

DELTA BLOOD

by Kimberly Locke

*A half-hour drama pilot
First ten pages*

INT. LOS ANGELES APARTMENT - NIGHT

A shoebox apartment in Los Angeles.

Too small. Too hot. Too expensive to be this sad.

Streetlight BUZZES through cheap plastic blinds.

HOLLY KELLER, 22, sits at her desk with her knees pulled to her chest.

Wild red hair. Freckled skin. A face that learned how to go blank and stay there.

On her laptop:

DELTA BLOOD ARCHIVE.

Episodes. Case notes. Old thumbnails.

A picture of two teenage girls smiling into a cheap microphone.

HOLLY AND KIT, 16.

Holly clicks one file.

RAY COOPER - RAW AUDIO.

She doesn't play it. Her hand lingers on play. Her hand frozen.

Behind her, KIT REYNOLDS, 16 forever, blonde bob, pink cardigan, appears over her shoulder.

Not a jump scare.

A habit.

KIT
That one again?

Holly closes the laptop halfway.

HOLLY
You're not supposed to be here.

KIT
And yet.

Holly reaches into a cardboard box and pulls out a dusty MICROPHONE.

Kit watches, amused.

KIT (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

HOLLY

What?

KIT

You're doing your serious voice.

Holly plugs in the mic.

The red light wakes up.

HOLLY

Most killers aren't masterminds.

Kit rolls her eyes.

KIT

Here we go.

HOLLY

Most victims aren't random.

KIT

Put that on a tote bag.

Holly ignores her.

HOLLY

People like to think murder is a line. Something far away. Something only monsters cross.

She looks at Kit in the laptop reflection.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

But it's not a line.

A beat.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

It's a door.

Kit's smile fades.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

And sometimes somebody opens it for you.

The room goes quiet.

Too quiet for LA.

Kit leans closer.

KIT
Don't tell it wrong.

Holly looks at her.

HOLLY
I never told it at all.

Kit smiles.

KIT
That's not true.

The laptop CLICKS.

Holly freezes.

The file has started playing.

RAY COOPER - RAW AUDIO.

A hiss of old recording.

Teenage Holly breathing hard.

Then teenage Kit's voice, bright and shaking with excitement:

KIT (V.O.)
Holly, this is it.

Adult Holly doesn't move.

KIT (V.O.)
Don't you see? This is exactly what
we needed.

The waveform crawls across the screen.

Kit is gone.

Only Holly now.

Only Kit's voice.

KIT (V.O.)
The podcast is going to blow up.

Holly slams the laptop shut.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE: DELTA BLOOD

The song "Seedling" by Ceitidh Mac plays.

INT. THE KELLER HOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Holly, 16, in her small, sparse bedroom, violently JOLTS upright.

She settles back into her pillow. She's not getting back to sleep now. This annoys her.

She stares at the popcorn ceiling until light seeps in through a small window over her bed.

EXT. FLORIDA PRAIRIE - DAWN

A large bur oak tree stands in the center of a prairie.

Holly, ragged, stands in a faded flannel with bags under her eyes. A shotgun is slung over her shoulder. She shifts back and forth.

RICH, 50s, a grumbling philosopher of the backwoods and Holly's uncle, SLICES the throats of three shot and dead doves.

Red DRIPS.

Holly flinches.

HOLLY

Why'd you have to cut their
throats? They were already dead.

Rich rotates the doves 180 degrees so the heads hang down. Blood drips into the earth.

RICH

You don't want the blood to get all
clotted in there. No good for
cooking like that. You gonna stand
there lookin' like an idiot or are
you gonna help?

Rich gestures to the rest of the doves in a pile next to them.

RICH (CONT'D)

Stupid girl.

Holly picks up three more doves. Rich hands her the knife.

SLICE.

Rich watches her hand. Reaches over. Moves her thumb up onto the spine of the blade.

RICH
Like that. You'll open your hand up
and then I'm the one hearin' about
it.

She does the next one right. He grunts. High praise.

EXT. RED MARSH - NIGHT

FLASH:

Longleaf pines black against a red sky. Full of stars.

FLASH:

Handheld. Whipping through sawgrass. Dark water.

FLASH:

A man's hand, open, bobbing over red water.

BACK TO:

EXT. FLORIDA PRAIRIE - DAWN

Holly, stunned. Knife still in her hand.

Rich is already walking, ten doves slung on the rope, not looking back.

RICH
You comin'?

Doves fly out of the tree, survivors.

Holly watches them go.

They are the lucky ones.

Holly follows.

EXT. DELTA FORK'S MAIN ROAD - DAY

Holly and Rich walk down a rural road lined by sparse trees and farmland. Patches of forest break up the landscape.

They pass a sky-blue sign that reads WELCOME TO DELTA FORK!
in frilly writing.

It's not somewhere you'd want to spend your entire life in.

Holly trudges next to her uncle until they arrive at:

EXT. THE KELLER HOUSE - DAY

A small trailer home with a patchy lawn and a sagging porch.

INT. THE KELLER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rich throws the doves on a small dining room table with a
THUD.

You hear Holly's mother before you see her. Sirens and
sandpaper.

JONI KELLER, late 30s, emerges from a small kitchen. Wiry.
Thin strawberry blonde hair in a tussle. Dressed to stay home
in a house dress.

Joni used to be pretty, but youth has left her and left
behind her shell.

JONI
Don't you bring those filthy
creatures in my house, Rich!

RICH
You're the only filthy creature
living in this house, Joni.

JONI
You're a bastard.

RICH
I got you dinner for tonight so you
better keep that mouth of yours
shut.

JONI
I'm not eating anymore of your
roadkill, Rich.

RICH
Oh yeah?

JONI
Yeah!

RICH

What are you going to eat, you broke hag? Me and your spineless daughter know you spent the last of Bo's life insurance on pills. I'm trying to help you.

JONI

That money was mine. I earned every cent of it.

Rich's eyes narrow.

JONI (CONT'D)

We don't need your help, dickwad!

Joni grabs an old dusty cordless phone, the nearest thing in reach, and chucks it at Rich.

He dodges it skillfully. This is their routine.

Joni and Rich SCREAM at each other. Loud. Grating.

Holly sneaks out of the room.

INT. THE KELLER HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Holly, in front of a dusty mirror, stares sullenly at her reflection.

YELLING through the door.

She turns on the WATER to drown out the sound, filling the basin.

It doesn't help.

She picks at blood-specked fingernails.

The filth under her nails makes her frantic. She grabs a bar of Castile soap and scrubs HARD.

She dunks her face in the sink with a splash.

INSTANTLY WE CUT
TO:

EXT. RED MARSH - NIGHT

Holly's face drowns in red thick liquid. Blood.

She SCREAMS.

INT. THE KELLER HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Back in the bathroom.

Holly paws her face where the blood was, horrified.

She turns the water off.

INT. THE KELLER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Joni and Rich are in a full screaming match.

JONI

I don't have a problem!

RICH

Yes, you do! What would Bo think of you?

JONI

I do what I need to get by, thank you very much! And that bastard is long dead, and we are much better off that way. Why do you hang around here, Rich?

RICH

I'm family!

JONI

Bo's family. Not ours!

RICH

Someone's gotta look after that daughter of yours!

JONI

I know what you are. You're a pervert!

RICH

You gotta be kiddin' me.

JONI

I see the way you look at her! And I remember how you looked me up and down when Bo brought me home the first time. How you stared at my bare legs like you'd seen a doe out huntin' on the first day of spring.

RICH

You flatter yourself too much.

JONI
Just tell me you want me! Tell me
you want my daughter!

Holly brushes through the two of them to the door. She grabs her backpack.

They acknowledge her briefly.

Joni pauses.

Then they get right back to it.

JONI (CONT'D)
Tell me!

The screen door SLAMS behind Holly.

EXT. DELTA FORK - AVERAGE STREET - DAY

Holly trudges down the empty street lined with houses similar to her own but less neglected.

Eerie, until a tan 2000 Jeep Cherokee XJ with big wheels pulls up beside her.

The window rolls down. KIT, 16, blonde in a pink suede moto jacket. More well off, bubbly, high-strung, Holly's best friend.

A calming but detached voice plays through the speakers.

CAR MEDITATION (V.O.)
Imagine your new self in front of
you. Successful, assured,
confident. Breathe the image in,
and take a step into your destiny.

KIT
Oh my gosh! You look tired, random
girl on an empty street walking
alone. I am totally not a psycho
murderer. Need a ride?

Kit smiles.

Holly's face softens. She hops in.

INT. KIT'S JEEP - DAY

Kit turns down the meditation.

Driving too fast down the rural back roads of Delta Fork, Kit multitasks.

She applies lip gloss.

KIT

Hey Siri, add to my notes app. New episode idea: A teenage girl ends up hog-tied and dead in a rural Florida town in a ditch. She was hitchhikin' and a trucker, AKA an on-the-run serial killer, picks her up and bam. She's dead.

Her phone DINGS. The note has been captured.

HOLLY

Did that really happen?

KIT

No. It's good though, right? I think we should try something new for the next episode. Nothing happens in this town. Calling this podcast Delta Blood was a pretty bad idea when there literally hasn't been a good crime in Delta in, like, years. I hate reruns.

HOLLY

Did you see the newspaper articles I sent you? There's been sixty cases of missing kids in Florida alone this year.

KIT

No one cares about kids on the back of milk cartons anymore, Holly. Be for real. We need something sensational so the UCLA admissions officer sees the true-crime reporting I'm capable of. This is my ticket out of here.

Kit switches the podcast on her Spotify to "Pink Pony Club" by Chappell Roan.

She belts along. Big. Shameless.

KIT (CONT'D)

Sing with me!

Holly joins in, hesitant at first, then freer.