

SECOND SHIFT

Episode #8: Trust Me

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Scene One – Stupid Goat

SFX Birds and stuff

ARKAHN

Shae, will this be sufficient?

SHAUNA

Yeah, I think so, Arkahn. Barely room in the goat cart for anything else. Let's see... Two pig pies, one large jug of water, one small jug of that purple stuff, half of that crumb cake stuff Fesmer made.

Yeah. Even with Mike's appetite returning, the rest of us probably won't starve.

ARKAHN

And if you do, there are many food stands.

SHAUNA

Are you sure you don't want to come to the game with us Arkahn?

ARKAHN

I have never much cared for Brikka. Besides, I have several chores to complete for my parents. Perhaps you should stay behind as well? You look awful.

SHAUNA

I can't look worse than I feel. I'm pretty sure that I've been having nightmares these past weeks, but I can't remember them. All I know is that I've been waking up every morning in a blind panic, exhausted.

ARKAHN

It is likely the staggering quantities of hoj you imbibe each day. It is astonishing that you sleep at all.

SHAUNA

Could be. But anyway, I should still go to the game. I'm curious to see what all the fuss is about, and it'll be nice to spend some time with Mike after all these weeks.

ARKAHN

He does seem to require time with friends.

SHAUNA

You are a friend, Arkahn.

ARKAHN

Thank you Shae.

SHAUNA

Well, I've got me a goat to wrangle. Have fun today.

ARKAHN

Shae, one thing.

SHAUNA

Yeah?

ARKAHN

Did you use Odi to awaken Meek two nights ago?

SHAUNA

Um...

ARKAHN

You were absent from your bed, and, you forget, I am attuned. Your spell was like an explosion in the dead of night to me.

SHAUNA

Oh man. You have to promise that you won't tell the others.

ARKAHN

You can trust me, Shae, but I am not the only attuned person in Laundi. If anyone desires to find you, you have made it easier for them to do so. That is the consequence of your action.

SHAUNA

Well what was I supposed to do? Let Mike die?

ARKAHN

I do not believe we are "supposed" to do anything. We do as we think we must. You have done so. I merely wished to caution you as to a possible outcome if you are not more careful.

SHAUNA

Okay then. Well... thanks.

ARKAHN

Certainly.

SFX Goat noise

SHAUNA

There she is. I'd better catch her before she runs off again. Wish me luck!

ARKAHN

<fading> Fair luck, Shae.

SHAUNA

Umbra... Here girl... Let me just put this harness around your spikey obstinate... Gotcha!

SFX Alarmed goat noise, goat running away.

SHAUNA

GHA! Stupid goat-thing!

MIKE

Hey Shauna!

SHAUNA

AHH! Jeez, don't sneak up on me like that.

MIKE

Um, I didn't, but sorry anyways. Whatcha doing?

SHAUNA

Trying to catch that stupid goat.

MIKE

Well what's the problem?

SHAUNA

She hates me and runs away every time I get near her.

MIKE

Ah. Speaking of which, have you seen Katherine?

SHAUNA

Mike!

MIKE

Well, it's kinda true. I just want to apologize for making a jerk of myself at breakfast yesterday.

SHAUNA

Well, there she is, about to go in to Zana's. Here's your chance.

MIKE

<groans to self> Okaaay... Hey! Katherine! Wait up!

KATHERINE

<from a short distance> Keep walking, gimp!

SFX Door slam

MIKE

You see??

SHAUNA

Eh, you know how she is.

MIKE

Yeah, she holds a grudge like a.... I don't know. I can't think of anything clever.

SHAUNA

<small laugh> Well, you can hardly blame her. Just give her a little more time.

MIKE

Whatever. I think she's just savoring her righteous indignation. Seriously. She's almost glowing.

SHAUNA

Katherine has her reasons, Mike. And they're usually good ones. <beat> I'll try to talk to her tomorrow. She'll probably feel a bit better after a day to herself. Now help me catch this stupid goat. We've got a Brikka game to go to.

Scene Two – Exposition!

KATHERINE

Hey Arkahn, Zana. They gone yet?

ARKAHN

Only a few moments past, Kath.

ZANA

You are just in time to help us clean. Here is a broom.

KATHERINE

Alright. But isn't your shop closed today? I thought you were going fishing, Zana?

ZANA

It is, and I am, but duty before recreation.

SFX sweeping, dishes clattering, etc for a few moments.

ARKAHN

Why did you not go to the game, Kath?

KATHERINE

I've never been a big sports fan. Also, I kind of wanted a day to rest.

<beat>

And I figured Shauna and Mike would like a day together without me around. I don't want to be a third wheel.

ARKAHN

If you do not mind my saying, I have never really understood their friendship. There is a peculiar undertone to it...

KATHERINE

Well, I told you Shauna and I roomed together freshman year, right?

ARKAHN

Yes.

KATHERINE

We didn't really become close for a while. I had my own stuff to deal with at that point... Anyways, she met Mike during orientation and they hung out a lot. Something happened—I don't know what—and Mike stopped coming around for a while. After a few months, I guess whatever issues they had just got swept under the carpet. They've had a few classes together, work together, they go to games sometimes. I don't really get it, but I think she looks at him like a brother. He *is* a lot like her real brothers.

ARKAHN

And yet Meek does not see her as a sister.

KATHERINE

Exactly.

SFX door opening

ARKAHN

Oh, *boxen wo fai, valo* (*I am sorry, sir*), but we are not open today.

REYBATI

Apologies. I have business with Zana.

ZANA

<cold> *Grendillo fai*, Reybati. Girls, the kitchen appears to be presentable. Would you take inventory in the cold cellar for me? I believe there are several items which should be replenished.

KATHERINE

Zana, are you—

ARKAHN

Come Kath. There are gelek roots to count.

SFX walking, doors, stairs

KATHERINE

What was that?

ARKAHN

That is something I wish to discuss with you.

KATHERINE

Yeah?

ARKAHN

Swear to me that you will not speak of this with the others, Kath.

KATHERINE

Sure.

ARKAHN

I am serious, Kath. I only confide in you because I feel we have become close in the past weeks and I require help.

KATHERINE

I would be happy to help you Arkahn. But what does this have to do with—

ARKAHN

What do you know regarding the Red Circle?

KATHERINE

I might have heard them mentioned once or twice...

ARKAHN

The Red Circle is the filthy secret of Laundi. They are a group of criminals who extort money, smuggle illegal goods... Anything criminal in Laundi bears their influence.

KATHERINE

I thought that was what the Legion does?

ARKAHN

Not precisely. The Red Circle are merely organized *pullavin* (*thugs*). The Legion's interests are somewhat broader than that. Besides, University keeps the Legion out of Laundi.

KATHERINE

They do? What about the first day we arrived, when they chased us to Zana's on the *waa-loren* thingers—

ARKAHN

Granted, the Legion has some agents hidden amongst the populace, but that is another matter. That man upstairs: Reybati. He is an agent of the Red Circle.

KATHERINE

What?!

ARKAHN

He arrives every month and takes money from Zana. Like most people, she seems to regard it as a business expense. But lately, each month, they are taking more and I do not know how much longer she can afford it. Zana does not speak of it, but she has been having business troubles.

KATHERINE

That's awful. And with all the money spent on Mike...

ARKAHN

Precisely.

KATHERINE

But what can we do about it?

ARKAHN

The only reason the Red Circle has not been stopped is that nobody knows who the leaders are. Whoever they are, they are people in positions of great enough power to thwart any attempts to take down the entire group.

KATHERINE

I get it. We have something like that in my world. But so what?

ARKAHN

We cannot stop the man upstairs, Reybati. We do not want them to retaliate at Zana. But I have been doing some research for months now. With your help Kath, I think I can stop the whole thing!

KATHERINE

I'm not sure I follow you...

ARKAHN

If we can trail Reybati back to wherever he takes the money, we can find out who is next in the chain of command. That is the key. Perhaps we can even find written records.

KATHERINE

Ehhh... I don't know... I don't think I like this...

ARKAHN

But now is the perfect time, Kath! Half of Laundi will be at the Brikka game. Even the Circle will be looking the other way.

KATHERINE

But why us? I mean, aren't there people we can go to? The town guard, University, somebody who knows what they're doing?

ARKAHN

The *Lowatuen (town guard)* is a joke and University have their heads so deep in their rituals that they neither notice nor care what happens to ordinary people like Zana.

KATHERINE

Okay. But only us? If we do this—which I still don't think we should—wouldn't it be best to wait for at least Fesmer or Shauna? Wouldn't we be safer with their magic on our side?

ARKAHN

No, it should be only the two of us. I do not want anyone else involved if we are captured. Fesmer, Shauna—they are too important to risk. Besides that, the more of us there are, the more likely they will be able to trail this back to Zana.

KATHERINE

I really don't like this Arkahn. I'm not sure I want to play the hero. I mean, stories like this never end well.

ARKAHN

I do not wish for you to do this unwillingly, but consider what could be at stake here, *senjen (please)*.

KATHERINE

I... I need to think about this.

ARKAHN

Of course, Kath.

KATHERINE

I'll be outside.

SFX stairs door

Scene Three — Katherine's Decision

SFX birds and stuff, faint water

KATHERINE

So this is where Shauna practices... Nice.

SFX footsteps

ZANA

Bui bui, Kath. I did not expect to see you out here. Have you come to join me?

KATHERINE

Bii Zana. Actually, no. I just came out here to think. I didn't know that you fished here.

ZANA

Normally, I do go farther afield. Today I am not inclined to do so. And so, here we are. What troubles you, Kath?

KATHERINE

What about you, Zana? You look troubled as well.

ZANA

I suppose I would. <sighs> This is as good a place as any to cast. Stand back a step, I would not like to catch you...

SFX fishing reel? Do they have fishing reels? Or perhaps just a swishing sound.

ZANA

It certainly is a fine day. And after all that rain...

KATHERINE

Yeah.

ZANA

Did you sight Meek this morning? He was looking for you. I believe he wanted to apologize for insulting you yesterday morning.

KATHERINE

Zana?

ZANA

Yes?

KATHERINE

You are changing the subject.

ZANA

Am I? Forgive an old lady in her ramblings, Kath.

KATHERINE

What is wrong, Zana?

ZANA

Oh, you need not concern yourself with my troubles.

KATHERINE

You may be my boss but you are also a friend. And if you can't talk to your friends about your problems...

ZANA

<sighs>

You are correct Kath. Yet there is simply little to be gained by speaking of these problems.

KATHERINE

Money?

ZANA

Yes. Business has diminished the past year as other, newer businesses attract customers. And though I do not mind in the slightest, helping the three of you has been costly, even considering the paltry amount I have been paying you. And now...

<beat>

When I opened my shop, money was no object. Ainorem know I had plenty of treasures to sell from my travels. Just a small vial of pure *veradooni* from the far west fetched enough for a year's supplies. But that was a long time ago and those things are all sold.

<beat>

I do not regret my investments, though I could have made some more wisely. I have lived happily and comfortably for years. But lately...

<Pause>

KATHERINE

What did that man want?

ZANA

What man?

KATHERINE

The one who came in earlier.

ZANA

Oh, merely a vexing business expense. He did come earlier than I expected this month, however ...

<beat>

The fish do not seem to be biting here. I think I shall walk a ways. There is a good spot around the lake.

KATHERINE

Yeah, I've got some stuff to take care of anyway. Have fun Zana!

ZANA

I shall attempt to do precisely that. *Grendi fai*, Kath.

KATHERINE

And don't worry too hard. It's your day off!

ZANA

Praise Ainorem for that.

Scene Four — Resolve

SFX Door

ARKAHN

Kath, have you—

KATHERINE

Yeah, I'll do it. I still don't think it's a smart thing to do. But it seems to be the right thing.

ARKAHN

Oh *cha grendi fai* Kath! You cannot know how much this means to me. But you must promise that you will never breathe a word of this to anyone. It is for their protection that we do this alone, and we must do it in secrecy for the same reason.

KATHERINE

I understand. So what now?

ARKAHN

First I must retrieve a few... things I have hidden in Zana's cellar.

KATHERINE

Do all of you have stuff hidden in Zana's cellar?

ARKAHN

I do not believe Jareth does. You should go to your room and assume clothing that you rarely wear. I would recommend a head-scarf as well. Perhaps a touch of beautifying powder. It would be good to disguise yourself, though not too obviously.

KATHERINE

What about you?

ARKAHN

I have additional clothing stored in the closet upstairs. You never know when a bad storm will make the journey home inadvisable.

KATHERINE

Sounds like a plan. Meet you back here in a few minutes?

ARKAHN

Indeed. And bring your bow.

KATHERINE

My what?

ARKAHN

The bow that Zana gave you.

KATHERINE

Hold on a moment, I'm not shooting anybody.

ARKAHN

Of course not. But is it not safer to be adequately prepared?

KATHERINE

Oh no, I'm not bringing my bow. That's just asking for trouble.

ARKAHN

But if we are caught—

KATHERINE

No. Outside of action movies, that's not how it works. If we go in there with weapons, somebody is going to get killed and it is going to be us. If we get caught, we are running like hell or surrendering.

ARKAHN

But—

KATHERINE

No. No weapons. If we get caught they'll just call the *Lowatuen* on us. If they're in the Red Circle's pocket like you say they are, that's the worst that will happen. Because we *will* be breaking and entering and they'll have every right to get us busted. If we bring weapons, we're going there to start a fight which we will lose and probably get killed in the process.

<pause>

ARKAHN

Very well. No weapons. Let us prepare ourselves otherwise though.

KATHERINE

Good. I'll be just a few minutes.

Scene Five — Targonone

SFX birds etc, footsteps

KATHERINE

You know Arkahn, I don't think I've ever seen you wearing a dress before.

ARKAHN

Quiet you.

KATHERINE

<laughs>

ARKAHN

I despise wearing dresses. Even if others cast me strange glances, I will choose pants on any day.

KATHERINE

<half joking> I admire your resolve.

ARKAHN

There is nothing to admire. I just loathe dresses. You, on the alternate hand, look amazing.

KATHERINE

Thank you.

ARKAHN

The powder draws attention to your eyes. You should wear it more often.

KATHERINE

I've never been big on cosmetics. They test them on animals.

ARKAHN

Animals?

KATHERINE

Yeah. To make sure their faces don't burn off or something...

ARKAHN

I suppose that makes sense...

KATHERINE

Uh. So are you sure this is the way we should be going?

ARKAHN

Oh yes. Reybati always leaves in this direction to stop at a few other businesses. We should sight him shortly.

KATHERINE

What if we see someone we know?

ARKAHN

Everyone we know is at the Brikka game.

KATHERINE

True enough... But what about your parents?

ARKAHN

Oh, we need not worry ourselves over them.

KATHERINE

Good. Because I'd rather not have to come up with a cover st—...
Oh hell.

SFX footsteps cease

TARGONONE

Arkahn, Kath, is that you?

KATHERINE

Cha builana fai Targonone.

ARKAHN

Cha builana fai.

TARGONONE

What an unexpected pleasure. You look lovely today, I might add.

KATHERINE

Cha grendillo fai.

TARGONONE

Is Zana fishing today?

KATHERINE

Yes, she left this morning, though I think she is only going as far as the pond.

TARGONONE

She always did enjoy a pleasant day by the water. Hopefully she does not imbibe too much *pino* (*wine*) and fall asleep outside again!

KATHERINE

Seriously?

TARGONONE

Oh, the stories I could tell you... <chuckles> That reminds me, would you deliver a message to her? The *gwap* (*some kind of fish*) begin running soon. She is welcome to go up to my cabin during this year's New Life if she wishes. My wife's family will be visiting and so I will not be using it.

KATHERINE

Umm... Sure.

TARGONONE

I hear your friend has awakened?

KATHERINE

Yes. Before sunrise yesterday.

TARGONONE

That is fantastic. Surprising a little, but most welcome. Is he in pain? Able to move?

KATHERINE

He *is* a pain. But otherwise he seems well enough.

TARGONONE

I must come by in the next day or two to verify his well-being myself. Until then, I hope he does not try to strain himself. The body can be extremely fragile in times like this.

KATHERINE

I'll be sure to let him know...

TARGONONE

Well, I should not tarry any longer. You two look as if you have errands to run as well. Stay clear of trouble!

KATHERINE

Fai goren-do cha Targonone. *(Good bye from me.)*

ARKAHN

Faen goren-do cha. (Good bye from us.)

SFX footsteps resume

<pause>

KATHERINE

Well that was awkward.

<beat>

What's a *gwap* and where are they running to?

ARKAHN

It is a fish. They spawn in the lakes near Draenmer. They are quite delicious.

KATHERINE

Okay. That makes more sense now.

ARKAHN

Let us make haste. And keep your eyes active.

KATHERINE

I never had this much trouble with Spanish or Japanese. After six weeks, I knew way more than “thank you” and “good morning.”

ARKAHN

Charendraen is the only language I know. Your “English” is exceedingly strange to me. On occasion, I cannot interpret a single word that Mike says.

KATHERINE

If it makes you feel any better, I usually have no idea what he's talking about either.

ARKAHN

Still, if you truly wish to understand our language, you might try removing Jareth's translation pendant.

KATHERINE

Huh. Learning by immersion. That's a really good idea, Arkahn. I think I'll try that.

ARKAHN

Not this moment, however.

KATHERINE

Right. Heh.

ARKAHN

Perhaps I should attempt to learn your English as well, if Fesmer is going to continue speaking—

KATHERINE

Oh! Arkahn! Over there. Is that him?

ARKAHN

Where?

KATHERINE

Over there, with the brown cloak

ARKAHN

You must be more specific.

KATHERINE

Leaving that bakery!

ARKAHN

Yes. That is Reybati!

KATHERINE

What now?

ARKAHN

Now we follow him.

KATHERINE

Shouldn't we hide?

ARKAHN

No need yet. He does not know he is being trailed, so we can hide in plain sight. Just look like you are doing what you are supposed to. And keep talking.

KATHERINE

Okay.

ARKAHN

We need only appear to be two ordinary women out for an *ezgava* walk. (*pronounced ezga-VA*)

KATHERINE

So what do ordinary women do?

ARKAHN

I do not know... Shop? I am usually being dragged around by Fesmer or doing chores that I do not have time for in the week.

KATHERINE

Let's go over here. We can look at clothes. <beat> So what's the deal with Fesmer anyways? How did you meet up?

ARKAHN

In truth, there is not much of a story. I did not have many friends and neither did Fesmer. I met him shortly before I began working at Zana's.

KATHERINE

Ah. Hey, this is nice.

ARKAHN

I had other friends for a while, but they were older and have ascended to greater ventures.

KATHERINE

I understand. Back in high school, most of my friends were older than I. My last couple of years there were kind of lonely... How does this look? Too colorful?

ARKAHN

I do not know. I suppose the pattern is a little too much. Try this one. Oh, he is almost out of view. Come.

KATHERINE

<reluctantly> Okay. Can't really afford these things anyway...

<beat>

So what about Jareth? How does he fit into everything?

ARKAHN

He and Fesmer were raised in the same town, roughly a day's journey from here. Fesmer's older brother, Loric, and Jareth were childhood friends before Jareth left for University. So I suppose when Fesmer and his mother fled here they met up and have been friends ever since. Though sometimes I fear they will kill each other.

KATHERINE

I still have not met Fesmer's mother.

ARKAHN

She is a quiet woman. She works as a seamstress out of her house—the one next to Fesmer's—and rarely leaves. Fesmer says she has never been the same since the death of his father and brother.

KATHERINE

Oh.

<pause>

ARKAHN

Reybati is entering the butcher's shop. I believe that is the last on his route.

KATHERINE

So what now?

ARKAHN

We must buy several things.

KATHERINE

Why?

ARKAHN

So that he does not sight us as we trail him. Nobody will pay heed to two women returning home with groceries.

KATHERINE

Okay... I don't have much money so I will buy some bread.

ARKAHN

I will purchase some fruit. Do not allow him to escape your sight.

KATHERINE

Okay. Meet you back here in a few moments.

<beat>

<quietly to self> This is such a ridiculous idea. How did I get talked into this? Really. This is like something Mike would do. <sighs> Ooh. Hey, perfect opportunity to learn Charendraen. Okay. Basic shopping conversation. I can do this.

<beat>

BAKER

Oli runa, lio. (Good afternoon, young lady.)

KATHERINE

Cha par nolan torn fai, senjen. (I would like two round loaves please.)

BAKER

Cero. Cha penipa alix fai? (Certainly. Have I seen you before?)

KATHERINE

Uhhhh, *senjen? Cha par ayan leyenuun fai. Cha grendi fai.*
(please? I would also like two of those sweet rolls. Thank you.)

BAKER

Cha ino lyona fai. Sor own-nominem cha?
(You are most welcome. What is your name?)

KATHERINE

Sor own-nominem cha? Oh! Name. Um, it's Kath. I mean, *fai-en nominem eye* Kath. ("What is your name?" Oh! Name. Um, it's Kath. I mean, my name is Kath.)

BAKER

Yay lominura doren fai bok cha, Kath.
(An exquisite pleasure to know you, Kath.)

KATHERINE

Piay. Eye donitah droa.
(Yes. It is a very fine day.)

BAKER

Jorna-cha eye fuo-bok fai. Eye fuo-junipaen kasama—?
Your accent is unknown to me. If it is not rude to inquire—?

KATHERINE

Oh God. Umm... *boxen wo fai. Fain... dokiluna... eye-fuo... tendip.*
(Oh God. Umm... I'm sorry. My... heartthrob... does not... escape.)

BAKER

<laughing> *Parado fai?* (Excuse me?)

KATHERINE

Great. Here. Money. I mean, *drowna* (*money – rhymes with "grown-ah"*)

SFX Coins on table.

KATHERINE

Boxen wo fai. Pashti vorgen fai. Cha grendi.
(I am sorry. I must go. Thank you.)

BAKER

Linem, Cha rawso peni fai again. Perhaps at the New Life Festival?
(Regardless, I do hope to see you)

KATHERINE

Wait, what?

ARKAHN

Pst! Come here!

KATHERINE

Fai fohumin! Cha grendi fai. Goren-dai! (Flee now! Thank you.
Goodbye!)
<beat>
Well that went well... Bui bui, Arkahn.

ARKAHN

Do not use my real name.

KATHERINE

Sorry.

ARKAHN

Do you realize that you spoke to that man of heartthrobs?

KATHERINE

Oh, that's what Dokiluna means. And *tendip*?

ARKAHN

Escape.

KATHERINE

“My heartthrob does not escape.” Brilliant, Katherine. Ah well. Sweet roll?

ARKAHN

[Thanks.]

<beat>

Just in time, there goes Reybati.

KATHERINE

So... where were we?

ARKAHN

We were discussing Fesmer's mother.

KATHERINE

Oh yeah.

<awkward pause>

So what about your parents, Arkahn? I never see them around.

ARKAHN

Oh, they are busy. They travel a great deal. I am glad for my job at Zana's or I do not know what I would do with my time. Aside from the extensive lists of chores they leave me. What about your parents?

KATHERINE

Let me just put it this way: I moved to the other side of the country as soon as I could.

ARKAHN

Were they so bad?

KATHERINE

There was no way I could live my own life as long as they were nearby. I even paid for college myself so that I wouldn't owe them. Of course I *did* manage to get a few scholarships... Regardless, if they had their way, I would still be living with them and driving to some local school. They never trusted me to make my own decisions, you know?

ARKAHN

Believe me, I do. I envy that you were able to leave like that. Unfortunately, even if I started saving more money, I could not flee my obligations to them.

KATHERINE

Arkahn, you don't have to live under them. You're an adult. You do not have to bow to your parent's whims.

ARKAHN

I have too many obligations here. Perhaps some day I will be able to slash my tethers. But not yet.

KATHERINE

<half joking> There are always options. Maybe you could even come back to Boston with us.

ARKAHN

That does seem somewhat extreme. But Ainorem know what the future will bring.

KATHERINE

Oh, I was kind of just joking. I mean, who knows if we'll ever get back.

ARKAHN

I think Reybati is going into that house. Make note of it and keep walking.

KATHERINE

Got it.

ARKAHN

When he leaves, let us wait a few minutes and then we can approach the house. If anyone else leaves, we follow them. Now, let us find some place out of the way to conceal ourselves.

KATHERINE

Oh, lovely. It has been a while since I had to hide behind bushes...

Scene Seven — Breaking and Entering

ARKAHN

Kath!

KATHERINE

Huh?

ARKAHN

He is leaving without his bag. Cover your face with your scarf and keep your voice low!

(whispering dialogue from here)

SFX shuffling footsteps, door being tried, locked

ARKAHN

The front door is bolted. We will go around back.

<beat>

Here. Lift me so that I can see in the windows.

KATHERINE

Ready. One, two, three, *oomph!*

ARKAHN

It appears to be vacant. I am going in. I will unlock the back door for you.

SFX Creaking window

KATH

Okay...

ARKAHN

Lift me up a little more...

KATH

Trying...

SFX struggling sounds as Arkahn climbs in the window

ARKAHN

This would be much easier in pants... There we ahh!

SFX Thump!

KATHERINE

You ra-na?

ARKAHN

Yes. I am fine. Meet me at the door.

SFX a few moments of footsteps.

<pause>

SFX Door opening

ARKAHN

Come in. Hurry!

SFX Door closing

KATHERINE

Nice kitchen... Hey, this is just an ordinary house.

ARKAHN

Yes. I was not prepared for this...

KATHERINE

For what?

ARKAHN

Look around. Perhaps we can find something important. Records or ledgers, anything. I will attempt to locate his bag.

KATHERINE

Are you certain this is the place?

ARKAHN

Of course. We saw him enter, did we not?

KATHERINE

But what if this is just his house?

ARKAHN

It likely is. However, that does not mean we are in the wrong place.

KATHERINE

So great, now we are breaking into somebody's *home*. This feels very wrong.

ARKAHN

Of course it feels wrong! Our actions are criminal. But our cause is just.

KATHERINE

That is a pretty fine distinction.

ARKAHN

That is the tale of my life. We are here, so we might as well do what we came for. But if you can not overcome your scruples and act for the greater good...

KATHERINE

Fine, fine. Anything to get out of here faster. So what are we looking for?

ARKAHN

Anything. Especially documents though. And keep your eyes wide for hiding places. Loose bricks and the like.

KATHERINE

Alright. <sighs> Let's get to work.

<beat>

What was that?

ARKAHN

I did not hear—

SFX door being unbolted

ARKAHN

Ben-sa wai! Conceal yourself behind this counter!

<Pause>

SFX Door opening

CHEANTI

Borenbui? (Hello?) Reybati, are you home?

KATHERINE

Who is that? The contact?

ARKAHN

I do not know.

CHEANTI (it is a hard Che, like Cheese)

Borenbui? Is someone there?

<beat>

I swear I heard something... Cheanti, you are becoming over-fearful.

SFX footsteps approaching, Cheanti humming some Laundian tune

KATHERINE

She's coming this way!

ARKAHN

Once she passes through the door, I will hit her with this. Try to catch her so she does not make much noise.

KATHERINE

What is that? I thought we said—

ARKAHN

Shh!

SFX Wazap! (the official onomatopoeia of the Pain Stick at full blast) Body slumping to the ground.

KATHERINE

<normal volume> What the hell is that? I thought we weren't going to hurt anyone.

ARKAHN

It is a Velian Pain Stick. Do not worry; she is merely unconscious.

KATHERINE

A *Pain* Stick? *PAIN* Stick? What... Why... What the hell is a pain stick?

ARKAHN

Just what it sounds like. Now help me lift her into this chair. I want her bound and gagged before she wakes up.

KATHERINE

No way.

ARKAHN

She knows something and if we can extract it from her...

KATHERINE

No. I want out.

ARKAHN

We cannot withdraw now. It is too late for that. Do not fret, we will not actually hurt her. We need only frighten her.

KATHERINE

What do you mean, "not hurt her"? I just watched you attack her with a pain stick!

ARKAHN

Kath. I need your help. Now is not the time for questions. Action is required. I know that you understand this. Did you hesitate when you helped Shae awaken Meek?

KATHERINE

What? How did you know?

ARKAHN

You foolish children. I am attuned. How could I not know? You three will be very fortunate if no one from University discovers it.

KATHERINE

Okay, fine. But I will not hurt her.

ARKAHN

Of course not. I need you to keep searching the house. *Cha grendi fai*, Kath. You will not regret this.

KATHERINE

We'll see about that...

Scene Eight — Interrogation

ARKAHN

I will ask you again and let me warn you, I am losing my patience. Who are you and how do you know Reybati?

CHEANTI

I told you the truth. I am Cheanti. I am Reybati's wife. This is our house. I... Believe me. We are attempting to begin a family.

KATHERINE

I think she is telling the truth.

ARKAHN

Have you found anything yet?

KATHERINE

No.

ARKAHN

Then keep looking.

<beat>

So, you are Reybati's wife.

CHEANTI

What, do you think the -Ti in our names is a coincidence?

ARKAHN

What do you know about your husband's work? Are you involved?

CHEANTI

My husband is an honest worker. I am employed in the windmills. What does that have to do with anything?

ARKAHN

I am the one asking questions. What does he do with the money?

CHEANTI

Is that what you seek? Money? There is plenty in my handpurse over there. Take it and go. You will find nothing else of worth in this house.

ARKAHN

Do not play the fool with me. You know the money I am talking about.

CHEANTI

I do not. *Qin*, if you take that money and flee now I will not even summon *Lowatuen*. Just leave, *senjen*. I do not know what you are looking for.

SFX Smack!

ARKAHN

Do not lie to me!

KATHERINE

What are you doing?!

ARKAHN

You know what I seek. Every month your honest husband travels from business to business and extorts money from good folk. We saw him bring it back here and leave without it. Now where is it?

CHEANTI

What are you talking about? *Senjen*, take whatever you want, just do not hurt me. We are attempting to begin a family. *Senjen*...

ARKAHN

<insulted> Filth like you are attempting to begin a family? You expect that to earn my sympathy? That you are trying to bring another being into this world that you can mold to your depraved lifestyle? Do not cause me to laugh. Where is the money?

CHEANTI

I am telling you, I do not know.

SFX rustling of clothes

ARKAHN

<deadly calm> You know what this is?

KATHERINE

No! You said—

ARKAHN

<snapping> Quiet and keep looking!

SFX heavy footsteps

ARKAHN

<calm again> I can tell you know what this is.

CHEANTI

It... It is a Pain Stick. But those are not permitted in Laundi. Where did you... Unless you are... No...

ARKAHN

<quieter, almost friendly> Do not trouble yourself with the details, Che. You do not mind if I call you Che, correct? I just want you to know that your Circle has begun to tread on some feet. I want you to know how serious I am. Where is the money?

CHEANTI

<defeated> I... It is beneath a loose tile. Near the stove.

ARKAHN

Right here?

<beat>

SFX Grating of tile

ARKAHN

Very good. Now I will just give it to my assistant for safe-keeping.

SFX few paces of walking

ARKAHN

<whispering> Here Kath. Check carefully. There may be some clues.

KATHERINE

<whispering, but angry> What are you doing Arkahn? You said you would not hurt her. What if she is innocent?

AKRHAN

<whispering> She is not. She is hiding it but I can tell. Do not worry, I am merely attempting to scare her.

KATHERINE

<whispering> Well, you are scaring me Arkahn. I do not like this. This isn't you.

ARKAHN

<whispering> I am sorry Kath. Sometimes one must do unpleasant things in order to accomplish a desirable result. Have you searched upstairs?

KATHERINE

No.

ARKAHN

Please do so.

KATHERINE

But—

ARKAHN

Do not fret, Kath. I will do only what is necessary; nothing more.

SFX walking

ARKAHN

<quietly, calmly> Now, Che, tell me the truth *senjen*. That loose tile near the stove. That was not the final resting place of that money, is it not.

<beat>

Is it not?

CHEANTI

<almost a whisper> No...

ARKAHN

Now we are traveling smoothly. Where does that money go, Che?

<beat>

Where does it go Che?

<beat>

Oh and we were making such progress. I thought perhaps we were even becoming friends, Che. I really did not want to have to use this thing. Especially on a friend. Do you know what a Velian Pain Stick does to a person, Che? Of course you do. I used it to incapacitate you earlier. But do you know what it can do?

CHEANTI

<nervous> N... No...

ARKAHN

It is most unpleasant. Let me tell you a secret. <hushed, intimate voice> I know from experience. There is nothing quite like it. Did you know that the Velians actually created a new word to describe what it feels like?

CHEANTI

<whimpering> *Senjen* do not hurt me. *Senjen*... We are attempting to begin a family...

ARKAHN

<overlapping> "...attempting to begin a family," yes, yes. Do not fear. It does not inflict any true injury. If it held against one spot for too long, it might leave some bruising, some swelling. But certainly nothing permanent. At least at the lower settings. See, you likely do not know this—how would you?—but these can only be used by those who are naturally attuned. The more potential a person has, the more pain they can cause. And, not to be immodest, but I am strongly attuned.

CHEANTI

Senjen...

ARKAHN

When I incapacitated you, I delivered a burst at the highest power. Right at the base of your neck. You passed out instantly from the shock. Crude, I know. An amateur's approach. However, someone who knew how to use one of these things well, someone who was strongly attuned, could... what is the word I am searching for... modulate. Could modulate the power used and keep the subject awake for a long time. But I am not certain what damage that would cause. Especially to someone trying to have a child. I *have* heard stories about them rendering people infertile...

CHEANTI

Fuo... senjen, fuo... (No... Please no...)

ARKAHN

Fear not Che. I would never do such a thing to a friend. The problem is, friends tell each other things. *Secrets*. Where does the money go?

CHEANTI

<utterly defeated, almost crying> I take it to work with me. I... I give it to a contact there.

ARKAHN

And who is that, Che.

CHEANTI

Senjen... They will kill me. They will kill Reybati. *Senjen...*

ARKAHN

Shh. Do not fret, Che. We do not have to take the money. You can still make your delivery and nobody will know what happened to you. Nobody will know about your new friend. You can trust me.

SFX Footsteps

ARKAHN

Cha parado fai.

KATHERINE

Nothing yet, though I counted all the money.

ARKAHN

Nai-nai. Continue looking upstairs. These two seem to like hiding things. Perhaps you looked past something.

KATHERINE

Okay... Remember what you promised me though.

ARKAHN

Of course.

SFX footsteps

ARKAHN

Now where were we? Ah yes, the untimely end of you and your honest husband. No, I do not think you need worry yourself over that. Not if we leave you with the money. But, understand Che, that I cannot depart this place without something to show. There are those who expect results from me. And I must deliver. Who gets the money Che?

CHEANTI

<almost inaudible> Folstropos.

ARKAHN

Parado fai? I could not quite hear you?

CHEANTI

<whispering, but audible> Folstropos. He... All the money passes through him.

ARKAHN

Folstropos! The owner of all those windmills? All that farmland? To think a man like that would feel the need to expand his business into other areas. Does greed know no bounds? Ah well. *Cha dona grendillo fai* for your help, Che. Enjoy your rest.

CHEANTI

Wha—

SFX WAZAP!

ARKAHN

Simpering *walsu* [scum.]

SFX running footsteps

KATHERINE

I thought I heard— Arkahn what did you do?!

ARKAHN

She provided me with the information we needed. She is merely unconscious. Do not worry. She will recover soon. Help me untie her.

KATHERINE

You did not have to do that!

ARKAHN

Incorrect. I did. And with good fortune, when she wakes up she will be disoriented enough to doubt her memories. Perhaps she will not even remember a second person with a strange accent...

KATHERINE

So what do we do with her?

ARKAHN

We will place her comfortably in her bed, as if she returned from a trying day of work and went to sleep. We will put this chair back where it belongs, put her groceries away, and in every way we can think of, make it appear that nothing has happened.

KATHERINE

And the money?

ARKAHN

Ah, yes. I will return that to where I found it. We must leave no trace. Now, let us make haste. And judging from your expression, I would recommend saving that outburst until we are far from here. We must leave here as rapidly as possible.

Scene Nine — Confrontation

SFX birds and stuff

KATHERINE

<angry> Arkahn! Arkahn, wait up!

ARKAHN

Yes Kath?

KATHERINE

What. The. Hell. Was that?

ARKAHN

What?

KATHERINE

Do not “What” me! I just saw you psychologically torture a woman and not even bat an eyelash. What the hell was that?!

ARKAHN

I was only doing what was required, Kath. Once I inform certain people of Folstropos’ involvement, the Red Circle will be broken. Zana and everyone in Laundi will be freed of their corrupt grasp.

KATHERINE

I am not asking why you did it. I am asking *how* you did it. How could you do something like that? Just who are you?

ARKAHN

I am exactly who I say I am Kath. I have never lied to you.

KATHERINE

Forgive me if I have trouble believing you Arkahn. I just saw a side of you that I never even imagined to exist. A cruel side that could threaten a defenseless woman with a weapon. And by the way, you did lie to me. At least *twice* today.

ARKAHN

Twice?

KATHERINE

You brought a weapon after saying you would not and you slapped that woman after telling me you would not hurt her! Not to mention using that thing on her twice.

ARKAHN

I...

KATHERINE

I thought you were a friend Arkahn. Somebody we could trust. But I guess there is much more to you than we first saw.

ARKAHN

Kath, I am your friend. And you are mine.

KATHERINE

Friends do not lie to each other Arkahn.

ARKAHN

How can you be so blind? Of course they do. People lie to each other all the time and for many different reasons. Has it never occurred to you that some lies are told for good purposes?

KATHERINE

That is just apologetic bull. I thought you were beyond things like that, Arkahn.

ARKAHN

Kath—

KATHERINE

Shut it Arkahn. I am going back to Zana's and I hope you do not plan on following me. And if you know what's good for you, you won't try to talk to me for a while.

ARKAHN

But—

KATH

Oh, and don't worry about today. I'll keep your secrets for now. I am a person who keeps her word. But I want you to know that you've lost my trust.

ARKAHN

Kath...

KATHERINE

No. We're finished. I'll see you at work.

SFX stomping away

ARKAHN

<calling after her> Kath!

KATHERINE

God, what else can go wrong...

Scene Ten — Dark Wings

SFX

Door closing.

SHAUNA

Arkahn, I'm back!

ARKAHN

<in distance> Oh! Shae! Ah, please remain in the living room for a moment.

SHAUNA

Uh, oh. Okay! <a beat> Are... your parents here?

ARKAHN

No. I am just... <normal voice> There. You have returned early.

SHAUNA

Yuh. Sorry.

ARKAHN

No apologies required. I simply did not expect you.

SHAUNA

Sure. Changing clothes or something?

ARKAHN

Yes.

SHAUNA

...Cool. Well anyway, if you don't mind, I think I'm heading to bed early. It's been a long day.

ARKAHN

I understand. It has also been a long day for me.

SHAUNA

Oh yeah? What'd you do?

ARKAHN

Oh, nothing to boast of. Some tasks for my parents. Has University's Brikka team thwarted their 90-year curse?

SHAUNA

Couldn't tell ya. Mike and Fesmer got into a fight with some University students and we left before the game finished.

ARKAHN

Are they *ra-na*?

SHAUNA

Fesmer's fine, and Mike's... Mike. But I think he's going to be okay.

ARKAHN

That is fair tidings.

SHAUNA

Yeah. Well, goodnight Arkahn. I took your suggestion and laid off the *hojen* today. This might be the night I finally get some real sleep.

ARKAHN

Let us hope. Sleep well.

SHAUNA

Amen to that.

MUSIC CUE

Transition music; from pleasant dreamy, to eerie, to dark and foreboding.

SFX

A flutter of heavy wings, several clicks of a beak. Breathing.

SHAUNA

<terrified> H-hello? Is someone in here?

SFX

Wings rustle. An unnerving sound like a caught / blocked breath.

SHAUNA

Oh my God. Something's at the foot of my bed. Arkahn! Arkahn!

HARPY

Shauna Brown.

<SHAUNA stops breathing; music stops also>

HARPY

We will find you. <a sound like a chuckle> We will find you.

<SHAUNA wakes up, screaming. ARKAHN runs in, but SHAUNA continues screaming>

ARKAHN

Shae! Wake up, Shae! You were dreaming! It is only an ill dream, Shae. Shae!

SHAUNA

<crying now> It's not a dream! Oh God. I want to go home! I just want to go home!

ARKAHN

You are well now, *maraluna* [friend-love]. Shhh. It is well now.

SHAUNA

Oh my God, oh my God... it was awful, Arkahn. I remember now. The nightmares I've been having. It's been the same nightmare over and over... It's coming for me. It's real, and it's coming for me!

ARKAHN

Calm yourself, *maraluna*. You know that you can trust me, Shae. I am your friend. Now, tell me everything...

Bonus Scene for listeners: The bakery scene in English.

BAKER

Good afternoon, young lady.

KATHERINE

I would like two round loaves please.

BAKER

Certainly. Have I seen you before?

KATHERINE

Uhhhh, please? I would also like two of those sweet rolls. Thank you.

BAKER

You are most welcome. What is your name?

KATHERINE

“What is your name?” Oh! Name. Um, it’s Kath. I mean, my name is Kath.

BAKER

An exquisite pleasure to know you, Kath.

KATHERINE

Yes. It is a very fine day.

BAKER

Your accent is unknown to me. If it is not rude to inquire—?

KATHERINE

Oh God. Umm... I’m sorry. My... heartthrob... does not... escape.

BAKER

<laughing> Excuse me?

KATHERINE

Great. Here. Money. I mean, money.

SFX Coins on table.

KATHERINE

I am sorry. I must go. Thank you.

BAKER

Regardless, I do hope to see you again. Perhaps at the New Life Festival?

ARKAHN

Pst! Come here!

KATHERINE

Flee now! Thank you. Goodbye!

<beat>

Well that went well... Bui bui, Arkahn.

ARKAHN

Do not use my real name.

KATHERINE

Sorry.

ARKAHN

Have you any notion what you just said to that man, Kath?

KATHERINE

Not a clue. Sweet roll?

ARKAHN

Thanks.

<beat>

Just in time, there goes Reybati.

(fade out)