

The Moon Crown

Message Six Transcript

Hands of Time

INTERRUPTING BROADCAST with SFX:

Tuning, fast ticking played over the (at present) oldest sound in recording history, an 1860 rendition of “Au Clair de la Lune”. Tuning. A music box version of Au Clair de la Lune plays in reverse, interrupted by a tape recorder button clicking.

LOU, over static:

Hey, little recorder... We haven't spoken in some time, so I thought, I'd say hello.

LOU and LAMB in tandem:

Hello.

LOU, over static:

Once again, I don't even know where to begin. They can tell me it's fine, that maybe it was just a sleepwalking hex, but I know that I've lost everyone's trust.

And I can't even blame them.

And I have no idea what happened.

No.

[I guess]

I guess right now,

[I'd be lying]

I'm lying.

[To both of us.]

To both of us.

I do have some idea. Some sense of what happened? But not fully.

[I tell myself]

I remember bits and pieces of what makes Pierrette, my "ghost", tick. But the details are dreamlike. Though it's not always like that. Not always dreamlike, and not always like it's someone else entirely.

So, yes. Recorder... Or future me, I guess? If you're thinking, or rather, if you're remembering, that I haven't really left this room much lately, except to pick up books and maybe destress with a drink or two... You're right.

I keep thinking about why we're here.

[Why we're here.]

About why we're even running.

[Why we're running.]

I can't believe I dragged the three of them into this mess... Especially Chess... I mean, yes, I know I've really — just — my “friendship” with Henrik? If you can call it that? Tenuous. Tenuous at best. And then her? Tala? We barely even talk.

But I can't stop thinking about why we're here. About why we started running. It's um.. I think about Chess. He's always doing as much as he can for everyone, and I... You know, it makes me want to be better, I guess? It's always been that way with us. Right from the day we met.

LOU, laughing, over static:

It's been a while since I'd thought about that. Chess and I met through one of The Academy's weekend markets, they sold those liminal artifacts - the ones that are pretty much useless? Well, he was looking at these old records, he likes the ones labeled “classical”? Which makes them REALLY ancient. But I was there picking up some pieces for Arnel, and we...

Arnel...

I had credit for those markets. From working through the academy.

He really... He liked these kinds of things. Recorders. Transmissions. Radios.

If I had just gone alone to find him — well, I'd probably be dead. But I wish..

I can't help but go over, over and over and over, why we're here.

[Why we're here.]

Why we even had to leave. Why we're running.

[About why we're even running.]

I tell myself,

[I remember bits and pieces.]

I only remember bits and pieces. And at one point, that was true.

But, now... After the letters? The messages? I guess...

[I guess,]

I'd be lying, if I said that. To both of us.

[To both of us.]

To all of us, if I said I don't know what's happening to Henrik, and where this new beast came from.

Honestly, I don't even know where to begin.

“Au Clair de la Lune” begins to play, along with a slowly ticking clock

Huh. Pretty. Is Dad playing that? What time is it?

A single tick of the clock plays at the “t” in time

LOU, sighing:

Oh, FUCK, the ruins! I should’ve left twenty minutes ago—

LOU closes a door as crying rises around her.

A voice says, "Open the door, OPEN THE DOOR".

A creature growls and she begins running, stopping briefly.

LOU:

Second moon is that way - Wait. Where is the third moon?

A roar from a Stalker.

LOU:

Shit! Second moon is that way - which means - they're... This way!

LOU's steps continue on as she enters a forest.

The crying fades as her footsteps go on.

HENRIK:

You're a bit late. We were about to leave.

LOU:

Not my fault that it's a fucking task to get down here.

HENRIK:

Well, then, I'm glad you made it. It's up ahead.

Steps, climbing through dense woods.

LOU:

Shit, something's out there.

HENRIK:

Relax, it's just Chess.

Breaking branches, trickling water splashing underfoot.

LOU GASPS, steps halt.

HENRIK:

What is it? What's wrong?

LOU:

Ah... Spider. Sorry.

HENRIK laughs

LOU:

Oh, you think that's funny?

HENRIK, *still laughing*:

Come on.

HENRIK [**distorted**] :

Lou?

All sounds drop off.

LOU:

Have there always been two moons? I feel like that's not right. No, Henrik, we've been here before - no, we've been to the ruins, we already found that new creature - you were inf-

Sorry... I don't know what's going on with me.

HENRIK:

What kind of question is that? This way, quietly now.

Sounds of the forest slowly return, along with footsteps.

CHESS:

Careful, the cobble's slippery.

LOU:

I should have brought the crowbar.

HENRIK:

I really don't think so.

LOU, laughing:

You sure?

HENRIK:

That is MORBID, Lou!

LOU:

Oh, what in Bathala's — *This* is the nest?

CHESS:

I know. Weird, isn't it?

HENRIK:

Am I... Missing something?

LOU:

Chess and I used to volunteer... er - Well, we chaperoned little kids on trips out here. So, what is this place?

HENRIK:

Whatever it is, it's older than me.

Twinkling ringing.

LOU:

What's this, a necklace?

CHESS:

Wear it. And don't lose it. When we get in there, you gotta listen, alright? If I say run, then you run.

LOU:

Oookay? Hey... Chess? Do you think there's a chance we might die in there?

CHESS:

Shhh. Not in front of Henrik. He might eat us!

LOU:

Really?

HENRIK:

I *can* hear you.

A gate creak.

Flint hits wood, sparking as a small fire blooms.

HENRIK:

Ready?

CHESS:

Want me to go in first?

HENRIK:

Look, I know you can handle yourself, but let me lead. For now.

HENRIK jumps down through a collapsed floor.

HENRIK, *echoing*:

Throw it down!

Fire from a torch, getting quieter as it falls.

HENRIK:

Got it!

LOU:

Hey, wait! Dammit, Chess - just because Henrik-

Clothes rustling, followed by wind rushing, and a wet thud.

LOU:

FUCK.

HENRIK, clapping:

Graceful. Elegant. A perfect ten from the judges. And the crowd goes *wild!*

LOU, laughing:

Fuck off.

Three pairs of wet steps as they explore the halls leading to the basement. A low growl, steadily growing louder.

CHESS:

Lords, *what* is that smell?

The growl continues to rise from a distance.

Chess runs into Henrik.

HENRIK:

Get her back up top.

LOU:

AGH! What the hell, Chess?! What is all this?

LOU:

Silphidae..? Carrion - Beetles? I—I've read about these, at work.
Chess, I've only seen these referenced in relation to corpses.

CHESS:

Don't touch the fungus.

HENRIK:

Go. NOW.

LOU:

It's building something... Out of bodies...

CHESS:

Wait, something's still alive in there.

LOU:

Agh, my head... Why do I feel like I've heard you say that before?

Chess fumbles around a bag for paper scrolls, dropping them.

CHESS :

Shit!

HENRIK :

This is not the time!

CHESS [**distorted**] :

But I can help them. I can deal with the dead, but I should learn how to work with the living, too.

LOU :

Oh, SHIT-

A torch clatters on the floor.

Henrik runs as a growl and the sound of wings flapping rises.

HENRIK :

Listen to me. Quiet.

A high ringing as LOU's necklaces activates.

LOU chokes for air and HENRIK rips the necklace off and throws it.

CHESS :

Why did you take it off of her?!

HENRIK :

It was reacting to something!

CHESS :

I've got you. Up. Up.

A low roar, rumbling, as if the ground and walls are shifting.

HENRIK :

Fuck, fuck, fuck! Do you have alum with you?!

CHESS :

Y-yeah, here.

I've only got one vial of blood on me, but I think it's enough.

HENRIK :

I hate this.

HENRIK roaring as the rumbling, chunks of stone are crumbling around them.

CHESS [**distorted**] :

Enough! Run, Lou. **RUN.**

HENRIK hyperventilating and roaring again

The walls crack and the ruins rumble. A creature clicks and growls.

CHESS :

Not us, you idiot!

Something squelching, as if flesh is being sewn together.

LOU :

Fuck, no, not another— Wait, Chess, is that a... Manananggal?

CHESS :

Yep.

HENRIK roars

LOU :

Henrik?!

CHESS :

ENOUGH.

LOU:

Hold on, stop! Let go - we can't just abandon him!

CHESS:

We can't do anything either way.

This place could collapse on us.

LOU:

They could kill him!

CHESS:

She's helping him.

LOU hisses in pain

CHESS:

Hold onto me, okay?

LOU:

Chess, is.. Is Arnel in there?

CHESS [**distorted**]:

Does it matter? I mean — I'm sorry... I don't know.

LOU:

I can't... I can't even tell one body apart from the others.

CHESS:

See you soon, Henrik.

Quit it! We need to go.

LOU:

We will.

CHESS:

Don't you dare. Stop!

LOU:

You think I'm letting Arnel rot in there?

Fuck that. Fuck ALL of this!

CHESS:

Fine. Slow down. If we're going to do this, we do it right.

Sounds drop off, until there's only a slight rumble.

CHESS, casting magic [**distorted**]:

In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni.

A fire bursts as the creature lets out a scream. Footsteps.

HENRIK, out of breath:

I think we got it! Where's Chess - Where are you going?

LOU:

It's not enough. Nowhere near enough.

HENRIK, out of breath:

What do you mean?!

LOU:

You didn't kill it.

HENRIK:

We're not here to kill anything! I only went up against that thing...
You two were supposed to get to safety!

LOU (?) [**distorted**] :

It's fine. I'll take **care of it**.

Stone grinding across stone.

HENRIK:

LOU!

Static, radios glitching, footsteps.

LOU (?) [**distorted**] :

You think you're getting away. Get. Back here.

A heartbeat as LOU's steps quicken, sounds rise, becoming more chaotic as a creature growls and moans, its heavy footsteps growing near, then farther, and close again. Static shifts from left to right, getting faster with each shift. Lou laughs between her controlled breathing.

***LOU inhales sharply** and stabs the creature repeatedly as the sounds continue to rise around her. A steady heartbeat grows louder.*

HENRIK:

Good GOD - what - are you doing?! Lou... Why are you looking at it like that?

LOU (?) [**distorted**] :

Like what?

HENRIK:

You... Butchered it...

All sounds drop away as a clock continues to tick.

LOU (?) [**distorted**] :

I have experience.

LOU :

Chess? CHESS?!

CHESS :

Right here.

HENRIK :

I'm *so sorry*.

CHESS :

It's fine. At least we're alive.

HENRIK :

Not any closer.

LOU :

Henrik... Why are you acting like you've never met Tala?

TALA :

Now, what are a human, a mage, and a vampire doing out here?

Hunting?

LOU:

What kind of hunts have you been on that look like this?!

TALA:

Sorry. My mistake. I guess you are not quite human anyway.

Are you?

LOU:

What? Tala?!

HENRIK:

How long has that entity been hiding here?

TALA:

Long enough. You need to feed. Are you... *Sick*?

HENRIK:

What? Don't be ridiculous. No, I'm all right.

TALA:

What about you? You seem well enough.

HENRIK:

Absolutely not! She doesn't use magic. It would be pointless.

LOU:

Henrik, it's fine. I'll do it.

HENRIK:

I don't want you to.

If you haven't noticed, I try and avoid blood lust.

TALA:

What's wrong with you?

LOU:

Henrick?!

CHESS:

What's happening?! Lou, hold his head!

LOU:

He's... he's burning up.

HENRIK:

I'm *alright*.

LOU:

Hey, you don't have to...

CHESS:

He needs to stay awake.

LOU:

I... remember this moment.

Can you... Tell me about that legend?

About where you came from?

CHESS :

Why would you ask that?

HENRIK :

You know, I thought I was going to die the last time you asked that.

Well, I've already told you as much as I know.

Except the part about the other land.

The place where they... where *you* changed us.

TALA [**distorted**] :

He means you made us palatable.

LOU :

This is so familiar. No, I've heard this before.

LOU's voice playing backwards

These experiments. They were done on a peninsula, weren't they?

HENRIK [**distorted**] :

Yes... hold on. **Why do you sound so certain about that?**

LOU :

Do I...? I don't know...

LOU :

Dad, why don't we ever talk about the peninsula?

LOU :

Maybe I read it while researching the Tambal?

HENRIK:

Oh, sure. And somehow you think we're from the same place.

CHESS:

What's this peninsula?

TALA [**distorted**]:

It's a space between the things we... Perceive.

A fold in reality, if you will.

This creature shouldn't be here.

HENRIK:

Plenty of things that shouldn't be here.

CHESS:

He's right. Let's get out of here before the whole place caves in..

LOU:

Wait, how do I get there?

HENRIK:

How do I get there? We are not leaving this town!

LOU:

I didn't say you had to come! Calm down.

Henrik, don't push yourself.

CHESS:

You're not going anywhere.

LOU:

I don't need permission from either of you.

CHESS:

That's not what I meant. Look, it doesn't matter where any of us go, or want to go. What do you think will happen when the town sees the fire? Do you think they'll really believe that we came here looking for Lou's family, that we didn't summon a new entity?

HENRIK:

Well, we thought it could be a *[distorted]* Doppelganger.

CHESS:

You may not realize this, but people who don't deal with magic don't believe ancient entities like doppelgangers still exist. They believe in the things still living in our history, our era. Nobody's seen a doppelganger, how long was it?

LOU:

At least a century, maybe longer.

CHESS:

There you go. At least a century.

LOU **[distorted]**:

This, this space between reality...

Where do I find where these creatures live?

TALA, laughing:

Where? The peninsula? *You're serious...*

Ferryman of the dead.

LOU:

And where do I find him?

HENRIK:

We're done talking. We should get back while it's still night out.

LOU:

Then we should go *now* if we're going to beat sunlight.

HENRIK:

I... I really need to rest.

TALA:

You *are* sick. How... *Interesting*.

LOU:

Fine. We'll go to my house and figure out what to do from there.

You though? I don't trust you.

TALA [**distorted**]:

That's quite all right.

I'm not sure I trust whatever you are, either, creature.

STATIC

CHESS:

When does your dad get home?

LOU:

Dawn, there's something strange. Thinking about that.

How's Henrick? He asleep?

CHESS:

He's still running hot. I've never seen anything like this.

It shouldn't happen. He's technically dead

LOU:

Chess. Listen... If we did find my brother's body-

CHESS:

NO. Don't ask me please. Please... Don't ask me.

There's a really small chance that I could resurrect him,
and I can guarantee, it wouldn't go how you're hoping.

LOU:

But you can do it right?

...But if you still love me-

CHESS:

That is *exactly* why I won't try to bring him back.

LOU, sighing:

I'll get it.

THE WINDS:

Open the door... Open the door.

LOU, sighing:

Oh, *fuck*. Sheriff Kit.

SHERIFF KIT:

Lou, you're... You're home! It's, uh, it's been a while. Actually. I, I think we haven't spoken since you first arrived here.

LOU:

What do you want?

SHERIFF KIT:

Well, some towns folk found a burnt down building in the woods. Shrine, Actually. Now I know you've been meeting, I guess you could say that right? With Chess from the Town Saloon.

LOU:

What does that even mean?

SHERIFF KIT:

Well, you've been cohorting

LOU:

Cohorting?

SHERIFF KIT:

Yes. With Chess and Henrick Preben? The vampire.

LOU:

Is there a problem with that?

SHERIFF KIT:

Only if you were at the shrine.

You should *know* summoning is illegal.

LOU:

It wasn't a shrine.

SHERIFF KIT:

Please, stop interrupting me. Oh, also, thank you for telling me that you do in fact know what sort of activities *were and were not* practiced there, and that you've been there.

LOU:

I, I don't...

SHERIFF KIT:

Would you come with me? I'd appreciate it if you did.

LOU:

Right now...?

SHERIFF KIT:

I suppose it could wait until morning. Time to shut the doors, you know? I'll be here tomorrow.

LOU:

Hold on!

SHERIFF KIT:

Let me talk. You understand? You're gonna let me know what happened and what part *you* had to play in it. Oh, and if you need any help at all, the stalkers are out to keep everyone safe.

LOU:

You mean they're... Watching me.

SHERIFF KIT:

Can't be too cautious! See you in the morning.

LOU:

Shit! We need to leave!

DAD (TAMBAL):

Okay. You want to talk about the peninsula? Lou, I want-

LOU:

What was... I going to tell them...

LOU:

Hey, little recorder. I left you on. Well, since I'm here...

I wanted to tell the three of them something, but I can't really - and it seemed *so important*. Like this sudden urge to run again. Like we were just there, back at the ruins, back when - when Henrik was first infected.

No, we were *JUST THERE!* Weren't we just there...?

Maybe I have been sleepwalking. Maybe I should tell them...

Not that I'm really ready to talk to any of them. After everything with the knife and... Pierrette Lamb.

I don't know how much longer we can stay in this place.

You know, we've been trying to find passage all this time, to somewhere *far* from everything that's happened, maybe even to the Kingdom. Anapogee. And we wouldn't NEED to be doing all of this if I just... I wanted to know so badly? Whether Arnel was really in that place. I wanted to know where the doppelgangers, where the Tambal, were building their nest.

So. It's my fault. That we found that thing.

It's my fault that Henrik's sick.

Do you remember when I told you that I wanted someone to know what we saw? Well, no, you're a recorder, so I suppose you don't. Maybe if I had just kept these tapes to myself, none of this would be happening. The messages. Pierrette.

But then what if Henrik isn't the only one this is happening to? What if more entities are being infected? What if this is all coming from that place?

It's where they changed Dad, after all.

The place where we were...

Reassigned, our family name.

The Goliath Peninsula.

Home.

The place between the things that we perceive.

STATIC

LOU [**recording** - trailer one]:

My name is, at least currently, Llewellyn Goliath.

STATIC

LOU [**recording** - trailer two]:

I can't stay, I can't go with the sheriff

STATIC

LOU [**recording** - trailer three]:

I'm looking to get a broadcast out to a friend.

STATIC

LOU [**recording** - episode one]:

I *did not* summon that thing.

INTERRUPTING BROADCAST [**distorted**]:

The moon was used,
as a reflector for tests
of the communication system.

AGENT MOLDER:

The Moon Crown is a podcast by me. M Molder.

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Thanks for listening.

Catch you next time.