Claude, completely silent, which I have to say is even more terrifying than if he'd said something. How bubbly and sweet Finn can like this man, I'm not sure. He's terrifying.

"You're scaring River," Bentley says as he glares at Marcus.

Marcus swings his glare onto Bentley. "With my face?"

"Your face is quite scary," Claude concurs.

"Yes, and when I'm done with your face it'll be terrifying."

Claude wraps an arm around me and draws me in. "It's okay. He's all bark and no bite."

Alexei watches Marcus warily. "Unless you're a bad guy. Then he'll just tear your head clean off your body. One time, I saw this guy come up and the guy was like 'I'm going to kill you, you stupid motherfucker.' And Marcus grabbed his head in one hand and his body in the other and just... *shhoop* pulled his head clean off." He demonstrates by ripping Finn's straw wrapper in half.

I stare at Marcus in horror, especially when he seems *proud* of himself.

"I'm sure it was decades ago," Finn says as he tries to reassure me.

"It was like a year ago, Finn," Alexei says.

"In my defense, he was a murderer and I grabbed him right before he murdered this little girl. She was like five," Marcus says.

He says this like I should commend him. "Oh my god, you tore the head off a man in front of a five-year-old?" I ask in horror.

Marcus's smug look dissipates a little. "I told her not to look," Marcus says like that's an excuse.

"This," Finn says as he points at Marcus, "is how revenge stories start. The child, traumatized, grows up to be a crime-fighting superhero with a vendetta against the man who scarred her for life."

"She made me a Christmas card filled with glitter and unicorns. She was *fine*," Marcus insists.

"Was the unicorn headless?" Claude asks.

"No! I'm never helping anyone ever again," Marcus says as he folds his arms over his chest and glowers.

The waitress seems a bit concerned as she sets the glasses of blood in front of everyone but Finn. I snatch mine so fast it spills and drag it over

before pressing it against my lips. It tastes so sweet and amazing and is literally the best thing since the last time I drank blood at like ten o'clock this morning. Finally satisfied, I set the empty glass down and look up to find everyone staring at me.

“Do you feed the poor thing?” Finn asks.

“Enough to feed a herd of vampires,” Bentley says as he pours all but an inch into my glass out of his and I stare at the man who clearly truly loves me. And then I down that in one go.

“Ooh, here comes my food,” Finn says as the waitress sets down a steak with a side of lobster and I stare at the demon. I thought the true demon was Marcus but no... he's sitting before me.

“I love steak,” I whisper.

“It's so tender too,” Finn says as he cuts into it. He takes a bite and moans and I stare at the devil who has formed before me. “Ohhh that's good.”

I can't look away!

“Want to suck on a piece?” Finn asks me.

“Evil,” I whisper.

“Finn looks sweet, but he's anything but innocent,” Bentley explains. “Oddly, at this table, you're better off with Alexei than anyone other than me.”

Claude gasps. “Excuse me? What about me? I'm the definition of perfect.”

No one says anything. And I just glare at Finn as he eats his human food. All I know is if he ends this feast with ice cream, I'm going to cry the manliest of tears.

“Look at it this way,” Claude says. “Finn is taunting you with delicious food but at least you're not dead!”

“True... Fine. I'll take life over a steak and lobster,” I say, still pretty devastated.

“I really shouldn't have gotten all of this food. It's so much food. I have to be ready for the special ultra-super-secret ultimate fun-filled exciting palooza of a night that I have planned for you fangy motherfuckers,” Finn says before following it up with more steak stuffed into his mouth.

“What are we doing?” Alexei asks Marcus.

Marcus shrugs. "I know as much as you."

"I wonder if we're going roller skating," Alexei says, looking cocky.

Claude's neck snaps around so fast I'm surprised it doesn't break.

"Hold on... there's a story here that I have not heard! My sweet lover, how have you deprived me of this?"

Alexei's got a wicked grin on his face as Marcus's glare deepens.

"No."

"Tell me, tell me," Claude says eagerly.

Finn waves his fork excitedly. "So there was Marcus, wanting to woo me with his mighty charm. And he told me I could pick where we would go on our date. So I thought, my, what fun would it be to go *roller skating*. And there was Marcus all ho ho ho, I'm so sexy as he slides his roller skates on and the moment he hit the rink he did the splits and plummeted to the ground."

"It wasn't the *moment* of," Marcus grumbles.

"Do... do you really want me to describe the whole thing?" Finn asks with a grin.

"Alright, are you guys ready? We'll go do something without Finn involved," Marcus decides as he claps his hands.

"No! Wait for me!" he says as he tries stuffing steak in Marcus's mouth. I'm very curious why he actually eats it. Is it because he's so old?

"Help me! Claude, eat!"

"Don't mind if I do," Claude says as he snatches a fry while I stare at them in wonder.

"Alright, you guys are going to follow my car to the magical and wonderful night of super-duper fun," Finn says. "Are you guys ready?"

No one seems ready.

"Theme park, baby!" Finn shouts as he rushes onto the scene, trying to display it like he's a babe off a game show. There are a lot of arms flailing and smiles being smiled. It's all concerning.

"No," Marcus says as he broods to the extreme.

"This looks like fun!" Claude says.

“No fucking way,” Alexei says as he and Marcus turn around and *high five* each other, like being sticks in the mud is something to be proud of. They hurry back toward the cars as Claude and Finn act like they don’t even notice they’re gone.

Claude hooks his arm through Finn’s and they hurry up to the ticket booth. I look back at Marcus and Alexei who look wounded that neither man bothered to cry after them, beg them to stay, or go retrieve them.

“Is that...” I point.

Bentley nods. “Oh yeah, they like pretending they have this whole sad thing going on because they want them to run back and force them to join in so they seem important,” he explains.

“Ah, makes sense. Let’s go!” I say as I join Finn getting his tickets.

“Are they still looking at us?” Finn asks as Bentley and I get in line behind him.

I glance at Marcus and Alexei who have now slowed to sloth speed as they near the cars. “Most definitely.”

“What a bunch of losers,” Finn says as he takes his ticket and waits for us to get ours. The four of us hurry off, leaving Alexei and Marcus behind.

“Ooh! This one is called the Grim Reaper, that sounds delightful! Let’s go there!” Claude says as he hurries off for the line. As soon as we’re in line, people file in behind us.

That’s when I notice Marcus and Alexei turning heads and scattering families. They take a look at the end of the line and walk right past all of them to the people directly behind us.

“We would like to cut,” Marcus says, voice menacing as Alexei looms into their space. They are the definition of bullies. The poor humans backpedal as quickly as they can, giving Marcus and Alexei plenty of room.

“Are... Are you sure they’re men of the law?” I ask Bentley. “I mean... you have to admit, they kind of act like they’re part of the mob.”

Finn nods. “I would be an amazing mobster. I would make them all feel my wrath.”

“You?” Alexei asks. “What would you do? Cute them to death?”

“Come here, Alexei. I want to show you what I’d do to them.”

“Do we have to ride this thing?” Marcus asks as he stares up at it.

“Are you afraid of roller coasters like you are of roller *skates*?”
Claude taunts.

“No, but Alexei is,” Marcus says.

“Don’t be throwing Alexei under the bus,” Finn says as the gate opens and he heads in with Claude.

“Do you like roller coasters?” I ask Bentley.

“Yeah, I enjoy them. Dorothy loved them and would drag me to theme parks whenever she could when she was young. She loved the drops.”

“I like them, but I wouldn’t say I love the drops. I wonder if it’s different as a vampire. Like because you’re used to being lightning fast.”

“We’ll find out,” Bentley says as he slides into a car and I get in next to him. Claude and Finn get in the front one, forcing the two pouters into a car together behind Bentley and me.

“Hey, DeGray... DeGray!” Marcus reaches forward and smacks the back of Bentley’s head before he can even turn around.

“What?” he asks.

“Get Finn for me.”

Bentley sighs. “Finn, Marcus wants you.”

“Tell him I’m preoccupied. Oh, Claude! Thank you for being here with me. Can I... can I hold your hand if I get a wee bit scared?” Finn asks while blatantly batting his eyes at Claude.

Claude, the peacock he is, just shimmers with delight. Literally... shimmers. I’m pretty sure he tossed glitter on his face at some point. And when I glance back at a rather seething Alexei, I notice he’s got a little bit of shimmer on his cheek, which I find kind of adorable.

“Of course, my little butternut! You can lay your head on me if you need to. Or hold hands. Whatever makes you more comfortable,” Claude says as the safety bars come down from above our heads.

I see something a moment before it comes in contact with the back of Bentley’s head.

“Ow,” Bentley says as he rubs his head before looking back at Marcus.

“Dammit, DeGray, your head is in my way.”

“For what?” Bentley asks as he picks up a pen.

“Where were you going?” Finn asks as he walks around to the third car that Alexei is in.

“I am not pathetic or weak or... whatever you’re thinking,” Alexei says as he squeezes this way and that. “I... I have taken on vampire hunters! And... and... vampires!”

Claude grabs Alexei and gives him a tug, popping him free. “It’s okay to be afraid of roller coasters. Here, next roller coaster you can hold my hand!”

“That’s not what I want! I never want to ride on one again!” Alexei shouts but it’s clear Claude is deaf to his cries and tries to console him with hugs, smiles, and deaf ears.

I turn to find Bentley tipping the man working the roller coaster. “Thank you for not throwing us out. Good work. Good job. You deserve a raise!” Bentley gives me a look of horror as he rushes over. “We’re going to get arrested. We, the detectives of the VRC, are going to get arrested.”

“Well... they definitely make things more fun,” I say as we hurry to catch up.

Bentley smiles at me. “Is that what you’re calling it?”

“Alexei, want to ride the carousel? It has little horsies! Your favorite!” Claude says.

“Finn will fit right in with the children. They might even ask me to hold on to him so he doesn’t fall off,” Marcus says, grinning and proud.

Finn’s eyes narrow. “What was that?”

“I... love you?” Marcus says quietly. “Want me to threaten more people? Will that make you happy?”

“Maybe... wait, no! I don’t want to get thrown out. We have to do the Drop of Devastation first,” he says as he rushes for an absolutely terrifying roller coaster.

Alexei puts on the brakes, and even I’m a bit hesitant as I stare up at it.

“It’s like he’s not happy keeping his weak little human body safe,” Marcus says as he hurries after him.

“Are you having fun?” Bentley asks.

“I am! They’re a lot of fun.”

Bentley looks after the four. “You’re not horrified?”

“Not yet. I feel like next to them, we’re normal.”

“We are normal,” Bentley says. “You haven’t tried eating my fish in at least a week.”

“Nine days! I’ve been using that little counter you got me.”

“What kind of counter?” Finn asks as he looks back at us.

“Oh, one time I accidentally tried eating Bentley’s fish and so he bought me one of those dry erase boards that say ‘We have proudly worked *blank* days since an accident.’ And he scratched out ‘an accident’ and put in ‘since a fish has been harmed.’ It’s not funny and I never harmed any of the fish. They love me!”

“He tries to eat them constantly. They barely have any blood!” Bentley says.

“So what’s the sign say? How many days has it been?”

“Nine...” I whisper.

Finn is delighted by this. “Oh my god, you’ve only gone nine days since trying to eat one?”

“It was an accident!” I say. “Let’s go on this ride of death and forget everything else.”

“Deal!” Finn says, which makes Alexei groan.

Bentley sets a hand on my back and pushes me forward. “After you.”

“You’re going too, right?” I ask.

“Oddly, I’ll do whatever you want me to,” he says with a smile and I know that he will. And that’s what I love about him. I sneak a peck right onto his cheek before tugging him after me as Alexei curses Gaia, God, and Finn. And it’s a great day. The best day. Because I’m alive with the man I love, and I finally have my whole life ahead of me.

A quick look into Banshee’s mind

The demon from hell is back again today. He *smiles* at me and *looks* at me and calls me cute. I’m not fucking cute...

“She *is* super cute,” River says, which makes me preen a little. Because River can call me anything. River is mine and mine alone and this man dare step into my life and take what is mine?

I swipe at him, just for fun and fun it is. I can’t help the little purr that escapes me at the way he jerks back. Fear. I see fear in that beast’s eyes.

Good. I have done my job. I have kept my River safe for he is *mine*.

“Ow, that’s my *skin* you’re kneading!” River cries as he picks me off his lap.

Oops. My bad.

But it’s okay because I’m the best cat in the world and everyone who meets me knows it. I am... where the hell is River going? Is he leaving me? He is shutting the door in my face, and oh my god where is he going?

“Stop yowling, I’m taking Amara for a walk, I’ll be back in like five minutes. Sit with Bentley,” River calls before shutting the door the rest of the way. I try my hardest to stuff my paws beneath it because I must save him! If only I could snag his pants he would return. He must have forgotten or gotten confused. Or maybe he’s getting rid of the dog.

Yes... yessss what a good River. What a goooooood River. I am pleased.

“Will you stop yowling?” Bentley asks.

I whirl on him.

We are alone... together. Just him and me and me and him and he is my enemy. My sworn nemesis, and one day I’ll get River to understand that he needs no man in his life for he has *me*.

And no dog either but he’s currently dumping the dumb thing off in a ditch somewhere super far away.

I hope.

I watch as the evil one sits in *my* seat. Which seat is my seat, you might ask? They’re all my seats. This whole house is mine. And maybe we just arrived here and maybe it once belonged to this man but now it’s all mine. All of it.

I yowl at the door again, sure River will hear, but he hasn’t returned. The ditch can’t be that far away. What if something caught him? What if something found him? What if he’s never coming *baaaaaaaaaack*?

I race to the window but even calling out to him does nothing to bring my River back.

Slowly, I look over at the couch.

“Come here,” the evil one says.

He’s even got my favorite blanket. Does he realize my weakness?

I shall scratch him. Yes! What a pleasant idea. My favorite, actually.

I leap onto his lap, all claws, and love the little jerk he does as I sink them in. Ah yes, I will make him hate me. Yes, I will... why is he petting me? Did I say he could pet me? And does he realize River is missing? He must go get my River.

“It’s okay, River will be back.”

Maybe if I get closer to his face he’ll understand.

“Yowling in my face doesn’t help. Come here. I promise he didn’t leave you,” he says as he squeezes me to him in a death grip. He’s going to MURDER me. I will skin him alive!

“See? It’s not so bad now, is it?”

I hesitate mid bite as I realize that maybe just for this mere moment in my time of absolute need I’ll allow this inferior being to hold me and scratch just a little because my god... that’s the spot. Ah yesss... I *do* like my chin strokes. He has been studying my weakness. This enemy is smarter than I once believed.

“River never believes me when I tell him I can get you to purr. Maybe one of these days you’ll stay on my lap even after he returns.”

Ha! Never. I will never sink so low!

“You know you don’t have to knead with all your claws out, right? Well, at least you’re happy.”

I will only see true... happiness... when... my River... comes home...

“Is she sleeping on your lap?” River whispers.

I perk up, smack the evil one whose lap is annoyingly warm, and then climb onto his head as a reminder that I am queen. It makes River laugh and I’ve done my deed for the day.