Strangekind Studio

presents

KIND

Chapter Six: The Puppet
TRANSCRIPT

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ACRONYMS

SFX - SPECIAL EFFECTS
VO - VOICE OVER
VD - VOICE DESCRIPTION
TN - TRANSCRIBER NOTE

SHOW NOTES

KIND is a cinematic audio drama best experienced with headphones. For adult audiences only.

Sujin Baek is a happily married cook and caretaker for the children at Eden Orphanage. He is also the Kind Killer, Silver City's most prolific and terrifying serial killer. When his secret is forced to the surface, the city's dark underbelly threatens the very heart and humanity of all Silverians.

Strangekind Studio presents stories that subvert tropes and challenge genre conventions. We spotlight characters who are part of the intersection, including characters who are LGBTQ+, disabled, neurodiverse, and BIPOC. Questions? Comments? Contact us at strangekindstudio@gmail.com or at linktr.ee/strangekindstudio

CONTENT WARNING

KIND has potentially triggering content. This Chapter has content warnings for sexual content, emetophobia (13:51 - 14:17), gun violence, kidnapping, violence & gore, mentions of drug use, and misogynistic language.

This show is for adult audiences only. Listener discretion is advised.

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PRE-SHOW MESSAGE

JAE: Hi! It's Jae here, creator of KIND. I would like to take a quick moment to thank you for listening to our show. It really means everything to us that you have taken the time to join us on our journey.

If you're enjoying the show so far, you can support us by leaving a rating or review, or recommending the show to others!

I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our featured friend of the show, METROPOLIS. METROPOLIS is about a neon utopia located on an icy, distant island. No word ever gets out except for the very few reporters they invite. One of them is ace reporter Nan's best friend. When he disappears, it falls to Nan to discover the secrets of Metropolis. Or find oblivion herself.

Please check out their trailer and give them a listen. I know you'll love them as much as we do!

Thank you again. Until next time.

METROPOLIS TRAILER

TRANSCRIPT AVAILABLE HERE:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vzRGjpEedoOU_IsfahYVScLdu_BjACWQLUOWk_d9NUs/edit?usp=sharing

SCENE ONE: GABRIEL KUROKI

EMA: (Coolly) What are you doing?

AMBIENT: The pool room. Ciesla Estate. Morning. A storm rages outside, lashing the window with torrential rain. The radio is on - playing Bach.

MUSIC: 'J.S. Bach Cello Suite No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1008 II. Allemande' by Laura Metcalf. A quiet, elegant cello piece.

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SFX: Ema walks into the pool room, heels clicking against the wooden floorboards.

VD: Gabriel's voice is deep, monotone, and gruff. He seems almost reluctant to speak, as if to interact with the external world would imperil him somehow.

GABRIEL: Nothing, ma'am.

EMA: Taking interest in plastic house plants?

SFX: The plastic fern in Gabriel's hands rustles as he turns to look at Ema.

GABRIEL: Why are they plastic?

EMA: So they don't die.

GABRIEL: Are they alive?

EMA: They look alive. That's the point.

GABRIEL: I don't understand.

EMA: You don't have to. Has my husband been in to see you yet?

GABRIEL: No. I was told to meet him here.

SFX: Ema saunters over to the pool table.

EMA: Hm. I suppose you are to receive your first assignment.

SFX: She rolls a ball on the pool table. It knocks into the others. One of them sinks. A long silence as they both watch.

GABRIEL: My presence makes you uncomfortable.

EMA: I despise you. Does that bother you?

GABRIEL: Yes.

EMA: (Soft scoff) Does that bother you?

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GABRIEL: I don't have any feelings about it.

EMA: You're a fanciful toy. Your concept of emotion is a calculated reference. An equation. You play the part well - doesn't mean you are.

GABRIEL: You despise me and yet wish to expand our numbers.

EMA: I don't work with Puppets. I am attempting to create the perfect human. The very antithesis to a crude, ugly thing like you.

GABRIEL: Your daughter is one of us, is she not?

EMA: (Pause)
(Softly. Coldly) That thing isn't my daughter.

GABRIEL: Because she disconnected from our Master?

SFX: Ema approaches Gabriel and places a hand on his chest. She's intimately close.

EMA: (Smiling threat) I think I'll put you through another round of tabula rasa…sift out those pesky, lingering scraps of ego…

SFX: She slaps Gabriel on the cheek with the tips of her fingers three times at 'pesky, lingering, scraps of ego'. Gabriel tightens his grip on the potted plant, his leather gloves creaking.

BAKULA: Leave the boy be, Ema. Shouldn't you be in the lab, testing the new chips?

SFX: Bakula and Yvonne enter the room. Ema steps away from Gabriel.

EMA: I've run out of subjects.

BAKULA: (Chuckles) Perfect timing. Gabriel, put down the fern. Come and meet your new coworker.

SFX: Gabriel sets down the plant. Yvonne steps forward.

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YVONNE: Yvonne Birch.

GABRIEL: Gabriel Kuroki.

BAKULA: Yvonne here is one of Dodder's. She's the best of the best. The cream of the fucking crop. Consider yourself lucky, Gabriel.
I've called you both here today because we have a bit of a resourcing issue. The Carpenter's gone, which means that no more Puppets are being made. Which means, I'm running low on soldiers.

EMA: And test subjects.

BAKULA: Precisely. So, I figure now's as good a time as any to fetch a few old friends. I've let them have their fun for long enough.

YVONNE: Old friends, sir?

SFX: Bakula draws out a piece of paper. Hands it to Yvonne.

BAKULA: This one's a VIP. I want him first.

YVONNE: (Pause as she reads) Marcus Linden. The Mayor?

BAKULA: He's been getting real mouthy lately. Talking big on unsanctioned reforms. We're going to tighten the leash and induct him into the family.

YVONNE: We'll bring him in right away, sir.

BAKULA: It's a recent habit of his to sleep in on a Saturday morning. Sloppy, for a mayor. But it makes him wonderfully easy to find.

YVONNE: Unharmed, sir?

BAKULA: Not a hair. At least - not anywhere above the neck. He needs to be camera ready.

GABRIEL: You'll have him by tonight.

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BAKULA: Don't fuck it up, Gabriel. My wife's itching to put you on her table again.

EMA: (Playfully) Perhaps, you'd like to take his place, husband?

BAKULA: (Laughs) And this is why I sleep with a gun.

GABRIEL (VO): The Governor looks at Ema with an expression I can't place. There's venom to their words, but their eyes are weak. Flimsy. Beneath the thick veneer of power, the Cieslas are as vulnerable as any human. And yet, we bow and scrape and inch away, eyes stuck fast to the ground because it's easier to bend than it is to fight.

SFX: Thunder rumbles.

MUSIC: The music on the radio transitions to non-diegetic and increases in volume, playing out to the end.

SFX: A zippo flips open. The flick of the spark wheel. Flame catches. Burns.

YVONNE (VO): KIND. Chapter Six. The Puppet.

SFX: The flame flickers. The zippo flips close.

SCENE TWO: OLD FRIEND

AMBIENT: A car. Driving through the city. It's raining. Gloomy. The windshield wipers whir.

MUSIC/SFX: Jazz is playing on the radio. 'Viljan' by Bladverk Band. A cool, romantic saxophone.

SFX: Yvonne is driving. Gabriel's watching the world pass by in a neon-grey blur.

GABRIEL: (Muttering unconsciously to himself) I hate the rain.

YVONNE: That's a strong emotion for a common weather phenomenon.

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GABRIEL: (Irritated) It's a statement.

YVONNE: Are you inviting me to converse?

GABRIEL: I don't know. Maybe? Don't you hate the rain?

YVONNE: (Pause) I enjoy it.

GABRIEL: That's a strong emotion. Enjoyment.

YVONNE: The rain reminds me of someone.

GABRIEL: We were erased. We have nothing to be reminded of.

YVONNE: (Distantly. Lost) Yes, but…there are impressions. A rainy day, just like this one. A car. Old and beaten. The seats were stained with coffee. Takeaway meals. Cigarette ash. And there's music. Jazz. A door you can never step through twice.

SFX: They both listen to the music for a while.

GABRIEL: (Trying to be less of a dick) Is that um…is that a trumpet?

YVONNE: It's a saxophone.

GABRIEL: Sounds like a person singing.

YVONNE: That is the intention.

GABRIEL: (Perplexed. But curious) What else do you remember?

YVONNE: (Pause) A name. Ilana. She called me Ilana and it felt…right. Like I'd heard it before.

GIV (MEMORY): Sujin…

SFX: Pain lances. Gabriel jerks upright. Claps a hand to his head.

GABRIEL: (Shaky, mad) Your name is Yvonne Birch. It's always been Yvonne Birch and it always will be.

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YVONNE: I know, but I feel like–

GABRIEL: The Governor will use you for firewood. Or you'll get erased and lose everything again.
(Pause. He sighs)
Let's…let's just focus on getting the Mayor, alright?

YVONNE: (Quietly) You remember too, don't you?

GIV (MEMORY): My hero.

SFX: Gabriel punches the radio. The music cuts out. Static takes its place.

GABRIEL: (Coldly) Keep your eyes on the road.

AMBIENCE/SFX: Car doors slam shut as we slam cut to Mayor Linden's house. Driveway. The rain is coming down hard. Yvonne and Gabriel trudge through the storm to the front door, gravel crunching underfoot.

YVONNE: Masks.

SFX: They both raise masks over their nose and mouths.

VD: Both Yvonne and Gabriel's voices are hereon muffled from their masks.

SFX: Yvonne rings the doorbell. No answer. She rings again. Nothing.

YVONNE: I don't think he's home.

SFX: Gabriel pounds loudly on the door.

GABRIEL: (Yelling) Mayor Linden? Mayor Linden, open the door!

SFX: Nothing.

GABRIEL: (Irate) Fuck it.

SFX: SLAM! Gabriel kicks the door in. The pair stalk inside.

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GABRIEL: You take downstairs. I'll go up.

YVONNE: Got it. Remember, not a hair.

GABRIEL: Not above the neck.

SFX: Yvonne slowly makes her way into the lounge. We follow Gabriel up the stairs. Slow. Quiet.
We hear something in the distance - two voices moaning. The squeaking of a bed. Muffled behind walls. And music. 'No Apology' by Mike Stringer. A slow, grungy, Nirvana-esque song with moody electric guitars and bass.
A pause. Then Gabriel slams open the door.

MARCUS & DIRECTOR: (Shrieks/yells in surprise)

DIRECTOR: (Squealing in happy surprise - out of breath) OOoo! We've got company!

SFX: The couple pull apart.

MARCUS: (Pissed) What the hell are you doing in my house?!

DIRECTOR: (Thrilled) Is this a scene?! Oh, Marcus, you shouldn't have~!

GABRIEL (VO): That irritating person, beaming at me like they've just won a prize.

SFX: A lance of pain. Gabriel grabs his head.

GABRIEL: (Sharp intake)

GABRIEL (VO): I feel that weird pain in my head again. I can't breathe in this fucking mask.

SFX: Gabriel lowers his hand.

GABRIEL: The Governor has requested your presence, Mayor Linden.

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MAYOR: (Angry) Can't you see I'm in the middle of something?! You can tell the Governor that he can arrange a meeting, instead of sending his dogs to break into my house like-like common criminals!!

SFX: Gabriel Arthur-fist-clenches.

DIRECTOR: Oh no, Marky-Moo. I think you've made the scary man angry.

GABRIEL: You. Go.

SFX: Gabriel jabs a thumb at the door.

DIRECTOR: Moi?

GABRIEL: This has nothing to do with you.

DIRECTOR: (Smiling, coy) The man you're trying to drag away is my paramour. So unfortunately, I'll have to stay and make your life difficult.

SFX: Yvonne enters the room.

YVONNE: The Governor said nothing about leaving anyone else we find unharmed.

DIRECTOR: (Coolly) I'd like to see you try, darling.

YVONNE: Very well.

SFX: Yvonne steps forward. But Gabriel grabs her arm.

GABRIEL: Wait.

MARCUS: (Anxiously) Hestia. I-I think it's for the best if you leave. I'll go and see what the Governor wants–

DIRECTOR: Hush, my sweet. Let mommy handle this.

YVONNE: Why did you stop me?

SFX: Yvonne shoves Gabriel's hand away.

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GABRIEL: I–
(Pause)
I don't know.

YVONNE: (Sighs) You grab the Mayor. I'll handle the clown.

DIRECTOR: The 'clown'? Well, that is plain rude. Have you never seen winged eyeliner before?

GABRIEL (VO): Yvonne moves before I can.

SFX: Yvonne stalks towards the bed. Grabs the Director.

GABRIEL (VO): She grabs Hestia's hair in one hand and yanks them off the bed. It's violent and sudden and they never had a chance.

SFX: Yvonne yanks the Director off the bed.

DIRECTOR: (Cries out in pain) Ouch! Could you please refrain from scalping me?! Everything else is fair game–

MARCUS: (Panicked) Hestia!

SFX: Yvonne beats the Director, mechanically, ruthlessly.

GABRIEL : (Tense, forceful) Come on, Mayor. She's not stopping until you leave with me.

MARCUS"I'm coming! I'm coming! Oh my–Hestia!! Don't-don't hurt them! Please!!

SFX: Marcus scrambles out of bed, hastily pulls on his pants, and hurries out of the room. Meanwhile, Yvonne continues beating the Director who has fallen silent.
A deep, bassy thrum fades in. Like a violent heartbeat. Urgent. Incessant.

GABRIEL (VO): My heart's about to beat right out of my chest and I can't catch my breath, no matter how much I gasp for air - this mask, this fucking mask.

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AMBIENT/SFX: Exterior. Driveway. The torrential rain continues on. The car door slams shut. Locks.

GABRIEL (VO): Even outside, I can still hear their voice ringing in my ears like a bad case of tinnitus.
I lock the Mayor in the car, stagger over to the rose bushes, and empty my guts until I taste bile.

SFX: Unsteady footsteps over gravel. Gabriel drops to his knees. Rips his mask off.

GABRIEL: (Panting, coughing, vomiting)

SFX: Memories and snatches of moments from the last four Chapters echo and drift. The Eden crew laughing during dinner. Aya telling Sujin she loves him. The Director conversing with Kind as they wait outside Leach's office. Giv and Kind being super gay. Kind pleading with Giv in the warehouse. Finally–

GIV (MEMORY): You aren't Sujin.

GABRIEL: (Panicked, fearful yell)

SFX: Gabriel slams a fist into the ground. Something breaks. Silence falls. There's only the white noise of rain.

GABRIEL : (Panting, shaky)

GABRIEL (VO): And then, within seconds, the pain and the noise and the memories subside. Until there's just silence. A blissful emptiness.

AMBIENT/SFX: The scene fades out. Leaving a ringing silence.

SCENE THREE: IBUKIMORI

AMBIENT: Outside a cabin. Forest. Day. It's sunny, thriving, beautiful. Giant pine trees creak in the summer breeze. Birds and small critters chirp and chatter. Somewhere nearby, the gentle ringing of a windchime.

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SFX: Giv opens the cabin door and steps onto the porch. He's using a crutch and limping heavily. Wood creaks. He sits on the steps. Takes in the view as he catches his breath.

A car approaches. Slows. Comes to a park. Out steps Dana who slams the car door shut. She's carrying a shopping bag.

DANA: It's almost like we're on holiday. Shitty little cabin. Beautiful green pine trees. Animals and stuff. And that unpolluted air?
(Inhales)
Eh. I think I prefer the pollution.

SFX: Dana approaches the porch and sets down the bag at Giv's feet.

DANA: Here. Got what you asked for.

GIV: (Disapproving) These are all cans.

DANA: Yeah? You asked me to get food.

GIV: This is hardly food, Detective.

DANA: It's not like there's a proper kitchen here. What do you expect me to do? Make a meal out of dirt and rocks?

SFX: Dana kicks at a rock. She pulls out a smoke and lights up.

DANA: (Exhales smoke, irritated) Did you get in touch with Eden?

GIV: Yes, it was spotty, but I managed to talk to Maeve. After the Director's attack, they closed Eden down. Everyone's staying at her house.

DANA: How is that old queen doing?

GIV: Maeve?

DANA: The Director.

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GIV: Oh. They're doing well, considering. No word yet on the Mayor's whereabouts.

DANA: Seeing that Ciesla sent his dogs after the Mayor, my guess is that he's gone to the dark side.

GIV: It's so strange. How everyone is so…scattered. We've always had Eden. And now it's…gone.

DANA: Not gone. You'll get it back once we blow this thing wide open.

GIV: What about Olivia?

DANA: I found her phone company. Bullshit my way through and got 'em to ping her phone. Looks like she's in Jerusalem. She's got her phone switched off though, so no luck there.

GIV: It's for the best. This is the first time she's able to do as she pleases. We should let her stay out of it.

DANA: Agreed. Don't need a bratty kid getting underfoot.

GIV: As much as I admire your determination, Detective, I'm not quite sure how we're going to 'blow this thing wide open'. You know?

DANA: Kind's the key.

GIV: Sujin?

DANA: Yep. They might have gotten their claws into him, but we have you. If you can get him to defect, we'll have everything we need to expose the Governor and his entire operation.

GIV: I'm still struggling to believe it myself, despite what I've seen.

DANA: You said there were two thousand of these Puppet fuckers, right? That's two thousand cases we can present as evidence. Two thousand witnesses.

GIV: But to get to them…

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DANA: We need to get to Kind.

GIV: The Director suggested filming a message for him.

DANA: Not a bad idea. Maybe it's not all faux fur coats and cocktails up there.

GIV: I could film the forest too. Sujin always loved Ibukimori.

SFX: A pause as they gaze at the forest around them. The pine trees susurrate in the summer breeze.

DANA: I always thought this place was cursed. Never heard of anyone making it their holiday destination.

GIV: It's where I first met Sujin. It must have been fifteen years ago? In my first year of college.

DANA: You were studying medicine?

GIV: …Business.

DANA: Oof.

GIV: It seemed a logical move at the time. The white collar world was my chance to climb the ladder and funnel money back into Eden.

DANA: So what changed your mind?

GIV: Sujin did.

DANA: You don't strike me as a suit kinda guy.

GIV: I do prefer the scrubs.

DANA: So, get your husband all sentimental. Talk about your first meeting. Film the trees. Maybe shed a tear or two. If the message hits home, you'll get your husband back.

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GIV: And if it doesn't?

DANA: Then we're fucked.

SFX: Dana crunches up her cigarette butt in her hand.

DANA: It's going to work. When Ilana tried to–when she broke into my flat, she was different. Called herself Yvonne. She looked at me and…it was like she couldn't recognise me.
But…there was a moment. She hesitated. And it was only a second - maybe half a second, I don't know - but she knew me.
(Pause - realises she's getting too emotional)
(Clears her throat)

SFX: Dana claps a hand on Giv's shoulder.

DANA: (Brightly) Don't underestimate yourself, Giv. Insecurity isn't your colour. Come on. I'll crack open some cans for breakfast.

GIV: Detective…if you'd like to talk about–

DANA: I've been yapping so much my jaw's about to fly off.

SFX: Dana helps Giv up. Giv flinches and grabs his injured leg.

GIV: (Winces, intakes in pain)

DANA: Your leg okay?

GIV: Better today.

DANA: Taking on the world one leg at a time.

GIV: (Amused) I'm sorry to be an inconvenience, Detective.

DANA: You damn well should be. Want me to sign your cast?

GIV: No, thank you.

SFX: Dana grabs the bag and makes her way inside.

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DANA: I'll do it when you're sleeping. Come on, Crutches. I hope you don't expect me to give you a bubble bath. I'm not squeamish but I got rough hands.

SCENE FOUR: THE KINDRED

AMBIENT: Fade into the Kindred's commune. It's verdant life, sunny voices, and a drifting river nearby. In the distance, someone is playing an acoustic guitar. A bright, relaxing piece - 'Marigold Spring' by Daniel Kaede.

GABRIEL (VO): The Kindred. Kind Killer hybistrophiles that have become an unwieldy stain on the fringes of the news cycle. Injecting spiritualism and fanaticism into murder is as curdling as you'd expect; and people love to put a lens on the reprehensible. The Governor has 'business' with their so-called leaders - Violet and Orrin - and we were tasked to bring them in. Quietly.

SFX: Gabriel and Yvonne get out of the car. Slam the doors shut. Their boots crunch against the grass. They pause to survey the bustling commune.

GABRIEL: (Irritated) Next time, I'm driving.

YVONNE: My driving is impeccable.

GABRIEL: It's inefficient. It took us three hours to make a one hour journey.

YVONNE: And if we crash the car, it would take even longer.

GABRIEL: Did they programme the caution into you? Or is this inherent?

YVONNE: Masks.

SFX: They pull up their masks. Their voices are hereon muffled.

GABRIEL: (Dryly) Inherent, then.

SFX: They walk into the commune. The guitar and voices are louder.

YVONNE: I wasn't accounting for this.

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GABRIEL: I don't think the Governor was either.

YVONNE: Why are they dancing? Is this a show?

GABRIEL: Maybe they're trying to convert us.

YVONNE: I think they're trying to eat us.

AMBIENT/SFX: They enter Orrin's yurt. The outside is immediately muffled by the thick material of the yurt.

VD: Orrin's voice is masc, sage, and a little pompous. Violet's voice is femme, breathy, and lilting.

ORRIN: No-one is eating anyone, sister. We are imbuing you with our loving energy in an open-armed welcome.

GABRIEL: (Bristling) You're not imbuing me with anything.

SFX: Violent dances around the two, her many bracelets jingling with every light step.

VIOLET: Come, brother. Move with us. Feel the flow of our energies!
(Hums happily)

SFX: Yvonne and Gabriel exchange glances, perplexed and confused.

YVONNE: Are you Orrin and Violet?

VIOLET: Oh my! You must be a powerful receptor!

YVONNE: Recept–No, we're here for you.

VIOLET: (Giggling)

YVONNE: To capture you.

VIOLET: You cannot capture what is free.

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ORRIN: We are like the air - present but elusive.

SFX: Gabriel punches Orrin.

ORRIN: (Cries out in pain)

GABRIEL: (Amused) Not elusive enough.

VIOLET: What a fine way to introduce yourselves! With violence!

GABRIEL: You're Kindred. What do you care about violence?

ORRIN: Kind's violence is necessary. He marked us to free us.

GABRIEL: (Flatly) You beat the die and you decided that starting a cult would be the best use of your 'freedom'?

VIOLET: We are free to spend our lives as we will - we choose to spread the message of our saviour. To ensure that his work continues unhindered.

GABRIEL: You're doing a terrible job. Your so-called saviour's on the lam.

ORRIN: A mere hiccup! Kind is simply biding his time. Gathering his strength before gracing the unbelievers with his divine love.

VIOLET: You yearn for the light, but you don't believe that you need it. Or perhaps you think you don't deserve it?

GABRIEL: Spare me the grift.

ORRIN: The grift?

SFX: Orrin walks over to Gabriel. Takes his hands. Gabriel flinches back, tries to shove Orrin away. But Orrin only tightens his grip.

GABRIEL: (Growls, panicked) What are you–don't touch me–!!

ORRIN: Do you feel that, brother? My hands. They are warm. As are yours.

GABRIEL: I'm wearing gloves–

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ORRIN: (Loudly, overlapping) As are yours, brother! They call us Puppets. Sentient tools of war. What about you? Do you truly believe you are what they say you are? Or do you believe that you are more? That you have as much sovereignty as the human you call Master?

SFX: Gabriel violently shoves Orrin, who staggers back.

GABRIEL: (Pissed, threatening) Sovereignty? What can I do with that? What use do I have for your brand of freedom?

SFX: An awkward, tense silence.

VIOLET: Brother Orrin? Perhaps a walk could help clear the air?

SFX: Violet heads to the yurt entrance. Pulls open the flap. Light and sound rushes in.

ORRIN: Yes, I think so too.

SFX: Orrin approaches the entrance.

YVONNE: (To Gabriel, muttering) What do they put in this incense?

GABRIEL: (Amused huff)

ORRIN: Come, come! Brother, sister. Let us walk and talk. Maybe you will find yourself enlightened.

AMBIENT/SFX: The four traverse outside, walking through the commune. As Gabriel narrates, we can hear the illustrative audio accompanying his words.

GABRIEL (VO): The sun beats down on us as we're led around. Everywhere we look it's an idyllic calendar display. Lush green and vibrant flora. Flourishing farms. Unfathomable found object sculptures acting sentry - or maybe they're piles of garbage, who knows. Sloppy music and writhing bodies. There's a guy in a grass skirt, reciting poetry to a rapt audience - something about flying and the cosmic unknown. A group of kids playing on a makeshift jungle gym. One of them falls hard enough to break every bone in her body, but she just bounces off the ground and climbs back on. There's food too. A

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bounty of fresh fruit and colourful salads. No fires. Not a single flicker or flame. And I have the sudden realisation that I can't tell the humans and Puppets apart. To think they could blend so easily into the crowd. Immortal freaks of nature like me. And not a Master in sight.

YVONNE: (Mystified) They look so…

GABRIEL (VO): (Quietly) Happy. They all look happy. I don't know if I've ever felt that kind of happiness before.

GIV (MEMORY): Sujin…

GABRIEL: (Intakes sharply)

YVONNE: (To Gabriel - quietly) What do you think?

GABRIEL: (Whispers) I don't…

GABRIEL (VO): (Shaky) I don't want to do this.

GABRIEL: (Wavering – trying to hide his uncertainty) There's a whole commune of them. And just the two of us. We'll have to bring reinforcements.

YVONNE: Let's grab who we came for.

SFX: Orrin and Violet move closer to Yvonne and Gabriel.

ORRIN: What do you think? Beautiful, isn't it?

VIOLET: Our wonderful home is a sanctuary for the Kindred. Marked or not. Puppet or human. We welcome all to our garden of Eden.

GABRIEL: (Perplexed) Eden, huh?

ORRIN: You are both of course, more than welcome. Stay as long as you want. We know how difficult it is out there, where you are shunned for merely being born different–

YVONNE: Puppets aren't born, we're made.

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VIOLET: You can choose your story, sister. We Kindred have cast off our shackles and denounced the stories of our oppressors.

ORRIN: When will you cast off your shackles, sister?

YVONNE : (To Gabriel) I've had enough of this shit. Let's do this before I turn one of them into fucking kindling.

GABRIEL: As enticing as your offer is. We're here on business.

SFX: They stop walking.

ORRIN: Oh, dear. Look how serious he is, Sister Violet.

VIOLET: (Amused) Should we be worried?

YVONNE: (Flatly) Maybe you should. The Governor would like a word with you.

VIOLET: (Suddenly angry. Wary) Absolutely not! The Governor is Kind's foeman!

ORRIN: We'd like to politely decline.

GABRIEL: He wants to make a proposal. Maybe even clue you in on your saviour's location.

ORRIN: (Pause to digest) He knows where Kind is?

GABRIEL: Sure.

VIOLET: He is lying, Brother Orrin! He is still enslaved!

ORRIN: But look! Look at his brow! He bears the mark of Kind.

GABRIEL: The mark of what?

ORRIN: The mark of Kind!

SFX: Orrin rushes up to Gabriel - intimately close.

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GABRIEL: (Pissed, unnerved) Hey – what–what are you doing–?

ORRIN: This! This! Upon your brow.

SFX: Gabriel unconsciously reaches up; touches his forehead.

GABRIEL: (Incredulous) This scar?

ORRIN: We bear it too! The mark of Kind!

VIOLET: When Kind saved us, we were left with his mark. Those of us who bear his mark have experienced his divine love.

ORRIN: His divine mercy!

GABRIEL: (Quietly - sick) I've never met him.

ORRIN: (Hushed, warmly) Not that you remember. Perhaps, in another lifetime?

SFX: The clink of a zippo flipping open. The flick of a sparkwheel. The subsequent flame.

KIND (MEMORY): Convince me.

SFX: A lance of pain. Gabriel flinches and grabs his head. Leather glove creaking.

GABRIEL: (Gasps and pants)

YVONNE: What's wrong with you?

GABRIEL: Nothing. It's just a headache.

SFX: Gabriel lowers his hand.

YVONNE: We've wasted too much time.

GABRIEL: You grab the small one.

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YVONNE: Yes, sir.

SFX: Yvonne and Gabriel grab Orrin and Violet respectively. They drag them through the commune, towards the car. Around them, the Kindred yell at them in alarm, anger. That droning, mechanical heartbeat from Scene Two returns. Increasing in volume as the fervour intensifies.

VIOLET: No! No! Let go! I don't want to go!

ORRIN: You can't do this! You are one of us, are you not? Why do you continue to do your master's bidding?!

YVONNE: (Panting) Gabriel. They're all looking at us. And they look pissed.

GABRIEL: Keep going! We're almost to the car.

SFX: The Kindred get louder and closer and angrier. Someone throws a rock at Yvonne. It strikes true.

YVONNE: (Shouts above the noise) This doesn't look good!! Ow! Do not throw that stone at me! GABRIEL!

GABRIEL: I got this! I got this!

SFX: Gabriel pulls out his gun and cocks it.

ORRIN: No!!!

SFX: BANG! Gabriel fires off his gun. The Kindred scatter in terror.

GABRIEL: Stay back!

SFX: Another gunshot. The Kindred are panicked, screaming.

GABRIEL: Stop squirming, Brother Orrin, or I'll pick them off. One by one.

SFX: Another painful lance. Joe's voice from Chapter Four flitters in the background.

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JOE (MEMORY): …if you don't hear from me every five minutes, pick them off. One by one.

GABRIEL: (Grunts in pain)

ORRIN: (Whimpers) What-what will happen to us?

YVONNE: Tabula rasa.

VIOLET: (Desperate) They can't control us! We bear the mark!

ORRIN: The mark, yes! The mark!

GABRIEL: (Inhuman Voice, irate) **It doesn't matter anymore!**
(Normal Voice) Mark or not. Puppet or human. You'll be back where you belong.

SFX: The Kindred surges forward once more, trying to protect their leaders. Gabriel shoots into the crowd haphazardly.

ORRIN: (Screaming. Desperate) You're–you're killing them!

GABRIEL: (Savagely) You can't kill what's not alive!

ORRIN: We are alive! We live in his presence! IN KIND'S WORLD!!

SFX: BANG!

GABRIEL (VO): By the time we've got Orrin and Violet into the car, I've put five of them down. Yvonne gives me a look I didn't think she could make. Anger. Or reproach. I have no idea. But I let my finger off the trigger like I'd just been burnt.

SFX: We're at the car. Yvonne slams a fist into the car door. In the background, the Kindred are screaming and wailing.

YVONNE: (Pissed) You killed five potential soldiers. The Governor won't be pleased.

GABRIEL: (Inhuman Voice, snarling) **Get in the car and drive!**

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AMBIENT/SFX: Yvonne and Gabriel get into the car. The tires screech as they speed away.

We cut to the interior of the car. Orrin is sobbing as Violet attempts to comfort him. But eventually she too, succumbs to despair.

GABRIEL (VO): I train my gun on the two Kindred in the backseat. They slump into each other's arms, crying and shaking. Their wide, terrified eyes bore into me as though I were their devil and executioner.
(Emotionless. Cold) They really do look alive. It's uncanny.

AMBIENT/SFX: The scene fades out.

SCENE FIVE: MEETING OF THE MASTERS

AMBIENT: We're in Paradise, Leach's strip club, bought for the night for the Governor's people. Low, sultry beats. Dancers twisting around poles and floating around the club. Smoke hangs in the air like fog. Decadence and debauchery for the Silver City elite.

MUSIC: Two songs play in the background through thrumming, bassy speakers. Sultry, slow electronic music that is a little bit moody. 'Placebo' by Andreas Boldt and 'Hold Me Tight' by Uygar Duzgun

SFX: Glasses clink. Ice subs rattle. Liquor is poured freely. Cigars are cut and lit. Laughter, crass voices, and coy hums.

DODDER: (On the tail end of laughter) Now, now. We can't ream out the Lieutenant. What did we expect when we gave her that promotion? A yes woman? She doesn't have the stomach for real authority.

LT. ALDER: (Trying to hide her anger) There are officers in the SCPD who followed protocol that night–

BAKULA: Protocol?
(Chuckles)
Lieutenant, there is no such thing as protocol in my SCPD.

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LT. ALDER: (Coolly) Regardless. The officers received a call. They went to deal with it. Protocol.

DODDER: (Laughs) It's like trying to reason with a parrot. Fucks sakes. No, I believe the onus of fuck up rests upon the Captain's glass shoulders over there.

CAPTAIN EATON: (Insecure) Glass shoulders..?

BAKULA: Well, Jimmy? What have you got to say for yourself?

CAPTAIN EATON: (Grovelling) Oh! Yes, Governor. I'd been working very hard to ensure that we brought Kind in quietly as requested - however…

BAKULA: However, you brought him in as loudly as you could, you fucking peacock. The world is watching our every move and the FBI are knocking at my door.

LT. ALDER: Why don't we give them Kind, sir?

CAPTAIN EATON: Shut it, Alder!

BAKULA: What are you getting at, Lieutenant?

CAPTAIN EATON: Governor, there's no need to indulge her–

DODDER: Shut up, Eaton, and slick up this girl, why donchya?

SFX: Dodder smacks a dancer's butt and she hums a laugh as she struts towards Eaton.

FEMALE DANCER: Hello, handsome. My, look at those big blue eyes.

CAPTAIN EATON: (Flustered) Oh really, I don't need a dance–

DODDER: (Flatly, mocking) Oh, really. You do.

SFX: The dancer gives Eaton a lapdance.

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LT. ALDER: (Overlapping) The hunt won't end until he's caught - or dead - right?

BAKULA: I can't give him up. He's too useful to me.

LT. ALDER: Give them a body. We have a pathologist - Ashley Song. We get her an implant, get her under our control–

BAKULA: And she confirms the identity of the body as the Kind Killer.

LT. ALDER: Precisely.

SFX: Bakula raises his cup to his lips. Takes a long sip.

BAKULA: What do you think, Dilstern?

VD: Dwade Dilstern is soft-spoken, articulate, and has a deep, rumbling voice. He comes across as a very meticulous man who never has to raise his voice to be heard.

DWADE: I like it. It's simple. Gets the feds off our backs.

BAKULA: A simple solution for a simple man.

DWADE: Simple is clean. Unlike our current situation, Governor.

BAKULA: (Chuckles) Webb? Herrera?

SFX: Kieran Webb kisses a dancer sloppily, and reluctantly comes up for air when he hears his name.

VD: Kieran has a young masc voice that has a somnolent air. He's a typical trust fund baby who has been given the keys to the kingdom without having to work a single day in his life.

KIERAN: (Distracted) Huh? What?

DWADE: Webb. Stop groping the poor boy and pay attention.

SFX: Webb pats the dancer as he shoos him away.

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KIERAN: (Lascivious drawl) Get outta here, baby doll. I'll come find you later.

MALE DANCER: (Clicks tongue) Whatever. Dick.

SFX: The dancer saunters away.

VD: Eloy Herrera has a smooth, masc voice. He seems perpetually caustic and pissed off. It's clear that this man is a tinderbox. One spark is all it takes to set him off.

ELOY: I think it's a waste of time. You think a piece of paper is gonna stop this shitstorm? You're delusional. Or stupid.

DODDER: Watch your mouth, Herrera.

ELOY: You watch your back, Leach. Might find a knife sticking out of it one day.

DODDER: Hopefully not one of yours. The blade'll snap right off before it gets to me.

KIERAN: (Snickers) That's what you get for cutting corners, huh?

BAKULA: (Laughs) How much did the fuck up in Guatemala cost you, Herrera? Five million?

ELOY: For the last time - it was arson! Some local thug tryna be a big man. Well, I had him skinned good.

BAKULA, DWADE & DODDER: (Laughing and taking jabs at Herrera)

KIERAN: You want my take?

DWADE: (Dryly) For what it's worth.

KIERAN: I reckon we just sit back and let it play out. A shit storm's still a storm, right? And what do storms do?

DWADE: Cause immense havoc and destruction?

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KIERAN: They blow over. They end. They go the fuck away. By this time Monday, the news will cycle to the next hot thing. I heard there was a Ramirez-the-second working out of LA. I'll have my networks shift focus.

BAKULA: Kind's too precious a commodity. It doesn't feel right to sit on our hands. I want action, gentlemen. A real plan. We've worked for years trying to get him back under our control. I've shed my fair share of blood.

CAPTAIN EATON: If-if I may, Governor? We could change his face, so to speak. A bit of a makeover-

DODDER, KIERAN & ELOY: (Burst out laughing and jeering)

DODDER: A makeover? You want us to braid his hair and paint his nails too, Eaton? Fuckin' makeover.

CAPTAIN EATON: We could take a blowtorch to him. They're not looking for a scarred man–

SFX: Bakula slaps Eaton so hard, he falls out of his seat. A few people scream and yell in surprise. The club goes quiet for a moment, before resuming to party.

CAPTAIN EATON: (Cries out in pain) What was that for?!

BAKULA: (Seething, dangerous) Know your place, boy. You lay a single finger on Kind and I will have you chipped and spayed like the prissy little mutt you are. Do you understand me?

CAPTAIN EATON: (Embarrassed. Angry. Afraid) Y-Yes, Governor. I understand.

BAKULA: Leach - the Captain looks like a mighty fine footstool, does he not?

DODDER: (Smirking) Why yes he does, Governor.

BAKULA: Kick your feet up, Leach. You deserve it.

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SFX: Eaton reluctantly crawls to Leach who forces him to his knees and props his feet up on his back.

BAKULA: (Louder - to everyone) In fact, we all deserve a bit of respite tonight, gentlemen! Despite our small problem - which will be promptly dealt with - we have finally all our pawns in place.

DODDER, ELOY, KIERAN, DWADE: (Cheering, hollering, laughter)

BAKULA: (Chuckling) Look at us! Real revolutionaries! Leaders of industry! Dilstern, you've been a mighty fine asset with your 'water transportation' business.

DODDER, ELOY, KIERAN, DWADE: (Cheers and laughs and jokes)

BAKULA: And Leach! Dear Leach. Our bottomless wallet, kindly funded by Big Oil.

DODDER, ELOY, KIERAN, DWADE: (Cheers and laughs and jokes)

BAKULA: And of course, our technological wizard and reviled media mogul–

KIERAN: Reviled? C'mon, Ciesla. Everyone loves me. They call me the Funnel Webb!

DWADE: (Dryly) Because you kill everything you touch.

KIERAN: (Sneering) Sure. That's why your precious Sylvia's sitting on your mantle.

DWADE: (Unaffected) Don't be crass.

BAKULA: Gentlemen, gentlemen. We're amongst friends! Fill your glasses and simmer down. It would be a shame to cut this party short.

DWADE: Of course, Governor. My apologies.

BAKULA: Where were we? Ah. We have Herrera–

DODDER: With his five million dollar pile of ash and soot.

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DODDER, KIERAN, DWADE, BAKULA: (Laughs uproariously)

ELOY: What, you think you can have a civil war without guns?! Without me, this plan sinks!

BAKULA: (Chuckles - placating) You speak the truth, my friend.

DWADE: And don't forget yourself, Governor.

BAKULA: President Ciesla does have a nice ring to it.

DODDER, ELOY, KIERAN, DWADE: (Cheers, laughs, grovels)

BAKULA: As the Masters of our new empire, we will bring to fruition our vision of a Western utopia. A veritable playground for the elite of the elite. We will be gods, gentlemen. Gods!!

DODDER: And this is all thanks to that wooden psychopath of yours.

BAKULA: Speaking of the devil.

SFX: Gabriel and Yvonne enter the club. They get hassled by the dancers as they make their way to the Masters - particularly Yvonne.

FEMALE DANCER: I'll give you a private dance for free, blondie!

BAKULA: Unfortunately, she's on the clock. Go and grab us another fruit platter, angel.

FEMALE DANCER: (Coy) Yes, sir~

SFX: Dancer struts away.

BAKULA: Yvonne. Gabriel. How did you get on with the Kindred?

VD: Yvonne and Gabriel's voices are muffled by their masks.

YVONNE: We delivered Orrin and Violet to the lab, sir.

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BAKULA: Good! Good! Ema will be pleased. I won't see hide nor hair of her until tomorrow.

GABRIEL: (Stiffly. Cold) We found more Puppets at the address, sir. And many more human sympathisers. A commune.

DWADE: (Contemplative, curious) I have heard rumours that the Kindred were more than overzealous fans. It appears as though they truly are a cult.

GABRIEL: If you send us back with reinforcements, we can bring them all in.

BAKULA: Captain. Lieutenant.

CAPTAIN EATON: (Strained) Y-Yes, Governor?

LT. ALDER: Yes, sir.

BAKULA: I want you to raid this commune. Let's say…that you received a report that the Kindred were mixing up some kool-aid.

LT. ALDER: We'll have them all in cuffs before morning, sir.

BAKULA: This is why I can't get rid of you, Lieutenant. Your can-do attitude. Captain - I know you enjoy being on your knees, but you have work to do. For once.

CAPTAIN EATON: Yes, Governor! Right away!

SFX: Eaton leaps to his feet and staggers, crashing into the table.

DODDER: My drink!!

KIERAN: Get this fuckin' clown outta here!

BAKULA: This was a thousand dollar suit!

CAPTAIN EATON: (Grovelling) Oh, I'm sorry Masters, my apologies –
(Snaps) Alder!! Mop up this mess! Why are you standing there like a muppet?!

SFX: Bakula rises to his feet and walks over to Yvonne and Gabriel.

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BAKULA: Yvonne. Gabriel. I have a special job for you.

YVONNE: Of course, sir. Another retrieval?

BAKULA: So to speak. My wayward daughter has been spotted in Jerusalem. A debris of a town east of Silver City. I want you to find her and bring her home.

YVONNE: We'll leave right away, sir.

GABRIEL: Maybe we should join the raid on the Kindred–

YVONNE: (Sternly) Now, Gabriel.

SFX: Yvonne grabs Gabriel and pulls him towards the exit.

BAKULA: We'll have a drink once you get back! A proper welcome party! (Chuckles)

SCENE SIX: ROAD TO SOMEWHERE

AMBIENT: Front office. Hermon Motels. Fluorescent buzzes. A rickety fan creaks overhead. And on a small, staticky television, plays the news.

SFX: The door opens. A bell rings. Olivia steps inside and reaches the front counter. There's no-one here.

OLIVIA: Um…excuse–

MUSIC/SFX: Breaking news music cuts Olivia off. 'News To Me 2' by Jon Bjork.

NEWS ANCHOR (VO): In breaking news, the Kind Killer case has come to a grisly end. A shooting in the Silver City port district has led to the deaths of two people - Kind Killer suspect, Sujin Baek, and kidnapping victim, Olivia Ciesla. SCM News' Eugene Nam is reporting live from the emergency news conference, where Mayor Linden and SCPD Captain Eaton will release a joint statement.

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OLIVIA: (Softly, to herself) Oh no….Giv…

SFX: At a press conference.

CAPTAIN EATON (TV): Today, we received confirmation of the identities of the two bodies found in the port district.

The first body is confirmed to be Miss Olivia Ciesla, who we have been searching tirelessly for, after she was kidnapped by Sujin Baek fourteen days ago. Myself and everyone at the SCPD would like to offer the Cieslas, and the Governor, our sincere condolences and regret that there wasn't a better outcome for Olivia's rescue. The family has requested privacy while they go through this difficult period.

The second body has been confirmed to be Sujin Baek - our main suspect in the Kind Killer case. While this is not the vindication any of us had desired - the families of his forty one victims can rest easy tonight, knowing that the worst evil Silver City has ever seen, will never walk our streets again.

EUGENE NAM (VO - TV): Further details of the shooting have not been released to the public, with Captain Eaton citing that it is an ongoing investigation. Mayor Linden has also offered his condolences to the families of Kind's victims, and has vowed to–

SFX: A toilet flushes somewhere behind the counter. A door opens. Closes. Shuffling feet approach the desk. Bates picks up the remote and turns the TV off. They toss the remote onto the counter and sit down.

OLIVIA: (Small gasp)

VD: Bates has an androgynous voice that is void of life and soul. They are the human equivalent of the ambiguous, crusted-over stain they wear on their brown bowling shirt.

BATES: This ain't a movie theater. You wanna watch TV, you gotta pay for a room.

OLIVIA: (Snarky) Give me a room then.

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BATES: Sure. Fifty a night.

OLIVIA: Fifty? But the sign outside says twenty!

BATES: Yeah, if you're not a minor.

OLIVIA: I'm twenty-one.

BATES: You got some ID on ya?

OLIVIA: …I forgot my wallet.

BATES: Fifty bucks.

OLIVIA: What? You can't just–

BATES: Fifty bucks or you can get the fuck outta my office. This ain't a charity.

OLIVIA: (Embarrassed) I only have the fifty…

SFX: The door opens. Bell rings. Clover strides inside, her heels clacking loudly.

VD: Clover's voice is femme, friendly and lilting. She has a confident, wry touch to her words.

CLOVER: Don't be such a tight-ass, Bates. Hook my girl up. She's good for it.

BATES: What have I said about loitering in my office, Clover?

CLOVER: You said you love having me around because I bring class to the puke decor.

BATES: If you didn't bring in half my customers, I'd drive you out myself.

CLOVER: (Laughs) I love you too, Bates.

BATES: My name ain't Bates.

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CLOVER: Would you rather be Norman?

BATES: (Grumbles) Can never win with you, can I?

CLOVER: (Laughs)
(To Olivia) You got the money?

OLIVIA: (Snaps out of it) Huh? Oh! Yeah. Fifty, right?

CLOVER: Ten will do it.

BATES: Like hell it will!

CLOVER: Ten will do it.

BATES: (Huffs angrily)

CLOVER: Consider it a Friend-of-Clover's discount.

OLIVIA: Um…thank you.

SFX: Olivia hands over the money.

BATES: You're gonna put me out of business if you keep adopting strays, Clover.

CLOVER: You go to bed every night with stuffed pockets. You'll be fine. Hand me the keys before I tell everyone you've got bedbugs.

SFX: Bates grabs keys as they mutter angrily under their breath.

CLOVER: Uh-uh. Not room 4. Give her the one next to mine.

SFX: Bates tosses the key down and picks up another. Throws it at Olivia who catches it.

BATES: You got lucky room thirteen. Cleaning at noon. Breakfast in the vending machines outside. Now piss off before I change my mind.

OLIVIA: (Bewildered) Th-Thank you.

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CLOVER: (Sing-song) Thank you, Bates~
(To Olivia) Come on. I'll show you where you're at.

SFX: Clover strolls to the door. Opens it. Pauses.

CLOVER: You coming or what?

OLIVIA: Yeah, I-I'm coming!

SFX: Olivia hurries after Clover.

AMBIENT/SFX: Exterior. Hermon Motels parking lot. Day. It's empty and vast. We hear the traffic roaring past on the highway. Clover and Olivia walk across the parking lot.

CLOVER: What's your name?

OLVIA: Oliv–Renée. Renée Kuroki.

CLOVER: You can call me Clover. Or Clo, if you're feeling risque. Don't worry too much about Bates. They're a bit of a creep, but for the most part they're harmless.

OLIVIA: I'm fine.

CLOVER: I'm a good read on people.

OLIVIA: Really, I'm fine. I'm…I'm worried about someone.
(Deep breath)
There's nothing I can do about it anyway.

CLOVER: There's always something you can do.

OLIVIA: Like what?

CLOVER: Liiike. Sharing a joint with your new best friend?

OLIVIA: (Weakly) I don't smoke–

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CLOVER: Okay, okay. But you drink, donchya? I make a mean Anything Goes.

OLIVIA: (Hesitates. And then makes up her mind) Sure. Why not?

CLOVER: (Smiling) Thatagirl.

SFX: They jog up the stairs and stop outside Olivia's room.

CLOVER: Room thirteen! This is you. And that is me.

OLIVIA: I'm going to freshen up.

CLOVER: You take your time, sugar. I'll get to mixing.

AMBIENT/SFX: Olivia unlocks her door and steps inside. Once the door closes, it's dead silent.

MUSIC: 'Yesterday's Thoughts' by Heath Cantu. A quiet, funeralistic synth/keyboard piece. It's sparse. Contemplative.

SFX: Olivia pads across the carpeted floor. She drops her bag and sits down on the bed.

OLIVIA (VO): They're lying about his death. But it's weird. I hardly know the guy and just the thought of him dying feels like a hole's been punched out of my chest. I'm being squeezed on all sides with this-this pressure. This immense fear.
And Giv. I can't imagine…

OLIVIA: (Sighs heavily)

AMBIENT/SFX: We're in the bathroom. Olivia showers.

OLIVIA (VO): When I left the hospital, I ambled through the city, aimless, numb, taking turn after turn, road after road, until nightfall.
People are supposed to see the end of the road. And if they don't, they at least need a general direction to follow. North. South. East. West. Somewhere along or in between, a million choices and a millions roads. Pick one and go. Humans invented things like compasses and maps and GPS - because when they were freshly bipedal, 'lost' meant 'death'. A sudden deviation into the

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brambles of the unknown. Even those who intentionally lose themselves in the wild or the urban labyrinths, do so with a desire for answers. An end of some kind.
But that's the human experience.
What about Puppets? What about me? Do I get to see the end as well? Or am I doomed to keep walking without a compass or a map, playing chicken with the Earth until one of us dies?
I stand under the shower until the hot water runs out. When I step out, I'm as cold as I was before.

AMBIENT/SFX: Whoosh! We're outside, on the walkway. Clover sits on a foldable chair, drinking an iced cocktail. Olivia exits her room.

CLOVER: There she is. I'm already on my second drink!

OLIVIA: Sorry. I…lost track of time.

CLOVER: Wanna sit down? Here, I made you one too.

OLIVIA: Thanks.

SFX: Olivia sits down and takes the drink. They both sip their drinks and gaze out over the parking lot and the nearby highway.

OLIVIA: It's so peaceful here. I thought these roadside motels were always busy.

CLOVER: There's a few people milling about. Sleeping, mostly, since they work nights.

OLIVIA: Do you…do you work nights?

CLOVER: You don't have to be so coy about it. Yeah, I 'work nights'.
(Laughs)

SFX: Clover does air quotes for 'work nights'. Her bracelets jangle.

OLIVIA: (Awkwardly) Is…is that something you want to do, or…?

CLOVER: (Wry amusement) I wouldn't do it if I didn't want to.

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OLIVIA: (Flustered) Oh, yeah, I know. I wasn't trying to–

CLOVER: (Giggles) I'm studying to become a psychologist. Well, studying online. It's kinda hard to get to classes when I'm 'working nights'.

OLIVIA: (Surprised) Psychologist? That's…

CLOVER: Surprising? It shouldn't be. We all have our own reasons for doing sex work. I know a couple of girls who do it because they enjoy it. And power to them. For me? It's a part time job. It gets me through school. Puts food on the table. Keeps me alive - and more importantly - keeps me thriving.

OLIVIA: (Curiously) I guess I've never been in a position where I had to earn money for myself. It's always been there for me.
(Pause - realising. Then, embarrassed)
Sorry. That was such an asshole thing to say.

CLOVER: No need to apologise. It's the truth, isn't it? What matters is we're here now, sharing a drink in a dingy Hermon Motels parking lot.

OLIVIA: (Chuckles weakly) There's nowhere else I'd rather be.

CLOVER: (Laughs) Oh, you are a sentimental soul. Hard to find these days.

OLIVIA: What is it like? Your work? Do you…do you enjoy it?

CLOVER: I enjoy the power it gives me. It's a job where I only have to answer to myself. Not to mention I get to keep all the money I earn from my body and my labour.

OLIVIA: So it's good?

CLOVER: It's good enough. But if you're thinking of getting into it, I'd advise trying other work first.

OLIVIA: I don't really have any qualifications…

CLOVER: That's okay, sugar. You'll get to where you need to go. You're more capable than you think you are.

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OLIVIA: I really hope so.

CLOVER: You remember that Hermon Motels ad that went around - oh, like ten years ago?

OLIVIA: Maybe…?

SFX: ‘The Hermon Motel Jingle’ by Jaidenazakai plays like a distant memory surfacing for a nostalgic moment.

CLOVER: Shit, how did it go?
(Sings) ‘Hermon Motels, you can travel with flair–’

CLOVER & OLIVIA: (Sings) ‘Your last stop, on the road to nowhere!’
(Laughs)

CLOVER: That’s the one!

OLIVIA: I always thought it was so ominous. ‘Your last stop on the road to nowhere’. And what was with that grim reaper in the sombrero?

CLOVER: (Laughs) I dunno. But I thought he was pretty cute.

OLIVIA: (Laughs)

CLOVER: (Chuckles) Anyway, my point is. If you keep going, you’ll find your somewhere soon enough. Perseverance is the key. It’s what an old friend always used to say. Just focus on the next step. That’s all you gotta worry about.

OLIVIA: Your friend’s probably right.

CLOVER: Is that what you came here to do? Give up?

OLIVIA: (Pause) I came here to get away. I was so concerned with what was behind me, I never once stopped to think about what was in front. Kinda…got myself tangled up in brambles.

CLOVER: What are you running from? Parents? Partner? Debt?

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OLIVIA: Parents. My dad, specifically.

CLOVER: I get it.

OLIVIA: Is that how you ended up here?

CLOVER: What? Hermon? (Laughs) No! It's cheaper to stay here than it is to rent.

OLIVIA: (Astounded) It is?

CLOVER: Sure, a night here will run you anywhere from ten dollars with the Friend-of-Clover's discount, to fifty, if Bates is trying to grift you. Even then, renting out a five by five shoebox in Silver City? That'll run you around 3k.

OLIVIA: (Aghast) Five by five is nothing!

CLOVER: Right? It was okay a few years ago. And then our beloved Governor lobbied for harsher tenancy laws that favoured landlords. So, rent went up, housing became scarce, and tenants were outbidding each other for shoeboxes. It's grim out there. Consider yourself lucky to have avoided that at all.

OLIVIA: I didn't know the Governor was so…callous.

CLOVER: (Understanding) No-one wants to think badly of their own fathers.

OLIVIA: (Intakes sharply)

SFX: Olivia stands up in alarm.

MUSIC: 'Two Wave Hold Down' by Felix Johansson Carne. Warm synth/organ music that begins quiet and understated, until it swells with orchestral elements at the climax of the song.

CLOVER: Oops! Careful! You almost dropped your drink!

OLIVIA: You…you know who I am?

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CLOVER: (Laughs) No way! If you think a pair of sunglasses and a cap is a good disguise, you're not gonna get very far out here.
(Pause)
Come on. I'm not gonna rat you out.

OLIVIA: (Warily) You're…not?

CLOVER: In my line of work, discretion is key.
(Pause - Olivia is eyeing her)
Look. Sit down and relax. Finish your drink. We're friends, aren't we?

OLIVIA: (Pause)
(Wary agreement) Friends.

SFX: Olivia sits back down.

CLOVER: Phew.
(Chuckles) You just about jumped outta your skin.

OLIVIA: Why didn't you say anything?

CLOVER: I'll be real. I didn't catch on until I mentioned the Governor. Then I remembered your picture on the news. Says you were kidnapped by the Kind Killer.

OLIVIA: As of this morning, I'm dead.

CLOVER: Lucky you!

OLIVIA: I don't feel very lucky.

CLOVER: Not everyone gets a clean slate. A chance to be whoever they wanna be. Renee Kuroki, for example.

OLIVIA: They say that he's dead too. Kind.

CLOVER:Oh, I heard. Is that what got you so worried?

OLIVIA: Why would I be worried? He's the Kind Killer.

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CLOVER: You're here, aren't you? And you got his mark.

OLIVIA: His mark?

CLOVER: Sure. Right there. On your forehead.

SFX: Olivia reaches up and touches her own forehead.

OLIVIA: He shot me.

CLOVER: Samesies.

OLIVIA: You're a–?

CLOVER: Mmhmm. Puppet through and through. I used to be a Kindred before coming here.

OLIVIA: Those weirdo hybristophiles?

CLOVER: At first, the Kindred were a political movement. We harboured Puppets he'd freed. Humans, who were sympathetic to our cause. We wanted to organise and free the others. Take down our Masters. Take down the Carpenter.

OLIVIA: (Wry, slightly exasperated) You sound like him.

CLOVER: 'Him'?

OLIVIA: Kind said the same thing to me. Before he…he 'freed me'.

CLOVER: He's right, you know. We were right. Then Orrin took over. He thought the Kindred needed a leader - even though we were doing just fine without one. Don't get me wrong - Orrin's not a bad guy. But he brought spirituality into this political movement. This resistance. And turned it into a farce. It wasn't even about liberating our people anymore. It was about Kind as this deified figure. This…self-soothing that stagnated our cause. Kind became our new master - and I wanted nothing to do with it. So I left.

OLIVIA: Do you think it's possible? Liberation?

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CLOVER: Not as long as we stay content. Agitation and anger is what drives movements. But we're not angry enough. We're cowed and lashed down. No-one has the courage to make real change. Or…maybe we're just too sick and exhausted. That's how they keep us in line. Work us to the bone, demean us, devalue us, and we won't even think to raise our heads - let alone rebel. We're docile beasts.

OLIVIA: You're living and working here in spite of your master.

CLOVER: Sure. Spite is also why I'm studying psychology. If I can understand humans, I can understand their needs. Their motivations. Know thy enemy, and all that.

OLIVIA: (Thoughtful pause)
(A hint of childish innocence) You're…You're really cool.

CLOVER: (Laughs)
I just know what I want to do. And you will too. The next stop - remember?

OLIVIA: Did you figure them out? Humans, I mean.

CLOVER: So far I've learned that humans know jackshit about anything, including themselves.

OLIVIA: That's…anticlimactic. I thought they'd have it all figured out. At least…my dad seems to.

CLOVER: (Scathing) Bakula Ciesla is floundering worse than any of us. All the pomp and posteuring? He's too frightened to show his real face to his constituents, to his people. And what do frightened men do? They pick up a gun and shoot at the thing that scares them the most.

OLIVIA: (Nervous) Is that what he's going to do?

CLOVER: Word on the street is that he's got himself an army. People don't just create armies if they don't intend to use them.

OLIVIA: (Panicked) Oh my god!

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CLOVER: Let me tell you something important I learned about humans. They may be human in flesh, but that doesn't mean they have humanity. You understand?

OLIVIA: I…think so.

CLOVER: In my time working out of this motel, I've met both Puppets and humans who have been exiled and condemned by their own. I can tell you right now - they have more humanity in their pinky finger than Bakula Ciesla has in his entire body. And you? You are certainly not your father's daughter.

OLIVIA (VO): We watch the sun set over that scuffed, cracked parking lot, and I churn Clover's words over and over in my mind.
Maybe she's right. Maybe, I'm not lost, but…demeaned. Devalued. My humanity stripped away from me when it exists solely at my own behest. I can dictate my existence. I can move this world with my influence, my presence, because I'm not a soulless husk. I'm Olivia Ciesla.
I sit here, beside my new friend, sipping on her Anything Goes which tastes like sweet gasoline. And I decide to take that next stop to somewhere.

MUSIC: Quietly plays to end.

SFX: A car speeds into the parking lot. Swerves to a stop. Yvonne and Gabriel step out of the car. Close the doors as they survey the area.

OLIVIA: Oh, shit! Get down! Behind the rail!

SFX: Olivia slips off her chair and ducks down. Clover joins her. In the background, Yvonne and Gabriel speak to each other.

VD: Yvonne and Gabriel's voices are muffled by their masks.

YVONNE: What a shithole.

GABRIEL: Are you sure this is the right place? The guy seemed a little skeevy.

YVONNE: The way he was looking at me. You should have let me gouge his eyes out.

GABRIEL: We can on our way back. For now–

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YVONNE: Focus on Olivia.

GABRIEL: Why don't you take a look around? I'll go speak to the receptionist.

YVONNE: Remember–

GABRIEL: (Flatly) I won't shoot them.

YVONNE: You sure about that, Gabriel? You seemed real trigger happy back at the commune.

GABRIEL: What was I supposed to do?

YVONNE: Be creative.

GABRIEL: That's not how we work.

YVONNE: Fine. Don't be a trigger happy dick.

GABRIEL: (Beat) You take reception and I'll take a look around.

YVONNE: (Sighs, annoyed) Fine.

SFX: Simultaneously, Clover and Olivia speak to each other.

CLOVER: They yours?

OLIVIA: (Whispering urgently, panicked) I recognise that car. Those are my dad's guards. Or mercs, whatever. They suck, okay?! And they're here for me!

SFX: Clover listens to Yvonne talk about gouging a man's eyes out.

CLOVER: I dunno. That blonde one's pretty cute.

OLIVIA: She's wearing a mask!

CLOVER: (Clicks her tongue) I can tell.

OLIVIA: Clover!

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CLOVER: Cool your jets. I got this handled. Here - take my key. Camp out in my room while I get rid of these jokers.

OLIVIA: Are you sure?

CLOVER: This ain't my first rodeo.

OLIVIA: Okay. But…be careful!

SFX: Olivia takes the keys and quietly slips into Clover's room.

AMBIENT/SFX: We're with Yvonne and Gabriel, surveying the parking lot from their perspective. Clover suddenly stands and calls down to them.

CLOVER: Why hello there, handsome! Are you looking for some company tonight?

GABRIEL: (Stiffly. Coldly) No, thank you.

CLOVER: (Giggles) Oh, I wasn't talking to you.

YVONNE: (Clears her throat awkwardly) No, thank you. We are here to find someone. Perhaps you could help us?

CLOVER: Why would I wanna do that, handsome?

YVONNE: You would be well rewarded for your time.

CLOVER: I usually am.

YVONNE: Not like this.

CLOVER: (Pause) Hm. I like you.

SFX: Clover saunters across the walkway and down the stairs.

GABRIEL: She doesn't seem very credible.

YVONNE: (Smirking) Because she thinks I'm more handsome than you?

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GABRIEL: (Irritated) Because she's drunk. And she'll probably say anything for cash.

YVONNE: We don't have a lot of options. And even less time. Do you want to go back to the Governor empty-handed?

GABRIEL: (Annoyed grunt)

SFX: Clover approaches them.

CLOVER: Nice ride. Don't see many BMWs in this parking lot.

YVONNE: Can you tell me if you've seen this woman?

SFX: Yvonne pulls out a photograph and holds it out.

CLOVER: Straight to business, huh?

GABRIEL: Answer the question.

CLOVER: Hmmmm. I can't say that I have. I do love her blue lipstick. It's such a perfect shade on her.

GABRIEL: (Sighs, angry)

YVONNE: Look closer. Take a moment to think. It's very important that you remember.

CLOVER: Well, it's certainly not important to me, is it?

YVONNE: (Sharply) You'll get your money! So stop playing games and look closer.

CLOVER: (Pause. Shaky breath) Annika…?

YVONNE: (Sharp intake)

CLOVER: (Faintly) He…He erased you. Didn't he?

YVONNE: (Sharply) Grab her.

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GABRIEL: Yvonne–

YVONNE: (Shout, harsh) I said grab her!

AMBIENT: We switch to Olivia's POV. Inside Clover's room.

MUSIC: 'In Between' by Bonsaye plays. A fast-paced, anxious electro song - just the instrumentals for now.

SFX: =Olivia is pacing, panicking.

OLIVIA: (Panting, hyperventilating)

OLIVIA (VO): How did they find me?! What do they want? I'm dead, aren't I? What use does dad have for a dead Puppet?

SFX: Her pacing stops.

OLIVIA (VO): (Realising) He wants everyone to think I'm dead. So whatever happens to me - he's not held accountable. If he erases me…if he destroys everything I am and replaces me with-with his own version of Olivia Ciesla, then I'd be really dead. And no-one would know. He has the power to erase any of us - all of us - and no-one would fucking know.
(Terrified. Despairing) Bakula Ciesla is untouchable.

SFX: Outside, a scuffle breaks out. Olivia goes to the window, pushing aside the curtains to peer through.

GABRIEL & YVONNE: (Impassively telling Clover to calm down. To come with them quietly)

CLOVER: (Yelling profanities at them as she tries to get away)

OLIVIA (VO): Can I live the rest of my life, knowing what the Governor is capable of? Knowing what he could do to people like me? Am I brave enough to raise my head?

SFX: Olivia runs to the door and flings it open.

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OLIVIA (VO): (Realising) This is my somewhere.

AMBIENT/SFX: Olivia strides across the parking lot and towards the trio. The closer she gets, the louder we hear the conflict.

CLOVER: Get your damn hands off me! This is kidnapping! A felony! BATES! BATES! GET YOUR ASS OUT HERE WITH YOUR SHOTGUN! BLAST THESE MOTHERFUCKERS TO OBLIVION!

GABRIEL: (Surprised) Olivia.

CLOVER: (Gasps) Why did you come out here for? Run!!! You gotta run!!

OLIVIA: (Determined) I'm not running.
(Steely tone - to Yvonne and Gabriel) I'm here. You have me. Let her go.

GABRIEL: You'll come quietly?

OLIVIA: You have a car. Even if I run, I won't get very far before you catch me.

YVONNE: (Pause)
(To Clover) Go. And don't mention this to anyone.

GABRIEL: If you do–

SFX: Clover shoves Gabriel back, making him stumble.

CLOVER: (Panting, pissed) You're not the first asshole in a suit to threaten me.

SFX: Clover rushes to Olivia.

CLOVER: (Concerned) Olivia – Renee – you don't have to do this!

OLIVIA: I'll be okay, Clover. Thanks for the drink. Let's do it again sometime.

SFX: Clover hugs Olivia.

CLOVER: (Tearfully) I'd really love that, sugar.

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SFX: Gabriel grabs Olivia and separates the two.

GABRIEL: (Gruffly) C'mon. Don't struggle. Get in the car quietly and I won't have to cuff you.

AMBIENT/SFX: Car doors slam shut. The engine roars into life. They peel out of the parking lot.

MUSIC: The bridge before the chorus of 'In Between' by Bonsaye plays.

OLIVIA (VO): As we pull out of the parking lot, I turn around and see Clover standing there, watching us go.
Then we turn the corner. And she's gone.

GABRIEL: (Panting, verge of a panic attack)

YVONNE: You okay?

GABRIEL: (Breathlessly. Strained) Yeah. Yeah…It's these fucking masks. Can't breathe in them.

SFX: He pulls off his mask.

GABRIEL: (Breathes slowly, deeply, trying to calm himself down)

OLIVIA (VO): Our eyes meet in the rearview mirror. There's a shock. A jolt of painful recognition. And his eyes widen, go blank, like he's suddenly gone someplace else.

GABRIEL: (Sharp intake)

SFX: Gabriel flinches in his seat. Goes silent.

OLIVIA (VO): I don't realise I'm crying until I say his name.

OLIVIA: (Crying. In disbelief) …Sujin?

MUSIC: The chorus of 'In Between' by Bonsaye plays. The main lyrics are 'I find myself' that is repeated over and over. The music plays out to the end. The usual credit music plays, 'For a Moment' by Amaranth Cove.

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NARRATOR:

Chapter Six stars:

KoreHan as Gabriel Kuroki
GM Hakim as Giv Hasan
Skye Redden as Detective Dana Liu
Bree Frankel as Yvonne Birch
Athena Lee as Olivia Ciesla
Jeremy Tucker as Governor Bakula Ciesla
Shykodah-Khi McGrath or Vyxenah as Ema Ciesla
James Reece as Dodder Leach
Jay Roussouw or Jay33721 as the Director and the Narrator
Maxwell Anthony as Eugene Nam, Kindred #1, and Male Dancer
Urchids as Captain James Eaton and Orrin
Mystic Waterz as Lieutenant Cassie Alder
Aurora Ave-L as Clover
Austin Sharp as Eloy Herrera
Matt Doherty as Kieren Webb, Kindred #2 & #3, and Bates
Patrick J Delva as Dwade Dilstern
And Ransoms as Mayor Marcus Linden

'The Hermon Motels Jingle' is by Jaidenazakai
The script consultant for this Chapter is Aurora Ave-L.

KIND is produced by Madison Diaz.
The script editor is Matt Doherty.
The show consultants are Austin Sharp and James Reece.
The Strangekind Studio artists are Elias McDonald and Eva Monique.
KIND is written, directed, and sound designed by Jae-in Hwan.

The sound effects and music for this show is sourced from Epidemic Sound.
You can find the link to the full music credits in the description of this episode. Please follow, rate, and review to support our show.
This has been presented by Strangekind Studio.

MUSIC: Fades out.

CHAPTER SIX END

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