

ARSEN Episode 14

"Lion's Den"

Characters Present: Aurelie, Kailen, Nyx, Shelby, Dominic,
Narrator/Luke, Violetta, Gregor, Flax, Colton, Rey

ANNOUNCER

Welcome to Arsen, a magical Audio Drama, storytelling experience. Arsen contains swearing, illusions to sexual themes as well as themes of violence. Thank you, and enjoy this episode of Arsen.

SFX: MUSIC PLAYS < THE THEME SONG>

KAILEN

They would have told us.

SHELBY

They didn't tell us they were royal. Why would they tell us about this?

NYX

Kailen. They knew that association with Unseelie meant death. They couldn't tell us.

DOMINIC

Actually. I think they did kind of...

SFX: Flipping through pages

DOMINIC

Mission Log 302:

LUKE

All attempts to find the Unseelie have proven unsuccessful. They have spent so long hiding from us and what we think of them that they have learned to evade us entirely. They will not be found until they want to be. Violetta and I have often wondered about this new generation of Unseelie and if they share similar values as their ancestors.

We're not sure. But we intend to find out.

DOMINIC

I think they did find out. But they couldn't share their findings.

KAILEN

But the murders, the rebel group from Ohio?

GREGOR

As I've told Aurelie already. The actions of one do not reflect the will of the many. There was no rebel group. Just the one.

NYX

Kailen. What does this mean?

KAILEN

Let me think...

SHELBY

Can I please shoot this fool now?

KAILEN

Just give me a minute to think, ok?

DOMINIC

This development could change everything we've ever known about
LaFresia, Kailen.

KAILEN

EVERYBODY JUST STOP! (pause) Give me a minute to think.

SFX: Kailens footsteps away.

NYX

You should go talk to him, Elie. You seem to have a gift of calming
him down.

AURELIE

I don't know.. He was pretty clear that he needed a minute.

SHELBY

Yeah well it's also pretty clear that he's in love with you so I
don't think he'd mind.

AURELIE

Uh.. what?

NYX

Shelby. Now is not the time to share observations.

SHELBY

What? It's not like he's hiding it!

NYX

Still not the time or place Shelby.

SHELBY

Whatever. I'm over this drama. Elie. Go talk to Kailen. He won't be
mad. Promise.

AURELIE

Um.. ok. I'll be right back... Shelby please don't kill the Unseelie.

SHELBY

No promises.

NYX

We'll keep him safe

SFX: Footsteps away

AURELIE

Kailen.. Are you ok?

KAILEN

Aurelie, I'm sorry.. I didn't mean to snap like that. I just. I thought I lost you back there on the subway. And then we chased him and we couldn't find you. I.. couldn't find you. I never wanted to hurt someone as bad as I wanted to hurt him when I saw him standing so close to you. I kind of lost my head. I just... Aurelie I don't know what I would have done if we didn't...

AURELIE

I'm ok, Kailen. You found me. And I'm safe.

KAILEN

I know.

AURELIE

We need to go with him.

KAILEN

(deep breath) I know.

AURELIE

What? No fighting back? I usually have to push a few more times to
convince you.

KAILEN

Yeah well.. This time I know you're right.

AURELIE

It's not a trap, Kailen. I feel it.

KAILEN

And right now.. That's enough for me.

AURELIE

(intakes of breath like she's going to say something. Then stopping
and changing her mind a few times)

KAILEN

Something on your mind?

AURELIE

You linked with me back there.

KAILEN

I did.

AURELIE

So we have a.. What did you call it? A significant connection?

KAILEN

(slight laugh) I guess so... (serious) I saw the fear in your eyes and
I.. I had to speak to you.

AURELIE

I'm sorry we got separated. I shouldn't have taken us down there. I
knew it was going to be busy.

KAILEN

We did exactly what we were intending to do, Aurelie. We let the
Unseelie find us.

AURELIE

Not exactly what we thought we'd get when they found us though right?

KAILEN

No... no it's not..

AURELIE

So, have you had enough time to think?

KAILEN

No. But we should go anyway.

SFX: Walking back

NYX

So Kailen. What's the plan here?

KAILEN

We'll go with you Unseelie.

SHELBY

You're shitting me.

DOMINIC

Is that the wisest choice here?

AURELIE

Yes, it is Dominic. You want to find the truth. They have it. So we
go and get it.

KAILEN

Shelby, make sure he's telling the truth

SHELBY

Gladly.

SFX: footsteps . some magic happens here (maybe some magic ringing)

SHELBY

Unseelie, You're going to answer my question honestly. Ok?

GREGOR

I will answer your question honestly

SHELBY

Are you telling the truth? You mean no harm to Aurelie?

GREGOR

I mean no harm to Aurelie. What I have said is the truth.

SFX: magic stops

SHELBY

Looks like it's true, cap.

KAILEN

Ok then.

GREGOR

Neat trick darlin'

SHELBY

Bite me.

NYX

So we're going?

KAILEN

Yes

GREGOR

Glad to hear you all came to your senses.

KAILEN

Make no mistake, Unseelie. If we even so much as sense any traps or tricks, we will kill you where you stand. Do you hear me?

GREGOR

Wouldn't have it any other way, buddy.

SHELBY

We're seriously doing this?

KAILEN

Yes.

DOMINIC

Going with him... to the Unseelie's den.

AURELIE

We have to.

NYX

I hope you're right about this, Kailen.

KAILEN

Me too, Nyx.

GREGOR

Right then.. Let's go.

SFX: walking

AURELIE

Where do we go?

GREGOR

That's for me to know...

SHELBY

And us to never find out .. right.

GREGOR

No.. I was going to say.. That's for me to know and you to be shocked by. Don't judge a book by it's cover, darling. You've got to read it first.

SHELBY

Call me darling again and you won't have eyes left to read anything.

GREGOR

Come, come. We have to make a stop first.

KAILEN

No. No stops.

GREGOR

I told my friend I'd grab him on our way home. He's been up here for a while keeping an eye out for you, Aurelie. We can't leave him here.

SHELBY

The hell we can't.

GREGOR

He comes with us. You'll still outnumber us.

AURELIE

How do you Unseelie blend in with the humans? With your eyes and your scars.

GREGOR

Ah you noticed those did you? (laughs) They make these things called colored contacts. And recent generations of Unseelie don't have as many scars. Mine are on my arms and torso. But left my perfect face alone. Flax has got 'em bad all over and up on his face. But the new guys have 'em on, like, their forearms or their hands. Places we can hide pretty easily.

DOMINIC

You've adapted?

GREGOR

Not adapted. The scars were the product of your precious King Easton banishing us to Earth without Inhalators for no reason. We weren't equipped to survive. Each generation the damage gets weaker. He was angry that we didn't want to follow him like lost little sheep.

DOMINIC

The King had perfect reason to want to send you away. You were spewing hate about his reign! And you attacked castle guards and the King on that day! It was your own evil ways that marred you!

GREGOR

Where'd ya learn all that?

DOMINIC

It's in every book I've ever read on the subject.

GREGOR

And those books were written by?

DOMINIC

Top LaFresian scholars and historians

GREGOR

LaFresian.

DOMINIC

What?

GREGOR

History is written by the victors, Dominic.

(a long pause)

DOMINIC

How did you know my name?

GREGOR

You're not the only one who does research.

KAILEN

Where is this friend of yours?

GREGOR

Right up ahead.

AURELIE (whispered)

Kailen.. We're close to..

KAILEN (whispered)

I know.

GREGOR

And voila. Give a minute and I'll go inside and get him.

NYX

What are we doing here?

GREGOR

This is where my friend has been hiding.

SHELBY

This is our building.

AURELIE

How did you know?

GREGOR

We are good at what we do, Aurelie.

SFX: door opening.

COLTON

About damn time. I'm tired of wearing this tie.

DOMINIC

Colton?! You're a...

COLTON

An Unseelie.

DOMINIC

How?

GREGOR

You see when a Mommy Unseelie and a Daddy Unseelie fall in love...

COLTON

Gregor. Enough. (pause) I didn't want to lie to you. But I was under orders to watch and not engage.

GREGOR

You still engaged quite a bit though.

COLTON

Shut up, Gregor.

AURELIE

But you didn't see us when we were shielded.

COLTON

Of course I did. It's called acting.

DOMINIC

You...

COLTON

I am not your enemy, Dominic. I promise.

GREGOR

Alright love birds. Let's get to the camp.

NARRATOR

Gregor and Colton led the guard through the city a few blocks. The crowds had begun to slightly dwindle. Kailen stood at the back of the group, his jaw tight as they turned into an alley.

KAILEN

What's this?

GREGOR

Well we can't all have our gates in fairy bridges and hundred year
old oak trees.

COLTON

Yeah, our gates are more like dumpsters and graffiti covered walls.

SHELBY

Great.

GREGOR

Right this way. So. Dominic. I hear you're well versed with portals.

Would you like to do the honors?

DOMINIC

Me? But why? Can't you do that?

COLTON

We can.. But we figured you'd want to control it if you could.

GREGOR

No funny business here.

DOMINIC

Captain?

KAILEN

Ok, Dom. You can do it.

NARRATOR

Dominic began rolling his sleeves as he approached the brick wall in front of them. He glanced back towards Kailen who gave him a slight nod. Closing his eyes, Dominic places his palms flat on the wall.

GREGOR

Down we go.

NARRATOR

The wall began emitting a bright red light under Dominic's hands. And the light spread until the wall caved in on itself, vanishing in the bright Illumination. Kailen grabbed Aurelie's hand and gave it a squeeze. Shelby and Nyx took tentative steps to the edge of the portal. They each took deep, steadying breaths and followed Colton and Gregor into the light.

SFX: Portal sounds, travel to the Unseelie world music. Mysterious,
but not frightening.

AURELIE

I really do not like that...

COLTON

(deep inhale) Ahh home. I've missed you!

GREGOR

Welcome to Beneath.

NARRATOR

Aurelie glanced around her. It seemed that they were inside a large cavern of earth. The ceiling of dirt was dotted with chandeliers of emerald fire. There were several smaller cave passages that led in different directions from the room they were in.

AURELIE

So this is the Beneath?

COLTON and GREGOR

(laugh)

COLTON

No, this is the Portal room.

NARRATOR

Colton and Gregor led the group down one of the nearest passages.

They walked for a few hundred yards, the passage was lit by the occasional torch of the same Unseelie fire. Aurelie felt Kailen's balled fist brush hers a few times. She watched him out of the corner of her eye and saw just how tense he was. His eyes darted around from side to side, behind them. Above them. His mind was running a million miles a minute.

AURELIE

We're ok, Kailen.

NARRATOR

Kailen nodded slightly in her direction but did not respond. Just ahead, the passage ended at a large dome the size of nearly 10 football fields Aurelie estimated. The ceiling of earth stood taller than many skyscrapers in her beloved NYC, and it was also decorated with the same large chandeliers of light. Below them on the ground of the cavern stood thousands of buildings, winding streets through a bustling town.

GREGOR

This is the Beneath.

DOMINIC

How is this possible? We thought most of you died out.

COLTON

No, but we just got tired of dealing with the scouts LaFresia kept sending so we don't leave unless we have to. You thought we died out, we just found our own world.

SHELBY

We can see that.

DOMINIC

How many of you are there?

GREGOR

Jeez. Ya know we missed our last census. But thousands at least.

DOMINIC

You have your own world..

KAILEN

And we suddenly became very outnumbered.

AURELIE

It's ok, Kailen. I promise.

GREGOR

She's right you know. We're not going to hurt you. Flax needs to see you. As far as we're concerned you are his personal guests.

SHELBY

That's the truth. Or he thinks it's the truth at least.

AURELIE

Are we going to meet him?

FLAX

Actually he's coming to meet you.

SHELBY (startled)

Shit!

DOMINIC

Oh my Gods..

NYX

Flax Rathmore.

FLAX

That's me.

NARRATOR

Standing behind the guard was a tall gentleman with broad shoulders and unsettling deep red eyes. His long black mane was slicked back behind his ears. His bare torso was decorated with deep pink and

purple scars that spanned down his arms to his hands and up his neck and covered the entire right side of his face. He wore a deep red sleeveless cloak that hung open in the front and landed just above his knees. His legs covered in dark pants and his eyes were scanning Aurelie. He smiled and bowed his head slightly.

FLAX

Aurelie. Lovely to see you again.

AURELIE

Flax.. or should I say Mazus.

FLAX

Ahh yes. My middle name. When I introduced myself to you on the phone, I wasn't sure how much your parents had told you. I figured I should play it safe.

AURELIE

Are you a police officer all the time or just when you're stalking me?

FLAX

(laughs) The guise of law enforcement gives one a lot of connections in the mortal plane.

AURELIE

So. This one here tells me you have proof that you are not the person
that killed my parents.

FLAX

Depends on how much evidence qualifies as proof to you.

AURELIE

That's a pretty bullshit answer.

FLAX

Agreed. But it's the answer I have. Come with me. We will find a more
private place to talk. While the Unseelie here are non-violent, they
take time to warm up to LaFresians like yourself.

NYX

How long have you had this place?

FLAX

At least the last 50 Earth years.

DOMINIC

Do you have a book of your history here?

FLAX

Of course we do. You're welcome to read it. Gregor and Colton can
show you when we have finished our discussion.

DOMINIC

I can find it myself actually. If you'd let me?

FLAX

what do you mean?

NARRATOR

Dominic closed his eyes and muttered a spell under his breath.

SFX: magic ringing

NARRATOR

A few moments passed and suddenly a book came wheezing through the air from the city below and landed in Dominic's hands.

FLAX

My my.. You are all quite gifted, aren't you? Please. Keep that copy. It's refreshing to hear of a LaFresian who wants to hear our side.

NARRATOR

Flax led the group into a smaller, abandoned looking building on the outskirts of the town. Inside, a small framed Unseelie sat on a desk in the center of the room.

AURELIE

Rey?

REY

Elie!

AURELIE

Wait.. Don't..

REY

Elie, I'm so sorry I never told you the truth. It wasn't safe for anyone to know what I was. Well, except for your parents.

AURELIE

How did that even happen, Rey? How did my parents go to Earth to kill Unseelie and end up living next door to one?

REY

We were actually hunting the same Unseelie.

NYX

Excuse me?

DOMINIC

You were hunting your own kind?

REY

You do the same.. The guard governs the citizens of LaFresia. My
organization governs the Unseelie.

SHELBY

So you were hunting a criminal?

REY

I was. But your parents found him first. After a tense standoff and a
long conversation.. They, well they believed me and let me go. I
brought the criminal back here to the Beneath for proper punishment.

AURELIE

They let you go?

REY

They were good judges of character. They knew I wasn't like the
rogue. They trusted me.

DOMINIC

But the Sharps sent letters after they found and killed 10 different
Unseelie assassins.

REY

Your parents never killed anyone. They helped me govern the Rogues, any Unseelie that committed crimes against mortals. I was always in charge of punishment. But they couldn't exactly write that in their letters to LaFresia.

SHELBY

So how did you end up living next door?

REY

Well. Flax needed a man on the ground on Earth, to keep watch of our gates and ensure that no other rogues caused mortals havoc. Luke and Violetta were part of my team. We worked together.

FLAX

Your parents eventually became our friends, Aurelie.

AURELIE

How?

SFX: Flashback

LUKE

You'll have to excuse us, Mr. Rathmore. But we are still wary of Unseelie, especially the original Unseelie.. We thought you had died.

I mean no one has heard word of you since ...

FLAX

Since your King Easton banished us?

LUKE

Well...

FLAX

We chose not to follow his rule, and he chose not to let us live a free life. We were a threat to his reign. So he tried to eliminate us.

VIOLETTA

That doesn't sound like Easton. He sent you away because of the crimes you committed in LaFresia.

FLAX

Of course it doesn't sound like him to you. He has a carefully crafted facade. And his two sons were not much different.

LUKE

What do you know of the King's sons?

FLAX

I know that the younger one has taken the throne now, Arsen, I believe, and the one who seemed like he had any actual sense disappeared before he could do anyone any good, leaving the kingdom to ruin.

LUKE

I'm sure that wasn't his intention.

FLAX

Intention does not mean a thing in reality.

VIOLETTA

Easton was a tough ruler, but his son Arsen is a just ruler and will do a wonderful job as the new leader.

FLAX

Will he open the gates for us to return to LaFresia?

LUKE

The people of LaFresia won't allow it. They're afraid of what you've done.

FLAX

And what is it that you think we've done?

VIOLETTA

The fires in town, the attack on the castle. The Assassination of
Easton.

FLAX

We did not kill your precious King.

LUKE

What do you mean?

FLAX

We rejected the throne. So we were enemies of the Kingdom. Easton
informed us of his plan to banish us long before the fires in town
began.

VIOLETTA

So you did not cause the fires?

FLAX

I didn't say that.

LUKE

So what are you saying?

FLAX

We were branded the villains. So we became them.

LUKE

Easton would not have made such a declaration without just cause.

FLAX

Oh he had just cause... He knew we could dethrone him. We were powerful, fire-harnessing fae, and our numbers grew every day with other citizens who were fed up with his reign of terror and oppression. He sent word of his declaration, so we set a few fires to send him a message as well.

LUKE

Did you kill my father?

FLAX

No matter what your history books say. We never set foot in the castle that night. And we did not kill Easton. We were half way through the portal to Earth by then.

VIOLETTA

I can't believe Easton would banish you like that. Luke, do you think Arsen knew about this?

LUKE

No! My brother is an honorable man, he wouldn't be a part of this.

FLAX

Brother?

LUKE

I didn't ..

FLAX

You are the lost son aren't you?

LUKE

I... I am.

VIOLETTA

Please do not tell a soul.

FLAX

Why did you disappear?

LUKE

My father told me I had to choose. Between the throne and.. Love.
Arsen helped Violetta and I hide. So we could live a normal peaceful
life together.

FLAX

Ah.. But then when you heard of his passing why did you not return to
take your rightful place?

LUKE

You have to understand. My father was a ruthless man. He wanted so much from me and most times I wasn't able to give what he required.

My brother was much more suited for that line of work.

FLAX

A shame. LaFresia could have benefitted from a ruler such as yourself.

LUKE

And maybe one day it will. But for now.. We stay here. We will help you stay hidden from any LaFresian guards. Your new world is safe with us.

FLAX

Thank you. Your Majesty.

LUKE

But I do ask one thing in return.

FLAX

Anything.

LUKE

If you are not the one who killed my father.. Please help me find out who did.

SFX: Out of flashback

AURELIE

You knew about who my father was?

FLAX

Yes I did.

GREGOR

What the heck? You didn't tell me?

FLAX

Well that's because you can't keep a secret.

GREGOR

Can too.

COLTON

You ruined Ripley's Surprise party last year.

GREGOR

How was I supposed to know it was a secret?

COLTON

Because that's what surprise means!

DOMINIC

So you had nothing to do with King Easton's assassination?

REY

Of course we didn't! We wanted him dethroned, not killed.

GREGOR

We wanted the end of the monarchy.. But we wanted it legally.

FLAX

We were on our way out of LaFresia, Easton had guards leading us away
at the time of the murder.

NYX

If there were guards escorting you at the time, you have an alibi.

SHELBY

Yeah, why didn't the guards speak up about it?

COLTON

Apparently the guards that were escorting the Unseelie out.. Are also
the ones that were found dead in the castle later that same day.

GREGOR

Dead men tell no alibi.

FLAX

We were framed then.. And it's happening again now.

AURELIE

My parents.

FLAX

We would never hurt them.

AURELIE

They kept you safe?

FLAX

They would send.. Altered reports back to the guard. They helped Rey govern Unseelie, and just like every race, we are bound to have a few criminals. When they caught one, they told you in their letters. But what they didn't tell you was that we were in charge of their punishment. Over the years they came to trust us. And us them. We were all incredibly saddened to hear of their passing.

AURELIE

Why did you come to question me about them?

FLAX

I needed to know what you knew. If they told you, or if you didn't believe. If you knew anything about who might have done this. And why they framed us.

GREGOR

We didn't burn your house, Aurelie. We loved your parents.

FLAX

I made a promise to your father to find out who killed his father all those years ago. Today I make the same promise to you. And this time I intend to keep it.

SFX: End of Episode

ANNOUNCER

Thank you for listening. Today's episode was written by Nicole Tuttle and edited by Mariah Clawson, and featured the vocal talents of Nicole Tuttle, Micheal Porteus, Emily Buza, Ace Corsaira, Wes Haas, Mike Crawford, Mariah Clawson, Griffin Coldiron, Zachary Robb and Liza Holmes. This episode was edited by Brad Colbroock, Mariah Clawson and Griffin Coldiron and featured the music of John Bartman and I'm Sophia DeRise. Want to stay up to date on

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