

DESIREE: They don't call it "true love" for nothing.

(FRANK *walks away, pours himself a drink.*)

DESIREE: One day, when I was still just a girl, I was in my father's study. I had a deep love for the written word, even then. Daddy had a large pile of magazines...pulp trades. I was going to push them aside; I was looking for my Voltaire. But then I looked down, and the picture of a woman looked up at me. A drawing, actually, of the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen. She was facing off against some strange, tentacled thing oozing out of a crater. The other people around her were running, but she was holding her ground. It wasn't her figure or her face that made her beautiful, no. It was her strength. Defiant and fierce and...stunning. I'd never seen anything like it, and then I grabbed another magazine, and there she was again, and again, and again. On each cover, she was a different character, in different clothes, in different places, but they were all her. And Frank...I could feel your love for her. So much passion in every stroke of your brush. I never knew a man could feel that way about a woman. My father was...cold. Distant. Nothing like the artist behind those covers. I didn't learn why my father had those magazines until later. (*Beat*) Not long after my father attacked you, things went very badly for him. He made the wrong enemies.

FRANK: Look how I weep.

DESIREE: To protect us, he sent my mother and me away. A new place, with new names. Bianca Falconi became Desiree St Clair. But before I left, I...I knew I had to meet you. I wanted to see Francis Ellery with my own eyes. By the time I worked up the courage to seek you out, you were in the hospital. I visited you once, only once, while you were still there.

FRANK: Like hell.