

## **The Attic Monologues Episode 23 - A Heavy Heart**

**Content warnings:** Emotional spiralling, manipulation. References to alcohol and alcoholism, assault.

[THEME MUSIC FADES IN.]

### **MORGAN**

Planar Prod presents: The Attic Monologues.

Episode 23: A Heavy Heart

[THEME MUSIC RESOLVES.]

[MATCH STRIKES, FLAME CATCHES.]

[PEN SCRATCHING ON PAPER. OMINOUS HUMMING.]

### **THE AUTHOR**

You must be wondering the obvious: why you? In eight billion people, why is *your* story important? What makes *you* special?

Your predecessors had no cause to ask these questions. They were in the dark as to their role, as to the eyes of the universe watching over them.

I wonder whether that made it easier for them, or harder.

I have seen so many protagonists come and go. (*Chuckling.*) I have seen them rise up to their destinies, believing that fate was guiding their hands, as it should be. (*Chuckles.*) As they deserved.

I have seen them remain completely oblivious that anything significant was happening at all.

I have seen them fall apart in confusion, in terror. As you did.

I *could* tell you why the universe watches you. I *could* tell you what is so special about *you*. I could tell you why this narrative is different from all those that came before it.

But that feels a little cheap, don't you think?

[RAIN FALLING.]

**NYX [AS UNNAMED]**

[OMINOUS HUMMING.]

In the seconds before I fall, I believe I can fly.

I have seen him do this a hundred times. The way his heels rise, until his entire weight rests in his toes. For a moment, just a moment, he is haloed in gold. He is not just a king, but an angel, his dark feathers burning, setting horizons alight. He could tear down kingdoms. He could change coastlines. He could create a shining empire for all to see.

[OMINOUS HUMMING BUILDING.]

Then comes the moment - when gravity overcomes him. He tips gracefully over the edge, like a dancer, like a gazelle, as if his wings and beak are already bursting forth, cutting him through the air.

He falls, buffeted by wind. He is a scattered shadow. The rocks below are so close; the sea seems to reach up to cradle him.

But before impact, the miracle occurs. In the space between my inhaled breaths, always half convinced my lover is about to die. It is not a slow sprouting of feather and claw. One moment, a boy is falling through the air. The next, a raven soars. He glides as if the sky was made for him. As if he knows, as I do, that he was made to change the world.

He dances towards me; I can't help the yell of delight that escapes me as he alights on my shoulder. Before he found me, I had believed that life was made for surviving. For dragging your body from one sunrise to the next.

Now I have seen - beauty. Hope. Something *more*.

It makes me want to believe.

He tells me about all of it. About magic, about the Corvidae. About his hidden kingdom in the gaps between the city. How he fights for it to remain whole, even as infestation forces it to crumble. All of his plans to fix it.

It lights his face in a way nothing else does; and I believe he truly will achieve everything he envisions. Because he believes it, and that is all the magic there is.

*Belief.* Such a thing could, has, changed coastlines and razed empires. What little leap of faith is there to believe it could truly be magic?

He wants me to join him there. In this world he crafts with a flick of gold and feather.

But one cannot join without magic.

So I must believe. I must prove it. I must have magic - I must *change*.

He holds my hand as I overlook the waves. The sun is just sinking below the horizon, setting the waters ablaze.

I lift my heels, one, two. Up, up, until a light breeze could send me over the edge.

I tip. Gravity overcomes me.

He lets go.

In the seconds before I fall, I believe I can fly.

[RAIN FALLING.]

[PAPER RUSTLES. THE CLINK OF BOTTLES, THE OPEN OF ANOTHER]

[CHIME OF PHONE RECORDING.]

**BELLA**

Hey, Future Nyx.

How are you doing? It's been a while since we spoke.

Hopefully you aren't listening to this. Any of these. Hopefully I've told you all of this in person. Hopefully you've forgiven me. I doubt it. I don't know that I could forgive me. I've watched every bridge crumble. I've set half of them alight.

[BEAT.]

Sorry. I think I've been alone too long. Self pity... (*Chuckles*). I've always been good at it. Still am. Wish I wasn't.

I haven't texted Lola, or Seth. Maybe I should. They've been trying, and I- I haven't stabbed them in the back. Yet. Or at least, if I have, they don't know it yet. I don't know where the line is. There's been less... reason. Less opportunity, to tell them. So maybe they don't count as a betrayal.

And besides, there's always been something about you... about us.

Everyone knows, you and me are...

Or we were. I guess that's what makes it worse. Because we *were*. Almost.

But I could never let you get too close, because I knew I couldn't have you forever. I always knew I would have to leave. And I couldn't let you love me as a lie.

But I wasn't strong enough to stop you, and maybe I didn't want to, and you did it anyway. I've always loved you for that. That you loved Bella. Not the Crow.

[A SIGH.]

Now I suppose you won't love either.

That was supposed to be a good thing. I was supposed to break your heart, so you wouldn't try to follow me back to the city.

What was the point, in the end? Why did it matter? You know almost everything, and now- (*Gasps*)

[TAPPING ON THE WINDOW.]

**RAVEN [*MUFFLED THROUGH THE WINDOW*]**

So you really *are* just this morose all the time. How depressingly ordinary.

**BELLA**

Why are you here? I already told you to go away.

**RAVEN [*MUFFLED THROUGH THE WINDOW*]**

Yes, I recall. You were quite adamant about it.

[*BEAT.*]

I got bored of waiting. It's been a week, dear niece - have you made any progress in your plans?

**BELLA**

I do *not* have time for this. I have an essay due on Monday. Can't you walk into Agatha's fists again, or something?

**RAVEN [*MUFFLED THROUGH THE WINDOW*]**

If you must know, I haven't been home in a week for that exact reason. She still refuses to take her rings off to make it a fair fight.

**BELLA**

Maybe you should take the hint. No one wants you around right now,  
because all you do is cause chaos.

**RAVEN [MUFFLED THROUGH THE WINDOW]**

Maybe you're right. But aren't you going to invite me in anyway? It is so  
very difficult to balance on this window ledge, and the ground is *so very* far  
away. You wouldn't want to explain how I fell four storeys from your window  
when no one even saw me come in, would you?

**BELLA**

You've never needed permission to enter here before, so who am I to stop  
you?

[*BEAT.*]

Fine. Come in.

[SOUND OF WINDOW BEING PULLED OPEN.]

**RAVEN**

Thank you *ever* so much.

[THUD ONTO CARPET.]

**RAVEN**

So what *are* you doing?

**BELLA**

Planning. Thinking. Worrying about Nyx.

**RAVEN**

Unsurprising, and incredibly dull. Something more interesting please.

**BELLA**

You don't understand. I haven't seen them in days. I really think they're  
spiralling, I-

**RAVEN**

Yes, as I said, I heard your frankly tragic monologue. I fail to see how it is anything other than your own fault.

**BELLA**

I am *fully* aware that it's my fault, thank you. I don't need *you* to tell me.

**RAVEN**

I'm not discussing the *lying*, Bella. I'm discussing the fact that your beloved protagonist is right across the hall from you. Do you know how much of our family would have killed to be this close to one of them? And you have them right there, and they would do anything for you. You could go talk to them right now.

**BELLA**

B-but they're reading right now.

**RAVEN**

I fail to see the issue. Go and *talk to them*.

**BELLA**

Are you- *insane*? Haven't you talked to Athrie? You *know* their theory about wh-what happens-

**RAVEN**

*Dear* niece, you have two choices. Continue to be terrified of your own shadow, and watch the love of your life be destroyed. Or stop caring about anyone other than you and yours. Otherwise, you *will* be the first to fall.

**BELLA**

You're talking about-

**RAVEN**

I'm talking about *survival*. Priorities. Besides, you know as well as I do that most of the people in those monologues either want to be there, or should be.

**BELLA**

That doesn't mean we get to just *choose* who-

**RAVEN**

You are insufferable. *Fine*. You don't have to choose anything. I will.

[FOOTSTEPS. DOOR OPENS.]

**BELLA**

Raven, please. Please don't-

[NYX'S VOICE, MUFFLED.]

[SHARP KNOCK ON DOOR - NYX STOPS SPEAKING. WINGS FLUTTER. DOOR OPENS.]

**NYX**

Bella?

**BELLA**

Nyx! Um. Hi.

**NYX**

What's- what's up? Did I hear wings?

**BELLA**

Oh, yeah, it was just that- annoying raven. I- I shoed it out the window.

**NYX**

Oh. Kay.

[*BEAT.*]

**BELLA**

I- was worried. About you. I haven't, seen you in days, and I thought- you might not- I thought you might want some food. Or fresh air. Or water. Or a shower- have you left your room since Saturday?

[BEAT.]

**NYX**

No.

**BELLA**

You should, really, do that. I can cook if you want? I have all the ingredients for tomato pasta. Except cheese, but we can just go buy some, and, I mean, it would be good to get some fresh air, right? So maybe a trip to Big Tesco is a good idea. That always makes you feel better, right? If we just-

**NYX**

I can't. I have- things to do.

**BELLA**

Like *what*, Nyx?

**NYX**

Reading. Monologues. The fate of the universe, y'know. Or at least, several hundred people.

**BELLA**

You can't read if you collapse. Or if you fester into a pile of bones. You need to look after yourself. You need *rest*.

**NYX**

*How the hell* am I supposed to rest, Bells? I can't sleep in there. There's a chest full of *people* in my room, Bella. Real, living people who have been trapped for *years*, and I am the Only. Thing. That can let them out.

**BELLA**

You're not just- this *power* you have, Nyx. You're not just who the world tells you to be. You taught me that. You have to be yourself, too. You can't continue like this. You look like- like you're dying. How do you know the monologues aren't doing something to you, drawing on you? You- we have no idea how magic works, but we know energy can't be created from thin air, and magic *is* energy, right? So, *logically*, you need to rest. Conserve. I can't let you fall apart in front of my eyes. I won't.

[SILENCE.]

**NYX**

I'm so tired, Bella.

**BELLA**

I know. Let me help you. Please.

*[BEAT.]*

**BELLA [cont.]**

Can I hug you?

**NYX**

Yes please.

[FABRIC RUSTLES. A LONG PAUSE.]

[A TEARY SIGH.]

**BELLA**

Nyx?

**NYX**

Bella?

**BELLA**

You really need a shower.

[NYX LAUGHS.]

**NYX**

Yeah, probably. What- what day is it?

**BELLA**

Nyx!! It's Friday. The 28th. Of February. 2022.

**NYX**

Yeah, definitely need a shower. And some real food. I've been eating protein bars. And water from the sink in my room.

**BELLA**

Vegetables. You need vegetables. And tea. Definitely tea. Something nice and relaxing. I have a lavender chamomile that should knock you out instantly. And maybe we can save going outside for tomorrow, when you've slept.

**NYX**

Yeah, that sounds good. Great, even.

*[PAUSE.]*

Bella? Can I- can I sleep in your room? I don't know if I can- I can't sleep, in there. With- them.

**BELLA**

Yeah, of course. I'm here for everything. And anything. Take your time, okay? You don't have to go back to them until you're ready.

**NYX**

I love you.

**BELLA**

Yeah. Love you, too.

*[CHIME OF RECORDER TURNING OFF.]*

*[DOOR OPENS, FOOTSTEPS INTO ROOM.]*

**BELLA**

Feeling better?

**NYX**

Yeah. A lot, actually. Crazy how sometimes it's not the mental illness, it's just the ungodly lack of hygiene getting you down.

**BELLA**

I made tea? Lavender and chamomile.

**NYX**

Sounds fancy. You are, as always, a goddess. Thank you.

[FOOTSTEPS, A YELP AND A LAUGH.]

**NYX**

Shove over! I simply must be the maximum amount of cosy before I  
consume this nectar.

**BELLA**

I'm not particularly comfy. I'm all elbows. And cold.

**NYX**

Then I simply must make *you* cosy. Come on, Bells, don't you know I'm a  
special important person chosen by the universe now? My hugs are literally  
divine.

**BELLA**

I'm not sure that's how that works.

**NYX**

So you don't want a hug? A non-stinky hug, that is?

**BELLA**

No, no, I'll always take a hug.

**NYX**

Well then.

[FABRIC RUSTLES.]

**NYX**

You're super comfy, actually.

**BELLA**

Thanks.

*[PAUSE.]*

**BELLA**

I've missed you.

**NYX**

I'm sorry.

**BELLA**

No, no, it's- I just mean, I'm sorry I didn't come dig you out sooner.

**NYX**

I'm glad you did, though. I think I could've gone on forever, just... reading.

*[BEAT.]* And besides, I should've checked in with you. I can't imagine...  
how've you been?

**BELLA**

Oh, uh, I've been okay. I talked things through and I... I understand. What's  
happening. Why they did what they did.

**NYX**

Okay...

**BELLA**

I don't really want to talk about it. If that's okay?

**NYX**

Of course.

*[PAUSE.]*

**BELLA**

I, uh... I threw out the bottles.

**NYX**

Okay.

**BELLA**

And I tipped the rest down the sink.

**NYX**

Okay.

**BELLA**

If you want to talk about it-

**NYX**

No. Uh, no thanks. It was just... everything was too much. I didn't want to think. I wanted the world to be quiet.

**BELLA**

I understand.

I'm sorry.

**NYX**

Yeah.

[SILENCE.]

**NYX**

Ask me?

**BELLA**

What?

**NYX**

Anything. I don't know where to start. I just need to- talk. To you. To anything other than myself. Give me a direction I can go.

**BELLA**

Okay. So, uh. How do you feel? About- everything. The Narrative. The Protagonist. The- the Author.

**NYX**

*(Sighing)* Honestly? I... I don't know. I don't know what to feel, how I'm *supposed* to feel. At first, there was just like- white noise. Like I was feeling *so much*, but I had no idea *what* it was I was feeling. Does that make sense?

But now, it's just, like... numb. Like I've wrung myself out. I'm just tired. I don't think anything Ambrose said actually helped explain what's going on. So for now I'm just, like- *doing*. The only thing I'm sure I have to. Taking it one step at a time. If this is the power being a protagonist gave me, I guess I have to use it. And the plot will find me even if I ignore it, just like it did last week.

**BELLA**

That's... fair. Nihilistic, but fair.

**NYX**

Not really seeing much of a future to be hopeful about, Bells.

**BELLA**

Have you tried?

**NYX**

What?

**BELLA**

Tell me about the future. Yours, in an ideal world.

**NYX**

Bella...

**BELLA**

Come on. Humour me.

**NYX**

*(Sighing)* Fine.

Okay, so, first off, I become a badass. If I'm a protagonist, I should get a training montage where I become totally hench. Second, I want a glow up. Like, a cool fancy outfit to be badass in. Gotta have one of those, y'know? Oh, and maybe a sword.

**BELLA**

*(Laughing)* Why do I feel like you're not taking this seriously?

**NYX**

Bella, I have never been more serious a day in my life. I will simply perish without a sword.

**BELLA**

Right.

*[PAUSE.]*

**NYX**

In the end, Bells, there's no point thinking about it. Anything could happen. The whole world's gone, like, totally upside down overnight. I don't know the rules anymore. I don't know what to expect. So I can't even guess.

**BELLA**

Then maybe... you should learn the rules.

**NYX**

Hm?

**BELLA**

Call it your first training montage, maybe, but for *learning*.

**NYX**

Ew.

**BELLA**

*Magical* learning, Nyxie. The first step for any protagonist is to learn their new world. You need a mentor. Like- maybe, Ambrose-

**NYX**

I don't... I don't know if I can talk to Ambrose just yet. I don't know. I just. I need a bit more time. After everything. And I just- I dunno.

**BELLA**

Nyx-

**NYX**

He was just so nice about everything, y'know? All while lying to me- to us.  
At least Athrie was never, like, nice about it. They tell you exactly what  
they're thinking. I don't know.

**BELLA**

Talk to Athrie, then. I mean, I talked to them a bit, and they gave me some  
books from the library which look helpful?

**NYX**

There are books in the library on this shit?

**BELLA**

I mean, it's a magical library. As it turns out. Like, infinite.

**NYX**

Oh my god! I read about that place! In that monologue, the one about the  
guy who was obsessed with magic- Matteo Ricci!

**BELLA**

I don't remember that monologue.

**NYX**

Oh, yeah, uh... it was one of the ones I read... when... you weren't around.

**BELLA**

Before or after you promised to stop reading them because the Author was  
threatening to hurt you?

**NYX**

...After?

*[BEAT.]*

Listen! In my defence, how was I supposed to know that they were being legit? Before, like, a week ago, would *you* have thought magic was real? No! So why would I think that this random letter full of unhinged ranting was real!!

**BELLA**

Fine.

[BEAT.]

Will you tell me, next time you get- anything? I mean, anytime you get scared. Or any time you get another letter. Will you tell me?

**NYX**

Okay. I *promise*, I will tell you.

**BELLA**

Okay. Good. Thank you.

Now, *before* you go talk to Athrie, I need you to do two things. One, sleep. For at least eight hours. If you can't sleep, at least lie horizontally with your eyes shut. Can you do that for me?

**NYX**

Mmm, I can certainly try. What's the other thing?

**BELLA**

I need you to eat something. I put quorn nuggets in the oven for you. We've got ketchup, or mayo.

**NYX**

Bella, *obviously* ketchup. Am I heathen? No. I will not touch that monstrosity you call a sauce. I can't believe you'd even mention it in my presence.

[BELLA LAUGHS.]

[DOOR OPENS. FOOTSTEPS.]

**SAM**

Oh. You guys are actually, outside your rooms.

**NYX**

Yeah, Sam, we do unfortunately exist in the corporeal world. It surprises me too.

**SAM**

How, uh, how are you?

**NYX**

Absolutely peachy! Tip top! Vibing!

**SAM**

Ohkay. If you're sure? It's just I heard... well...

**NYX**

Everything's fine, Sam.

**BELLA**

Nyx's just been really stressing over Midsummer Night's Dream, you know?  
The performance isn't too far away.

**SAM**

Right, yeah. Speaking of that, actually, I was just at the library with Iman, and, well. She said...

**NYX**

What did she say?

**SAM**

Um, it was kind of colourful. I guess your phone has been off? But basically, get your arse to rehearsals, you piece of- well, you get the picture.  
Apparently you haven't been in for over a week.

**NYX**

Thanks for the contribution, Sammy, I'll be sure to take it under advisement.

[LOUD FOOTSTEPS, DOOR SLAMS.]

**BELLA**

I'm sorry about them, they're really- sleep deprived. There was...

*[BEAT.]*

Someone attacked them in the park after the charity event last week.

**SAM**

Oh. Shit.

**BELLA**

Yeah, it's just- it messed them up a bit. They haven't been able to leave the house.

**SAM**

That's... I'm sorry.

**BELLA**

I promise they'll get to the next rehearsal.

*[BEAT.]*

Uh, when is the next rehearsal?

**SAM**

In about an hour.

**BELLA**

...Okay, maybe the one after that. I've managed to convince them to sleep. Could you- text Iman? Let her know? Maybe not, all the details, but just enough.

**SAM**

Yeah, sure.

**BELLA**

Also, don't tell anyone else. Please.

**SAM**

Yeah. I hope... that they're okay? That they feel better?

**BELLA**

Yeah. I hope so too.

[CHIME OF PHONE RECORDER TURNING OFF.]

[THEME MUSIC FADES IN.]

**MORGAN**

Thank you so much for listening to The Attic Monologues. If you're enjoying our show, please consider supporting us through our Patreon or Ko-fi, to help us compensate the hard work our team puts into every episode. You can find links in the shownotes below. Alternately, you can leave us a review, whisper to the wind, or tell enemies, love interests, and friends alike to listen.

This episode was written by Morgan Greensmith, and produced by Morgan Greensmith, LM Clohessy, and Sorren Brairwood. It was directed and script edited by LM Clohessy. The sound design is by Isaac Thompson and the theme tune was composed by Wilkie Morrison.

In this episode you heard the voices of:

**ATLAS**

Atlas Morgan as Nyx Ryland

**BONNIE**

Bonnie Calderwood Aspinwall as Bella Crow.

**DREW**

Drew Citrine as Raven.

**KIT**

Kit Lovick as Sam Harris.

**ROYA**

Roya Gharbi as Lola Brodeur.

**ALASDAIR**

Alasdair Stuart as the Author.

[PHONE RINGS OUT, ISN'T PICKED UP.]

[VOICEMAIL BEEP.]

**BELLA (VOICEMAIL)**

Uh this is Bella? Leave a message? Or just, uh, yeah. Just text me? *[BEAT.]*  
Cool. *[BEAT.]* Thanks.

**LOLA**

Hey, uh, starting to get just a little bit worried now. Text me when you get this? Just wanna know you're alive. And not, like, jumping off a bridge. Text me, yeah? Love you.

[PHONE HANGS UP.]

[PHONE RINGS OUT.]

**NYX (VOICEMAIL)**

You've reached Mx Nyx! I'm probably rooting through my bag trying to find my phone right now, and I'll answer in 3, 2, 1...! In which case, I'm probably asleep. Or my phone is under my laundry. Or dead! That's a very real possibility. Though whether I'm talking about me or my phone is up for debate.

You should probably just text me, it's easier.

[VOICEMAIL BEEP.]

**LOLA**

So you aren't communicating again. Over a week, and all I've got is a single text that says, and I quote, *We're alive*. Do you know how absolutely bloody useless that is, Nyx? I've gotten more out of Sam than the two of you combined. *Sam*, Nyx. Your flatmate, who I literally barely know, is answering his phone. He says you're both being weird. I had to ask, What do you mean, weird, because both of you are always being weird, and was this a Concerning kind of weird or were you just being dickheads. He just said that *Something Happened*. That he'd promised not to say more.

What the *hell* does that mean?

I'm guessing it didn't go well. That much is obvious.

I could understand if it had, and you guys were making up for lost time. I could understand if it *hadn't*, and you needed space.

This is something else. I don't know what happened, but Nyx...

[PAUSE.]

If you don't want to talk to me, I'd at least appreciate confirmation that you aren't about to jump off a bridge. When you remember one of your other best friends for a second. If you remember.

[PHONE HANGS UP.]

### **MORGAN**

Today's episode features a trailer for Ethics Town, a queer cosmic horror podcast. If you like questioning fate, moral conundrums, and our very own director LM Clohessy, we know you'll love this podcast. So without further ado, Ethics Town.

[HEAVY RADIO STATIC.]

[THINGS BEING PLUGGED IN]

**HOST**

Okay, uhh, so we've got the... thingy. And it's gone into the... thing. Red light's on. Yeah, that seems to have done it. Okay, yeah, that's all- That's, that's on. Right.

Oh! Oh, that's on! That's, that's on, umm, okay...

[RADIO DIAL BEING TURNED.]

[STATIC FADES.]

[WIND WHISTLING, THE CREAK OF A WOODEN STRUCTURE SWAYING.]

**HOST (cont.)**

Uhh, twenty-five point eight. Good, okay, okay.

[A DEEP BREATH.]

This is a normal broadcast from a normal radio.

That's a lie. This is an emergency broadcast from an emergency radio. I'm not much of a radio guy -

[STATIC.]

I did do theatre in high school, and I quite liked it. I always got so nervous on stage though, so I did think radio might be a better option.

Um... I'm not much of a radio guy, so expect technical difficulties.

[A DEEP BREATH.]

Good evening, citizens of Ethics, and anyone nearby whose radio can also pick up this frequency. Especially people nearby whose radios can pick up this frequency. I've got a lot to report on and I'm afraid at times this broadcast may become difficult to listen to, but let me start with this:

Stay the hell away from Ethics.

[INTRO MUSIC BEGINS TO FADE IN, THEN STOPS ABRUPTLY]

The, the town. Not the philosophy. Just, I mean, ju- go wild with the philosophy, it's great, big fan of ethics, me. But it's just-

[COUGH.]

The town...

[INTRO MUSIC PLAYS.]

### **VOICE 2**

Ethics Town is a new cosmic horror podcast set to air in 2023. This trailer was sound designed by Cai Gwilym Pritchard, with theme by Mick Zijdel. The voice of the Radio Host was Rhys Lawton. To keep up to date on the show's progress you can follow us anywhere on @EthicsTownPod. Thank you for listening.

[INTRO MUSIC FADES]

### **VOICE 2**

He's rubbing his two brain cells together to have a single thought.

### **VOICE 3**

He used up those two brain cells so quickly.

**END OF EPISODE 23**