

## **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)