

HIGHLIGHT TO SEE CONTENT WARNINGS:

NICHOLAS:

(as the intro plays) At the edge of Gilt City, the night air thrums with signals uninterpreted, and all await the arrival of the Night Post.

[CRICKET SONGS RING FOR A FEW SECONDS AND THEN FADE OUT, REPLACED BY THE TICKING OF A CLOCK.]

NICHOLAS:

Good evening. I'm surprised to see you all here so early, eagerly waiting outside of my office doors. To what do I owe the pleasure?

VAL:

We're fucking outstanding Night Post employees, what else would you expect?

MILO:

Now it's suspicious that we would show up at the place we're forced to work against our will. I don't know what we can do to convince our postmaster that we're just simply trying to perform our postal duties to the best of our abilities.

CLEMENTINE:

Come on, don't harass him. It looks like you've been on the run, Nick. Do you want a chance to put your things down before we borrow a little of your time?

NICHOLAS:

Oh, no. That's not necessary. Come on in.

[THE LIGHTS IN NICHOLAS' OFFICE FLICKER ON WITH A SPOOKY BUZZ.]

NICHOLAS:

I'm glad you're staying out of trouble. After we last spoke—well, I always worry when this trio arrives together at my office door.

MILO:

Why? We don't cause trouble. Trouble follows us around like a one-night stand that didn't get the hint. We're trying to ditch trouble and meet other people.

VAL:

(shutting the door) I'd say it's more like trouble is chasing us down a dark alleyway and attempting to knife us.

CLEMENTINE:

What I think is getting lost in metaphor is that we've discovered an interesting piece of information about how the Night Post operates. We want to know how much you know and hear your opinion before we do anything else.

NICHOLAS:

I'm restricted in the amount of information I'm allowed to share with couriers, and there's plenty I don't know.

VAL:

I knew he'd be like this.

CLEMENTINE:

Give him a chance before you decide he's not gonna help us.

MILO:

Did you know that the government doesn't control the Post?

NICHOLAS:

What do you mean?

MILO:

Pigeons are all pawns chosen by the Other...whatever the Other might be. There's a supernatural force that compels us to carry mail through ancient paths for a mysterious purpose no one understands, and it's changing us, replacing bits of our humanity so we can better serve its interests.

NICHOLAS:

(scoffs) That's quite the claim. Do you have any evidence to support it?

VAL:

Would you believe we heard it from Maya?

NICHOLAS:

You mean...my predecessor? I don't--how is that even possible?

VAL:

You sure you didn't know?

CLEMENTINE:

She survived. The Skelter kept her alive. Then she built a life support pod to sustain her, so that she could stay away from the Post.

NICHOLAS:

What? How did she manage that?

MILO:

With difficulty, I imagine. She wasn't in great shape when we found her.

VAL:

And now she's in worse shape.

CLEMENTINE:

She tried to kill us by overloading her own life-support system.

NICHOLAS:

Oh my—

MILO:

Maya planned to expose the truth about Pigeons' connection to the post, exposing couriers to more scrutiny and abuse, which we all want to avoid.

VAL:

Pigeons deserve to know the truth. None of us chose this and we should at least be able to understand what we're tangled up in. If we're puppets or whatever, at least let us see the strings.

CLEMENTINE:

Our knowledge is incredibly limited. It's like someone untied our blindfolds, but we're still lost in the woods during a new moon. We know that sharing this kind of news won't come without consequence—

MILO:

But we won't make any progress if we're the only people who know. Obviously, there isn't a way we could keep the information from spreading once we start getting the news to other pigeons, but we thought with some help from folks in other stations, we could reach a lot more people in one night.

CLEMENTINE:

We're anticipating the negative pushback once this gets out to the general public, but we can't keep our fellow pigeons in the dark as a half-hearted attempt to keep them safe.

NICHOLAS:

Did you come here for my advice, or have you already decided what action to take?

VAL:

We thought you might want to shed some light on the situation, since you know more than we do. You knew *her*.

NICHOLAS:

Yes, I did, and I can't imagine she would act without cause.

MILO:

(sarcastic) Yeah, she tried to kill us, but not without good reason.

VAL:

Of course, Postmaster Best is so far up—

CLEMENTINE:

(overlapping) Maybe we should give Nick a chance to speak without—

VAL:

(overlapping) Naturally, Miss Clementine jumps to the defense of the powers that be.

CLEMENTINE:

I don't think that's—

NICHOLAS:

(loudly clears his throat) I understand this is an emotionally charged situation, but perhaps you'd all like to take a seat and a deep breath. We can try to discuss this without undue distress.

VAL:

I'd like to show you some undue distress.

NICHOLAS:

What was that, Valencia?

MILO:

You'll have to forgive Val. We're all recovering from our most recent *attempted murder*.

NICHOLAS:

Yes, of course, well, that only makes sense. You pigeons are under stress, and things haven't exactly been easy on this trio lately—

MILO:

Huh! An understatement if I've ever heard one. Your ex-bestie did try to exploit and explode us.

NICHOLAS:

And I appreciate your trust in coming to me with this situation. Postmasters are not as wise and all-knowing as we might seem. I am still only human.

VAL:

Wait, what else would you be?

NICHOLAS:

Okay, perhaps that was the wrong figure of speech. I don't know what you might be imagining, but there isn't a secret postmaster handbook that contains all the information about how the Night Post operates. Postmasters have a unique comprehension on the way the Post works. It's difficult to describe, more like an intrinsic understanding than implicit knowledge.

CLEMENTINE:

Like breath in your lungs, or feeling your own pulse?

NICHOLAS:

Hm. Yes, you might say that.

MILO:

And you don't bother to warn anyone in our position that we'll be irrevocably changed? If you started off as pigeons, where's your solidarity with the rest of us?

NICHOLAS:

It isn't as simple as you make it sound! You are correct that many postmasters begin their careers as pigeons, but we're sworn to protect the knowledge entrusted to us. These issues run deeper than class politics.

CLEMENTINE:

We know we're dealing with forces beyond our comprehension, but we can't ignore our fellow couriers. If the threats are lurking in the shadows, we can't withhold the lantern.

NICHOLAS:

Clementine Keys, I am surprised at you. Surely you understand how dangerous spreading fear-mongering information would be.

VAL:

Don't single her out. We've all talked this through, and we know what we're getting into. After we barely escaped with our lives, we had planned to keep what we learned to ourselves—

NICHOLAS:

A wise response. Why stray from your initial plan?

MILO:

Well, if we're all wrapped up in cosmic, supernatural fuckery, I think we should at least have a fair shot at facing it.

CLEMENTINE:

Exactly. Couriers already face countless unknowns on their nightly routes. We're asked to risk everything because of these invisible threads that trap us here. If we're facing permanent side effects from whoever or whatever is spinning that web—

VAL:

We not gonna be pawns in any game, not The Governor Themself's, or the mysterious Skelter spirits or whatever you've got going on, *Nicholas Best*.

NICHOLAS:

I don't have anything "going on," Valencia.

VAL:

Uh-huh, sure.

NICHOLAS:

You should place more trust in your Night Post officials. Postmasters endure more than you know.

MILO:

Then tell us! Being mysterious doesn't help.

CLEMENTINE:

I promise, it isn't our intent to corner you in your office and target you. We've already made up our minds to share what we know with other pigeons. Arguing that point is unproductive. Is there anything you can do to provide us some clarity? Anything you could share with us could be a big help.

NICHOLAS:

I'm not in a position to be able to reveal more information to you, but I *do* care about you all. I want to see you safe, not entangled in something larger than you know.

VAL:

Uh, too late. We're already en-fucking-dangered.

MILO:

Why did I know this conversation wouldn't go anywhere?

CLEMENTINE:

I understand we are not putting you in an easy position here. (*softly*) Please, is there anything—

VAL:

There isn't. I don't know why we bothered.

NICHOLAS:

I know the chances that you'll take this advice are slim, but I'd be remiss if I didn't try. Keep quiet. Keep running your routes. Rest well and wait for things to calm down again. There's no need to upset the order of things.

VAL:

Oh, Postmaster, please may we lick the boots of the great Night Post overlords. I've always wanted to live and die under someone's thumb. *(metallic click)*

MILO:

Val, put down the paperweight. You don't want to get written up. *Again.*

VAL:

Add it to my fucking file. I am so fucking sick of this—

CLEMENTINE:

Val! Val, it's okay. Let's go.

NICHOLAS:

I apologize there isn't more I can do. I hope you believe me.

MILO:

Don't worry about us, Postmaster. We'll take care of ourselves.

[THE PIGEONS LEAVE, CLOSING THE DOOR BEHIND THEM.]

VAL:

(muffled) I swear I'm going to stab someone. It's probably going to be Nick, and he won't see it coming.

CLEMENTINE:

(muffled) You can't stab anyone.

NICHOLAS:

Fly safe, pigeons. I am so sorry.

[INSIDE GILT TOWER: PEOPLE TALKING AND WORKING. FOOTSTEPS RING ON TILE IN AN OPEN AREA.]

SECRETARY:

Ms. Prescott will see you now.

[AFTER A LONG PAUSE, THE SECRETARY CLEARS THEIR THROAT.]

SECRETARY:

Ms. Prescott will see you now. It's better not to keep her waiting.

CLEMENTINE:

Thank you. I...I'll just go in, and—go into her office, and speak with her. Now.

SECRETARY:

(after a pause) You don't need help operating the door, do you?

CLEMENTINE:

No, I—I have it, thanks.

[OFFICE NOISE DIES AWAY WHEN CLEM SHUTS THE DOOR. WILHELMINA STANDS UP FROM A ROLLING CHAIR.]

WILL:

Clementine, you came!

CLEMENTINE:

Did I have a choice?

WILL:

Yes, of course! I would never force you to do anything you didn't want to.

CLEMENTINE:

It didn't seem wise to reject an invitation from the new... "Gilt City Liaison to the Night Post"?

WILL:

The nameplate is a bit much, isn't it?

CLEMENTINE:

The fancy title and the new private office in Gilt Tower isn't too much for you, though.

WILL:

I understand how it looks like I used the situation to my personal advantage, but I didn't actually ask for any of this.

CLEMENTINE:

You don't have to defend yourself to me.

WILL:

I am sure your opinion of me couldn't get any worse, anyway.

CLEMENTINE:

We both have a lot of unresolved emotions about what happened between us, but I don't think it's productive to rehash it. If I'm being completely honest...

WILL:
Yes?

CLEMENTINE:
I don't think it's healthy for me to spend time with you—at least not until I can resolve my feelings.

WILL:
I'm glad to hear you say that. I...I understand that I pursued you under false pretenses. I shared information with my superior that I should have kept secret. I betrayed your trust. But, if we both still feel a connection to one another, then... we can try again.

CLEMENTINE:
Is this why you called me here?

WILL:
I wasn't sure you would come, but I guess I shouldn't have doubted you.

CLEMENTINE:
(*exhale*) Yeah, that's me, come-when-she's-called-Clementine.

WILL:
I wanted to give you space, but I know something happened. We found the collapsed elevator and were able to access some of the wreckage. I can only imagine what you found down there.

CLEMENTINE:
Your boss.

WILL:
She wasn't my boss.

CLEMENTINE:
We almost died down there.

WILL:
Well, I'm glad you didn't.

CLEMENTINE:
(*pause*) None of us are going to escape this...you know?

WILL:
I don't understand what you mean.

CLEMENTINE:

We're all tied up in this—the Night Post and whatever you want to call the forces that control it. If you haven't realized already, it isn't the postmasters, or the Gilt Tower officials, or even the Governor. Behind the bureaucracy and the bullshit, something we don't understand is changing us.

WILL:

Changing who, the-the pigeons?

CLEMENTINE:

We don't know if only couriers are affected. Will the cushy position in the golden tower save you from what's coming? I'm not sure it will.

WILL:

Sounds ominous. Do you care to elaborate?

CLEMENTINE:

I'm not sure that I can. I'm-I'm sorry. I don't think coming here was a good idea. I'm feeling a bit strange.

WILL:

Well, take a seat, take a seat. I'll send someone to get you something to drink. Is it one of your migraines? Do you want water or something with caffeine? Do you need to eat something, or—

CLEMENTINE:

Stop it!

WILL:

S-stop what?

CLEMENTINE:

I don't want you to be kind to me. This is why I didn't want to come see you! You're being so—so *you!*

WILL:

Is there something wrong with me?

CLEMENTINE:

Well, uh, you romanced me because your boss told you to, and then betrayed me and my friends, so...yeah, I'm guessing something is wrong with you.

WILL:

(overlapping) In my defense—

CLEMENTINE:

Don't.

WILL:

(*exhale*) I'm very sorry.

CLEMENTINE:

Yeah, you've said as much. You've written it in a dozen letters. You've sent gifts and flowers, and I can't imagine how much all those things cost.

WILL:

Admittedly, I have the tendency to be a bit excessive, but you're worth going overboard for. You deserve everything, even if it isn't from me.

CLEMENTINE:

Why did you ask me here? Why do you want to keep pulling me back?

WILL:

I wanted to let you know that I want to help you. I want to make up for what I did, even if it doesn't change how you feel about me. I have access to more information. I can help you research the previous cities. We can continue the Strategist's research!

CLEMENTINE:

I'm not sure I want help from you.

WILL:

That's understandable.

CLEMENTINE:

But, I don't think I'm in a position to refuse help from someone...like you. We don't have many allies, and especially not powerful ones.

WILL:

Oh, well, I am not sure how powerful I actually am.

CLEMENTINE:

You're plenty powerful. Look outside, you have your own secretary. Although, I'm not sure what a "liaison to the Night Post" actually does. Are you still a part of the Post, or...?

WILL:

Of course, I'm just here to facilitate closer cooperation with the Governor's Office.

CLEMENTINE:

Like the Urban Strategist did?

WILL:

Well, I don't have *that* kind of reach, but I do have a direct line to the Governor. They've been taking a keen interest in postal affairs. They made a visit to Station One recently.

CLEMENTINE:

(*unimpressed*) Wow, that's impressive.

WILL:

It was incredibly stressful. We had to scramble to try and impress.

CLEMENTINE:

Shame it isn't enough just to deliver the mail.

WILL:

Funny you mention that, because the Night Post delivery rates are at an all-time low—oh. Right, not the time to break down the most recent data.

CLEMENTINE:

I know that you've never had to run your own, but walking your own route is harder than it sounds.

WILL:

I've been lucky.

CLEMENTINE:

Well, if you want to call generational wealth luck. Not many of us can afford to buy a cushy position here at the Tower.

WILL:

You know, you can't actually buy those—

CLEMENTINE:

(*overlapping*) I know, it's all about societal connections and convenient reassignments. Being conscripted is bad enough without knowing that some of us have the privilege of opting out of the hard work.

WILL:

That isn't fair. I didn't ask to join the Night Post.

CLEMENTINE:

(*mocking*) Of course you didn't. You weren't supposed to inherit the position. Your whole life is a huge disappointment, and you don't deserve this. You're so much better than the rest of us.

WILL:

Harsh, and not necessarily true.

CLEMENTINE:

I used to admire you, maybe even envy you, but I see you with clarity now. You're a spoiled rich girl. You aren't used to hearing "no," and you don't know how to react when you don't get what you want.

WILL:

Do you believe that?

CLEMENTINE:

Does it matter?

WILL:

To me, it does.

CLEMENTINE:

(pause) Is there anything else?

WILL:

I guess not.

CLEMENTINE:

(sigh) Look, I'm-I'm sorry. It was not my intention to come in here and have an outburst. Genuinely, thank you for your offer. The way things are going, I wouldn't be surprised if I had to take you up on it.

WILL:

Well, I hope you will. Let me know if there's anything you need. I'm always here nowadays.

CLEMENTINE:

(false cheer) As long as you don't end up in a pile of electronic rubble buried under the earth you'll be doing better than the last woman who tried to run the Night Post. Try not to wind up dead, or worse.

WILL:

Thanks, I guess. It was good to see you, though, Clementine. Please, take care of yourself out there. *(door closes)*

[OUTSIDE IN THE CITY: PASSING CARS, A BELL RINGING FROM AFAR. MULTIPLE FOOTSTEPS ON CONCRETE.]

MILO:

Do you think we have enough?

CLEMENTINE:

This is all we could afford.

VAL:

Foiled again by Corporate Copy and Print.

CLEMENTINE:

You know how people love to spread a story around. This one affects us all, and I can't believe anyone is gonna keep it to themselves.

MILO:

And do you think these flyers are gonna get our point across?

CLEMENTINE:

"Howdy, y'all. We're all secretly working under the influence of supernatural forces that are changing us forever into tainted pawns for their unknown purposes. And our health benefits are essentially non-existent."

MILO:

Huh. It is a lot to try and fit on a single page.

VAL:

I think we did an okay job at summarizing the whole thing.

MILO:

There isn't really a good way to try and tell folks they're being transformed into puzzle pieces for a spirit's entertainment.

VAL:

You can tell we made the effort. Good thing Block tried to split us up, because now we have contacts at other stations.

CLEMENTINE:

Having them help us get these flyers out was a good idea.

VAL:

Of course it was—all my ideas are good ideas.

CLEMENTINE:

Not to be a Complaining Clementine, but these boxes are really heavy. How far away did you park, Milo?

MILO:

Shouldn't be that much further. I thought I parked next to, um...

VAL:

Here, let me take one of those from you.

CLEMENTINE:

Oh! Are you, are you sure?

MILO:

(mimicking Clementine) Oh, Valencia, you're so strong. I bet you know how to handle a tricky box.

CLEMENTINE:

Milo!

VAL:

He isn't wrong.

CLEMENTINE:

You're both crude and inappropriate. Who raised you?

VAL:

Hey! Who raised *you*?

MILO:

But the eye-fucking is fine, though.

CLEMENTINE:

We don't—

VAL:

Miss Clementine is a lady, Mr. Cylix-Wilder. We shouldn't pollute her ears with such profane talk.

CLEMENTINE:

It's not like *that*. *Look*, There's the truck! Let's go before it gets too late. We have a lot of stops to make.

[CARDBOARD BOXES SCRAPE AND THUNK AS THEY'RE LOADED INTO THE BACK OF THE TRUNK. THE BACK DOOR SLIDES SHUT.]

VAL:

(exhale) Alright. Let's go start a fucking revolution.

MILO:
Or die trying!

[LIGHT STATIC BUILDS IN THE BACKGROUND. MULTIPLE WOBBLING, DISTORTED TONES OVERLAP.]

CLEMENTINE:
Are you seeing this, too?

MILO:
Oh, what the fuck?

CLEMENTINE:
Oh, at least it's not my imagination. I thought it might be a migraine aura.

[THE STATIC AND DISTORTION INTENSIFY, WITH HIGH-PITCHED TONES JOINING IN.]

VAL:
Ah fuck, watch the van!

MILO:
The closer you get— (*yelp of pain*)

CLEMENTINE:
Be careful!

MILO:
Feels like being stung by a bunch of wasps.

VAL:
An entire van can't disappear out of existence and blink back like nothing ever happened. What could cause that?!

CLEMENTINE:
Don't stand too close to—

[THE STRANGE NOISES REACH AN ALMOST UNBEARABLE CRESCENDO. CLEMENTINE AND MILO BOTH GRUNT AS SHE TACKLES HIM.]

MILO:
You didn't have to tackle me like a linebacker, you know.

CLEMENTINE:

I didn't want you to end up—wherever the van is now!

[GRADUALLY, THE STATIC FADES.]

MILO:
How can it be gone?

CLEMENTINE:
I don't think it is. It's just somewhere else.

VAL:
All of our posters—

MILO:
My van!

CLEMENTINE:
There's a strange smell in the air, like...brimstone and honeysuckle.

MILO:
What are we gonna do now?

VAL:
A hell of a lot of walking, I guess. Our contacts are still waiting. We need to meet with them.

CLEMENTINE:
Maybe we can catch a ride.

MILO:
Are they going to make me ride a horse, too? Look, that's too country even for me.

CLEMENTINE:
Aw, Milo, it's not that bad. Now, I don't even have to deliver anything under the first-tier package weight restrictions! And Daff is such a sweetheart. I'm sure once you meet—

VAL:
(interrupting) Less about the horses, Clem.

CLEMENTINE:
Oh. Sorry.

MILO:
(sigh) We're fucked.

[THE WOBBLING AGAIN, INSISTENT.]

VAL:

I-it-it's coming back!

MILO:

Yes! Welcome back, my sweet, gas-powered automotive. Oh, what would I do without you?

CLEMENTINE:

Wait, don't try to touch it again!

VAL:

It looks mostly normal now. What's the worst that could happen?

MILO:

(jingling and scraping keys) Well, my key won't fit in the lock anymore. Look, the entire mechanism's different. But, there's a trick—

[MILO HITS SOMETHING, AND THE VAN DOOR SLIDES OPEN.]

MILO:

Believe me, that's much less helpful when it happens while I'm driving.

CLEMENTINE:

Please, be careful! We don't know what else might have been altered.

VAL:

All of our posters are still here! We can still do this.

MILO:

Assuming the van still starts after leaving our existence and returning.

CLEMENTINE:

(opening a box) The...text is changed. The whole design is completely different.

VAL:

It's the language from the last city, right?

MILO:

(sigh) And no one will be able to read them. Back where we started.

CLEMENTINE:

Maybe not. We could still write on the backs.

VAL:

You want us to handwrite thousands of flyers?

MILO:

Can we get the information out through tech? We don't have to do everything the archaic way just because we work for the Night Post.

VAL:

How many pigeons do you know with home computers? Do *you* even have a computer?

CLEMENTINE:

I don't. I don't even have a home phone.

MILO:

That's because you're—well, you know.

VAL:

Unless we're planning on knocking on doors or calling names out of the phone book.

CLEMENTINE:

An aggressive letter-writing campaign doesn't appeal to you?

MILO and VAL:

No.

CLEMENTINE:

Okay, then what's our next step?

VAL:

If we're dealing with something that can eat a mail truck and spit it out different, we're going to need some more help.

MILO:

And I doubt our beloved Postmaster is gonna be very helpful.

CLEMENTINE:

We'll have to gather other allies. We can't be the only ones who want to get to the bottom of this.

MILO:

Obviously not, but I'm not sure spirits and cultists make good allies, either.

CLEMENTINE:

We make do with what we have, right? That's like the Night Post's motto or something.

VAL:

I thought the Post's motto was "You mail it, we lose it."

MILO:

(exhale) Come on, let's see what we can decipher from these flyers.

NICHOLAS:

(as the outro plays) Thank you for joining us on tonight's route. If you'd like to support Station 103, consider joining our Patreon for weekly bonus stories and early episode access. Or check out our Redbubble and Ko-Fi shops for Night Post merch and digital story collections. Send a letter to your favorite tchotchke collector, and tell them about The Night Post.