

WHEN TOWER ANGELS FALL

by Elizabeth Plant

EPISODE 03 – “STYX AND STONES”

(TWO YEARS AGO.)

The upstairs office of a nightclub; its windows boarded, lights dim, but with the sounds of music and chatter muffled from below. There couldn't be a greater contrast in atmosphere, particularly as Chel shivers with a strange anticipation, pacing and rubbing at her arms.)

CHEL *(shivering, feverish, agitated)* Summin's comin'. Ughh, can feel it. Itchin'. Whole body's itching!

HASSAN *(weary, annoyed)* Last time, kid, it's not gonna get you—

CHEL *(accusatory)* And it's not the drugs, San.

HASSAN *(scoffs, sarcastic)* 'Course not. Look at you – shakin' like a baby horse...

CHEL *(feverish)* Just feel it – really feel it, y'know? Like, know how Trista says her knees starts to tremble all frantic-like 'fore it rains? S'like that, but my whole body.

HASSAN *(firm, scolding)* Told you not to touch it. That shit's stronger than it's meant to be.

CHEL *(defensive)* No, it's not the—!

HASSAN *(sarcastic, firm)* What, it's your magic light, is it? Chel, you are literally just high.

CHEL *(helpless)* San, you're not listening!

HASSAN *(reassuring, irritable)* Nothin' is coming. We ain't gettin' touched, however last week went.

CHEL *(pleading, stammered)* Been so long, like birds is eatin' me all over! Can't she jus' let us out again?

HASSAN *(soft)* Baby, it's not that simple.

CHEL I'll try this time, really **try** to be good –

HASSAN *(firm)* V says we gotta wait. Business gotta run with or without you.

CHEL (desperate) But I'm *itchin'*! C'mon, she likes you – more than me –

HASSAN (cold) How d'ya think we got in trouble like this?

CHEL (helpless) I didn't know it would start a fucking riot!

HASSAN (angry, riling, accusatory) You have any idea how lucky you are, still breathin' to feel this shit? I don't go round fightin' none of Turner's boys - don't nearly kill 'em, neither!

CHEL (angry, defensive) I did *not* nearly kill him!

HASSAN (cold, fast) Whatever. But you better keep kissin' any boots V puts your way, and thank fuck we still got the police on our side. An' that's enough tastin' their product, or we lost them too!

CHEL (cries out in agitation)

(Chel slams her fists down on a desk in frustration.)

(shouting, agonised) I AM NOT HIGH, I HAVE BEEN TRAPPED IN THIS CLUB FOR EIGHT FUCKING DAYS, HASSAN!

HASSAN (firm) It's for everyone's good, Chel.

CHEL (desperate) Not mine! She boarded up the windows and I can still see the light – can't you?!

HASSAN The light isn't—

CHEL (distraught) Can't you?! (a few seething breaths, trying to collect herself) Jesus, fuck...! I'm going insane in here, man...

(She kicks the wall, runs her hands through her hair.)

Aghh!! (deep breaths, pacing the room to calm down)

HASSAN Victoria knows what she's doing.

CHEL (hissing, like an angry cat) Like hell she does. Who runs a cartel while running after their own fucking bodyguard?

HASSAN (firm) He's made it clear to her.

CHEL (scoffs, angry, bitter) That what he told you? Please, he loves the attention – all the fawning over his fucking accent!

HASSAN Look, Fionn is not—

(A door opens, and Fionn enters, eyebrow raised. The sound of music is momentarily amplified, until the door swings shut behind him. **When he speaks, his voice is smoother, more full of confidence and charm than the one we've come to know in the present.**)

FIONN *(smooth)* Not what?

HASSAN *(irritable)* On time.

FIONN *(amused hum)*

CHEL *(bitter)* Nice of you to show up.

FIONN *(amused)* Well, we can't all live where we work – that's a special luxury for those of us who cross every line on the beach.

CHEL *(spiteful)* Bite me, Dublin.

(A sudden shout, fury, the sound of glass breaking from the club below.)

FIONN *(unfazed, an edge of threat)* Don't try it, or you'll bite it too, sweetheart.

CHEL I'm not afraid of you.

FIONN *(amused)* Ha. Again. Special luxury for those who are stupid.

HASSAN *(warning, scolding)* That's enough outta you two – back off.

(Fionn raises his hands in mock surrender.)

FIONN *(sarcastic, charming)* All's fair in love and war! I surrender – really!

HASSAN You're not charmin' anyone like that, smartass.

FIONN I do all the time. V just wanted me to check the stock – officer's coming by in twenty for it.

HASSAN Everything's here.

FIONN *(suspicious)* Little skittish hasn't touched none?

HASSAN Says she hasn't—

CHEL *(firm)* No. I'm not an idiot.

FIONN *(scoffs)*

CHEL *(angry)* I'm not. You'll see.

FIONN *(muttered)* You're just lucky the streets didn't want you.

HASSAN Fionn.

FIONN *(hushed, dangerous, smirking)* Now, I don't know what V sees in you, but you better stop actin' like a trigger-happy ferret, else only thing you'll have left to prove to 'er is that you're better off dead.

CHEL *(defensive, cold)* She says I'm fast. Quiet. I can disappear, if I want to.

FIONN *(with a small laugh)* I wish you would.

HASSAN *(warning, angry)* Fionn, she's a kid. Lay off, go downstairs.

FIONN *(charming)* And she's a bloody good snitch. See, a compliment. Can't say I ever part on bad terms.

(Beat.)

Let me know when your 'talents' work out for you up here.

(He turns to leave, but as he does so the door opens. A woman appears, ominously silhouetted.)

(smooth) Ah, Victoria. I was just coming. Shall we?

(He makes to move past her, but she puts out her hand and stops him.)

Something wrong?

(Victoria closes the door, moves slowly further into the room.)

HASSAN V?

VICTORIA *(agitated, quiet)* He's here.

CHEL What?

VICTORIA *(distracted)* I mean, he was. Hiding in the crowd...

FIONN Officer Kendall?

(Beat.)

CHEL *(nervous)* Turner.

VICTORIA *(angry)* No, the ghost o' Prince Philip – course it was fucking Turner!

(She advances on Chel, who backs up into a table with panic in her eyes.)

CHEL *(nervous breath)*

VICTORIA *(dangerous, low)* Did I not make myself clear when I left?

CHEL *(stammering)* C-Clear? I don't—

(Victoria glares at Hassan)

VICTORIA *(angry, suspicious)* She actually been up here?

HASSAN Not a step outside, like you told me.

VICTORIA Good. Good...

FIONN (*frowning*) How did I not see him?

VICTORIA (*reassuring*) It wasn't you, Fionn.

CHEL (*spiteful*) It's his job to—

HASSAN (*interrupting, warning Chel*) What'd he want?

VICTORIA (*hissing, fast*) Well, it wasn't Molly or lollipops, was it?

(*Beat.*)

(*agitated sigh*) Just watched him a bit. He was at the bar. Didn't order nothin', he was watching – same as me. Dunno what he was lookin' for. Wasn't doors or exits or nothin', he knows the layout upside-down by now.

CHEL (*thinking aloud, nervous*) Maybe he was lookin' for someone... couldn't find 'em. Maybe it **was** me.

FIONN (*soft, concerned*) That actually why you sent me up? Check on her?

VICTORIA (*soft, warm*) Gotta keep my own safe, darling...

(*Beat. Hassan cracks his knuckles.*)

HASSAN (*low*) He still down there?

VICTORIA No. No...

FIONN (*hushed*) I don't like it. Turner never leaves 'less he gets what he wants.

VICTORIA (*dark*) No-one likes it.

CHEL So why'd he leave?

VICTORIA (*regaining composure*) There was a fight. Or, not quite. Some tosser spilled a drink on him – nice new suit, navy pinstripe. Stuck him in the eye with his own bottleneck. Poor fucker.

CHEL (*firm*) Shoulda had us there. We coulda stopped it!

VICTORIA Didn't need ya. That girl took care of it.

FIONN Girl?

VICTORIA (*frowning*) You know the one. Likes the corner booth. Dark eyes, messy hair. Load'a piercings, those shit tattoos – you know, uh... stick and poke?

FIONN (*dark, knowing exactly who it is*) Yeah... rings a bell.

(*He moves to one of the boarded up windows, peers out through a crack.*)

HASSAN You know her?

FIONN *(under his breath, almost thoughtful, as if hiding something)* No. Just see her a lot. Don't know how she even gets in, looks barely legal.

VICTORIA ID says she's eighteen.

FIONN *(low)* Sneakin' in longer than that, I bet...

(Beat.)

CHEL I don't trust it.

FIONN *(scoffs)* Yeah, what do you?

CHEL *(angry, rising to it)* Hey – you're the one who said Turner **never** leaves 'less he gets what he wants.

HASSAN *(reassuring, trying to calm)* We don't know what that is, this time.

CHEL *(suspicious)* What, he came to shank a guy and shack off? I don't think so.

VICTORIA *(fast, irritable)* Whatever it was, that girl down there just showed him the door. That's more guts than any of you got.

HASSAN That's not guts, V, that's a death wish.

CHEL *(suspicious)* Or is it?

(Beat.)

(breathless, hasty, eyes alight) What if she's with him? Think about it – nobody this side of the city doesn't know his face. Nobody'd even *touch* him if he killed the person right next to 'em. What's a girl playing at to get in his way if she's not—

FIONN *(firm)* She's not with him.

CHEL *(accusatory, determined to be heard)* She sits alone in a booth and does nothing – *nothing*, for – how long? Enough to recognise her, but not know anything? I'm telling you, it's weird – she's gotta be a plant, or – or *informant*, or—

FIONN *(dry)* Because you'd know all about that.

CHEL *(angry)* Yeah, I do - I live it, asshole!

FIONN *(sarcastic, firm)* Gold star! But she's *not* with him.

(Beat.)

VICTORIA *(soft, frowning)* You know that how?

FIONN I don't. But she's a kid. Turner doesn't touch kids. They're too unreliable. Proof of that right here.

CHEL (cold) I'm twenty-three—

VICTORIA (warning, as if to say 'shut up') Chel.

CHEL (defensive, desperate) I didn't do anything!

VICTORIA (annoyed, voice raised) Be quiet, I – need to think...!

FIONN (soft) Hey...

(He moves toward her, stands close. His voice softens for her and her alone.)

(sincere, pace a little quicker) You gotta trust me on this. Regardless of who she is, what happens after tonight is about your safety, for which I'm responsible. I'll look into her, if it'll ease everyone, but half of why I'm here is my intuition. And I'm not the one who's been addled by coke for eight days straight—

CHEL (flaring, furious) I didn't touch any of your fucking—

VICTORIA (dominating, shouting) CHEL! ENOUGH! Keep runnin' that mouth of yours, you'll wish you had anywhere left to run in this city – you understand?

CHEL (agitated breath)

HASSAN (protective) She hasn't done—

VICTORIA (bellowing) YOU UNDERSTAND?!

CHEL (meek, resentful) I understand...

(Beat.)

VICTORIA (long, agitated sigh)

FIONN (soft) Victoria... When have I ever let you down?

(Beat.)

VICTORIA (firm, commanding) I don't wanna hear any more talk about this girl, alright? I trust Fionn's judgement – like both'a yous should – but it's best we cautious. Don't let her in the club, under *any* circumstance. More things starts ta go strange round her... Zira knows what to do.

(Beat.)

Understand?

HASSAN Yes, V.

CHEL Yes...

FIONN (soft) While we're at it...

HASSAN *(warning, weary)* Fionn.

FIONN Let Chel out to play, sometime. She'll do us all in if she stays in here.

(Beat.)

VICTORIA When it's safe.

FIONN *(soft, charming)* I know. Of course.

(He bends, plants a soft kiss on her forehead, hushes his voice once more.)

(whispered) We take care of our own.

(Music fades in, a rumble or two of thunder. TITLE.)

Fade to the sounds of blinking electrical bulbs, the muffled sound of waves. The occasional seagull whining in the distance.

The kitchen. Pom sits on the counter before Fionn, who carefully tends the small wound on her forehead.)

POM *(pained, quiet but irritable)* I said I'm sorry...

FIONN *(hushed, firm)* Pom, I don't need to hear it. Just sit still.

(He presses a swab to the spot, and she scrunches her face with pain.)

POM *(angry)* GAH! Fuck – stings, man! What is that, bleach?!

FIONN *(dry)* Sorry, did you want an infection?

POM Coulda warned me!

FIONN *(dry)* I said sit still, what more d'you want?

POM *(agitated sigh)* Just – just get it over with.

(Fionn re-applies the swab. It still hurts like hell.)

(suppressed high-pitched groans, trying not to move or make a sound)

FIONN You brought this on yourself, you know.

POM I'm doin' this for you—

FIONN *(cold)* Aye, but did I ask you to?

(Beat.)

(small sigh, resigned) Gonna need you to hold that torch up now.

POM Look, if you didn't want me to try, you shoulda stopped me.

FIONN *(amused)* When has stopping you ever actually stopped you? Torch. Come on.

POM *(sarcastic)* Called a flashlight, actually.

(Beat.)

(sighs)

(She clicks on a torch, holds it up to her face. Fionn retrieves and threads a needle, snips the tail.)

FIONN Hope you're okay with needles.

POM *(joking)* Oof, yeah – could do with a hit, right now...

FIONN *(agitated sigh, almost a groan)*

(Fionn's hand drops seemingly despite itself, and slams into the counter, knocking into some tools with a clatter. Beat.)

(angry but too exhausted to truly let it out) Told you not to joke about that no more.

POM What – I never actually *did it*, you know that!

FIONN *(cold)* Stop talking. Please.

(Beat.)

POM *(apologetic, hesitant)* Fionn, I'm...

FIONN *(hushed, dark)* Stop. 'Less you want these stitches halfway cross your little skull, Pomegranate.

(He sets to work, sewing the wound closed.)

POM *(hisses of pain, whimpers, hums to distract from the feeling)*

FIONN Why'd you have to steal it, though?

POM *(uncomfortable)* I... I don't know, I – ow! *(takes a second to collect herself)* Wasn't thinking...

FIONN *(scoffing, under his breath)* Because that's new.

POM *(defensive, annoyed)* I was angry, wasn't I? I might've been concussed, or – or worse, even – and he just left me there! Didn't even have a shirt on or nothin' –

FIONN Oh, very new!

POM *(defensive)* Shut up! No, cuz if you walked in on me: prime serial killer set dressing.

FIONN *(laughs)*

POM What?

FIONN *(amused)* That guy as a serial killer – he'd say sorry for squashin' a bug.

(Beat.)

(sighs) So what do we do, now we have it?

POM Open it, duh.

FIONN You're serious?

POM *(irritable)* What else d'you do with a pot? I wanna know what's in there.

FIONN *(amused)* And you really think you can do all those knots back up? I know the lass is good with wires but these are somethin' else...

POM Who says we have to? Doesn't it mean somethin' more if it's like we're making a statement – like – I dunno – no secrets, no exceptions.

FIONN *(dry)* Run for government, you could.

POM *(proud)* You bet I could.

FIONN *(matter-of-fact)* In no way was that a compliment.

POM Hey!

FIONN *(laughs)*

(He snips the final stitch and lays down the needle, pats the counter.)

(matter-of-fact) Right, you're all stitched up, little girl. Now get your sorry arse off my counter.

POM Aw, not even a lollipop?

FIONN Christ, you're relentless...

(Pom hops down.)

POM *(dry, amused)* Never took you for a needlework guy. Cross-stitch didn't really seem your style, before all this.

FIONN First lesson of a life like mine – know how to fix yourself.

POM Thought it was don't get caught.

FIONN *(dry)* Yeah, well that got royally fucked for me, way back when, didn't it?

POM Well, it won't again. I promise.

FIONN *(scoffs)* Because your promises are worth *so much*...

(Beat.)

POM *(sincere, feeling awkward about it)* Thank you. For, uh... taking care of me.

FIONN You're welcome.

(Beat.)

(serious) Gonna pre-empt next time, and say don't open that pot. Tempting as it is, summin tells me it's gonna be far worse than Pandora's box in the long run.

POM *(frowning)* So what *do* we do with it?

FIONN Worth more at barter if they know it's untouched. That or we just slip it back before they notice, because this was such a dumb fucking move on your part—

POM Barter for what?

FIONN *(sighs)*

(Fionn begins pacing, thinking hard.)

Once they know it's gone, guarantee Oz goes running to Ezra. If he hasn't already. But the sister I think we can bring round... maybe...

POM Barter for what, Fionn?

(A white office, sparsely furnished and with a hard feel to the room.)

Amos sits at the desk, typing hesitantly at a keyboard, flipping through notes with determination. A recording of their previous session plays on a monitor.)

AMOS *(mumbling, muttering under his breath)* A... A flat... F... E – no, E *flat*... then she... *(sighs)* Okay, C... yes... and D, E... or was it E flat again...?

(The door opens and Ksenia enters, lets it swing shut behind her.)

KSENIA *(quietly venomous, disbelieving)* Oh, for fuck's sake...

AMOS *(nervous breath as the door slams)*

KSENIA *(cold)* Vega told me you were in here - and looks like you really *are* that stupid. Last I checked, this was *my* office.

AMOS *(nervous, apologetic, agitated)* Molt, you... M-Mine was – well, I can't work with all those other people around.

KSENIA *Why do you think I only ever work with one person in the room? (sighs, resigned and irritated)*

(She walks a little further into the room, heels clacking ominously.)

AMOS Vega said it was...

KSENIA *(short, dry)* Okay, did she? Because, of course, it's her permission to give.

AMOS *(fast, defensive)* I'm sorry.

(Beat.)

(hesitant, a little embarrassed) But you weren't coming in today?

KSENIA You weren't either. Guess we both had a change of plans.

(Beat.)

AMOS So do we... go back in?

KSENIA *(firm)* No, isolation's still under way. That hasn't changed. Camera's got a good enough night-vision to satisfy me.

AMOS Right.

(Beat.)

How... how is she?

KSENIA Crying. Still.

(Beat.)

(softening the tiniest bit) Send in some water soon, or she'll kill herself by it.

AMOS Gentle of you...

KSENIA You're one to talk.

(She grabs a chair and drags it round, sits before him.)

So? You going to tell me about that little performance?

AMOS What?

KSENIA (*mildly amused hum*)

(*She presses a button and the monitor switches back, plays out Amos' interrogation of Eden.*)

(*cool, dry*) Y'know, I don't recall any sanctions naming me your subordinate.

AMOS (*uncomfortable, fake playful*) Not yet, anyway. I'm the one with the fancy desk right now, ha...

KSENIA (*cold, commanding*) It's no time for jokes, Emmens. You are here to learn from me—

AMOS Oh... I am? Here I thought it was to capture those runaways.

KSENIA (*fast, ice cold*) That's what I'm here for. You are here to assess, not *attack*. From what I gather, you were rather terrible at both.

AMOS Molt—

KSENIA (*firm, cold, quick*) Because I *truly* don't care how many riots you saw back when, this shit is the long game; bloodlust for some hollowed out cause is exactly how this investigation *fails*.

(*This seems to strike a nerve in him, his nervous demeanour starting to slip away.*)

AMOS (*defensive, still nervous*) And – and it's really taken you eighteen tries to track down one base of errant civilians?

KSENIA Yes. Should I be embarrassed?

AMOS Well, m-maybe you should. Shouldn't you?

KSENIA (*firm, cold*) You try a flare from that thing and see how long you last. Twenty-odd died before I even got my hands on 'em – that's how bad it used to be! Play this game, you get real patient waiting for the cards. I'm still bad at it sometimes, I'm not ashamed, but I am *still* the best.

AMOS Are you? Looks to me I got farther with Eden than you ever—

KSENIA (*raising voice*) And you've set us back a week because of it!

AMOS (*defensive, agitated*) Isolation was your idea!

KSENIA Yes, kid, because she's afraid. And when that happens, people – don't – talk!

AMOS She's always talking – it's *because* she's afraid!

KSENIA *(angry, fast)* It is the *flare* that's talking! She has some – god, you've seen her – some *affinity* with it. Something none of the others has. There's a – a reason she thinks we're all angels, I just... have to find it.

AMOS *(disbelieving, firm)* Why does anyone have faith in anything? It's fear, Molt – that's all religion ever is.

KSENIA *(angry)* Well, it can't just be that she believes in God – there's no way that's all it is!

AMOS *(agitated)* Isn't that what the light is? Isn't that what it – *does*?

(Silence. A painful one.)

KSENIA *(dry)* You'd have to ask Engineering that.

(Beat.)

AMOS So we don't even know what we're torturing them with?

KSENIA *(shrugging, dry)* I've been here since the Institute began and I still don't. God knows you don't. Someone does, but... isn't it better this way? Thought Korelova would've numbed you to the idea of knowing.

(Amos blanches, jumps back from his chair and it falls to the ground with a clatter, his back now pressed to the wall behind.)

AMOS *(sudden unsettled breathing, staring hard)*

KSENIA *(clears throat)*

(She stands, takes a step or two closer.)

(dry, cold) Yeah, I looked into you. Perks of the position. Quite the hushabye had to happen after that incident; the sheer goddamn paperwork after taking out those reporters. Luckily, wasn't quite my department at the time.

AMOS *(defensive, afraid)* I wasn't the only one—

KSENIA But you *had to be* to make it go away, didn't you?

AMOS *(nervous breath, slightly angry)*

KSENIA *(cold, intimidating, almost disgusted)* I won't say what I feel about it. I can at least recognise you're more than equipped for this line of work. *But*, as unbridled as you were, that is *not* how this facility runs. You get that sweet little temper of yours under control, and none of us have to suffer a repeat casualty. I warn you now, because I am *not* going out like that, but I sure as shit can make sure you will. Do I make myself clear, Emmens?

(Beat.)

AMOS (meek) Crystal.

KSENIA (amused, satisfied) Hmph...

(She makes to leave.)

AMOS (hushed, mournful) It wasn't hollowed out. I really believed...

(She pauses.)

KSENIA (dry) And now you're here. How did that work out for you?

AMOS (cold) Everybody switches sides to survive. Nobody's ever proud.

KSENIA All that blood on your hands, how could you be?

AMOS Yours are worse than mine.

KSENIA (amused) You'd like to think that, wouldn't you?

(She moves and reaches the door, opens it but pauses again.)

(softening, sincere, almost as if she wants to reassure of something) Look, there aren't sides anymore. You're smart in ways enough to know that. The war on Heaven was only ever fought by angels, but God only wanted half of them to live. This path was inevitable for us, Amos. Just be thankful God's dead.

(She takes a step, but stops when Amos speaks.)

AMOS (taken aback) Amos? Did you – mean to call me that?

(Beat.)

Don't I get *your* first name?

KSENIA (dry) Rather you called me 'Molt.'

AMOS (awkward) Heh...

(Beat. Ksenia closes the door, turns back to him.)

KSENIA (changing tact, thinking aloud) That... when I came in, you were – you were talking to yourself. What was that?

AMOS (nervous) Oh, I - I was – trying to figure out – well, *place* – what Eden was saying.

KSENIA Story of my life.

AMOS (nervous, trying to piece together his thoughts) No, when she thought we were the devil. Specifically, she – before she lost it, she was listing notes – *musical* notes, I mean.

KSENIA (dismissive) 'List' is giving too much credit.

AMOS (as if trying to prove himself, stammering a little) I don't think so. They might've seemed random – she was pretty delirious – but, I... Y'know, I think they were a sequence. An actual melody, just... fragmented.

KSENIA How d'you figure that?

AMOS Clair de Lune. Remember, she was humming it – one of my first sessions?

KSENIA (dismissive) I do. But that alone can't make it significant – everybody knows that song; loves it for some fuckn reason – you included. Can't stand it, myself...

AMOS (uncomfortable, growing in resolve) Don't think he knows this, but I... I overheard Nadir – from Archival – recording a report. According to him, Eden sings it even in the Nest.

KSENIA (frowning, agitated) That's not possible. None of them *function* in the Nest – that's the point, they're scrambled!

AMOS (firm, confidence gaining) Noise sensors say otherwise. It's a comfort thing, just – intrinsic. And she talks about a 'he,' possibly even plural – if we know how many men are left there.

KSENIA Can't rule out she doesn't mean one we've already got.

AMOS (self-assured, certain he's onto something) We can figure that out. But what I mean is – to get there – that man *must* be connected to the song, or – or to her – to somehow be strong enough to keep shining through like this.

KSENIA (amused, dry) Then what do you suggest – we assemble an orchestra?

AMOS (as if genuinely considering it) Well... maybe.

KSENIA (agitated) Oh, Jesus, I shouldn't have asked. I have other things to take care of—

AMOS (sincere, trying to get her back) No, I'm serious! If any recording – I mean, *any* – survived, I suggest we play it. Wait out the rest of her isolation, ease her back to life with it. Clouds parting back to Heaven, right? Play it long as we can – so long it – it's all she thinks she knows. *Then*, I think, maybe... slate's clean again.

(Beat.)

(slightly amused, awkward) Except I'm only here to listen, right...?

KSENIA That you are.

(Beat.)

(resigned) So get ready, I guess. Gonna be listening to the same shit for a while.

AMOS *(taken aback)* You'll try it...?

KSENIA *(firm)* If what you say about Archival is true, I'll try anything once. She's an anomaly. We have a week to figure out why.

(The power room. Much clattering, banging, the throwing of objects clanging hard against metal.

A feverish Ophelia is searching for her missing pot.)

OPHELIA *(feverish, incoherent mumbling)* Where? Wh-where? Where – where – where – find – home – where – where?!

(Giving up, she slams a cabinet shut with a bang and rattle. She slumps to the floor against the wall, self-soothing as she rubs her chest.)

Ssshhh.... Sshh.... Shhhit.... (sniffles, breathes deeply and distressed)

(Sol enters, an assortment of thin books dropping from his arms as he sees the state of the room.)

SOL *(horrified)* What happened here? What'd you do?

OPHELIA Find – find – fff...ind – UGH!

(She beats her forehead with a fist, and Sol hurries to her.)

SOL *(warning, protective)* Stop. Stop it, Ophelia.

OPHELIA Find – cant – sssshit – shit!

SOL *(firm, anxious)* You're hurting yourself, stop.

OPHELIA *(pained moans, her head clearly hurting)*

SOL *(protective)* Give me your hand—

(He makes to prise her fist away, but at his uninvited touch she throws herself away, draws her knees to her chest.)

OPHELIA *(terrified, suddenly shouting)* Don't - TOUCH!! *(begins hyperventilating)*

SOL *(sincere, hasty)* I'm sorry – I'm sorry –

OPHELIA *(whispered, fearful, pained)* T-Touch... hurts... please...

SOL *(hushed, sincere)* Ophelia, I'm tryna help you –

OPHELIA *(distracted, moaning)* Mmmmmno – no...!

(She starts scrubbing at her hand as though dirty, beginning again to hyperventilate.)

N-No... *(bitter moan, angry)*

SOL What can't you find?

OPHELIA *(grunt of displeasure)*

SOL *(concerned)* You damn draw-quartered this place – what can't you find?

OPHELIA *(shaky breaths, struggling to scrub)*

SOL *(agitated sigh)*

(He looks around for something that might help, and thunder rumbles mildly in the distance.)

(determined, hushed) Okay...

(He moves to the window, cranks it open and the rain outside amplifies.)

(trying to get her attention) Ophelia. Ophelia!

OPHELIA *(small gasp as she looks up, surprised)*

(Beat.)

(soft, nervous breaths)

SOL Rainin', see? You can wash me off though here.

(Beat.)

(sincere) I'm sorry I touched you. I know now.

OPHELIA *(hushed, slightly shaking)* N... Now...?

SOL I'll ask. Forever. Promise.

(Beat.)

(Ophelia tentatively rises, feet shuffling toward the window next to him.)

OPHELIA *(soft grunt as she pushes to her feet)*

(She looks out the window, but is a little too small to reach out.)

(anxious breath)

SOL *(apologetic but slightly playful)* Ah. Sorry. Forget how you short folk have it. I'd lift you, but... *(grunt of effort)*

(He shoves a heavy upturned crate closer, pats the lid.)

This is more you, huh?

OPHELIA *(soft hum of agreement, tentative and unsure)*

SOL *(reassuring, smiling)* Don't worry. I'll hold it steady.

OPHELIA *(grunt of effort)*

(Ophelia steps up onto the crate, leans out the window and scrubs at her arm in the rain.)

SOL *(nervous, playful)* Not that far, Jesus – you fall, those waves takin' you straight down, and I'm next, your brother find it's my fault!

(Ophelia isn't listening, rather enjoying the feel of the fresh water.)

OPHELIA *(hum of pleasure, eventually growing into giggles)*

SOL *(smiling)* Rain feels good, huh?

OPHELIA *(laughing)*

SOL *(playful, reminiscent)* Ma said it was how clouds tickle. 'God's sense o' humour.' Tell that to the guy with the boat, ey?

(The thunder rumbles again, louder – as if announcing itself. Ophelia, smiling again, perks up.)

OPHELIA Heh... *(deep breath in, and screams – a release of energy, for the sake of it, screaming at the thunder as if to outmatch it)* AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

SOL *(anxious)* Gah! Fuckin' warn me – almost dropped you!

OPHELIA *(inhales deeply then screams once more, louder and longer)*
AAA!!!

(An enormous wave suddenly billows up, catching through the window and spraying water onto them both.)

(an actual scream, short and shocked, that then turns into laughter)

SOL *(chuckling, reassuring)* I told you! C'mon, get down – I'm all gone! I'm all gone...

OPHELIA *(giddy breath, small impact grunt as she jumps down)*

(Ophelia jumps down into the small puddle that now is the floor, and Sol slams the window shut.)

SOL *(playful)* Sense o' humour, my ass... Still, look atchu – clean, right?

OPHELIA Y-You.

SOL *(smiling)* Yeah, me too. You got a way with words – waves never got this high before...

OPHELIA *(amused hum)*

SOL I'll get the mop, and...

(He catches himself, suddenly realises.)

(like his stomach's dropped) Shit. No.

(He scrabbles to retrieve the papers he dropped, finding some of them now sodden.)

(agitated, frantic) No... No, no... Dammit, they're soaked through...

(Ophelia moves over to him, frowning. He shakes the worst of the water from a book, dangling it open so the pages flutter.)

(mournful, agitated) Least one's still good....

OPHELIA *(questioning hum)*

SOL Ah, just... *(sigh)*

(He holds the book out to her.)

(clears throat) Got these off Ru, while back. Ain't really need 'em, old school things. Well, contraband. It's a whole thing. Just... thought you'd like it.

(Ophelia takes the book. It is a sheet music anthology.)

OPHELIA *(soft breath)*

SOL *(soft, sincere)* Dvořák. Dunno if you know 'im, but he had some good ones. Course, he's no Debussy – Mozart, even – but he's, uh... up there.

OPHELIA *(soft hum, almost longing)*

(Ophelia flicks through the book, running a finger along the staves as if it were a strange kind of braille.)

SOL *(soft, reminiscent, warm)* Sound o' my childhood. Always on in grandad's greenhouse. Said it made the plants grow nicer. Summin 'bout music being some whole kinda language – like it could talk to 'em. Reckon he was right.

(Ophelia smiles. Her mother did the same.)

OPHELIA *(warm hum, sweet and reminiscent)* M...My... m... mmm.... *(disgruntled sigh)*

SOL *(reassuring)* Hey, it's okay – take your time. I can – Ru has pencils, if you wanna write—

OPHELIA *(disdainful hum, shaking her head)*

SOL Right. Yeah. Maybe patronising...

OPHELIA *(soft, weary sigh)*

(Beat.

A thought strikes her. She riffles quickly through the book until she finds what she's looking for. She holds the book up to Sol's face, taps the page with her finger.)

(hum as if to say 'here, look')

SOL 'Songs My Mother Taught Me.' Dang, you really know your... Oh. Oh, I gotchu... maybe. Your... mom did, too?

OPHELIA *(excited breath, happy he got it)*

SOL *(small breath, also pleased)* Bet she had a real nice garden, eh? All kinds'a wildflowers and vines – and them tall yellow roses. No, white. Those white ones with the red tips. Ones that look like they been painted but forgot about? One massive great bush, high as the chimney... Heh...

OPHELIA *(breath out, as if not realising she's doing it)*

(Ophelia looks at him quizzically. He is right, but she doesn't understand how.)

(smiling) Dunno why I'm so sure on that. Maybe I just like 'em. Idea of 'em. Just... different. Lotta folks don't like different,

(Beat. He sinks onto the upturned crate, stares down at his hands almost absently.)

(hushed, slightly strained) Not like we need remindin'.

OPHELIA Mm.

(Beat.)

SOL *(hushed, sincere, slightly sad)* Makes us people though. Better for it. Summin beautiful 'bout bein' different when everythin's the same. 'Specially here. Definitely here...

(Beat.)

(sighs)

(Beat.)

OPHELIA Pot.

SOL Huh?

OPHELIA P-Pot. Can't.... fffind...

SOL Oh.

OPHELIA Lost...

(Beat.)

(sniffles)

SOL *(reassuring)* Hey. Hey. We'll find it. Nowhere it can go – 'less it took a boat, and I ain't seen any pot pull that by itself.

OPHELIA No. I... Me.

(Beat.)

SOL Without it?

OPHELIA L... Lost.

SOL *(frowning, soft)* Means that much to you? What the hell's inside it...?

(Beat. He stands!)

Wait here. My room's only down the hall.

(He runs for the corridor; the sound of doors opening, clutter scraping out the way, the metal bed squealing against the floor as it is moved.)

OPHELIA *(breathing, not quite nervous but not entirely calm)*

(After a moment, Sol reappears, a battered, salt-worn case in his hands. He scrapes more clutter from a surface, and lays it down.)

SOL Gotta get better hidin' your secrets, you gonna stay here. Lucky me, nobody cares 'bout mine.

(He unclips and zips the case carefully, lifting the lid and revealing a weathered violin within – many years old and once a fine make, now with strings barely hanging on.)

OPHELIA *(awed breath out)*

(Beat.)

SOL *(soft, proud but distant)* One o' Ovington's last. Grandma's... Taught me everythin' till her mind went. Then, it was the only thing made her remember.

(Beat.)

(mournful) Almost lost it once, lost more 'cause of it. But I'd be lost too if I ain't know it was mine. Just wish was strong enough to play more than another song or two, but these strings... *(clears throat)* Yeah, better not.

(He shuts the case abruptly, reziips it.)

OPHELIA Th... Thank you...

SOL Nah. Leave that. 'Nuff said as is...

(Beat.)

(smiling a little) Come take a walk wi' me.

OPHELIA Hm?

SOL Clear ya head. Go to the roof, and... keep screamin'. Seems you had it figured out, half a second there.

OPHELIA *(amused hum, a little shy)*

SOL Been a while since rain on mah skin. Always... felt too cold till now.

(Beat. He steps a little closer to her.)

Guess times is changin'.

OPHELIA *(contented hum, as if to say 'let's go')*

SOL Yeah. Exactly.

(Silence.)

Then, a lone mockingbird call. Echoes, dies.

TWO YEARS AGO.

Alleys by a dockland at night, vague sounds of buzzing neon and distant drunken crowds. A young woman walks alone, head and eyes constantly darting as if in search of someone.)

POM *(nervous breathing)*

(She rounds a corner and gasps; a group of three men, full of substances - one doubled over to vomit.)

(shocked gasp, then aggravated sigh) Jesus...

LOWLIFE 3 *(retching, hacking and choking)*

JACK *(giggling)* You dickhead.

LOWLIFE 2 Told yous, that shit's too strong.

LOWLIFE 3 *(barely intelligible)* 'M fine...

POM *(disgusted scoff, whispering to herself)* God, you're pathetic...

(She makes to pass them, but one grabs her wrist.)

JACK *(warning)* Fuck was that, little girl?

POM *(cold, biting)* Said he was pathetic – don't touch me.

JACK *(trying to maintain his grip)* Hey!

(She rips her arm free, straightens her jacket.)

(grunt of pain) Fuck was that?

LOWLIFE 2 *(teasing)* Twist your wrist, did she?

JACK Shut up.

POM *(disgusted)* Maybe check you're stronger than your 'little girl' 'fore you try and take V's shit, idiot.

LOWLIFE 3 *(bleary, raw)* S'not ma fault... is the light's...

LOWLIFE 2 Here we go...

LOWLIFE 3 Put... the light in it...

JACK *(suspicious, rattled)* Hell d'you know about that drug whore, anyway?

POM What's it to you, asshole?

(Pom turns to walk away again, picking up her pace.)

JACK Oi!

POM Fuck off

JACK *(getting angry)* Oi – Oi! No, I wasn't done with you!

POM *(sudden nervous breath)*

(She picks up speed and turns another corner, but the lowlife makes a start after her, his footsteps echoing menacingly behind her.)

LOWLIFE 2 We got a runner, Jack!

JACK The Big Man's favourite.

(She slaloms through the alleys, the sound of the harbour growing louder, alongside her breaths and heartbeat. All other noise seems to disappear but her breath, ragged and afraid.)

(terrified panting, becoming steadily more detached and strange – slowing in pace)

(Suddenly, everything snaps back to reality, as she throws a loud, chained door open with a slam and hides herself behind some barrels and boat equipment by the water's edge.)

POM Shit...! *(residual panting, trying to regain breath)*

JACK *(dark, intimidating)* You think I don't know that door, little girl? Every junkie in the goddamn city knows the sound o' those chains...

POM *(clasps hand to her mouth, trying to stifle her loud breathing)*

JACK *(threatening, enjoying himself)* Now, I don't wanna hurt you. I don't, truly. Can't speak for Tommy back there, but... he does know how to treat 'em right like that.

(Pom's phone suddenly rings, betraying her, and she scrambles to decline the call.)

POM *(terrified whisper)* Shit – James – not now, babe, not now...!

JACK *(chuckling darkly)* You kids and your fucking screens, ey?

POM *(tearful, hyperventilating)*

JACK You come out now, and we'll have a nice time, the three of us, about V...

POM *(raising her voice, terrified but trying to control it)* I don't know her – I – I don't, I just –

JACK Sure carry yourself like you do. But, see, my man Turner... he'd be very happy to see that for himself.

(He rounds the equipment, sees her sprawled on the ground.)

POM *(breath of fear)*

JACK *(cold)* Get up.

POM *(firm, still shaking)* Don't come near me.

JACK *(snide)* You have any idea how much that man pays for information?

POM I don't know who you're talking about – don't come—

(He slams a fist upon the barrels, rattling them noisily. From behind, he doesn't notice as the door swings again.)

(frightened gasp)

JACK Get up now and maybe I don't give you to Tommy after!

POM *(furious, last resort)* I have a knife! I-I have a knife...

JACK *(dark, sarcastic)* Ooh, very hard, aren't you...?

(He withdraws a switchblade, baring it at her.)

 But, see... *that* makes two of us. So why don't you—

(A sudden gunshot blasts the air, as a bullet catches him in the arm.)

(scream of pain)

POM *(scream of terror)*

(The man wheels to face a dark figure advancing toward him, gun still outstretched.)

JACK *(ragged breathing, pained and hissing)* So she is yours!

FIONN *(cold)* Like hell she is. You think Victoria recruits anyone this stupid?

POM *(gasps of recognition)*

FIONN *(threatening but still heavy with charm)* I thought I made it clear Salvation Harbour was off limits for Turner's boys. Or did those bodies in boats not spell it out simply enough for him?

JACK *(furious)* You'll be next, with a shot like that, asshole!

FIONN *(small hum of laughter)* Fair enough.

(He shoots again, this time catching the man between the eyes.)

JACK *(strangled gasp, spitting blood)*

(Stumbling backward off the dock, Jack crashes beneath the water and sinks...)

(Fionn holsters his pistol, and Pom slowly rises from her hiding spot.)

FIONN *(smooth)* Better?

(Pom steps toward him, almost disbelieving.)

POM *(terrified, weak with relief)* Fionn...

(She makes to put her arms around him, but he repels her and forces her against the wall.)

(grunt of shock and pain as she hits the wall)

FIONN *(hissed, angry, fast)* Do not try and hold me, this is not a thank you, this is not me on your side.

POM F-Fionn—

FIONN *(disgusted)* You do not know me. So get one thing straight and get my name out of your mouth, little girl.

POM *(shaking)* I just wanted to—

FIONN *(hissed, fast)* You think I don't know why you're here? Why you've been here, every night, for weeks? Yeah, I've fucking seen you – in your tiny wee skirts and fancy shoes I know on good intel you do *not* wear anywhere else. But I will only say this once, because I *cannot* save your stupid little life again—

POM *(defensive, stammering)* I-It's not everything you think.

FIONN *(scoffs)* What, you're here to buy? Please, I don't sell to children.

POM I'm eighteen!

FIONN *(cold)* Did I stutter?

POM *(angry)* So you call me a slut and a kid in one fucking second, what's that say about you?

FIONN *(cold, threatening)* Says *you* are trying too hard to be grown, and *I* am staying out of it.

(He turns to leave, but she stops him.)

POM *(angry)* Then why'd you save me, huh?

FIONN *(weary sigh)* You think I want to be entertaining customers with two bodies in the water, 'stead of one? Rather fucks up the *feng shui* of a trip, don't you think?

POM So where is it?

FIONN Where's what?

POM Your stash.

FIONN *(agitated)* Jesus, girl, I said I'm not selling to—

POM *Anyone, seems like.*

FIONN *(taken aback)* Excuse me?

POM You don't have a bag. Or a coat – like the dodgy guys wear. Pockets don't even look full.

FIONN Fuck're you on about?

POM *(accusatory, cold)* Fuck're *you* selling, if you only have –

(She shoves a hand in his pocket, pulling out a small bag.)

FIONN *(angry, hasty)* Hey – get your hands off my –

POM *(smug)* One needle.

(Beat.)

FIONN *(agitated breathing)*

POM Oh...

FIONN *(hissed, dangerous)* Give it to me.

POM *(horrified)* You're... Fionn, I'm—

FIONN *(shouting, furious)* GIVE IT TO ME!

(He snatches it back and stuffs it deep into his pocket again, walking away.)

POM I – I'm sorry.

FIONN *(hissing)* Don't leave me alone, and you will be.

POM But you're the... You can't be doing that to—

FIONN Who are you to tell me I can or can't do anything?

POM Well, can't you?! Fionn, that shit's poison!

FIONN Stop following me!

(He wrenches open the door again, but she persists down the alley after him.)

POM *(frightened, desperate)* No, you don't get it – how long've you – I just – my dad was – Fionn, stop walking so fucking fast and –

FIONN *(dark, muttered)* I'm not going to say it nicely again.

POM Neither am I! *(gasp as he pushes her back)* Hey, don't push me, you piece of shit! You think I don't know how to knife a junkie who— *(frightened gasp)*

(He rounds on her, swiping her into the wall beneath a bright neon sign.)

FIONN *(snarling, venomous)* You wanna run that by me again, darling?

POM *(whispered, terrified)* I didn't mean—

FIONN *(hushed, dark, sarcastic)* Aw, but now we both have pet names for each other. So I'm a junkie and you're a slut, do I have that right?

POM I'm not a—

FIONN *(biting, fast)* You don't want me to call you that, don't hang round these corners like I can't see you steaming for it.

POM (defensive, angry) I have a boyfriend—

FIONN What, James, was it? Boy calls you every night I see you here; only once do you even answer, and you lie about where you are.

POM He – he knows I come to pick up here.

FIONN (snide) Please. You? After your daddy?

POM (flaring) You don't know anything about—

FIONN (cold) You've never done more than choke cigarettes because you think it makes you interesting.

(He draws closer, bending low and hovering close to her face.)

POM (nervous breath)

FIONN (soft, dark, cold) You're a lost little girl, Pomegranate, chasin' all the way through Hell for a man who does - not - want you. What, my wee Persephone are you? Well, I am *not* your Hades.

POM (whispered) I never...

FIONN (fast, threatening, commanding) Stop wading where you don't belong, and go back to a bed you won't get lost in, because *I'm* not the one who'll be hurting you if you get in too deep. And trust me, he is a *lot* stronger than I am. Go home.

(Beat.)

POM (whispered) I'm not afraid of you.

FIONN (almost pleading, muttered) When will you all stop saying that?!

POM Any of you.

FIONN (angry) Stop – just stop talking.

(He reaches into his back pocket and grabs his wallet. He doesn't seem to notice the sound of quiet footsteps from the alley behind him.)

Here, is this what it takes?

POM I don't want—

FIONN (agitated, feverish in his irritation) Take a – a twenty – no, fuck it, fifty –

POM (shocked) Fionn.

FIONN (incredulous, mocking) Yeah, you want all o' those? Take my card while you're at it, huh?

POM *(shaking, almost crying)* Fionn, stop—

FIONN *(guttural)* Take the whole fucking wallet, Pom!

POM *(agitated, pleading)* I'm serious, I hear something!

FIONN Yeah – you do. That's the sound of me getting some peace of *fucking* mind!

POM *Listen to me, there's—*

FIONN *(quick, agitated)* Just take it. Take it, and *get out*. This place got eyes on every corner, and your face is in 'em all just by breathin' my direction. Now, I'm savin' my skin much as yours, but you take that shit and get on a train and go fuck off up to some magic garden where it's safe.

POM I... I can't do that.

FIONN *Please. I... (beat, sighs, suddenly uncharacteristically sincere)* I can't get out, but you can. Don't even fucking like you, but *you can*. Lemme do this, and leave – me – alone.

POM *(nervous breathing)*

FIONN Pom.

(Beat.)

POM *(terrified, confused)* Why...?

FIONN No. No...

(He turns, begins walking away but falters at the sight of who stands there.)

(cold realisation, heart dropping through his stomach) Chel.

(Beat.)

CHEL *(shaking slightly)* You said you didn't know 'er.

FIONN Chel—

CHEL *(accusatory)* Y-You said—

FIONN *(warning)* Don't.

CHEL You lied to us!

FIONN I *don't* know her.

CHEL *(stammering, feverish)* What's the money, then? A-And the name, and—

FIONN It's not—

CHEL Bullshit, you were kissing!

FIONN I'd never—

CHEL *(furious)* You was right on top of 'er, you prick! Faces like *this close*—

FIONN *(cold, firm)* You don't know what you're talking about.

CHEL *(voice raised and shaking, eyes alight with fury)* No. N-No, you're not gonna do this again – NONE OF YOU are gonna make me feel like I'm crazy!

FIONN *(urgent)* Chel—

CHEL *(shouting)* NO, I SAW YOU – clear as that fuckin' light!

FIONN *(hushed)* Kid, we can talk about this...

CHEL *(hushed, shaking with anticipation)* Yeah... V's waiting, anyway.

FIONN *(dark, shaking with realisation)* She put you up to this?

(Beat. Fionn draws and cocks his handgun, points it at her.)

POM *(terrified)* Fionn...!

FIONN *(dark, threatening)* Don't make me hurt you.

CHEL Ha! *(she begins giggling in a vaguely unhinged way)*

(She cocks her head to one side, flips him off.)

(determined, dark) Fucking try it.

(She throws herself round the corner and begins to run, just as Fionn fires. It misses, and we can hear Chel's footsteps racing away.)

(panting, running sounds)

FIONN Shit...!

(He races to the corner, but she's already disappeared.)

(desperate, shouting) Chel! CHEL!

(His voice is left to echo out into silence.)

POM *(nervous breathing, slow and shaking)* I... Who was... What did I do...?

FIONN *(exhausted sigh)*

(He flings down his gun, letting it shoot away across the slick alley floor.)

(hopeless, dark) You've just killed me.

WHEN TOWER ANGELS FALL // a Nettle Hunt Production © 2023

with the voice talents of

Joey Surlis as Fionn

Maddi Albrechts as Pom

Anthony O'Neil Kelly Jr. as Sol

Aife as Ophelia

Chelsea Krause as Moltenore

David Purkey as Emmens

Rina Divata as Chel

Gerald Hill as Hassan

Nicole Tuttle as Victoria

Robert O'Neill as Lowlife Jack

and additional performances by Paul Reinbach and Deen Kartal

Written and Directed by Elizabeth Plant

Music Composed by David Fesliyan, Kevin Teasley & Synth of Insomnia

and art by Gelatoria