

Kalila Stormfire's Economical Magick Services. The following entry is for initiated ears only. Case Thirty: Song.

FADE IN: CITY HALL, GOVERNOR ZHANG is leading a tour of the Liminal hotline offices with local REPORTERS.

Cross talk including: "Hello, this is the City's Liminal hotline, how can I direct your call?" "Brownies are relatively harmless, just keep milk out by the windowsill every night and they shouldn't bother you anymore." "I'm sorry, but Liminal time defects are not a valid excuse for getting out of a parking ticket." "Hold on, Margie, I'll call you back, the Governor just walked in and it looks like he's got the media with him..."

GOVERNOR

Right, right. Don't worry about us, keep doin' what you're doin'. Just showin' these media folks what we've got set up here! (nervous chuckle) I did tell them you'd be here recording today.

HOTLINE WORKER

Do you need us to--?

GOVERNOR

I told you, it's fine. Are these things on?

REPORTER 1

The mic's hot, yeah.

GOVERNOR

(Media voice) As you can see, we've come a long way from the onset of the Liminal event. Our hotline operators are on call 24/7. The Grand Coven has generously offered counter-magick training for our police force, and it really has made a difference in their Southside patrols. Emergency calls are down nearly forty percent in the last two months!

REPORTER 1

Has the City considered the federal government's offer to relocate Southside residents completely? That part of the city is practically a ghost town these days.

GOVERNOR

I cannot say much for national security purposes, I'm sure your editors will understand. However, we are working closely with Homeland Security's Magick Crimes department to ensure the safety of Southside residents. We have also spent *two million dollars* supporting Southside residents who wish to find alternative living situations in the city.

REPORTER 2

What else has been done to push back the Liminal?

GOVERNOR

We are doing everything in our power to understand this unprecedented show of magic. We just don't know enough about the fae and the mechanics of their spellworking, but we are learning more every day. You might want to direct some of the more specific magick questions to the High Priest and High Priestess.

REPORTER 1

There have been reports that Grimmer & Daughters have been working with fae magick. Are they going to face legal action?

GOVERNOR

It is our job as representatives of the city to investigate any threats to the safety of our people. Anyone found endangering the citizens of Brushland will face the consequences. Now, if

you'll excuse me, I have a pending appointment.

Crosstalk of REPORTERS: "One more question", "Should Grimmer & Daughters be considered dangerous?" "Sir, has there been an update on opening the library again?"

The GOVERNOR sighs and closes his office door behind him. He doesn't immediately notice that GABRIELLE RAVENWOOD is sitting in his leather chair behind his desk until she speaks.

GABRIELLE

They have a point, you know.

GOVERNOR

(jumps) Oh! High Priestess, I-I was not told you had arrived. Um. May I-?

GABRIELLE

(cutting him off sharply) Charles. I am not here for pleasantries. There's been another protest outside the temple.

GOVERNOR

Oh, my. Well, I'm sure the police commissioner has it under control.

BEAT.

But...I can see from your face that you feel--

GABRIELLE

He most certainly does not. I'm afraid the time has come to get real about a few things. First of all, the Coven needs to be able to defend itself against defacement of our holy property.

GOVERNOR

I can ask the ward chief to increase patrols of the area.

GABRIELLE

That is not enough. The Grand Coven has the ability to protect

ourselves, Governor. We simply have our hands tied as to the extent.

GOVERNOR

What are you proposing, exactly?

GABRIELLE

I would first like to request an amendment to our institutional charter with the city. Our temple guardians are highly trained in both mundane and magickal martial arts.

GOVERNOR

Surely it's not that serious. There haven't been riots for months. You've taken care of that. And as the person who had to clean up after you? I am not doing it again.

GABRIELLE

It would not have been a problem if we had the ability to step in sooner. If you would simply give the Grand Coven a special provision to the baneful magick ordinance, we can take more proactive steps before having to involve the city and taxpayer dollars.

GOVERNOR

What about the other religious institutions in the area? If I amend it specifically for the Grand Coven, they will be perfectly in their rights to demand the same provisions.

GABRIELLE

If the city is worried about Grimmer & Daughters stirring up trouble again, there are ways to contain them. Certain... judicious amendments to

the baneful magick ordinance could weed out the less prepared covens and temples, for example...

GOVERNOR

(slightly cynical) I'm sure you have a list of appropriate regulations already?

GABRIELLE

I have a few ideas.

FADE OUT/IN to GABRIELLE walking down the steps of City Hall. Her phone rings, and she picks up.

GABRIELLE

Hello, Hector. I am leaving City Hall now. Are the...(disgust) protesters dispersed?

HECTOR

Joseph added the, uh, *flourishes* you suggested to the perimeter hex. They were certainly effective.

GABRIELLE

Reach out to the sheriff again, will you? Just to pre-emptively encourage him to look the other way during their baneful magick sweeps?

HECTOR

Did the Governor turn down the suggestion about the bill?

GABRIELLE

No, but I'm sure his hand-wringing will cause a delay.

HECTOR

I was thinking, we should probably take steps to head off the issue around public sentiment. We don't want to be seen as meddlesome, you know--

FADE IN MUSIC: DOWNFALL BY KAI ENGEL

GABRIELLE

(snappish) The only people saying that are the Grimmer plants protesting outside our door. Anyone with a lick of sense would know *they* are what's wrong with the city, not the Coven. (coughs)

HECTOR

(quickly) Of course, of course. But, I think we can *also* showcase the Coven's strength by highlighting our upcoming Beltane festival. It would provide the city with something to look forward to.

GABRIELLE

(recovering) Very well. We'll talk about it when I get back to the temple. I'm about to catch a car.

GABRIELLE hangs up and keeps walking.

SHADOW OF BRUSHLAND

You are dragging your feet, Ravenwood. After all this time, why are you so hesitant?

GABRIELLE

I am moving things as quickly as I can. I am only one person. Isn't it *you* in all your great power who should be moving this along?

SHADOW OF BRUSHLAND

We can only move as quickly as our vessel. Unfortunately, you seem to feel like there's a precipice to avoid. What is...oh. (chuckles) Oh, you pitiful thing.

GABRIELLE

That was a long time ago and hardly related to the matter at hand.

SHADOW OF BRUSHLAND

You cannot hide your failures from
us, Ravenwood. No matter how old,
their tendrils are stuck deep
inside your heart and lungs. We
feel them every time you exhale.
Oooh, especially when you exhale.
Extinguished dreams are so
painful, aren't they? Almost as
painful as rejection...

GABRIELLE

That's quite enough.

SHADOW OF BRUSHLAND

It's never enough. Not for you.
That's why we're here. We're the
only thing that makes you
feel...enough. Oh, don't pout. We
have work to do and your
ridiculous memories need to be
extinguished alongside your
dreams. There is a new dream now.
A bigger one.

GABRIELLE

You're right. Yes, I must...put
aside my personal issues. For the
greater good.

SHADOW OF BRUSHLAND

(chuckles again) Oh, no no no.
Putting aside your personal issues
would defeat the purpose. It's
time to use those flames.

Haunting choir singing begins.

GABRIELLE

What are you...what are you doing?
That-that's...

SHADOW OF BRUSHLAND

Oh, look at you. So young. So
ambitious. Even then, you needed
backup, of course. So...wanting.

A SOLOIST vocalizes.

GABRIELLE

No...stop...

SHADOW OF BRUSHLAND
Watch, Ravenwood. Let your mind's
eye see the phoenix that rises
from your failures.

GABRIELLE
I-I can't.

SHADOW OF BRUSHLAND
WATCH.

Singing ends abruptly into a choked gasp.

SHADOW OF BRUSHLAND
That poor replacement of *belonging*
to something couldn't last. You
try so hard to fill that old, old
void. And for what?

It's time to work on enhancing
your charisma through our magick.
What's the point of choosing a
human in your position if she
won't capitalize on the power in
her hands?

BEAT.

You can't make them love you,
Ravenwood.

But you *will* make them listen.

MUSIC FADES OUT.

FADE IN: KALILA's living room, morning.

KALILA
Today's date is October 6th. The
moon is waxing gibbous. Sun is in
Libra. I forgot to hit record for
the birth date and alignment
assessment.

SHADOW
Not to mention...my intro?

KALILA

Still getting used to this new format.

CHARLIE

You're fine!

KALILA

Thanks, Charlie. Um. Client name is Charlie Muta. She is twenty-four years old, a Scorpio, and an extraverted intuitive. I am recording this session and you, Charlie Muta, can rescind your consent to be recorded at any time.

CHARLIE

Acknowledged! For the record. This is really interesting, I've never thought to record my readings! You forget the details so easily after the moment.

KALILA

Yeah, exactly. Great. Let's get started. You set up this appointment for a reading and personalized tea regimen for an upcoming series of performances. Have you sought out this kind of product before?

CHARLIE

Yes, but it was a few years ago and it was basically what my friend could mix up in her own kitchen before our freshman showcase. Well, I'm guessing you kinda do that too but I heard you have more experience. I wanted something with a little more...oomf?

KALILA

Do you remember what was in your friend's mix? And how you reacted?

CHARLIE

Sure. It had orange pekoe tea leaves, orange peel, a little

lemon juice, local honey. She drew a throat opening sigil on a paper cup. Really basic. It was great to warm up and clear things out. Warm-up went really smoothly during those performances, as I recall.

KALILA

Right. So what makes you feel you need something stronger this time?

CHARLIE

Well. Like I said, this was years ago and, well...Long story short, I dropped out of college. I mean, I probably wouldn't have been better off with a BFA in Music if I stuck with it. Looking at where it usually gets people, student loans weren't worth it...but yeah. I stopped singing for five years.

KALILA

You stopped singing once you stopped your BFA program?

CHARLIE

Yeah. I, you know, had other things I needed to do to make a living. I worked most of that time, odd jobs here and there. But a month ago my boyfriend got me to sing at an open mic and well...I've been going back every week! It's like riding a bike, honestly. I can't believe I stopped for so long.

KALILA

That sounds amazing.

CHARLIE

Yeah, it...it really, really is.

KALILA

So this tea is to help with the repeated vocal performance?

CHARLIE

Um. Yeah, that and I want to start going more frequently. I met this woman--she's an event planner, works for the local theatre scene in Southside--and she said there's an audition for the headliner of a local band soon!

KALILA

Oh. How frequently are we looking at?

CHARLIE

So between the open mics, this possible band gig, and I also found this awesome nightly karaoke place near my apartment--probably four or five days out of the week?

A brief pause.

KALILA

(kindly, but cautiously) That sounds like a lot.

CHARLIE

Maybe, but it's what I really wanted for a long time!

KALILA

Absolutely. Still, even with an enchanted tea regimen, you might start getting some vocal strain.

CHARLIE

Oh.

KALILA

Can I do a quick scan of your throat? I don't need to touch, just want to see if there's been any blockages up to now.

CHARLIE

Okay. Is here fine?

KALILA

Yup. Just take a deep breath in...and out...feel the floor

underneath your feet. Be grounded
and centered.

Just the sound of breathing.

CHARLIE
Like this?

KALILA
Yup. Good. Keep breathing.

Pause, more breathing. KALILA then shifts in
her chair.

Hmm.

CHARLIE
(inhales) Is everything okay?

KALILA
You're fine. Um, just...can you
tell me about the first time you
got back on stage. What did it
feel like?

CHARLIE
It felt...it felt...powerful. Like
I had captured the entire room's
attention. I didn't think I'd be
able to do that ever again.

KALILA
That feeling...so you've only felt
it when you've been on stage?

CHARLIE
When I've been singing, yeah. It's
like the spotlight is on me, and
everyone is riveted to the art I'm
making, what's coming out of my
mouth. People come up to me
afterwards with stars in their
eyes, it's such an amazing
experience.

KALILA
I bet. And this feeling, it's
what's driving you to keep finding
ways to get on stage?

CHARLIE

I...yeah, I guess so.

KALILA

Have you ever seen those videos of the truly great actors talking about their craft? It's amazing, you see how deeply they love the craft and how much time they have put into developing their skills. But what truly gets me is the respect they have for the stage. You know they are masters of their craft because they realize it is not about them.

CHARLIE

Well of course, they have so many years doing what they love. It's the passion. They are in love with the craft.

KALILA

You know, I once had a friend who fell in love with priestessing in the same way you're falling in love with the stage again. She grew up in a religion where she was forced to be quiet, small. When she found out about this small group that needed someone to lead their rituals, she volunteered and immediately committed to leading rituals every week. If you would have asked her, in those early days, she would have told you that she was following her bliss. Later, she told me that wasn't what was happening. She never took any training or looked deep into the practice of priestessing. Do you know why?

CHARLIE

No.

KALILA

She told me that, because of her past being told to be small and

quiet, the experience of being center stage and being the leader was like a drug. She became addicted to the experience, seeking more and more of the feeling rather than respecting the role of what it means to be a priestess.

BEAT.

Do you see where I'm going with this?

CHARLIE

(resigned) I...Yeah. I think I do.

CHARLIE

I think that's what's happening with you, Charlie. You have talent, no doubt, but I think you are getting addicted to the stage.

CHARLIE

I...I mean, I respect the stage! I took classes. I spent...years learning to sing, dance, act. I did choir through high school! I know how to work with others in a creative project. I know the difference between natural talent and developing a skill over time. I've been building my skills. I understand the work involved.

KALILA

Yes, you do. No one should say you don't understand. And I think if you were given the chance to continue, you wouldn't have this addiction. But something happened. You had to stop for five years. Tell me about that feeling, the feeling that told you to stop.

CHARLIE

(deep breath) I don't know, it was like...I was told singing wasn't important. And so many other people were more talented, had

more opportunities. I didn't want to waste my time.

KALILA

Did you have that rush of power before you dropped out of college?

CHARLIE

You know what...no. I didn't.

KALILA

What changed?

BEAT.

FADE IN MUSIC: GREY DROPS BY SERGEY
CHEREMISINOV

CHARLIE

(hesitation) I did. I...I realized how big the world was, how much I needed to do just to survive. And it wasn't like I was getting big roles even then. I'm not the young, blonde, debutante type. I kept getting relegated to the choir. So I decided I should stop trying to be heard in the middle of a crowd of sopranos and just...try another path.

KALILA

What did you just say?

CHARLIE

Um...that I wanted to try another path?

KALILA

No, right before that. About being in the middle of a crowd of sopranos.

CHARLIE

Um...I was tired of trying to be heard, trying to stand out in that crowd. Being an alto is not really Broadway lead material.

KALILA

There it is. Charlie, do you know what the stage has been doing for you, that you can't get anywhere else?

CHARLIE

No...

KALILA

It is the one space, the only space, that you feel heard.

CHARLIE inhales sharply.

It's a powerful thing, to be heard. To be seen for exactly who you are. To be valued. Is that what you feel when you open your mouth on stage?

CHARLIE

Yes. Yeah, that's...(voice hitches)
I don't get heard anywhere else.
How can I? I'm, I don't fit the mold of the ingenue. The thin, peppy soprano. If no one is going to give me a stage, I have to take what I can get.

KALILA

That's so hard, Charlie. I'm sorry the world treats you that way. But getting addicted to the fickleness of the stage isn't going to help either. You need to find the confidence in your own voice, in being heard.

CHARLIE

(sniffs, bitterly) How?

KALILA

I want you to think about your loved ones. Who are the people who make you feel, even just a little, like you are heard?

CHARLIE

Um. (sniffs) My...my boyfriend.
Yeah. My...my roommate. She talks

to me about theatre. She was the first person I met in Brushland, actually.

KALILA

I want you to start writing down the people and times when you feel heard and seen. I want you to start building up that...that resume. Because you need to be heard in places that aren't just the stage. I'd also like to try an exercise with you, if you're open to it.

MUSIC FADES OUT.

CHARLIE

Yeah. I think so.

KALILA

It's a singing exercise. I'm going to sing the song first, and then I'm going to get you to sing each line with me. Okay?

CHARLIE

You sing?

KALILA

I have a little bit of training under my belt, yeah. (smugly) Pun intended.

CHARLIE

Ugh! (laughs)

SHADOW

Ugh, Kal, really?!

KALILA

(laughs, then back to business)
Okay. I'll sing through first, right? Just listen.

*I'm learning to breathe
underwater/It's quite beautiful
down here.*

*I used to think if I tried/ I
would drown.*

*I'm learning to open my mouth/Say
what I want/Without fear*

*That I'll/Chase away my
future/With the sound.*

Okay. One line at a time, after
me.

*I'm learning to breathe
underwater/It's quite beautiful
down here.*

CHARLIE

*I'm learning to breathe
underwater/It's quite beautiful
down here.*

KALILA

*I used to think if I tried/ I
would drown.*

CHARLIE

*I used to think if I tried/ I
would drown.*

KALILA

*I'm learning to open my mouth/Say
what I want/Without fear*

CHARLIE

*I'm learning to open my--(voice
cracks with emotion) my
mouth/without fear..*

KALILA

That's it. Breathe. Now;

*That I'll/Chase away my
future/With the sound.*

CHARLIE

*That I'll/Chase away my
fut--(frustrated, tearing up)
Gods, why is this so hard.*

KALILA

I know. I know. You gotta
remember, you aren't going to
chase away your future. Your
voice, your truth will never do
that to you. You need to learn to
trust your own voice. Okay? Good.
Breathe. That same phrase. Take
your time. "I'm learning to open
my mouth..."

Pause. CHARLIE inhales and exhales, then...

CHARLIE

(inhale)
*I'm learning to open my mouth/Say
what I want/Without fear
That I'll/Chase away my
future/With the sound.*

KALILA

Good. Do you want to try
altogether now? I'll sing with
you.

CHARLIE

(shaky, but firm) Okay.

KALILA/CHARLIE [KALILA'S
VERSION IN BREATHE
UNDERWATER FILE]

*I'm learning to breathe
underwater/It's quite beautiful
down here.*

*I used to think if I tried/ I
would drown.*

*I'm learning to open my mouth/Say
what I want/Without fear*

KALILA stops singing, letting CHARLIE finish
alone.

*That I'll/Chase away my
future/With the sound.*

Pause, letting the sound settle.

KALILA

How did that feel?

CHARLIE

HARD. I don't...it's such a simple song, but the words...It hit something, made me feel afraid. It's like my throat closed up.

KALILA

Good. That means it is hitting just the right place in your throat that needs encouragement to open up.

CHARLIE

There's...I didn't know I was still so...afraid.

KALILA

We are all so very good at distracting ourselves from fear. Believe me...I...I know.

So. I want you to sing this song every day, along with journaling the times you feel heard. I'll email you the lyrics, so you can't forget them.

CHARLIE

Yeah, okay. (inhales, exhales) You know what? I think I just needed to hear how much pain I still had around all of this.

KALILA

I'm glad you got what you needed to hear.

CHARLIE

I feel bad that I came here and I didn't even know what I really wanted.

KALILA

You've been separated from your voice for so long, it's always hard to recover old dreams. Just keep reminding yourself that your

voice doesn't have to be reserved
for the stage.

CHARLIE

True. It doesn't.

KALILA

I *am* going to make you a tea as
well, and this one is going to
help you settle into your voice.
You did need a tea for your voice,
a part of you was aware of that.
It just couldn't vocalize the
rest. I'll get that packet
together before you leave.

CHARLIE

What will be in it?

KALILA

What you'd expect to be soothing
for the throat--some lemon, honey.
But I'll also add something
evoking the sea. It's...okay, it's
going to taste salty. A little
bitter. You, um...might want to
take it when you have time to
yourself.

CHARLIE

Why? What will it do? What does
"evoking the sea" do?

KALILA

The sea is an archetypal symbol of
our unconscious, especially the
depths of emotion. So, the tea
will bring up a lot of emotions.

CHARLIE

Ah, so I probably shouldn't freak
my roommates out by sobbing into
my tea.

KALILA

Yeah, ideally. I mean, you might
not cry, but it might bring up
tears the first couple of times.
Once the emotions run their

course, you can just sing the Breathe Underwater song.

CHARLIE

I don't mind crying. I know it's good for me. And considering all this...realizations. Well, at least I'll know to expect it.

KALILA

The tea will be drunk daily, in the morning, and it will be set with an intention of awareness, of being heard, and of listening to yourself. Does that sound fair?

CHARLIE

Yes. Thank you.

KALILA

You're welcome. I think we are just about out of time...let me...

Recording shuts off.

FADE IN MUSIC: THE HEALING BY SERGEY
CHEREMISINOV

KALILA

This is Kalila Stormfire, checking in. This is a...personal recording, allowing me space to vent about myself instead of it happening in the middle of my case files. This is Aphrodite's...idea, she thinks I need more compartmentalization? I mean, seems counterintuitive when talking about soul integration but whatever. So. Here we go.

Update on the, uh, my animex re-integration? It's a little rocky, every once in a while it's kinda clear that my Animex is coming forward and it's not like Shadow where I can't remember or that my voice changes. It feels more like...I don't know, like I'm

more aware that they are a part of me? It feels...familiar.

It happened with Desiree, we were in the middle of a subway car, one moment I was just...me, and Shadow grumbling about crowds, and the next I find myself desperately wanting to take Desiree's hand. It was subtle, I would have thought it was just a passing urge to be connected with them. It took me a second to realize it was my animex telling me that I wanted to comfort myself. I massaged my own hand, just being okay with being in my own space, and I felt better.

FADE OUT MUSIC.

I mean, I did end up holding Desiree's hand too, afterwards. But it felt better? Less...less loaded? I don't know, this whole experience has been slightly disorienting.

(Slipping into a deeper, animex-type voice)

It's...getting to know yourself.

SHADOW

Yeah, yeah. It's overrated.

ANIMEX

Jealous, Shadow?

SHADOW

None of your business.

ANIMEX

This is part of the learning process too.

SHADOW

Yeah, but Kalila conveniently forgets is that you get her attracted to losers like Sam. When

a connection actually gets the juice it needs, it's because I'm there to make it happen.

ANIMEX

Are you calling Desiree a loser?

SHADOW

No, that one's a fluke. Kalila got all hot and bothered when we were all separated. Doesn't count. She'll break up with them when this is all over.

ANIMEX

You seem really fixated on that outcome, Shadow. I'm interested as to why?

SHADOW

Like I'd tell you.

ANIMEX

Suit yourself.

SHADOW

Why are you so invested?

ANIMEX

Kalila is evolving her taste in partnership, that means I evolve, too. No longer am I the fix-it project, I'm a partner. An adult, with opinions and ideas.

SHADOW

Kalila's already an adult.

ANIMEX

She was stunted, when we all separated. Animexis are meant to grow, to mirror the unconscious aspects of ourselves and help us better understand our journey through life. Sound familiar?

SHADOW

Whatever.

ANIMEX

What? Thought *you'd* get to this point first?

SHADOW

Shut up!

KALILA

Hmm...what was I saying? Oh, yeah, knowing yourself. And, um...something about Desiree? Shadow, if you're blocking out my memory again...oh. Recording is still on. Well, I guess I'll listen back to see what she has to say later.

End session.

OUTRO.

Kalila Stormfire's Economical Magick Services is written and produced by Lisette Alvarez. This script was edited by Gabriel Urbina. The reporters were played by David Hanna and Natalie VanSistine. Governor Zhang is played by Sam Nguyen. High Priestess Gabrielle Ravenwood and the Shadow of Brushland are played by Whitney Johnson. High Priest Hector Ivory is played by Chris Magilton. Kalila and her Shadow are played by Lisette Alvarez. Charlie Muta is played by Caroline Minks.

This episode was edited by Sarah Buchynski.

I would like to take the time to thank those who supported our final season with a tarot card:

- Dina Black
- Marnie Warner
- Jesse Schuschu
- Ayla Taylor
- Dallas Wheatley

Your reading for this episode is: The Sun. You will radiate your joy and your life through this season. Harness that energy, and know that even in the darkest of times you may be the light.

If you would also like to support the show,
become a patron at
patreon.com/kalilastormfire.

Thank you for listening.