

Strangekind Studio

presents

KIND

Chapter Two: The Husband 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 gun use, violence & gore, misogynistic and racist language, and non-consensual sedation. Please check the description of this episode for a full list of content warnings.

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

SCENE ONE: ESCAPE

AMBIENT: We pick up where we left off in Chapter One. Exterior Ciesla Estate. It's storming. Thunder rumbles. Crickets chirp. The constant roar of heavy rain.

MUSIC: 'I Am Monster' by Henryao. A slow, sad electronic song that begins with a humming pulse and deep bass.

SFX: Whoosh! The Detectives are running through the torrential rain, guns drawn.

DANA: (Yelling) Kind! This is your last chance!

ILANA: He's not stopping!

DANA: Eurgh! Goddamnit!

ILANA: Dana, I-

SFX: Dana skids to a stop, her boot splashing through a puddle. She raises her gun and-

BAM! Ilana collides into her, knocking her aim wide.

BANG! The bullet hits Kind.

KIND: (Pained grunt and gasp)

SFX: But he's still up and running.

DANA: What the fuck, Stone?! Why did you-?
(Realising) Shit! He's getting away!

SFX: The Detectives chase after him but they quickly lose him. Kind's footsteps are engulfed by the storm.

DANA: (Panting) Oh, goddamnit. GOD-FUCKING-DAMNIT!

ILANA: (Panting lightly) I can't see him!

DANA: He's gone, Stone. We lost him!

SFX: The Detectives slow to a reluctant stop.

ILANA: I'm sorry, Dana. I-I don't know why I-

DANA: We had him! We fucking had him!

(Huffs with wry amusement - she's fuming)

Oh, man. Cassie's gonna ream us out. I hope you got life insurance.

ILANA: I do.

DANA: (Seething) Good. Come on. We gotta check in with the Cieslas.

SFX: Dana turns and walks back to the estate.

ILANA: Dana, I-

DANA: Save it for the executioner, Stone.

AMBIENT/SFX/MUSIC: Everything goes silent except for the music which takes over. The singer hums over the slow beat and pulsing electronic drone. The song plays until the end.

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

GIV (VO): KIND. Chapter Two. The Husband.

SFX: The flame flickers. The zippo flips close.

SCENE TWO: THE KIND HUSBAND

AMBIENT: Eden Orphanage. Giv and Kind's room. It's late in the night. Everything is quiet. Everyone is asleep, including Giv. The rain patters against the window. It's peaceful.

SFX: Kind opens the door and stumbles in. He shuts the door behind himself. Slowly, quietly, makes his way to the bathroom.

KIND: (Trying to stifle his pants - failing for the most part)
(Pained groan)

SFX: Kind gets dizzy and stumbles into the dresser. He stops, leans against it for a moment.

Giv stirs in bed.

GIV: (Groggy) Mm. Sujin...?

KIND: (Strained) Yeah. Sorry. Didn't mean to wake you.

GIV: What time is it?

SFX: Giv sits up.

KIND: Late. Go back to sleep.

SFX: Giv yanks back the sheets.

GIV: (Alarmed) What happened?

KIND: (Quickly) Nothing!
(Takes a breath, trying to act normal) I'm going to take a quick shower before bed. Okay?

SFX: Kind straightens up and slowly continues to the bathroom. He opens the door and switches on the light and ventilation. The bathroom fan whirs.

Giv quickly gets out of bed and stomps over to the bathroom. Just as Kind closes the door - Giv slams his palm against it, keeping it open. The door judders.

KIND: (Startled, wide-eyed) Giv! Do you mind? I'm trying to-

GIV: (Sharp intake)

SFX: Giv grabs Kind's arm.

GIV: You're bleeding!

KIND: (Defensive) It's nothing.

SFX: Kind tugs his arm free.

GIV: (Angry, worried) Nothing?! It looks like someone shot you-!

KIND: I tripped-

GIV: (Seriously?) Sujin, I work in the ER.

KIND: (Long pause)
I was mugged.

GIV: Oh my god.

KIND: They just took my wallet. I barely had any cash in it-

GIV: You need to go to the hospital!

SFX: Giv grabs Kind's arm again.

KIND: (Firmly) No.

GIV: Sujin-

KIND: (Softly, wheedling) You're a nurse. The best in Elysium, remember?

GIV: (Worried sigh)

SFX: Giv lets go of Kind.

GIV: If-If this gets infected...

KIND: (Lightly) I've had worse.

GIV: (Grim) Yes. You have.

(Pause)

(Sighs)

(Reluctant acquiescence) Take a seat on the bed. I'll bring the first aid kit.

SFX: Kind walks back into the bedroom. He sits on the bed and switches on the lamp. In the bathroom, we can hear Giv walk across the tiled floor in his bare feet and open a cabinet.

GIV: Did you see their faces?

KIND: They were wearing masks.

GIV: We should make a report in the morning-

KIND: I don't want to bother. The police won't do anything.

SFX: Giv returns to the bedroom, switching off the bathroom light and fan on his way.

GIV: They could check any cameras that were close by-

KIND: We're not getting them involved, Giv.

SFX: Giv stops by the bed.

GIV: (Quietly, sombre) Was it a kid?

KIND: (Thinking about Joah) Yeah. It was a kid.

GIV: (Dismayed sigh)

SFX: Giv sets down the first aid kit on the bed and sits as well.

GIV: Do you want aspirin? This is going to sting.

KIND: Just wrap it up.

GIV: (Frowning) It needs stitches-

KIND: I'll be fine.

GIV: (A long, loooooong sigh)

SFX: Giv opens the kit and a pack of disinfectant wipes. Kind pulls off his shirt and tosses it to the ground. As they speak, Giv starts cleaning Kind's wound - none too gently.

KIND: (Grunting softly in pain)

GIV: (Upset) How many times are you going to get shot?

KIND: (Joking) Third time's the charm.

GIV: You weren't there last time.

SFX: Giv throws down the used wipes, angrily.

GIV: You don't know what it was like.

KIND: I was in a coma, Giv.

SFX: Giv opens the pack of bandages.

GIV: Exactly. You. Weren't. There.

SFX: He wraps Kind's arm. Yanks it tight.

KIND: (Pained yell) Argh! Not so tight!

GIV: (Stern, tense) You don't want stitches - it has to be tight.

KIND: (Amused) Are you mad at me?

SFX: Giv yanks it tight again.

KIND: (Pained) Argh!

GIV: All done.

SFX: Giv finishes wrapping and packs away the kit.

KIND: (Teasing) Can I have a lollipop?

GIV: (Flatly) Sorry. I'm all out.

SFX: Giv flips the kit close.

KIND: (Chuckling) You need to work on your bedside manner.

GIV: Next time, don't step towards the bullet.

KIND: (Wryly, exasperated) Okay, alright.

GIV: The goal is to step away-

SFX: Kind lurches towards Giv. Knocks him onto his back with a sudden kiss. The first aid kit falls to the ground.

GIV: (Muffled by a sudden kiss) -from the bullet!

MUSIC: Squaric by Martin Gauffin plays. The same soft piano melody from Chapter One. But this time, the song has more instruments accompanying it - strings, woodwind instruments perhaps. It sounds fuller, more intense.

SFX: The couple continue kissing deeply.

GIV: (A happy hum)

SFX: They finally come up for air and cuddle on the bed.

GIV: (Chuckles. Exasperated, but calmer) You age me.

KIND: (Seriously) I'd do it again. Back then - it wasn't a choice for me. I couldn't lose you. I would rather raze everything to the ground than sacrifice us.

GIV: Sometimes you frighten me.

SFX: Kind raises his head.

KIND: Am I really that scary?

GIV: Sometimes.

SFX: A short pause. Then Kind drops his head back down.

KIND: I don't care.

GIV: Maybe you should.

KIND: As long as you're alive. I don't care.

GIV: (Small, sad sigh)

SFX: Giv lifts himself up onto his elbow. He idly strokes Kind's forehead.

GIV: It's so strange to think it's still in your head.

KIND: It freed me.

GIV: (Curiously) How so?

KIND: (Silently debates telling him - but decides otherwise)

GIV: Sujin?

KIND: Yeah?

MUSIC: The song goes into the chorus. Swelling, warm, romantic.

GIV: (Smiling. Warm) I'm here. Whenever you're ready.

KIND: (Pause. Then gratefully) I know.

GIV: You will always be my hero. That will never change.

MUSIC: The song hits the climax of the chorus - then peters off.

SFX: As Kind voice-overs, we only hear the rain pattering against the window. The darkness of the room, the quiet of the night, takes to the fore.

KIND (VO): I feel my stomach curdle when he says that. 'My hero'. For the time we've been together, now and then he'd say those two words, and it's

everything to him. It's our entire relationship, encapsulated in two short words.

But to me, it's a bad reminder of every lie I've told, the sneaking around, the blood on my hands, the gun I keep hidden at my side.

(Bitter) My hero.

MUSIC: 'Append' by Martin Gauffin. It's a dark, desolate piano piece. During the chorus, it travels to the higher notes and generates feelings of wistfulness and regret.

SFX: During this next section of the voice-over, we hear the memory he's recalling. Like a bad, distant dream.

VD: The Mugger has the voice of a young teen. They are slightly high pitched and full of anxiety. They are clearly out of their element.

KIND (VO): A couple years ago, Giv and I were mugged by a couple of kids. Giv was so good. He was calm. Compassionate. Gave up his wallet without protest. He was worried about those kids, even as they waved a gun in his face.

MUGGER (MEMORY): (Anxious) G-Give us everything you've got in your pockets! Wallets. Phones. H-hand them over and w-we won't shoot!

GIV (MEMORY): (Calmly) I'll give you my wallet. I'll give you everything I have. Just put the gun down.

MUGGER (MEMORY): Stay back!!!! Don't come any closer!

GIV (MEMORY): You don't have to do this. We can help you.

MUGGER (MEMORY): I said stay back!

GIV (MEMORY): If you need a hot meal or a place to stay, we can help.

KIND (VO): But they grew up in an active war with adults. They, the allies, we the axis. Adults were their wardens and tormentors, and Giv's kindness was just another manipulation. A sweet ploy to lure them into a trap. So they got nervous. And then they got mad. And I saw the look in that boy's eyes - the very moment he decided to become a killer - and I too, made a decision.

KIND (MEMORY): (Urgent) GIV!

SFX: In the memory, Kind shoves Giv aside. BANG! The mugger's gun goes off. Kind's hit. There's a high-pitched ringing in Kind's head. Like tinnitus.

KIND (MEMORY): (Shocked, pained gasp)

SFX: Kind takes a dragging step before collapsing.

GIV (MEMORY): SUJIN!

SFX: Giv grabs Kind. Pulls him into his arms.

GIV (MEMORY): (Desperate, terrified) You're okay! You're alright! Please, my love!

SFX: The memory fades away as we return to the bedroom.

KIND (VO): The bullet is still in there. Lodged in my frontal lobe. It's my good luck charm. My key to freedom.

SFX: Kind slips off the bed and kneels before Giv. He unzips Giv's pants.

GIV: (Breathless) Sujin...you should rest-

KIND: (Commanding) Shut up.

GIV: You were shot-!

KIND: Do you want to be gagged?

GIV: (A sharp intake)

(A soft sigh)

Okay. Okay.

SFX: Kind pulls Giv's pants off. Tosses it aside.

KIND (VO): It's also the only thing keeping Giv alive.

MUSIC: The last tinkling notes of the song plays.

GIV: (Gasps)

SCENE THREE: CAPTAIN EATON

AMBIENT: The SCPD. Eaton's office. Through the door, the bustling station. Through the open window, the chaos of downtown Silver City. The ambient gives the imagery of a wide, sun-cast office, the summer heat eased only by the occasional breeze.

MUSIC: Riverbanks by Hara Noda. It's a lively jazz piece, a little chaotic and frenzied. Like being in the middle of rush hour traffic.

SFX: A golf ball is putt. It rolls into the hole.

VD: Captain James Eaton has a masculine voice. It's mid-to-high pitched and has a slightly airy quality to it. He has a touch of a transatlantic accent as he drawls his words in a way only a trust fund nepo-baby might. Even through his cadence alone, one can safely assume Jimmy's privilege.

(TN: The way Jimmy says 'Dana' is incorrectly pronounced 'Dah-Nah', rather than Day-Nah. Yeah he's an asshole.)

EATON: (Barely restrained anger) Say that one more time.

ALDER: (Stiffly) Detectives Stone and Liu pursued the suspect, however... they were unable to capture him-

EATON: (Impatiently) The suspect, being...?

ALDER: Kind, sir. The Kind Killer.

EATON: Are you telling me that you let the Kind Killer escape?

ALDER: (Tense pause)

I...

DANA: We didn't let him escape, Captain. He was like a goddamn eel. Next time-

EATON: (Cutting Dana off) Next time?
(Laughs obnoxiously)
Get the ball, Alder.

ALDER: (Coldly) Yes, sir.
SFX: Alder steps over to the putting mat and picks up the ball.
Eaton snatches it out of her hand.

EATON: Stone and Liu are off the case.

DANA: What the fuck?!

ILANA: That is inadvisable–

EATON: Do you know why I had Alder assign you as lead on this case, Dana?

DANA: (Seething) Because I'm your best damn detective?

CAPTAIN EATON: (Laughs thinly)
Isn't that quaint? No, sweetie. It's because you actually put effort into your appearance.

ALDER: (Sharply) Captain, that is uncalled for!

DANA: (Same time) I'm not your damn mascot, Eaton!

EATON: (Overlapping) This isn't negotiable, ladies. I want competent detectives on this case before the Governor tears me a new asshole–

ALDER: (Interrupting) Detectives Stone and Liu are our most capable and efficient investigators. There's no-one else in this department more qualified to catch the Kind Killer.

(Beat)
Give them one more chance. If they screw up again, I'll take responsibility.

DANA: (Shocked; pissed) Lieutenant!

ALDER: (Snaps) Quiet, Detective.
(Softens to a stiff, formal tone) James? Do we have a deal?

EATON: (Pauses to think. And then, with a smirk)
You'll take a demotion. Back to the musty barracks of your youth. Wouldn't that be ideal? Being out on the frontlines again? You can make daisy chains and play nice with serial killers as much as you want.

DANA: You unbelievable prick!

ALDER: (Overlapping; loudly) We have a deal. Detectives? My office. Now.

DANA: (Heatedly) But-

ALDER: (Shouts) NOW!

SFX: Alder slams the door open as she leaves Eaton's office.

DANA: (Sighs irritably)

EATON: (Smugly) I'll see you soon, Dana.

DANA: (Scoffs) Tch.

SFX: Dana and Ilana head for the door.

DANA: (Flatly) Your form sucks by the way.

SFX: Eaton puts the ball. He hits too hard and it smashes through a glass cabinet.

EATON: (Shrill shriek) MY MACALLAN!!

SCENE FOUR: HOMEMADE PASTA

AMBIENT: Dana's apartment. Night. Outside, we can hear the usual white noise of Silver City traffic. In the corner, a janky sound system plays jazz music.

MUSIC: Evans by Bladverk Band. A relaxed, romantic, jazz piece featuring a saxophone and piano.

SFX: Forks clink against plates as Dana and Ilana enjoy their pasta dinner at the table.

ILANA; (Chewing) Dana, this is excellent.

DANA: I told ya! I'm the best damn cook in Silver City. You want more beer?

ILANA: Oh. Ah...I really shouldn't.

DANA: After a day like the one we had, I think we can indulge.

ILANA: (Amused) I suppose you're right.

DANA: Of course, I'm right. You gotta learn to live a little, Stone.

SFX: Dana stands up, chair scraping, and she plods over to the kitchen. In the distance, we can hear her open the fridge and the bottle clink as she grabs two beers.

ILANA: I do. Live, I mean. In fact, I'm doing it right now.

DANA: Har-Har. I mean-

SFX: Fridge door closes. Dana starts heading back with the beers; her voice approaching.

DANA: -don't you ever go out? Party with friends? Go on trips and let your hair down?

SFX: Dana sets down the beers and takes her seat again.

ILANA: I don't have any friends.

DANA: (Awkward) Oh. Well...uh...I guess I'm in the same boat. It's hard enough making friends in your thirties, without being Dana Liu on top of that.

ILANA: I think being Dana Liu is an asset.

DANA: That is...the most clinical compliment I've ever received.
(Chuffed) Thank you, Stone.

SFX: The Detectives pop the lids off their beers and raise them.

DANA: Cheers to being friendless!

ILANA: Cheers to being Dana Liu.

DANA: (Chuckles appreciatively)

SFX: Their bottle clink as they cheers and they take a drink before continuing with their meal.

DANA: (Chewing) So...Stone. You've been at the SCPD for a few months now. How are you finding it?

ILANA: Everyone is very angry.

DANA: (Laughs) Yeah, yeah, that's Silverians for you! Pissed for the sake of being pissed. It's a way of life.

ILANA: I think your anger is justified. I've observed many instances of corruption, malfeasance, and nepotism during the short time I've been here. Captain Eaton being the most egregious perpetrator.

DANA: 'Malfeasance', huh? I guess you could call it that.

ILANA: The Lieutenant seems to be the only one who cares about the work we do.

DANA: She cares in her own way. Honestly, Cassie becoming Lieutenant is nothing short of a miracle. But she knows how to work the system and she doesn't mind selling her soul a little to do it. I suppose that's why she's where she is and I'm where I am.

ILANA: (Curiously) Doctor Song mentioned that you and the Lieutenant knew each other. Outside of work.

DANA: (Annoyed) That big-mouthed bitch.

SFX: Dana puts down her fork and leans back in her seat.

DANA: Yeah, Cassie and I were in a pretty toxic relationship. I broke it off when I found out she was cheating on me with her barista.

ILANA: Her barista?

DANA: Yeah. There's a cafe downtown that Cassie goes to every morning before work. The beans they use have this...weird smell. Kinda like smoked fruit. Anyway, two years into our relationship, I start smelling it on her after work. She tells me she's going to the gym and comes back stinking like she rolled around in a leftover coffee grounds. At first, I ignore it. Pretend I don't notice anything. If I act like everything is fine, then it will be. And the thing about ignoring problems is that it works - at first. It's a good short-term solution. A band-aid slapped over a stab wound. But then it starts getting to me. I'm bleeding out and it's harder to ignore. So, I go to that cafe on the corner of King and Locust, and I meet this bitch of a barista that's trying to destroy my relationship.

SFX: Dana takes an angry swig.

DANA: Wouldn't you know it, she's the nicest motherfucker I've ever met - and she makes the best coffee in the city. I mean, I walk outta there and I understand why Cassie would cheat on me. Hell, I would've cheated on me too!

(Bursts out laughing; it's weird, fake, tinged with bitterness)

ILANA: (Quietly) I'm sorry, Dana.

DANA: (With false bravado) Trust me, it isn't as bad as it sounds. Cassie did me a favour. I'm not really the relationship type.

ILANA: You're allowed to be upset about this.

MUSIC: The music ends.

DANA: (Defensive; irritated) I know I don't need permission to feel things. Fucks sakes. Why the hell are we talking about this, anyway?

ILANA: I'm sorry - I shouldn't have brought this up.

DANA: (Snaps) No, you shouldn't have.

SFX: A tense pause. Ilana sets down her cutlery and stands up from the table.

ILANA: (Impassively) It's getting late. I should get home-

DANA: (Growls) Sit down, Stone.

ILANA: No, it's fine. I think I'll-

DANA: Ilana. Please.

SFX: Another tense pause. Ilana slowly sits back down.

DANA: (Sighs; defeated)

Sorry. I'm sorry. I don't mean to be such an dick. It's been years and it still stings.

ILANA: I'm your partner, Dana.

DANA: Yeah...

SFX: Dana finishes her beer. Sets down the empty bottle on the table, hard, with determination.

MUSIC: Reliance of Dawn by DEX1200 plays. It's a quiet, warm electronic/synth piece. The music could be compared to cresting waves and at every slow, gentle peak, there are soft, nudging melodic notes like a bobbing buoy. It reflects the intimacy and vulnerability of the moment.

DANA: (As she rants, her voice gets louder and angrier until she sounds almost unhinged)

Okay, so it fucking hurts, alright? Cheating is one of the worst things you can do to someone you're supposed to love and - what - I have to forgive and forget? I have to move on and ignore the fact that every time I smell coffee I feel like puking my goddamn guts out? Oh, and yeah, she's also my boss, which she never fails to remind me during every single interaction we have,

by the way. How is it fair that I have to kiss Judas' ass while she gets to bang Miss Silver City twenty-eighteen?!

ILANA: (Stunned silence. Then, in a quiet, awed voice) You called me Ilana.

DANA: (Groans) Fuck me for being honest.

ILANA: I appreciate your honesty. I do. I like it when you tell me about yourself. Even if it's painful.

DANA: Sadist.

ILANA: Dana, I'm your partner. With that privilege comes certain imperatives that must be fulfilled. One of which includes loyalty. I intend to see it through. No matter what.

DANA: (Touched; but also wary) Let me ask you one thing, Stone.

ILANA: Anything.

DANA: Earlier today. When we were chasing Kind. I had him right in my sights. I know I could have taken him down, but you pushed me. You pushed me intentionally.

ILANA: ...Not intentionally.

DANA: Come off it, Stone. That wasn't an accident. You didn't want me to shoot him - why?

ILANA: (Nervous) I'm not certain. When I saw you about to take that shot, my body...moved on its own.

SFX: Ilana scratches her arms mindlessly.

ILANA: (Distressed, confused) I don't know why. I want him just as much as you, Dana. I'm sorry-

DANA: (Gently) Hey. Hey, Stone, it's okay.

SFX: Dana reaches over and touches Ilana's hand. The scratching stops.

DANA: I get it. Okay? I don't like using force either, but sometimes we gotta, to keep people safe. It's one of those shitty things that comes with the job.

ILANA: (Softly, gratefully) Yes. I understand.

SFX: Dana rises from the table and walks over to Ilana's side. She leans a hand on the table as she hunches down over her. Her voice is closer. Intimate.

DANA: (Amused, warm) I'm the type to hold a grudge for decades.

I'm...working on it. But with you...

(Huffs a laugh)

When it comes to you, it's funny how much you wear me down. Like goddamn sandpaper. I reckon you can just about sell my kidneys and shoot my dog, and I'd still wanna eat shitty homemade pasta with you.

ILANA: (Breath hitching) I don't want to shoot your dog.

DANA: I don't mean it literally.

ILANA: Your pasta isn't shitty-

DANA: (Interrupting) I'm going to kiss you, Stone.

ILANA: (Startled) Dana?

DANA: Can I kiss you, Stone?

ILANA: (Pause, then in a whisper) Yes.

DANA: Yeah?

ILANA: (Tremulously) ...Please.

MUSIC/SFX: The Detectives kiss. It's deep, intimate, heady. The music swells and takes over.

SCENE FIVE: OLIVIA CIESLA

AMBIENT: The Ciesla Estate. The same evening. We're in the parlour where a game of pool is running.

MUSIC/SFX: Die Kunst Der Fuge (BWV 1080 Contrapunctus 1) - a slow, moody string ensemble by Bach - plays. It begins non-diegetic, then as we enter the scene, the music becomes diegetic, playing on a record player.

SFX: A ball is struck and sinks into a pocket. Ice clinks in whiskey tumblers.

VD: Dodder Leach has a masculine voice. He has a drawling, amused quality to his tone whenever he speaks. If not for his shitty personality, one might assume him to be a rather friendly and approachable person by voice alone.

BAKULA: How are you so good at this game, Leach? Spent a lot of time fondling cues?

DODDER: (Laughs crassly)

What can I say, Ciesla? "He who knows himself is enlightened."

BAKULA: Sounds like you're being neglected. Mrs. Leach put you in the doghouse?

SFX: Bakula refills his glass.

DODDER: Yeah, well, she's no mail order bride. How is Ema these days?

BAKULA: (Laughs) Scientists, man. She hasn't left the lab in days. Says she's on the verge of a breakthrough. It's best to let her do her thing. Meanwhile, I got a catalogue of the finest girls in Silver City.

DODDER: (Interested) Local?

BAKULA: Japanese imports.

DODDER: (Greedily) Oh, man.
(Chuckles)

BAKULA: Had to grease a lot of hands for these ones. But it was worth every dollar. The Japs ain't like those damn moskals. They'd rather kamikaze themselves than miss a delivery schedule.

DODDER: Well, maybe I'll take a look. Jo - what about you? Ever tasted one of the Governor's girls before?

JOAH: (Flatly) No, sir.

BAKULA: Joah? He's a dickless saint. All smooth down there like a fucking Ken doll.

BAKULA & DODDER: (Laugh uproariously, meanly)

DODDER: Jesus Christ, he's not denying it! Don't tell me you're a virgin, Jo. Or are you one of those Ophid fairies, always strutting up and down King Street like bitches in heat-

JOAH: (Pissed, trying to keep calm) Would you like a refill, Mister Leach?

DODDER: Holy shit!

(Laughs like a hyena)

This is the guy you got watching Kind?

BAKULA: They have a history. And he's very useful in his own way. Aren't you, Joah?

DODDER: It's your shot, Governor.

SFX: Bakula sets down his glass and lines up a shot. Crack! The balls go rolling. He sinks one easily.

DODDER: I'm ain't the only one stroking cues.

BAKULA: I'm not doing the stroking. The catalogue, man.

DODDER: (Chuckles) Hey, that Captain of yours took me out golfing, by the way. Says he wants to 'strengthen our community bonds'. Some bullshit.

BAKULA: He's a useful moron to have in your back pocket.

DODDER: I knew I could smell the Macallan all over this.

MUSIC: The music ends. A new one begins. Invention No. 9 in F Minor (BWV 780) by Bach. Similar string ensemble piece to the first.

BAKULA: That's just the good Captain. Wears the damn drink like a perfume.

DODDER: Yeah, I already got my kids in the station.

BAKULA: (Chuckles) Come now, Dodder. You said you the SCPD were stifling your business. Why not have yourself a 'get out jail free' card?

DODDER: I dunno. You want me to make him one of mine?

SFX: Bakula walks around the table. Sets down his glass. And takes another shot. He doesn't sink anything this time.

BAKULA: Got my own shit to deal with.

DODDER: (Knowing) Kind.

BAKULA: (Irritated) He broke in last night. Beat Joah here to a pulp and ran off. One of Captain Moron's people clipped him though.

DODDER: You think he knows?

BAKULA: No. No, he thinks he knows.

DODDER: (Concerned) That's thirty-four he's put down. When are you going to step in, Ciesla?

BAKULA: He's strong. Stronger than anyone I've got. But I got people closing in on him. Won't be long until he's mine.

DODDER: Huh. And what about your daughter? Isn't she the reason he broke in?

BAKULA: (Flippant) Olivia? She's the least of my concerns.

DODDER: As long as the SCPD is in the palm of my hand, you have a private army ready to go.

BAKULA: Just keep the donations coming, Leach, and I'll have Kind off the streets soon enough. Joah?

JOAH: Yes, Governor?

BAKULA: Keep your eye on Kind. And this time - find out about that husband of his. Reveal yourself, if you have to. I want him spooked.

JOAH: (Beat) Yes, sir.

DODDER: Alright. It's uh...it's your turn, Jo.

JOAH: Joah.

DODDER: What?

JOAH: (Flatly) My name is Joah. Sir.

DODDER: (Scoffs) The fuck kinda name is Joah?

AMBIENT/SFX: BANG! The door slams shut. Olivia stalks into her bedroom, heels clacking against the floor.

MUSIC: Above As Below by Blood Red Sun plays on Olivia's sound system. It's a grungy poppy song with a femme singer who has a breathy voice.

OLIVIA: (Breathes) Asshole.

SFX: Olivia walks to her bed, throws herself down. The mattress squeaks.

OLIVIA: I'm the least of his concerns?

SFX: Olivia hits the mattress angrily.

OLIVIA: (Angrily) Good!

SFX: She pulls out her phone and calls Kyle.

VD: Kyle Dilstern has a youthful, masculine voice. He has a friendly, confident tone. He sounds as young as Olivia, in his late teens to early twenties.

KYLE (PHONE): What's going on, Livs?

OLIVIA: What are you doing right now? Can you come over?

KYLE (PHONE): What about your old man? Isn't he around?

OLIVIA: (Annoyed) Yeah, he is, but it doesn't matter. He's getting pissed with his gross friends.

KYLE (PHONE): (Chuckles) And you want me to swoop in and rescue you, huh? Fine. I'll come by. Anything for you, Livs.

OLIVIA: Security is crazy right now though, so you gotta sneak in. Maybe bring a wad of cash.

KYLE (PHONE): (Dismayed) Again?! I just got my allowance!

OLIVIA: (Giggles) I'll see you soon, Kyle.

KYLE (PHONE): Yeah, yeah. You owe me!

SFX: Olivia hangs up the phone.

OLIVIA: (Sighs and clears her throat)

SFX: She opens up the camera app and records a video of herself.

OLIVIA: This is the will and testament of Olivia Ciesla. I saw the Kind Killer murder this guy, Thomas Hurste. And last night, Kind broke into my house to murder me. I can't stop thinking about him. Like, at the time, I was really freaked, yeah. But after, I...I don't know. The less afraid I am of him and more...familiar he feels. Like I know him - the guy behind the mask.

(Beat - then, with a wry laugh)

Oh my god. This is so unhinged.. The guy's a serial killer and I'm thinking about looking for him.

(Laughs bitterly)

Whatever. I'm the least of anyone's concerns, right?

Oh yeah. And I leave everything I own to...charities or whatever. I dunno. I'm dead. Sort it out yourselves.

SFX: Beep. She stops recording and slumps back into bed. Time passes.

MUSIC: We skip ahead in time. Pressure Lover by Blood Red Sun now plays. It's the same vibe as the previous song. Electronic, grunge-pop.

SFX: There's a bit of a commotion at the window. Kyle grunting and panting. His shoes scraping against the brick exterior.

Olivia stirs and gets up from the bed. She walks over to the window and slides it open. The night rushes in with all its sounds - crickets, rustling trees, the distant hum of Silver City.

OLIVIA: (Amused; wry) You got past the guard. Impressive.

KYLE: (Strained, panting) Yeah! It took like...five hundred bucks to do it....but...I'm...here...now-!!

OLIVIA: Do you need a hand?

KYLE: (Even more strained) No! I...got...this...HRRRNNNGGHH!!!

SFX: Kyle pulls himself up - and his footing slips.

KYLE: OH FUCK!!!

SFX: Shoes scrabble wildly against the wall. He almost falls but catches himself just in time.

OLIVIA: (Amused) Are you sure?

KYLE: (High-pitched) YEAH I'M GOOD!

OLIVIA: Well, keep your voice down, okay? My mom's sleeping in the other room.

SFX: Olivia closes the window and walks back to her bed. She sits and idly flips through a magazine.

KYLE: (Muffled, through the window) BABE? BABE?? I TAKE IT BACK! I NEED HELP! BABE!!!!

SFX: Kyle bangs on the window to no avail. So he helps himself.

KYLE: (Muffled grunting and panting)

SFX: He struggles for a while before finally sliding the window open and hauling himself into the room. He collapses into a messy heap.

KYLE: (Panting, relieved)

SFX: Olivia closes the magazine and tosses it aside.

OLIVIA: (Amused) You took your time.

KYLE: (Exhausted, breathless) I need to lift more weights.

SFX: Kyle stands and walks over to the bed.

OLIVIA: Kyle. If you lift any more weights, you won't be able to wipe your own ass.

KYLE: (Laughs) Yeah, coach is really on my case this season. So's my dad, actually. After I fumbled last year-

SFX: He sits on the bed.

OLIVIA: Hey.

SFX: Olivia hits the bed with her palm.

OLIVIA: Fuck coach. And fuck your dad.

KYLE: You ever try saying that to his face?

OLIVIA: (Grinning) Your dad? Sure. Next time I see him, I'll march right up to him and tell him loud and clear: Fuck you, Dwade!

KYLE & OLIVIA: (Laughs)

KYLE: I'd pay to see that. Don't think anyone's talked back to him since he was my age.

OLIVIA: I get it. Fathers with unchecked egos. It's like they're in a completely different world.

SFX: Kyle leans on his elbow and pats the bed.

KYLE: So, what's with the booty call, Livs?

OLIVIA: Did you hear about what happened?

KYLE: (Tense; serious) You're talking about him?

OLIVIA: Kind? Yeah.

KYLE: (Grimly) I heard. The pigs shoulda taken him down. I would've. If I was here.

OLIVIA: (Softly) How are you holding up? Are your parents...?

KYLE: (Bitterly) Mom's been drinking non-stop and dad's just...well, he's always at work. Doing what he does best. Being a corpo-loser.

OLIVIA: Mine's exactly the same. Actually, I think he might be worse.

KYLE: No way. You remember what my dad said at Sylvia's funeral? During his eulogy?

OLIVIA: (Sucks air through her teeth, cringing)

KYLE: (Pompous tone, impersonating Dwade) "Death is yesterday. Dilstern is today."

OLIVIA: (Overlapping; same time) "...Dilstern is today." Yeaaaaah...I can't believe he used a slogan in his eulogy!

KYLE: (Bitterly) It was the perfect marketing opportunity.

OLIVIA: Have the cops given you anything yet?

KYLE: Sylvia's old news. It's all about you and that old guy now.

OLIVIA: (Guilty) That sucks.

KYLE: (Forced brightness) But hey! It's all good. I'm here. You're here. We got the mood lighting going on. The romantic music-

OLIVIA: (Amused) Romantic music? I'm pretty sure this song's about nihilism...

KYLE: (Waggles his brows) Well, how about you and I get...nihilistic together?

OLIVIA: (Laughs, wryly) You're beautiful, Kyle Dilstern.

SFX: The two kiss. Lay back on the bed.

OLIVIA: (A little breathless when they part) ...Fine. Let's get nihilistic.

SFX: Olivia pulls the covers as we transition once more through time. The music gets louder until-

OLIVIA: (Screams, horrified) KYLE!

MUSIC: The music suddenly transition to Particle Emission by Silver Maple. It's an urgent, suspenseful electronic song that starts off with a looping melody.

SFX: Kyle's sitting at the open window. There's the sound of a bic lighter being used. It's not quite working yet.

KYLE: (Muffled through a joint) What? You wanna hit?

OLIVIA: (Gasping in panic) Put it out! Put it out!

KYLE: (Laughs) C'mon, Livs. What is this - a bit?

SFX: Olivia rushes towards Kyle, now barefoot. The lighter finally works - a small flame erupts.

OLIVIA: (Hyperventilating) NO!

SFX: She bats the lighter out of Kyle's hand. The flame goes out. The lighter bounces on the floor.

KYLE: What the hell, Livs?! I was tryna light my joint!

OLIVIA: (Shakily; on the verge of tears) I-I can't...

KYLE: Are you high already?

OLIVIA: No!

SFX: Kyle picks up his lighter and tries again.

KYLE: Well, I dunno about you, but physical violence is uncalled for in a healthy relationship-

SFX: The spark wheel is flicked again.

OLIVIA: (Cries out in panic)

SFX: Olivia lunges at Kyle again. Slaps his hand. The lighter flies out the window and lands in the bushes below.

KYLE: (Dismayed) My lighter!
(Angry, confused) Livs! What the fuck?!

OLIVIA: GET OUT, KYLE!

KYLE: Livs, what are you doing?!

OLIVIA: GET OUT OF MY ROOM!

KYLE: I'm going! I'm going!

SFX: Olivia shoves Kyle.

OLIVIA: GO!

SFX: Kyle scrambles through the window. He's about to climb down but loses his footing. He falls two stories down - and into the bushes below.

KYLE: OH SHIIIIIT!

(Heavy grunt when he lands)

Ow. God-fuckin-damnit.

SFX: Kyle drags himself out of the bushes.

KYLE: I'M FINE BY THE WAY!

(Surprised, happy) Hey! My lighter!

SFX: He runs over to pick up his lighter.

Olivia slams the window shut.

OLIVIA: (Tearfully) What the fuck is wrong with me?!

SFX: A small knock at the door before it opens.

EMA: Olivia? Honey? Is everything alright?

OLIVIA: (Sobbing) Mom!

SFX: Ema steps into the room and Olivia embraces her.

OLIVIA: (Crying)

EMA: Was that Kyle? Did he do something to you?

OLIVIA: No...No it wasn't him...

SFX: Ema quickly steps away from Olivia, extricating herself from the embrace.

EMA: (Slightly annoyed) What's wrong, honey?

OLIVIA: He used a lighter. And he's used it a million times before. But this time it...it felt like I was about to die. Like...that tiny flame was going to burn me up. And I-I-

EMA: You're safe, honey. You're safe. Nothing's going to hurt you.

OLIVIA: I've never been so scared of-of fire before.

EMA: (Strained. Wary) Olivia. Honey. I think you're tired and you've been through a very traumatic experience. Anyone would react the way you did-

OLIVIA: No, this is different. Ever since I saw Kind I've...I've been feeling like a different person. Like...I'm not really supposed to be me. And this fire thing? It's been there all along. I just...forgot about it.

EMA: (Incredulous) You forgot you were afraid of fire?

OLIVIA: I know. I know. But...it makes sense to me.

EMA: (Tiredly) Olivia. I think you need some sleep. Go to bed and we'll have a chat in the morning. And no more boys.

OLIVIA: (False amusement. Disappointed) No more boys. Sure.

EMA: Good night, honey.

OLIVIA: (Miserably) Night.

SFX: Ema steps out of the room. Closes the door.
We hear her muffled footsteps head down the hall.

A short silence.

And then, a flurry of activity as Olivia pulls on her jacket and shoes.

She slides the window open, climbs out the window, and slides it shut.

MUSIC: The music ends just as the window shuts.

SCENE SIX: NO CREAM, NO SUGAR

AMBIENT: Silver City. Day. Outside the Eden Orphanage.

SFX: Someone is swinging on the grounds of Eden. Slow. Steady. Like a metronome.

The front door opens. Giv steps outside with a garbage bag in hand.

He pauses when he sees the intruder.

GIV: (Uncertain, wary) Excuse me. Sir. This is private property.

JOAH: (Overly friendly) Eden Orphanage, right?

GIV: (Cautiously) Yes. Is there anything I can help you with?

SFX: The swinging abruptly stops as Joah stands up. He strolls over to Giv.

JOAH: The name's Joah.

GIV: Joah?

(Pause as he studies the stranger)

Were you the man the Director met-?

JOAH: They were the Director?

(Chuckles)

They offered me a uh-certain service that an orphanage director had no business offering.

GIV: (Quiet amusement) Our Director is...uh...a bit eccentric. But they are always well-intentioned.

(Beat)

I'm sorry - I haven't introduced myself.

JOAH: Giv, right? Giv Hasan?

SFX: They shake hands.

GIV: (Startled) How did you-?

JOAH: Sujin told me all about you.

GIV: You know my husband?

JOAH: He's my brother.

GIV: (Shocked) Brother?!

JOAH: (Chuckles) Now, I know. We don't look alike. But we share the same father.

GIV: (Flustered) Oh! Oh, yes. Excuse me. I'm being terribly rude. Would you like to come in for a coffee, Mister...?

JOAH: (Coolly) Joah is fine. We're family after all.

GIV: Joah.

(Beat)

I...suppose we are family, aren't we?

JOAH: That for the skip?

SFX: Giv lifts the rubbish bag.

GIV: Yes, I'll just-

JOAH: Give it here. I'll help you out. Anything for my brother-in-law.

SFX: Joah takes the rubbish bag and walks to the skip.

GIV: (Unsettled) Oh....thank you. Joah.

SFX: Joah tosses the bag into the skip and heads back

GIV: Please, come in.

SFX: Both men enter the building and the door shuts behind them.

AMBIENT/SFX: The ambience changes to the vestibule. It's quiet. We can only hear the air conditioner.

GIV: You can take off your shoes here.

JOAH: Ah. You're that kinda household.

SFX: They take off their shoes and walk to the kitchen.

GIV: The Director likes to keep things traditional around here.

JOAH: I can appreciate tradition. You're alone, today?

GIV: Yes. For the moment. Please, take a seat. I'll boil the water for the coffee.

JOAH: Oh, allow me, Giv. I came unannounced after all. It's the least I can do.

GIV: There is no need, but...thank you. Joah.

SFX: Both men enter the kitchen. Joah fills up the kettle and turns it on. Giv pulls out the cups from the cupboard. As the water boils, the men talk.

GIV: It's strange. Sujin never mentioned a brother before.

JOAH: Let me guess. He's never mentioned his family, ever.

GIV: He told me that he was alone.

JOAH: Of course he did.

(Sighs)

He and our father had a falling out. Our family is...a stickler for tradition. And Sujin had always been so defiant.

GIV: Your father didn't approve of our relationship.

JOAH: (Cryptic, amused) Sure. You can say that.

GIV: My father wasn't thrilled himself.
(Coughs awkwardly)

SFX: Giv quickly pulls out the sugar and instant coffee.

JOAH: I'm sorry to hear that. Is he still around...?

GIV: (Awkward) I can empathise with my husband on that front.

JOAH: Your mother?

GIV: Passed when I was born. In fact, I only reconnected with my father at Sujin's behest. An utter failure of a reunion, of course, but it is nice to know that I come from somewhere. Even if that somewhere is...not quite to expectation.

SFX: The water finishes boiling. Joah brings the kettle over and Giv prepares the coffees.

JOAH: You were an orphan?

GIV: Grew up here, in fact, yes. Cream? Sugar?

JOAH: No cream. No sugar.

GIV: (Amused huff)
(Fondly) Sujin drinks his coffee the same way.

JOAH: We all come from somewhere.

SFX: Giv pours the water. They stir their coffees and make their way to the dining table.

GIV: Is everything alright, Joah? Your father, is he...?

JOAH: The old man's still kicking and screaming. No, I'm afraid I'm just here on a social call.

SFX: They sit at the table.

GIV: (Taken aback) Oh.

JOAH: Sorry to disappoint.

GIV: No, not at all. I thought...well, it's been eight years since Sujin and I were married. And his brother suddenly visits out of the blue-

JOAH: Let's just say that nothing gets done without my father's say so.

GIV: He wanted you to visit me?

JOAH: He's been worried about Sujin. Wondering about him. I think he's considering a reunion. Hopefully, one that's to expectations.

GIV: You are here to...screen me?

JOAH: I'm here to see what kind of man you are, Giv Hasan.

GIV: And what are your conclusions?

SFX: Joah takes a sip of coffee. He puts down his cup.

JOAH: That you don't know anything at all.

GIV: I know a fair number of things.

JOAH: You don't know what you should know.

GIV: (Dryly) I see that inscrutability runs in the family.

JOAH: Where does Sujin go at night?

GIV: (Pause)

He told you about that?

JOAH

He's told me alotta things, Giv.

GIV: (Coolly) I'm not my husband's minder nor do I wish to be. He can go where he pleases.

JOAH: My brother's obviously got his issues. While a minder is excessive, it can't hurt to keep a closer eye on him.

GIV: I'm not his warden, either. If you're here to give me unsolicited advice, then I'm afraid that I must ask you to leave-

JOAH: Just the foolish whims of a worried brother.

SFX: Joah takes another long, loud sip.

GIV: What kind of man is your father, that he keeps such a tight rein over his own son? Eight years and not once did you visit - because your father forbade it?

JOAH: Like I said. You don't know anything.

GIV: Then please. Enlighten me.

JOAH: That's not a conversation I can have with you.

(Pause)

My father, on the other hand. He would be able to tell you all you need to know.

GIV: (Surprised) He wants to meet me?

JOAH: I have a car waiting.

SFX: Front door opens and shuts. Kind takes off his shoes and he walks into the kitchen, carrying a load of shopping bags.

GIV: (Startled; uneasy) Right now?

JOAH: (Through a leery smile) The early bird and all that.

KIND: Giv? Honey? I'm just here to drop off the shopping. Everyone's waiting for us at Giuseppe's-

SFX: Kind's footsteps stop.

GIV: Oh, Sujin! Your brother's come to visit-

KIND: (Dangerous; beyond fury) What the fuck are you doing here?

SFX: Kind throws the shopping bags down.

GIV: (Shocked) Hey, it's okay-

SFX: Kind storms over to Giv.

KIND: (Sharply) Giv! Get away from him!

GIV: (Bewildered) We're having coffee-

KIND: (Desperate, pleading) GIV!

SFX: Giv stares at Kind. Then slowly stands and moves away from the table.

JOAH: A bit of an overreaction, brother. Your husband and I were just having a lovely chat.

SFX: Joah sips at his coffee, loud and obnoxious.

KIND: (Darkly, apoplectic) You're not here for a chat, Joah.

JOAH: (Shark-toothed) My. How jaded you've become.

SFX: Joah leans back in his seat.

JOAH: I think the time apart has affected your mind. Made you paranoid.

SFX: He flicks at his cup at 'paranoid'. It clinks loudly. Echoes. As though struck by wood.

KIND: I've tolerated you for too long.

JOAH: Yes. Why is that? Sentimentality, perhaps? Such a human foible, don't you think?

KIND: Something's changed. Or you've suddenly lost all sense of self-preservation-

JOAH: Father is simply tired of all the sacrifices he's had to make. As valuable as you are to him, he has...limited patience.

SFX: Kind grabs the back of Giv's vacant chair.
Joah takes another loud sip.

KIND: (Sneers) I've given you my answer. Despite your short-sighted intrusion, it will remain the same.

SFX: Kind crushes the wood of the chair backing. It splinters beneath his inhuman grip.

KIND: Now leave, before I call the police.

JOAH: Dragging the law into our family squabble? Are you certain that is a good idea?

KIND: You aren't my family.

JOAH: We come from the same tree, Sujin. We are family by design.

KIND: (Wrathful) Come here again and I will kill you.

SFX: Giv steps towards Kind.

MUSIC: Triptych III: Desolation by Anders Schill Paulsen. The anxious, suspenseful whining drone.

GIV: (Whispers, concerned) Sujin...

JOAH: I almost believe you, brother. But there's no need to get so worked up. There won't be any occasion for another visit.

SFX: Joah finishes his tea and sets down the cup. He stands up. Walks past Kind and pauses beside Giv.

JOAH: It has been an absolute pleasure, Giv. Sincerely.
(Intimately, leery) I will be seeing you again.

SFX: Kind stalks over to Joah and shoves him roughly against the wall.

JOAH: (Exclaims in pain when he hits the wall, and it devolves into mocking laughter)

KIND: (Growling) Keep testing me, Joah! See what happens!

SFX: Giv grabs Kind's arm.

GIV: Sujin, enough! He's leaving!

JOAH: Father sends his best regards.

SFX: Joah shoves Kind back. Kind stumbles back a few steps, seething. Joah straightens out his clothes and saunters away. A high pitched ringing. The accompanying rumble. They get louder and louder and louder, even as Joah leaves the building.

MUSIC: The song fades out.

SFX: The pressure builds and builds until-

BANG!

Kind punches the wall. The rumbling and ringing stops.

KIND: (Guttural, infuriated yell)

MUSIC: Etude No 1 For String Quartet by Peter Sandberg. Dramatic, tense string music.

KIND: (Pants harshly as he tries to calm down)

GIV: (Quietly; a little stiffly) I think you owe me an explanation.

KIND: (Roughly) There's nothing to say.

GIV: (Sharply) I didn't know you had a brother until fifteen minutes ago. I didn't even know you had a family. A family who are all still alive - and worried about you! You have nothing to say? Do you think I deserve that, Sujin?

SFX: Kind steps over to Giv and embraces him, moreso to comfort himself.

KIND: (Long, calming intake. Shakily, softly) Please. Please. I need you to trust me.

GIV: (Helplessly; perplexed) Of course, I trust you. But you threatened to kill him, Sujin. That's not you.

KIND: Those people aren't my family. They want to destroy this life we've built together. They want to destroy Eden. Us.

GIV: Why? Because of your father?

KIND: (Impassively) He's not my father.

GIV: (Impatiently) Okay. Not your father, then. Is it because of him? Because of how he feels about you being with me?

KIND: Is that what Joah told you?

GIV: He told me that I don't know anything.

KIND: You know me, don't you?

GIV: (Beat) Do I?

KIND: (Pause) Giv, I-

GIV: Are you in danger, Sujin?

KIND: (Softly) No.

GIV: Is Eden? The kids?

KIND: Not while I'm around.

GIV: What about me?

KIND: As long as Joah stays away.

GIV: And if he doesn't?

KIND: (Threatening undertone) He will.

GIV: That's not a guarantee, Sujin. You can't just caveman your way out of this. Whatever threat Joah poses-

KIND: I'm dealing with it.

SFX: Kind pulls away from Giv. Widens the space between them.

GIV: It would be easier to deal with if you just tell me the truth!

SFX: Giv stubbornly chases after Kind. Catches his hand.

KIND: You said that you trust me.

SFX: Giv releases Kind's hand.

GIV: (Softly) I do.

KIND: Then you need to trust me.

GIV: (Sighs) I'm trusting you, Sujin.

SFX: Giv gently raps Sujin's chest to emphasise his words.

GIV: But I deserve to know.

SFX: Kind embraces Giv again.

KIND: I'll tell you everything. Not now. But I will.

MUSIC: The music pauses. Rings. A bated breath.

GIV: (Softly) Just don't take too long.

MUSIC: The music continues. Urgent, fervent strings.

KIND (VO): After, we don't talk about what happened. But it's there, like osmium weights getting heavier with every tense step. And something changes between us. A subtle shift that destabilises, distracts, and 'us' is no longer a word I can say with the same confidence. Not anymore.

MUSIC: The song ends. Fades.

SCENE SEVEN: THE OPHID MARKET

AMBIENT: The Ophid Market. Day. It's smoky, noisy, and crowded. Bodies jostle past. Voices clash. In the distance, a street musician plays the saxophone. Traffic growls past in grimy fervour.

MUSIC: 'Das Hotel' by Sugoi. Just a long saxophone melody from the song plays. It's relaxed, a little romantic, and a little noir.

SFX: A zippo lighter flicking on. Burns the end of a cigarette. A long, indulgent drag. Then the steady click of boots making their way through the bustling market. Eventually, we wind up at one particular stall and hear the enticing sizzle of meat.

VD: Anh's voice is androgynous, tired, and wry. They're well into their ten hour shift and have too few spoons to deal with a nosy cop.

DANA: Miss Anh?

ANH: It's Mx.

DANA: Sorry - Mx Anh?

ANH: (Distracted) How many?

DANA: What?

ANH: How many skewers?

DANA: I'm not here to-
(Beat) Fuck it. Gimme two.

SFX: Dana puts out her smoke.

ANH: Coming right up.

SFX: An exchange. Skewers for cash. Dana takes a large bite.

DANA: (Full mouth) Holy shit, this is good! What is this?!

ANH: Gà Xiên Que Nướng. Lemongrass, garlic, chicken thigh. You won't find chicken this succulent in all of Silver City.

DANA: (Chewing enthusiastically) You could be raking it in with this recipe.

ANH: (Sarcastic) I am. I just like to sweat over an open flame for ten hours a day.

DANA: (Swallows food) Not enough foot traffic?

ANH: Americans don't have taste buds.

DANA: Oh, so it's the shitty customer service.

ANH: Got it in one, Detective.

DANA: (Slightly embarrassed) You watch the news.

ANH: My friend was murdered by the Kind Killer. Yes, I watch the news.

DANA: Then you'll know why I'm here.

ANH: Five questions only. You're scaring away the customers.

DANA: (Mock offense) I am your customer!

ANH: Four questions–

DANA: Fine. Alright. Jesus. First question. Where were you on the night of Thomas Hurste's murder?

ANH: Here. Next.

DANA: (Sighs)

Should've expected as much. That night, did you see or hear anything out of the ordinary...?

ANH: It's the Ophid District.

DANA: Fuck me for asking an obvious question.

(Sighs) Alright. So. Mx Anh. How long did you know Thomas?

ANH: I've already gone through this with the police.

DANA: (Chewing) Answer the question - or I'll give you a one star review on Kelp.

ANH: (Impatient) I don't know. Maybe...four or five years.

DANA: Did he tell you anything about his past? Like his family or friends?

ANH: Nope. He was tighter lipped than my husband during couples therapy.

DANA: Yikes. Sorry about that.

ANH: Your last question, Detective?

DANA: Was there anything strange about Thomas himself? And I don't mean in an everyone-at-Ophid-market-is-strange-kinda way. I mean, a detail that might stand out to you.

ANH: (Beat) He was afraid of fire.

DANA: Lots of folk are afraid of fire.

ANH: No, Detective. He was deathly afraid of fire. He would never come closer than five feet of my grill. And anytime anyone would light up in front of him, he'd immediately come up with some excuse to leave.

DANA: Wasn't he a confectioner? You gotta use fire to make confections, donchya?

ANH: He would buy his products wholesale. Resell it here. It's not really kosher but we let it slide because he seemed so...clueless. About everything. It was endearing. Sometimes, it felt like he was...copying us. Like how a kid might copy their parent or an elder sibling? He'd watch us hawk our stuff, and then do the same himself – but he was terrible at it. Gave most of his products away at the end of the day.

DANA: (Intrigued) How did he survive?

ANH: (Flatly) Clearly, he didn't.

DANA: (Dry, amused huff) Okay, wiseguy. One more thing. Who here has known Thomas the longest?

ANH: Six questions, Detective.

DANA: I'll give you a damn tip.

ANH: (Beat) I have.

DANA: Seriously?

ANH: Well, collectively. We've all known Thomas for the same amount of time. He just showed up one day five years ago and set up shop.

DANA: And what was he like back then?

ANH: Now that you mention it, he was a bit...off. Like he wasn't all there. I guess we rubbed off on him because he started opening up a bit. Got all friendly-like. It didn't take us long to bring him into the fold.

DANA: Right. Thank you, Anh.

SFX: A note hitting the stall counter.

DANA: Keep the change.

SFX: Dana walks away.

ANH: (Outraged) A one dollar tip?!

DANA: (Calling over her shoulder) If you think of anything, you can ask for me at the SCPD!

ANH: (In the background) You fucking cheapskate!!

SFX: Dana walks back through the market. She reaches her car and gets in. It's quieter. The market ambience is muffled.

ILANA: How did it go?

DANA: Not bad, I guess. Here, I got you the most succulent chicken in Silver City.

SFX: Dana hands Ilana the second skewer.

ILANA: Uh. Thank you?

DANA: You are so welcome.

ILANA: Did you speak to them?

DANA: Yep. They told me the same thing they told the Two Stooges.

ILANA: There's more.

DANA: Am I that obvious?

ILANA: Your lips curl up at the corners when you're withholding pertinent information.

DANA: Ah shit. That's my tell.

ILANA: (Trying to joke) You play poker with that face?

DANA: It's all about the confidence, Stone. My face may be as shallow as a trust fund kid, but you underestimate how much the average person second-guesses themselves.

ILANA: What does that mean?

DANA: That means, if you pretend hard enough, the pretend will eventually become the truth.

ILANA: That doesn't make any sense.

DANA: Something Anh said caught my attention. No-one knew Thomas before he first arrived at the market five years ago. And he was weird. Like, 'Tarzan in Manhattan' weird.

ILANA: 'Tarzan in...'?

DANA: Jesus Christ, Stone. It's a classic!

ILANA: Actually. It's funny that you mention the five year thing. Hold my chicken.

SFX: Ilana hands Dana her chicken. Folders and papers shuffling about.

ILANA: I cross-referenced the statements of the family and friends of the thirty-four victims. And guess what they all had in common?

SFX: Ilana hands Dana the report who flips through it excitedly.

MUSIC: 'Reliance of Dawn' by DEX 1200. A warm, synth song. As the name suggests, like the hot orange-pink dawn breaking over the dark horizon. It's dreamy and romantic.

DANA: ...Holy shit.

ILANA: (Smiling) I know.

DANA: Holy shit, Stone!

ILANA: Not a single one of them had known the victims for longer than ten years.

DANA: State records?

ILANA: It's like they appeared from nowhere.

DANA: What the fuck....

ILANA: Technically, on paper, they've existed. But there's not been one person who has come forward to corroborate this.

DANA: What do you think it is? Trafficking? False identities?

ILANA: Those are the most plausible explanations, yes.

DANA: So. The Kind Killer is somehow tracking these people.
(Excited) Stone. This is a pattern. This isn't random!

ILANA: (Excited) I know.

DANA: We can catch him with this. We can catch him, Stone!

ILANA: (Chuckles) I know, Dana.

DANA: (Elated) I would kiss you right now but I'm kinda skewered!

ILANA: You don't need hands to kiss.

DANA: Oh shit, you're right!

SFX: Dana lurches forward and kisses Ilana hard.

ILANA & DANA: (Laughs as they part)

DANA: Cassie's gonna love us.

ILANA: Can we...

DANA: Can we what?

ILANA: Sit here for a few minutes?

DANA: (Startled, but pleased) Sure. I think we can spare a few. Here, your food's getting cold.

SFX: Dana passes the chicken back to Ilana.

MUSIC: The music fades out, leaving only the saxophone which is muffled outside.

ILANA: Thank you.

SFX: Ilana takes a small bite.

ILANA: (Chewing. Pleasantly surprised) Oh!

DANA: Goddamn Anh. They're a goddamn genius.

ILANA: (Chews and swallows) Veritably.

SFX: Dana winds down the window to light a cigarette. The saxophone can be heard more clearly in the background.

ILANA: What is that?

DANA: It's a busker. Pretty good one too.

ILANA: No, the instrument.

DANA: What - you never heard a sax before?

ILANA: Is that what it is?

DANA: Jesus, Stone. No-one ever taught you about instruments?

ILANA: It was never pertinent to my listening experience.

DANA: Here, I'll roll down my window for ya.

SFX: Dana winds down the window all the way. The saxophone is louder. Takes focus.

DANA: It's called a saxophone. A woodwind instrument. My dad was a musician and he could play everything. But man, he loved his sax. He'd play it any chance he got.

ILANA: It sounds like singing.

DANA: That's why he loved it. He used to call it an extension for his voice. "My saxophone says what I never can."

ILANA: What does that mean?

DANA: Well, asian dads, you know. They have a hard time expressing their emotions. It's a face thing. So he found his expression through music. In a way...he made himself more vulnerable than he ever could through words. You can't lie through music.

ILANA: That is intriguing.

SFX: They listen for a moment.

DANA: You wanna learn to play?

ILANA: (Sincerely) Would your father teach me?

DANA: (Soberly) I don't think so.

ILANA: Oh. What about you?

DANA: Tried and failed. Many times. I was my father's worst pupil. I'm more apt with a gun than an instrument. I'm too rough, apparently.

ILANA: (Eagerly) I'd like to meet him one day.

DANA: (Quickly) What about your folks?

ILANA: I...don't have parents.

DANA: Well, that's just part of the Silverian Experience. Mommy and daddy issues. We're rife with them.

ILANA: I have to get the handbook from you one day.

DANA: Sorry. Lost my copy in a house fire.

ILANA: Is that—?

DANA: Item number seven of the Silverian Experience. Yeah.

ILANA: (Laughs)

DANA: (Chuckles) Come on. Finish up your dinner. We got a long night ahead of us, Stone.

AMBIENT/SFX/MUSIC: Fades out.

SCENE EIGHT: DADDY PATRIARCH

AMBIENT: SCPD. Eaton's office. It's the night shift, so it's quiet, but there's still some bustle in the station.

SFX: As Eaton laughs hysterically, he pours himself a drink.

EATON: (Breathless; laughing) I can't even...I can't even pour the damn whiskey...shit, Dana! Shit!

SFX: Eaton drinks the whiskey and leans back in his chair.

EATON : (Chuckling sporadically into his tumbler) And this is why we 'diversity hire'. The guys out there don't have a creative bone in their body!

DANA: Lieutenant? Why aren't you wrangling Daddy Patriarch like you usually do?

ALDER: (Impassive; on edge) I'm with the Captain on this one.

DANA: (Shocked) What?!

ALDER: A trafficking ring? Assassination? It all sounds very tinfoil hat, Detective.

DANA: (Heatedly) There's nothing tinfoil about it! Stone has five neurotically organised binders of evidence—

ILANA: It's more of a hypothesis based on circumstantial evidence. But one that I believe warrants further investigation.

DANA: Circumstantial?! Stone! Two or three similarities are circumstantial. But thirty-four?

EATON: So, because the victims lost touch with their elementary school chums or had a fight with mommy and daddy, this case is now a state-wide trafficking ring? And the Kind Killer is an assassin, picking off these people because...?

DANA: That's what we have to find out. The why of it all.

EATON: You want to know what I think, Dana?

DANA: (Dryly, scathing) Very much so, Jimmy.

EATON: (Begins calmly, but ends in an enraged shout)
I think you should spend less time 'hypothesising' and more time catching the serial killer using my city as a goddamn all you can eat buffet!!

SFX: Eaton slams his fist on the table to emphasise his shout.

MUSIC: 'Last Night, Last Night, Last Night' by Well Then, Goodbye. A suspenseful, synth with long, tense notes.

DANA: (Yelling) Hypothesising is what's going to lead us to Kind, you fucking-

ALDER: (Biting; sharp) You will do as the Captain says, Detective Liu. This line of thinking isn't going to get you anywhere. Trash the hypothesis. Put down your notes, Stone. You can't treat this like a science experiment. People are dying-

DANA: What the hell is going on, Cassie? You're never this much of a goon.
(Realises)
How much did he pay you?

ALDER: (Deadly cold) Excuse me?

ILANA: Dana, I think we should-

DANA: He paid you off, didn't he? Did you go golfing with Dodder Leach too? How many rounds did you last before you caved?

ALDER: (Shouts; enraged) Enough, Dana!

DANA: (Clicks her tongue in annoyance)

ALDER: (Low. Venomous) Unless you want to be suspended for insubordination, you will return to your duties at once. No more distractions. No more diversions. Find the Kind Killer before we find a thirty-fifth victim. Do you understand?!

EATON: (Mocking, amused) I heard chocolate helps.

DANA: With all due respect, Captain - which is none at all - you can go fuck yourself.

CAPTAIN EATON: (Laughs loudly, obnoxiously)
Close the door on your way out, sweetheart.

SFX: Dana and Ilana leave the office - Dana stomping and Ilana following quietly. The door closes behind them.

EATON: Like a silverback, that one. All brute force and no brain.

ALDER: She's getting too close.

EATON: Don't worry. We've pushed her off the trail for now. Bought him valuable time.

ALDER: He won't be happy-

EATON: We won't make it his problem.

ALDER: Are you sure that's wise?

EATON: We won't make it his problem, because it's not a problem. Relax, Alder. Have a drink. We have a dinner meeting with Leach and let me tell you - that prick is a bore sober.

ALDER: We don't have a choice.

EATON: That, Alder, is a luxury you and I will never have. Here. Wash down the bitterness with the best single malt whiskey you'll ever taste in your dismally long life. Or short. Depends how our girl does.

ALDER: (Beat) Give me the damn bottle.

AMBIENT: We cut to the outside of the office, as Dana and Ilana make their way through the department.

MUSIC: 'Blood on the Street' by Experia. A dark, droning electronic song. The bass/beat is like a heartbeat.

SFX: Dana stalks through the SCPD while Ilana tries to keep up.

ILANA: (Panting) Dana - wait -!

DANA: Something's wrong, Stone.

ILANA: Everything's wrong! He dismissed our theory-

SFX: They stop walking.

DANA: (Impatiently) No - who cares about Captain Dickwad - I mean, something's wrong with Cassie.

ILANA: The Lieutenant?

DANA: She might be an asshole bureaucrat, but she always backs us up. No matter what. She trusts my instincts.

ILANA: It was a disagreement, Dana. While misguided, she is certainly entitled to her opinion-

DANA: Whatever that was in there? It wasn't opinion. He got to her somehow. Money. Promotion. Blackmail. Whatever it is, she's like his goddamn puppet. She's not herself.

(Pause)

(Perplexed, annoyed) What? What is it? Why are you looking at me like that?

ILANA: (Hesitating) How can you tell?

DANA: Well, she went from tolerable bitch to intolerable asskisser.

ILANA: (Anxiously) And me?

DANA: Huh?

ILANA: Can you tell with me?

DANA: (Pause)

(Sighs, less angry) What's this about, Stone?

ILANA: I...

(Beat)

Maybe the Lieutenant had to sell more pieces of her soul. Not everyone can be like you.

DANA: Like me? The fuck are you on about?

ILANA: If you weren't so good at your job, Dana, you would have been fired many years ago. Perhaps within your first week here.

DANA: (Heatedly, defensive) That is--!!

(Pause. Realising)

(Begrudging acquiescence) I resent that.

ILANA: It is an admirable quality. That you are unafraid to be as you are. That you know who and what you are. That you are yourself.

DANA: (Wryly) Painfully.

ILANA: Magnificently.

DANA: Keep that up, Stone, and I'll start looking like a human hot air balloon.

ILANA: A hot air-?

DANA: Nevermind. C'mon.

SFX: They continue to walk - calmer. More in sync.

DANA: We're on our own now, Stone. This 'hypothesis' of yours? Keep it between us. As far as anyone knows, we got our nose to the ground like obedient bloodhounds.

ILANA: I assume that isn't what we are going to be doing?

DANA: That's right, Stone.

AMBIENT/SFX: Everything fades out. Leaving only the music.

MUSIC: There's just the heartbeat. Dun-dun. Dun-dun. Dun-dun.

DANA: We're going rogue.

MUSIC: Dun-dun.

SCENE NINE: FAMILY DINNER

AMBIENT: Maeve's house. The next evening. It's a warm and cosy dinner scene.

MUSIC: 'Slow Food Jam' by Almost Here plays. Peaceful, warm jazz music.

SFX: Scraping cutlery and clinking glasses.

KIMIA: You have outdone yourself, Maeve.

MAEVE: (Pleased; false bashfulness) There's no need to flatter me, dear. I've simply made do with what I have. It's nothing fancy-

GIV: This is truly delicious, Maeve.

MAEVE: You are a good boy. Really, I've made this dish a hundred times, so-

OWEN: (Interrupting) Just take the compliment, you old bat!

MAEVE: Must I remind you of the last time you crossed me?

OWEN: (Grovelling) I've never tasted curry as good as this before. You could be a Michelin star chef.

MAEVE: I could be. But I'm not one for the glitz and glamour. No, no, it's Eden and the children for me.

OWEN: What about us?!

MAEVE: You are the children.

OWEN: Oh.

EVERYONE SANS KIND & OWEN: (Laughs)

OWEN: (Overlapping) Yeah, yeah laugh it up. What does that make you, huh?

GIV: (Worriedly) Speaking of children, I hope everything is alright.

KIMIA: Amy and Harris have their work cut out for them.

OWEN: The way I see it - it's a win for everyone. We get a free meal and a night off. And the kids - well, they'd be glad to see the back of Maeve's big old head-

MAEVE: Next time, I'm putting your plate beside the kitty litter.

OWEN: (Grinning) Admit it. I'm your favourite.

MAEVE: (Firmly ignoring Owen) Kimia, dear. When did you say your wife was coming?

OWEN & KIMIA: (Laughing)

KIMIA: She should be on her way now.

OWEN: Did you ask her to bring more drinks?

KIMIA: (Hums in affirmation) Mm-hmm.

OWEN: Seriously, Maeve. Half a bottle of gin hardly counts as booze.

MAEVE: You don't need to get scuttled to enjoy a family dinner.

OWEN: Maeve. It's a requirement.

MAEVE: Bah.

GIV: Sujin?

SFX: Kind jolts in his seat.

KIND: (Startled) Wha-yeah?

GIV: You're not hungry?

MAEVE: (Concerned) Is it too bland, dear?

KIND: (Dazed) Yes. I mean - no. It's...perfect, Maeve. Thank you.

OWEN: You know what you need, Susu? You need to get – what was it you said, Maeve? Scuttled? Yeah. We all need to get scufflefucked.

KIMIA: If you want to get scufflefucked, Owen, you can piss off to The Reel.

GIV: (Chuckles) That place has quite a reputation.

OWEN: Oh, you missed our last night out.

KIND: (Amused) You were doing a double shift.

GIV: Ah. Yes, I remember that night. I came home to see Owen sprawled half-naked in our bed, eating cookie dough.

OWEN: I was nowhere near as bad as Maeve on top of the dresser with the lamp-shade on–

MAEVE: This isn't appropriate conversation for the table–

OWEN: (Joking) Speaking of tables...

MAEVE: Owen Reed! I swear to Jesus and Mary and all that is good–

KIND: (Chuckles quietly)

KIMIA: (Giggling) That's right! Maeve found a coffee table on the sidewalk and hauled it all the way from Ophid to Eden.

OWEN: Five cups into her sherry and she turns into the Hulk!

KIND: (Laughs)

KIMIA: Everytime we tried to help her, she'd bark at us.

OWEN: Literally.

KIND: It was lucky I put the kids to bed when I did.

OWEN: Otherwise they'd have seen a side to Maeve that should never be seen by anyone.

MAEVE: Oh, shush it! The lot of you! Why do you think I brought that table home? It was so the children could have a crafting space!

EVERYONE: (Same time) The children could have a crafting space.

MAEVE: (Outraged) Well! You try to do something nice–

SFX: A knock at the door.

MAEVE: Oh!

KIMIA: That must be Daru.

SFX: Kimia rises from her chair and goes to collect Daru from the front door. The door opens.

DIRECTOR: (In the distance) Kimia! Darling! Look who I found on my way here!

DARU: (In the distance) Sorry I'm so late. The traffic was horrendous.

OWEN: (Dismayed) Who invited the Director?!

MAEVE: It is a family dinner.

OWEN: They're our boss!

KIND: Only just.

MAEVE: It was only a formality. They're usually out doing god knows what - I didn't actually think they would come. Oh, don't give me that look!

OWEN: What look?! I'm not giving you a look!

MAEVE: That look you're giving me right now!

OWEN: That's my face! That's how it always is!

GIV: (Chuckles) I'll set another place.

SFX: Giv's chair scrapes as he stands.

Time passes. Drinks are had. Everyone gets a little 'scuttled'. Someone opens a fresh bottle of wine and pours. A beer is opened and promptly drunk.

MUSIC: The music changes to another upbeat jazz piece - 'Slow Burn' by Hara Noda.

VD: Daru has a femme voice, friendly and vibrant.

GIV: So, Daru. How is the new job? Are you fitting in well?

DARU: Yes, I am, thank you for asking, Giv. The hospital is overwhelming at times, but in the morgue it's the two of us. So it really isn't so bad.

MAEVE: What's that dear? You're working at the hospital like our Giv here?

DARU: Giv's the one who helped me get the job. He recommended me to Doctor Song and...well...I feel like I've finally found my feet.

OWEN: Amongst all the others.

EVERYONE: (Groans & laughs)

DIRECTOR: (Joking wryly) I'm sorry - who hired you?

OWEN: You did, Director.

DIRECTOR: Oh no. Maeve's in charge of the hiring process. This is on her.

DARU: (Sincerely) I would like to say thank you for inviting me tonight. We've only really met a handful of times, but already you've made me feel so welcome.

SFX: Kimia grasps Daru's hand.

KIMIA: (Smiling) We're family. How could we not invite you?

MAEVE: There will always be a place for you at my table, dear.

DIRECTOR: It's usually mine. My place.

MAEVE: (Ignoring the Director) Anytime you want to stop by for a meal. My door is open.

DIRECTOR: That's fine. I'm too busy trying to raise money for Eden anyway...

DARU: Thank you, Maeve. I'm still trying to find my way around this city and not everyone is as accommodating.

DIRECTOR: (Simultaneously in the background as the conversation carries on) ...keeping the roof over our heads...ensuring we have ample heating...enough food and school supplies...

GIV: You have one familiar face at the hospital, if you ever need help with anything.

DIRECTOR: Twelve kids. None of them would have a home if not for Eden. If not for me.

KIND: What is your new role, Daru?

DARU: I assist Doctor Song with the forensic autopsies. She's been kept rather busy by Kind, so I'm there to ease her workload.

DIRECTOR: Being a Director is demeaning work. Do you know how many hours I spend asskissing? It's a devastating amount of ass.

KIND: (Tersely) That's right. You'd be working on the victims.

DIRECTOR: Devastating.

KIMIA: Director?

DIRECTOR: (Bright) Yes, Mimi, darling?

KIMIA: Would you like a drink?

OWEN: Sounds like you need it, boss. With all the grumbling and griping.

DIRECTOR: (Outraged) I was not grumbling and griping. Matron! Was I grumbling and griping?!

GIV: (Weakly) It was...a bit. Gripey.

DIRECTOR: (Huffy) Do you want to know what kind of day I just had?!

OWEN: (Flatly) Not really.

DIRECTOR: (Angry) Dodder Leach, that...leech! Wouldn't spare me the time of day. Not even a glance! And as you all know, I am a compelling orator. I presented my case for refurbishing Eden - how it would be counted as a tax write off and a hefty boost to his less-than-desirable public image - and he

was- oooo, you wouldn't believe the nerve! - he was talking on that ridiculous bluetooth headset the entire time! To whom, you ask?

OWEN: We didn't.

DIRECTOR: To the bloody Governor! Governor Bakula Bug-Eyes Ciesla! That bloody Russian wanker-

DARU: Isn't he Polish?

DIRECTOR: -who has rejected my applications for more funding - a pittance - on multiple occasions. And he was yapping on with Dodder Leach like they were old friends! The gall-

KIND: (Tense; interested) Dodder Leach and the Governor are holding hands?

DIRECTOR: Sharing a bed from the sounds of it! The man was positively drooling by the time he got off the call.

KIND: That can't be a good look for Ciesla.

MAEVE: There's nothing good about that snake!

OWEN: So all this to say that you failed.

DIRECTOR: I didn't fail, Wenwen. I wasn't even considered! Oh, you lot wouldn't understand the pressures of running an orphanage. To have so many lives dependent on your tireless, thankless efforts...

SFX: A long silence. You can almost hear every eyebrow rising.

OWEN: (Clears his throat)

DIRECTOR: (Sulkily) Alright, fine. Maybe you do understand. Just a little.

MAEVE: The work we do is thankless, that I agree, Director. But it's the kind of work that we can go to our deathbeds with, satisfied and fulfilled. With no regrets. There's not many who can claim to that.

DARU: (Intrigued) No regrets? At all?

MAEVE: None whatsoever. Every decision in my life, bad or good, has led me to this table. I would not change anything for the world.

OWEN: I don't even know the word regret. You get an inkling - just down a vodka and raspberry, and find a pair of thighs to sleep between.

DIRECTOR: How delightfully lewd~

KIMIA: What about you, Giv? Sujin?

GIV: I do have some regrets. But I think that has more to do with my own shortcomings. Shortcomings...can be overcome. With time, I hope. Sujin, on the other hand-

KIND: (Firmly) No. None at all.

DIRECTOR: Oh, I do enjoy the confidence~

KIND: I have Giv. There's nothing else to consider.

OWEN: Eurgh. I hate how gay you are.

KIMIA: Owen. You go to the Reel.

OWEN: I stand by my words. Now. Is there anymore beer, or is it time to stumble my way to Ophid? And, hopefully, into a pair of big, strong, hairy arms.

DARU: We're out, sorry. I should have brought more-

MAEVE: Not at all, dear. Owen is going to sit down and drink tea like a civilised person. No Reel or hairy arms tonight.

OWEN: (Dismayed) Maeve!

MAEVE: No, no, no! Tonight is family night. And you, unfortunately, are family.

OWEN: (Whispers) I knew I was your favourite!

MAEVE: Tea, anyone?

SFX: Daru quickly stands.

DARU: I'll get that for you, Maeve. You don't have to get up.

MAEVE: I am the host, dear. It is my duty to serve the post-dinner aperitifs-

OWEN: Leaves dunked in water aren't aperitifs, Maeve.

DARU: Please. You've already done so much.

MAEVE: (Hesitating) Well...if you're certain, dear.

DARU: More than. It won't be long!

SFX: Daru walks into the kitchen. The kettle flicks on. Cupboards creak open. Mugs scuff against the counter.

The Director runs their finger over the rim of their wine glass, making it ring.

DIRECTOR: Come on, Maeve. Relax~ She's hardly going to destroy your kitchen.

KIMIA: (Joking) No, that's Owen's job.

OWEN: I beg your everloving pardon?!

GIV: (Chuckles) Sujin was inconsolable for weeks after that fire.

KIND: (Irritated) He destroyed my new stove! I just had it installed!

DIRECTOR: That stove cost me eighteen straight hours of sloppy grinding and incessant ego-stroking. And it was all gone in a flash. In a very Owen shaped flash. Who hired you again?

OWEN: In my defence, I was trying to learn how to cook. It's not fair that Susu is always cooking for everyone-

KIMIA: He's the cook! It's in his job description!

MAEVE: Well, you do more than cook now, of course.

DIRECTOR: Susu does have an affinity with the kids.

KIND: I sometimes read bedtime stories. It's hardly an affinity.

GIV: The kids love you. It's like you were born to be a parent.

OWEN: I still think there needs to be another cook in the kitchen.

KIMIA: What about you, Maeve?

OWEN: (Squawks) Maeve?! Et tu, Kimi??

SFX: Daru returns with a tray of tea cups

DARU: Sorry to keep you waiting!

MAEVE: Oh, lovely! Thank you so much, dear.

SFX: Daru sets down a tea cup in front of everyone.

OWEN: (Sniffs cautiously) Why does it smell so weird?

KIMIA: (Amused) You've never had tea before in your life. Have you, Owen?

OWEN: I'm a man of culture. Of course I haven't.

KIMIA: Do you drink anything other than alcohol?

DIRECTOR: Why would you want to go and do that?

(Sips tea)

Oh! But this is scrumptious.

(Sips loudly for a longer time)

SFX: Everyone starts drinking tea.

MUSIC: The jazzy music fades. It's replaced with 'Solitary Morning' by Nylonia. A whining, electric guitar that unsettles and grates.

KIND (VO): (Grim. Cold. Kind-like) It happens fast. Faster than I can react.

SFX: One by one, the Eden crew slump to the floor or over the table as they pass out. Glass shatters. Bodies thump.

KIND (VO): And then it's just me. Me and-

DARU: (Insidiously; her voice is completely changed) So it's true what they say about you.

KIND: (Impassive, cold) What do they say about me?

DARU: That you're...resilient. Irritatingly so.

KIND: Who are 'they'?

DARU: Do you really have to ask?

KIND: (Beat) Joah?

DARU: (Scoffs) That softcock?

SFX: Daru tosses a knife onto her plate.

KIND: Who is your master?

DARU: (Giggles, a tad manic) Look! Look! I have goosebumps!

SFX: Daru wriggles in her seat excitedly. Her chair judders and scrapes.

DARU: 'Who is your master'. That's what you ask them isn't it? Before you kill them?

KIND: (Coolly) If you know who I am, you shouldn't be sitting there so calmly.

DARU: (Scathing) Oh my god. Could you be any more trite? Use that swiss cheese brain of yours, Kind. And think. Why would I be so calm? Why would I have sought you out, after you've killed thirty-four of us?

KIND: The same reason why he keeps sending you. Thirty-four is a significant number. But not to him.

DARU: You're so sure of yourself. But you don't even remember who he is.

KIND: You remember. That's a rare gift.

DARU: I remember, but that doesn't mean I want to betray him.

KIND: No. You're too weak. Just like the others.

DARU: (Hissing; anger spiking) You didn't have to kill them!

KIND: I was trying to free them.

DARU: Did they ask you to?

KIND: They didn't have to.

DARU: (Hateful, grating laugh) You are so broken.

KIND: And you are a whim.

DARU: (Snarling) Fuck you!

SFX: Daru strikes the table in her sudden fury. Tableware clink as the table violently shudders. She leaps to her feet and bullrushes Kind.

MUSIC: 'Writings on the Wall' by Alec Slayne. An urgent, dramatic electronic piece with a pulsing beat.

SFX: Daru and Kind fight - and it's vicious, tooth and nail. Every blow is met and parried. But Kind quickly gets the upper hand and a well-placed strike sends Daru flying into the table. It smashes upon impact, sending broken wood and ceramic and glass everywhere.

DARU: (Panting harshly) Give it up, Kind! We won't stop coming.

SFX: Daru drags herself to her feet, kicking aside broken wood. Kind approaches. Stops a few feet away.

KIND: (Panting, growling) For once - think for yourself! Is this how you want to die? For a petty power grab?!

DARU: Petty? It's not petty. It's everything! It's the whole fucking world!

SFX: Daru kicks at the broken table.

KIND: You've been waiting and watching all this time. So why make your move now?

DARU: How stupidly optimistic you are, to think that I have any of your answers. I'm cannon fodder. We all are.

KIND: Your master's getting impatient, isn't he? Something's happened.

DARU: Take a step back. Maybe you'll find your 'why' then.

SFX: Daru walks through broken glass.

MUSIC: The music suddenly shifts with the mood. 'Mellifera' by They Dream By Day. A suspenseful, dark, droning piece.

SFX: Daru grabs Giv and drags him up, holding him like a human shield. We can hear Kind's heartbeat as anxiety quickly takes over.

KIND: (Scared, pissed) Giv!

SFX: Daru whips out a knife. Brings it to Giv's throat. The blade whistles through the air.

KIND: (With unfathomable fear) NO!

SFX: Kind rushes forward a few steps.

KIND: (Desperate, voice breaking) Don't touch him!!

DARU: (Giggles) He's so soft. Like a weird fleshy cushion.

KIND: (Seething, wild-eyed) Hurt him...

(Inhuman Voice) ...and I will **burn you alive**.

DARU: (Unphased) It only takes the tiniest pressure. And...

SFX: The deadly ring of the knife as she makes a shallow cut.

GIV: (Groans softly in pain)

DARU: (Darkly, malicious) They bleed so easily, don't they?

KIND: (Panicked; angry) I'll come with you!

DARU: (Pause) ...What was that?

KIND: (Seething) I won't fight you, Daru.

DARU: (Stunned) Seriously?

KIND: Seriously.

DARU: Just like that?

KIND: Yes!

DARU: (Stunned pause. And then a wild, manic cackle.)
That's all it takes? This pathetic looking guy?!

KIND: (Pleading) Put down the knife, Daru. Let him go.

DARU: Just like that and the Kind Killer is no more?

KIND: Don't make me say it again-

DARU: (Irritated) I'm not like the others, Kind. I'm smarter than they were.
Stronger. You can't wriggle your way out of this.

KIND: (Shaken, reluctant)...What do you want me to do?

SFX: Daru pulls out a bottle of pills. Tosses it to Kind. He catches it. Stares at it.

DARU: (Giggling) Take it.

KIND: How many?

DARU: (Overlapping) All of it.

KIND: This could kill me.

DARU: You and I both know that's not true.

KIND: (Releases a shaky breath)

DARU: Take the whole bottle, or I'll give your husband a second hole to breathe out of.

SFX: The blade rings as she raises it Giv's neck again.

KIND: (Exhales shakily; angrily)

SFX: Kind opens the bottle and throws the pills into his mouth. He chews them and swallows. Tosses the empty bottle aside.

KIND: Satisfied?

DARU: (Smirking) Very.

SFX: Daru releases Giv. Kind lurches forward to catch him.

MUSIC: The piano melody from Squaric by Martin Gauffin echoes as the dark droning of 'Mellifera' fades out.

KIND: (Gently, worried) I've got you. I've got you, love. You're going to be okay.

SFX: Kind hugs Giv to his chest. Kisses his forehead.

DARU: (Contemplatively) It's for him, isn't it? All this bullshit. The killing. The fighting. Everything.

KIND: You wouldn't understand.

DARU: (Pause)

(Softly) I would. I do.

KIND: (Coldly) A mere thing like you could never understand. You can pretend all you want, it's never going to change what you are.

DARU: (Sneering) And you? What are you, Kind?

KIND: I'm-

(Shaky intake)

DARU: Hm. Took longer than I thought it would. You really are resilient, aren't you?

SFX: Kind shakes Giv, dizzy.

KIND: (Slurring, panting) Giv? Wake up...wake up...Giv...please...

DARU: Don't worry. He's not going anywhere. You, however...

SFX: Kind sets Giv down gently and staggers to his feet. He tries to walk but crashes into the wall instead.

KIND: (Even more slurred; panicked; almost incoherent) Where...where are you...taking...me...?

AMBIENT/SFX/MUSIC: Daru catches Kind before he collapses. She brings her mouth close to his ear. It's suddenly intimate. Everything disappears. Goes silent. There's only Daru.

DARU: Home, brother. I'm taking you home.

MUSIC: 'Squaric' swells. Plays out the chorus. It's the full orchestral version that fills every space. It's soaring and emotional and plays to the very end.

The credit music starts. 'For a Moment' by Amaranth Cove. It's a quiet, moody piece with a simple electronic piano/synth melody.

NARRATOR:

Chapter Two stars:

KoreHan as the Kind Killer

GM Hakim as Giv Hasan

Skye Redden as Detective Dana Liu

Bree Frankel as Detective Ilana Stone

Athena Lee as Olivia Ciesla

Elias McDonald as Joah Birch

Jeremy Tucker as Governor Bakula Ciesla

Shykodah-Khi McGrath or Vyxenah as Ema Ciesla

James Reece as Dodder Leach

Sneha Kumar as Maeve Kelly and Daru

Patrick J. delva as Owen Reed

Vanessa Benoit as Kimia Azar

Jay Roussouw or Jay33721 as the Director and the Narrator

Urchids as Captain James Eaton

Mystic Waterz as Lieutenant Cassie Alder

Xaylon Ecter as Kyle Dilstern

And KiwiTheDemon as Anh

KIND is produced by Madison Diaz.

The script editor is Matt Doherty.

The show consultant is Austin Sharp.

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 TWO END