

EXT. PROMENADE - LATER

We hear the hustle and bustle of the fairground, consisting variously of a multitude of arcade-game bleeps and jingles, a distant big band playing music, a guitar being played, and the unintelligible conversations of the crowds.

BARFLY

You're really not gonna say anything to her?

GRANT

I did. I said thank you.

BARFLY

I swear, I cannot tell if you are the dumbest son of a bitch in the universe, or just the most insufferable.

GRANT

(sarcastic)

Why? You afraid I'm gunning for your title?

BARFLY

(dryly)

Ha ha.

BARFLY

But I'm serious. You know that gal back there was makin' eyes at you, right?

GRANT

She's a server, kid. It's part of the job.

Barfly laughs.

BARFLY

I don't know how it was on Terminal Station, but those eyes are not in the job description.

GRANT

Not everyone is as much of a degenerate as you are, you know. She was probably just being polite...

BARFLY

Sure. And you should have been polite and given her your info.

GRANT

How about you just mind your own business and finish that drink?

BARFLY

You know, that look you get when you know I'm right? That's what makes gettin' up in the mornin' worth it!

GRANT

You... really think she was interested? I mean, it's not like I've never had a suitor before, you know? I've... But it's been a hot minute...

Grant's voice fades out.

Dex's and Darya's voices fade in.

DEX [FORMERLY HOTSHOT]

I keep telling you, I'm fine!

DARYA

You still look like shit. Handsome shit, but still shit.

DEX

We really need to work on your sweet-talking. I'm a grown man. I can eat my own ice cream.

DARYA

Please? I like taking care of you.

Dex sighs.

DEX

Fine.

DARYA

Delat ertek yin'ek oni't.
[literally "you have worth to me"
but said like "great! Wonderful!"]

DARYA

Now, open.
Here comes the transport, ready to
dock!

DEX

Nope. Nevermind. Nuh-uh.

Darya's voice fades out as Grant speaks.

DARYA

It was a joke!

GRANT

(wryly amused)

Hell, I bet you never even had to
run a genetic test prior to dating
somebody before, did you?

BARFLY

Shh! Shh! Hold up, hold up! I
thought I heard...

GRANT

Heard what?

BARFLY

Excuse me! Pardon me. Sorry.

GRANT

Hey! Slow down! Kid, where the
hell are you going?

DARYA

There? Not so bad, yes?

DEX

You should eat some of yours.
It'll be a bowl of soup by the
time you finish-

BARFLY

(cutting in)

I thought I heard you, you rat
bastard.

DEX

Well I'll be damned. It's you.

BARFLY

Bet your ass it is.

GRANT

(catching up, out of
breath)

Barfly, what in the...

GRANT

What did you do this time?

DARYA

I will tell you. This ne'werkem
barged in here like a-

DEX

It's okay, Darya. I've got this
one.

DARYA

(concerned)

But your injuries...

DEX

I could have both arms tied behind
my back and I still wouldn't need
to worry about *him*.

Barfly laughs.

BARFLY

Is that right? I seem to remember
that going a little differently.
Or is that how you remember the
Crater Club?

DEX

That wasn't a fair fight and you
know it!

BARFLY

Oh, the mobster wants to talk
about fair, huh?

DEX

I don't do that anymore.

Barfly laughs.

BARFLY
(dismissive)
Sure. And I'm a Caller now.

DEX
It's true. I quit.

BARFLY
So... wait... you're telling me you
quit? Like quit-quit? You left the
Lunar Mob?

GRANT
(uneasy)
Hey now...

GRANT
How about we just take a breather,
okay? Last thing we want is anyone
doing anything they regret.

DARYA
Yes, listen to the old man.

GRANT
Yeah- Old man? Now wait just a
minute, I-

DEX AND BARFLY
(in unison)
Do you mind?!

GRANT
Sorry! I'll just mind my business.

DEX
What do you even want? Why are you
coming to me now?

BARFLY
Why do you think, asshole?

BARFLY
You going to tell them you found
me?

Dex chuckles softly.

DEX

No. I don't do that anymore. I got out. Made a clean break!

BARFLY

Holy shit...

There is a thud as Barfly grabs Dex and shakes him.

BARFLY

Ho-ly shit!

DEX

Hey! Hey! Let me go, you dumbass!

BARFLY

You're out! How the hell did you do it?!

DEX

Well, it's kind of a long story.

BARFLY

Shit, how about we get in a few drinks and you tell me all about it?

DARYA

What? Wait, what is going on?

GRANT

Yeah, I'm with the lady here. Can one of you two please explain what's going on here?

BARFLY

Oh, sure. Dex, this is my business partner, Grant. Grant, meet my brother, Dex.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - DAY

The fairground ambience alters subtly. It now includes the sounds of happy screams as people ride the rides, someone speaking over a tannoy, and the noise of the crowds gets louder.

MOLINA

Agh, god, how am I still tasting it?!

CRUTCHFIELD

(amused)

I- I think it's in your head.

MOLINA

I'm serious, it's like... *clinging* to every surface of my mouth. Ugh.

MOLINA

This is my life now. I'll taste nothing but fried butter until the day I die. I'm doomed.

MOLINA

Oh! Never mind.

CRUTCHFIELD

Uh- What?

MOLINA

There. The Bake Off tent. Cake will save me.

Crutchfield snickers.

CRUTCHFIELD

I thought you said you needed to eat a vegetable!

MOLINA

Yeah, and that one on the end is a strawberry shortcake. Strawberry is a plant. That is good enough for me.

Crutchfield still laughing quietly.

CRUTCHFIELD

Whatever you say, Molls.

INT. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE HAB, SUBSECTION: BAKE OFF

KATO

Are these, also, "for sale"?

NADIRA

Nah. These 'ere are just t' look at.

KATO

Then what, please, do the numbers indicate?

CLARITY

Where?

KATO

Here. On the small sign.

CLARITY

Let me see.

CLARITY

Oh, that's their score.

KATO

Score?

CLARITY

Uh... the points the judges awarded them. In the Bake Off.

CLARITY

It's a redline show. People cook something, and the judges, who are usually a famous chef and a celebrity, rate them. Whoever gets the most points is the winner.

KATO

Ohhhh. *Palyazat tukrasemya!*

CLARITY

What does *that* mean?

KATO

A competition of creation, to enhance the community. Artists

display their work, from which a winner is chosen. Ah, this is a *pirog palyazat*.
[competition of pies/baked goods]

CLARITY

Exactly! That's interesting. I didn't know you had things like that on-

CLARITY

That's...

CLARITY

I didn't think...

CLARITY

There's another one...

CLARITY

Oh, ew. What kind of a combination is caramelized banana and spearmint?

KATO

Khrabrostek. Huh.
[A brave one.]

KATO

What is wrong?

CLARITY

The labels. These are all Celebration Cakes?

KATO

Firwatter taroninak palyazat'nek?
Matek palyazat'nek bazmat be,
y'but "celebration cake'k" ne'be
mate'nek?

[Why is this individual category unusual? There are many different types of category, should there not be one for celebration cake?]

CLARITY

It's a recipe from where I grew up. I didn't know the Ulk-

CLARITY
(realizing it's rude)
Uh... people this far sunward knew
how to make it.

KATO
Recept'nek - "private property" en
semya't?
[Are recipes private property in
your community?]

CLARITY
No, it's just- Nadira, did you
know about Celebration Cake
before...

CLARITY
Dira? Diiraaa?

CLARITY
Are you-

CLARITY
Wait! What's wrong? Hey, slow
down!

NADIRA
Hah. It is you. Thought so.

CLARITY
(out of breath)
What- who-?

KATO
Mi'nek be'borba?
[Are we going to fight?]

CLARITY
Ne'znat.
[I don't know]

NADIRA
Figured I was seein' things, but
here you are, large as life. An'
twice as difficult.

Molly speaks over Nadira.

MOLINA

Uh... I'm sorry, but do we know you?

NADIRA

Crutchfield. How you been, man?

CRUTCHFIELD

Holy shit. Nadira?

NADIRA

How long's it been? The thing on Europa, right? No, Tethys?

NADIRA

Damn, it's good t'see you. Thought you were in a terminal orbit o' Diatoma. Real glad I was wrong about that one.

Crutchfield chuckles awkwardly.

CRUTCHFIELD

Yeah it's uh... been a while.

NADIRA

Yep. Six years? Helluva lot's happened. Fair bit of shit, but a helluva lot more that weren't half bad.

NADIRA

I'm real glad to see you free, an' walkin around, an', far as I can tell, more or less intact!

CRUTCHFIELD

I don't really remember you talking this much back then.

NADIRA

Yeah, well.

NADIRA

I want you t'meet my friend, Clarity. Big part of th' "not half bad."

Kato clears his throat.

NADIRA
An' that's Kato.

NADIRA
This here's Crutchfield, best
pilot this side of Europa. Used t'
work together, back in the day.

CLARITY
(a little nervous)
Nice to meet you?

KATO
Tavk'tat.
[Hello.]

MOLINA
Oh! You're from Makhnovchina! Uh -
Delat orom yin'nek werk't.
[Nice to meet you (basic).]

Kato makes an impressed noise.

KATO
Yi'nek znat ti't delat lav.
[Knowing you is good to me (fancy
and suave).]

CRUTCHFIELD
(understanding the tone
at least)
Yeah, charmed, I'm sure. This is
Molina. My wife.

NADIRA
Well, now, that's just fine. Last
we saw each other I seem to
remember you bein' pretty broken
up about some partner who'd up and
left, so that's real nice indeed.

MOLINA
Oh, uh. That was. Also me.

Nadira laughs

NADIRA

Well shit. Even better then.

Nadira is interrupted by a jingle over a nearby tannoy.

ANNOUNCER

(over tannoy)

And now, everyone, we're pleased to announce the grand prize winner of the Great System Bake Off with Jesse Fry. This year's Best Baker is...

ANNOUNCER

(over tannoy)

Hiba Blumenthal! With their extraordinary cardamom and black pepper celebration cake!

CLARITY

A- A whole division? I thought this was a Family recipe. How did all these people get their hands on-

NADIRA

(interrupting)

Let's go look at th' winners.

KATO

I am sure they are not all adventurous flavor combinations.

Clarity laughs

CLARITY

I hope not!

MOLINA

(privately)

Uh, so, who is this?

CRUTCHFIELD

Nadira. We did a couple of jobs back when uh... you. Weren't. Around.

MOLINA

Ah. Is she... ok? Or do I need to make up an excuse to get us out of here?

CRUTCHFIELD

I'm not sure. Let's give it a minute.

CLARITY

I want to look at the pies. Do you think anyone entered a pecan one?
- You should have entered *yours*!

CLARITY

Nadira makes *the* best pecan pie I've ever tasted.

NADIRA

'S the only one you've ever tasted.

CLARITY

And it's *wonderful*. But I bet no one did. Enter one, I mean. I looked it up, and the recipe is originally from Terra, and apparently there was a brief period when it saw a resurgence of popularity when macro-mollecular gastronomy got popular, because this one restaurant on Luna made a de-and-reconstructed version that sold for, like, thousands of dollars a plate, but hardly anyone makes it any-

CLARITY

Uh. Um. Sorry. I get excited.

CRUTCHFIELD

(warmly)

Y'know, Nadira, I think I'm starting to see why you've opened up.

MOLINA

Yeah, I think we're fine here.

CLARITY

Do your friends wanna come?

NADIRA

Got anywhere you need t' be?

CRUTCHFIELD

I'm pretty sure we need to be
wherever there's pie.

MOLINA

(almost too fast)

That sounds right.

NADIRA

Walk 'round the Hab with us, an'
then I'll buy y'all a pie. Or a
drink.

Crutchfield goodnaturedly mimics Nadira's
voice.

CRUTCHFIELD

Or both.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE BAKE OFF SUBSECTION AND THE "YOU'VE GOT NOODLES" NOODLE SHOP - DAY

The ambiance changes slightly. We hear something rumble past occasionally, a distant motor moving around, and a saxophone plays a solo as part of a distant jazz quartet.

We hear two pairs of footsteps, and something metal jingling as they walk, which we can probably safely assume is the sound of spurs.

Agatha stretches.

AGATHA

Ain't nothin' better'n spendin'
the day arm n' arm with your girl.
Takin' in the sights. Winnin' the
ring toss game.

They both chuckle.

VIOLA

You did!

AGATHA

Damn right.

VIOLA

I'm gonns treasure this teddy bear
forever, Mitthjärta! She's got the
perfect view of the fair sitting
in my backpack!

AGATHA

Mm... She ain't a better view than
the one I've got, darlin'.

They both giggle again.

VIOLA

You flatterer!

AGATHA

Duh!

VIOLA

Aggie, you know, I'm really glad
that we decided to come. I was
really worried that it was gonna

be too much with all the people
and the wide open spaces...

VIOLA

But, it's great! I've never seen
anything like it.

AGATHA

Yeah! First of its kind,
apparently! Figured we should give
it a lil' look-see, so we could
say we were here the first year
they did it. And what with Oran
givin' us guff for not seein' the
world...

VIOLA

Speaking of, did you find out if
he's here?

Agatha laughs.

AGATHA

Of course he's here, you kiddin'
me? Soon-to-be grandpa wouldn't
miss this for the world. Ran to
meet Cat n' Beatrice as soon as he
got here.

VIOLA

Aww. It was good that we decided
to travel separately then. That
way he can spend more time with
the two of them.

AGATHA

Yeah! Let us test out the Stellar
Hyacinth too, and she made the
trip with no issues! Maybe she can
make bigger trips someday.

VIOLA

Yeah! We just have to get your
bounty paid down-

We hear running footsteps approach.
SEdge HYSSOPSchILD interrupts Viola.

SEDGE

Viola? Is that you? Viola!

VIOLA

Unty Sedge!

They hug. They both make the 'squishing you so hard' noises and laugh. It's cute.

SEDGE

Oh, it's so good to see you, Vi!
It seems like you've been on your
wander for forever!

Viola laughs.

VIOLA

It really feels like it! I've
missed you so much!

VIOLA

Oh! Unty Sedge, meet Agatha Howard
- my girlfriend.

VIOLA

Aggie, meet Sedge, the Wander's
XO.

AGATHA

Oh! Howdy! Nice to meet ya, Sedge
uh... hug'n'kiss?

VIOLA

What?

Sedge gets it and laughs.
Viola then gets it and laughs.

VIOLA

No, no, it's Executive Officer.

AGATHA

Oh.

VIOLA

It's a position on the ship.

AGATHA

Oh r-right. I gotch-! Right! I
gotcha!

SEDGE
(warmly amused)
Nice to meet you too, Agatha.

Sedge laughs.

SEDGE
(teasing)
Girlfriend, huh? How long has *that*
been a thing?

Viola giggles, totally blushing.

VIOLA
Ummmm... I mean, it's been at least
a quint, right?

AGATHA
Oh. Oh *yeah*, whatever a quint is...

VIOLA
(quiet)
Oh! Sorry...

AGATHA
Best quint'a my life, if I'm bein'
honest.

VIOLA
Aw, Aggie...

Agatha laughs.

AGATHA
Say... y'sound... y'sound familiar,
Sedge.

Sedge chuckles evasively.

SEDGE
You uh... think so?

AGATHA
Yeah...

Agatha clicks her fingers.

AGATHA

Hey, I think I know where I heard
your voice before!

AGATHA

You're Captain Carex Cyperus on
The Nebularis Cycle!

SEDGE

(evasively)

Oh, uh. I have no idea what that
is.

AGATHA

'No idea what that is', it's a
Meteors and Moonmen Actual Play
that's been goin' on for... DECADES!
I just got caught up a month ago!

Sedge sighs in resignation.

SEDGE

You can't tell anyone that's a
Family production.

VIOLA

Everyone knows it's a Family
production, Unty.

SEDGE

Do they?!

Sedge chuckles incredulously.

AGATHA

Yeah.

SEDGE

Well... shit.

Viola chuckles.

SEDGE

Ugh. Anyway, I'm glad I found you
here Viola. I don't know if your
mother's messaged you, but the

Wander is docked here - we're taking a pit stop to, uh, snoop around. If you wanted to visit, we'd love to have you back aboard.

VIOLA

I'd love to see everyone again! Oh and Mom can finally meet Ag-

VIOLA

(sadly)

Oh.

AGATHA

What... What's wrong, darlin'?

VIOLA

I have to go visit by myself. Or...

VIOLA

Oh! Maybe they'll come see us here! That might be better anyway.

VIOLA

Aggie, Ulk- Regular folks can't be on Family ships.

AGATHA

Oh! Uh.

AGATHA

(reassuringly)

Tha- That's- That's fine! You ain't gotta worry about me. Y'know I'll find somethin' to keep myself busy while you visit your folks.

AGATHA

(joking)

Though, you stay on the Wander too long, an' I might start gnawin' on the Hyacinth's furniture!

They both chuckle.

VIOLA

I mean. If you're sure.

AGATHA

Yeah! Yeah - 'course!

VIOLA

I just... really wish I could
bring you with.

Agatha makes a reassuring noise.

VIOLA

Unty Sedge, how long's everyone
gonna be here?

SEDGE

Oh, a few days. It's been a little
too long since we've all been on
shore leave and folks are getting
antsy. Captain Fern wants us all
to get a chance to *relax*.

SEDGE

Either way, I should really go see
where our dear Captain ran off to.
Ah, likely terrorizing the
shooting gallery if I had to make
a guess.

Viola chuckles.

VIOLA

That sounds like her. Tell her I
said hi and that I love her!

Sedge chuckles.

SEDGE

Will do. It was nice to meet you,
Agatha.

We hear Sedge's footsteps leaving.

SEDGE

Have a good time, you two!

AGATHA

Bye, Cap'n Carex!

SEDGE

(from a distance)
Uh? Goodbye.

Agatha and Viola snicker.

Agatha's terminal beeps and makes a cowboy "Yee-Haw" with accompanying horse whinny notification sound.

AGATHA

Aw, shit. Forgot we were meetin'
Oran for lunch. He sent a *real*
blurry picture of the shop front.

VIOLA

The shop's called "You've Got
Noodles"? Noodles *do* sound good...
I'm starving.

AGATHA

Well, darlin'? Let's mosey.

VIOLA

Let's.

We hear Agatha and Viola walk, probably-spurs jangling as always. As they move, the fairground ambiance changes again to include a mariachi-esque band playing somewhere nearby.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS, "YOU'VE GOT NOODLES" - DAY

ORAN

Aggie! Viola! Over here!

AGATHA

There ya are, Oran! I could hardly tell what this place was supposed to be with that blurry-ass picture.

VIOLA

(excited)

Hey guys! It's so good to see you again! How's the baby doing?

HECK

Oh, our lil' bug's doing great. I guess they're pretty excited to be at the Fair. Ow!

CAT

Are they still kicking?

HECK

They started back up when they heard Aggie and Viola, I think they're fond of 'em.

VIOLA

Awww! I can't wait until they're really here.

AGATHA

(baby talking)

Little bug always gets so excited to hear their aunts, yes they do!

ORAN

I ain't ever thought I'd live to see the day that I'd see my daughter again, let alone be a grandpa.

CAT

It'll be nice for our kid to have more family around them.

CAT

I'm... still sorry for how I acted
when we first met.

ORAN

Oh, water under the bridge. You
were just protectin' your wife,
and I know my reputation. Glad you
know I weren't comin' to
indoctrinate Heck into my wire
mob!

Oran chuckles.

HECK

Oh, I think I might already have a
bounty, though...

CAT

Why?

HECK

Oh, because I stole your heart!

Cat interrupts Heck, trying not to laugh.
Heck snickers and everyone laughs.

CAT

No. Shut up. Oh my god.

AGATHA

Oh! Thanks for orderin' for us,
Cat.

From here, the sounds of cutlery hitting
plates can be heard behind the dialogue.

AGATHA

Say. Beatrice. Don'tcha ever get
like... tired of eating noodles?

HECK

Nah. We dress 'em up if it gets
borin'. Cat's dad made up a bunch
of noodle recipes a long time ago,
and we eat those from time to
time. They're still good! We just

don't have them on the menu any more.

CAT

And I'm trying to get her to eat better anyway. Thankfully she's not picky. We haven't done noodles for a minute, so we figured we'd treat ourselves.

VIOLA

I don't think I'd mind eating noodles every day. Especially if they're from your shop.

VIOLA

I retract that statement! These *really* don't hold a candle to yours, Cat.

CAT

(disgusted)

Ugh, this may as well be fucking spaghetti!

ORAN

Somethin' wrong with 'em? I think they're alright. Maybe a little too soggy, but-

CAT

A little too soggy? They boiled the shit out of these! I mean, look at these pale *fuckers*! They're not the right color. They're definitely not the right fucking texture. They're mush! Here, Heck. Eat this noodle.

HECK

M'kay.

HECK

Bleh.

CAT

See? Even *Heck* won't eat it.

HECK

It tastes weird. Is it just over-boiled?

CAT

(ranting)

No, they *clearly* don't know how to make actual ramen. I don't know what the fuck they made these noodles out of - if they even fucking made them *at all* - but it's not traditional. The water they put in it definitely wasn't alkaline, so it doesn't have the right chewy, springiness. The broth has fuck-all for umami, and-

VIOLA

(nervously)

Oh! Uh. Cat? Cat, you're being a little loud. And... a little angry?

CAT

(barreling on!)

Let's not forget these fucking toppings! Who in their right goddamn mind doesn't put bean sprouts on their 'supposed' shoyu style ramen?!

AGATHA

(to VIOLA)

Now hang on a sec, darlin'. This is gettin' good.

AGATHA

Yeah, keep goin', Cat!

A short distance away, Fox and Kelly are speaking in hushed tones.

FOX

Shit shit shit!

KELLY

Fox! How did she know it was spaghetti?

FOX

Probably because it is fuckin'
spaghetti!

KELLY
Fox, what the fuck is a shoyu?!

FOX
I... I don't...

FOX
That ain't important, Kelly! Shut
up! Just, follow the plan!

CAT
These. Noodles. Fucking. Suck.
Disgraceful!

We hear Cat push her bowl away.

AGATHA
(hellmo.gif)
Yeah-heh! Get their asses, Cat!
You tell 'em off for their
fake-ass ramen!

VIOLA
(quiet, worried)
No! Shh! No, Aggie, they're gonna
hear you!

We hear footsteps as Kelly and Fox approach from the noodle
ship.

Oran chuckles.

ORAN
Think they already did. Look.

Kelly giggles nervously.

KELLY
(voice cracking)
C-Can we get you guys something
else?

CAT
(enraged)
Yeah, you can get me a fucking
garbage can for this soggy shit!

Agatha makes an amused sound as Cat speaks.

HECK

Cat.

There is a brief pause as Cat collects herself. She sighs.

CAT

(not quite sweetly)

No. Thank you.

VOSKI

(growly)

You can do somethin' for me,
though, "Big Sky".

We hear a lot of noises all at once: A round is chambered in a gun, Oran is grabbed around the neck, Oran makes a muffled noise of surprise against Voski's arm.

The following lines overlap in roughly the order given.

VIOLA

Rook on a rocket!

AGATHA

Oh, you bastard!

CAT

What the fuck!

HECK

Hey hey hey!

FOX

Get 'em, boss!

ORAN

(being restrained)

Voski!

KELLY

Serves them right for insulting my
noodles!

The lines stop overlapping.

We hear Oran grunt as he struggles in Voski's grip.

VOSKI

(calmly, gritting teeth)
If anyone gets up or makes a move,
it ain't just gonna be noodles in
your soup.

VOSKI

Quit squirming, old man.

ORAN

What do you want, Mateus?!

VOSKI

Revenge. And what any outlaw wants
from you now, champ. You and your
money are gonna come with us, and
I'm gonna get my pound of flesh.

HECK

Hey! You're not eatin' my dad!

Voski sighs.

VOSKI

Uh. That's not what that fucking
means!

HECK

(calmly)
Now, hang on...

We hear a chair push back as Heck stands up.

CAT

Heck, what are you doing?! Sit
down!

VOSKI

Ey! I told you not to move,
cyborg!

ORAN

(dad voice)
Heck, please don't do anything
hasty...

HECK

Oh, I'm not, Dad. I *really* think
this guy just wants to talk.

CAT

That man has a gun against your
father's head! He does not want to
fucking talk!

HECK

(pleasantly)

Oh, I think he does! He just
doesn't know it yet.

VOSKI

Oh-ho-ho, screw that!

We hear the gun move in Voski's hand as he points it at Heck
instead.

ORAN

No! Voski! It's me you want!

CAT

Oh fuck! Point that away from her,
right fucking now! Can't you see,
she's pregnant!

Voski chuckles.

VOSKI

I'll just kill two birds with one
stone, then. I don't want to talk,
cyborg. Sit down, now!

HECK

(friendly and calm)

No, really! Things'll be okay. I
know you might think revenge'll
feel good in the long run, but you
might wake up one day and realize,
'Man, I really miss my old friend.
I wish I would've said something
different. Or, y'know. Not shot
him to death.'

VIOLA

(whispering)

Aggie, I'll be right back! Let me
go find help!

AGATHA
(whispering)
Good plan.

We hear quiet footsteps as Viola sneaks off.

HECK
You'll start to think about all
the good times you had. Those old
memories will start coming back,
and it'll start to hurt, knowing
what you did to your friend.

VOSKI
(conflicted)
Ohh no, nah nah nah. 'At's not
gonna 'appen. I don't believe you.

CAT
(muttering)
I can't fucking believe this is
working.

VOSKI
You don't understand what he did
to me!

HECK
I believe you that it hurt!
Friends hurt each other all the
time, sometimes without even
meaning to. And that's not right
and deserves an apology. My dad
hurt you, that's true. But he's
right here. He's listening. You
could work it all out right now!

ORAN
(still uncomfortable)
I-I mean... against my will, but...

ORAN
Yeah, sure. Let's talk it out,
Voski.

VOSKI
(sadly)
You got rid of me when I was at my
lowest, Oran. I needed 'elp. I

needed someone to care and you
just- You kicked me off the
Secondhand News and left me.

ORAN

Well, it's... because you made a lot
of bad choices. Too many. Got a
lot of folks killed, and it was
all a terrible influence on
Agatha. I couldn't keep you around
and risk more damage being done.
But I'm sorry.

VOSKI

Yeah?! You're sorry, ah?! So sorry
that you killed my kid too! And it
wasn't enuff to kill the folks in
the Bloodbaff, you had to kill
Garrison too!

Cat interrupts. She has had it.

CAT

Fuck! Okay! Y'know what?!

We hear a nice, metallic SCHWINGGGG as Cat pulls out the
sword from Scott's segment. The other characters make
various noises of surprise as Cat speaks. Cat punctuates her
sentences with the sound of the sword swishing in the air as
she points it at Voski.

Cat chuckles madly.

CAT

Either you get the *fuck*

Swish.

Someone says 'Careful!'.

CAT

out of here, or I'll... I'll...

Swish.

CAT

do something with this!

CAT

And you won't *fucking* like it!

Swish.

Voski, Fox, and Kelly speak over one another.

FOX
Is that a fucking SWORD?!

KELLY
What is this, Camelot?!

VOSKI
Who brings a sword to a gunfight?!

AGATHA
Oh, we ain't fightin'. *Gimme that gun!*

There's a thud as Agatha twists the gun out of Voski's hand. The gun falls to the floor. Voski makes a pained noise.

AGATHA
Grab him, Oran!

Oran makes a sound of effort as he squeezes the man in a bear hug. We hear Voski struggle.

ORAN
Oh, you're not goin' anywhere!

VOSKI
No! Shit! Hnngh, let go of me!

ORAN
Oh, turnabout's fair play Voski!

FOX
Let him go!

HECK
How 'bout I grab you by the scruff instead?

Fox yelps in surprise.

FOX
(struggling)
Aaagh, let *me* go!

KELLY

Shit! I'm getting outta here!

AGATHA

Oh, no ya don't!

HECK

Oh, I got them too!

We hear Heck grab Kelly.

KELLY

I'm sorry! I'm sorry! This was all
a set up!

CAT

The fuck are you even talking
about?

Swish.

FOX

No! Kelly, shut up! Shut! Up!

Swish.

CAT

Talk, dammit! Or I'll... I'll
fucking sword you!

Swish.

AGATHA

(in the background)

Watch where you're swinging that!

KELLY

We're not a real noodle shop!

CAT

Well *I* could've fucking told you
that.

KELLY

It's all been a front for our new
wire mob! We were hoping to lure
"Big Sky" with it after he won at
the Bloodbath, hoping he'd confuse
us for you! And then we'd steal
his money and kill him!

FOX
(struggling)
Damn it, Kelly! Grrgh!

KELLY
I'm sorry!

Voski groans, dejected.

VOSKI
I have the worst fucking team.

We hear footsteps as Viola returns... with MARSHAL TATUM
HADAR.

VIOLA
(nervously)
The- there they are, Marshal! That
guy's an outlaw and-

VIOLA
And I think that shop might be
running without a permit!

TATUM
Huh. Well I'll be damned! "Hollow
Point" Mateus! In the flesh! And-
Excuse me? You have a sword on
that man?

HECK
Oh, I [made it-]

CAT
(interrupting HECK)
She won it for me in a carnival
game. The one with the hammer and
the bell. You know.

TATUM
Mmmhmm.

TATUM
Hmm, well, what d'you expect from
carnies.

TATUM

And I guess this shop is just a big health code violation. Not terribly exciting but... whatever.

VOSKI

Ugh, it's you.

Tatum chuckles impishly.

TATUM

Miss me, Mateus?

VOSKI

Fuck off, Tatum.

Tatum laughs, enjoying this.

TATUM

I've been tryin' a bring you in since that Tethys casino job. You can put him down now, Baines.

There's a thud as Oran lets Voski down. Voski grunts.

TATUM

Gonna cuff you and your friends together. Wouldn't do to separate y'all, right?

We hear Voski and his friends get cuffed.

VIOLA

So what's going to happen to him now?

TATUM

We're shovin' him in a dome down on Diatoma. Him and his little lackeys.

AGATHA

Wait, those two lil' twerps are outlaws?

TATUM

Small timers, but they've still got bounties.

FOX

Hey! Who're you callin' small
time?!

Fox grunts as if yanked by the neck.

KELLY

Rude!

VIOLA

Thank you for your help, Marshal
Hadar! I was *really* worried he'd
hurt- my family.

TATUM

S'what I do, miss. After all,
can't let Mr. Baines get hurt...

TATUM

'Specially since he still has my
gun.

Oran guffaws.

ORAN

Aw, you're still mad about that,
Hadar?

TATUM

Yeah! Yeah, I'm still mad! I won
that thing fair 'n square!

ORAN

Well, you're just gonna have to
get over it. You're not gettin' it
back without another game o'
cards.

AGATHA

Yeah. It ain't yours, Hadar.

TATUM

Hey, careful, "Wildcard" Howard.
Yeah, I know who you are. Y'all
still got a little bounty on you
too. I'm bein' kind and turnin' a
blind eye for now, but that could
change.

Viola gasps with fright.

VIOLA

No!

AGATHA

Hey. Hey! I'm workin' on it, all right! Leave me alone.

VIOLA

(sincere, flustered)

Yes! She'll be good! We *promise*!

Tatum sighs.

TATUM

All right. Well. I'm gonna take care of this garbage, and then I'll be back for my gun, Baines. Get your cards ready.

TATUM

And I get the tense situation, but... keep that sword put away ladies, or I'm gonna have to kick you out, y'hear?

HECK

ATA, Marshal.

CAT

Of course.

We hear the metal scrape of the sword getting sheathed.

TATUM

C'mon, Mateus.

Tatum, Voski, Fox, and Kelly walk off, cuffs jingling.

ORAN

Wwww-welp, I s'pose it's definitely time to get outta here before *he* gets back.

VIOLA

But, I'm still hungry.

HECK

Yeah, me too. Like, *really* hungry.

CAT

Well, I'm not eating *this* slop.

ORAN

There's gotta be a good thrice
fried pie stand around here or
somethin', right?

AGATHA

Yeah, let's, uh, grab some drinks
too. I think after that, we could
all use it.

AGATHA

(realising)

Aww, I mean, except for you
Beatrice. I'm sorry.

HECK

(sadly)

Yeahhhh...

INT. PETS EXHIBITION TENT - DAY

The fairground ambiance changes as we move to the tent. The sound of children screaming is much more sparse. The majority of the ambiance is now the whoosh of some ride circling, an occasional rumble, distant, pre-recorded arcade game voices, quieter bleeps and bleeps, and a vehicle engine growling somewhere.

DAY 14

BROTHER ARGYRE

(fade in)

I understand. What you must consider, though, is that the life of the Caller is not without heavy demands. You will be expected to follow The Call wheresoever it leads you, and there are very few in the order who do not find themselves drawn from home and comfort in its service. You may find yourself residing somewhere you never even knew existed. Or, like me, you may never truly settle again.

(pause)

Now, it is not all bad news. I can confirm the various rumors about celibacy and not having offspring are wholly false. Although, looking at your adoption information here, it says you've already been spayed?

CAT RECRUIT

Mrow.

BROTHER ARGYRE

Yes, it does seem slightly unfair that you did not get to choose.

MOLINA

Uh...Brother Argyre?

BROTHER ARGYRE

Oh! Molina! And Crutchfield! I thought I had seen you in the crowd earlier. I was so hoping our paths would cross. Um, could you excuse me for one moment?

CAT RECRUIT meows

BROTHER ARGYRE

(to the cat)

I am needed elsewhere, but may I leave you this pamphlet? I'd recommend you read it through before you...ah you're already shredding it. I'll leave you to think it over.

CRUTCHFIELD laughs

CRUTCHFIELD

I'm sorry, Brother, it's good to see you, but ...were you just trying to recruit a cat?

BROTHER ARGYRE

Oh. Yes.

MOLINA

Cats can be callers?

BROTHER ARGYRE

Certainly. The requirement is to hear The Call, to listen. Being able to speak the same language is considered a bonus. I must admit, I thought you would be familiar with the concept, given Brother Cheeseburger's presence in your lives.

MOLINA

...are you saying Cheese is a caller?

BROTHER ARGYRE

Yes. A fellow brother.

CRUTCHFIELD

Uh..but...but I - I named him!
He's called Brother Cheeseburger
because I thought it was funny!

MOLINA

And because you thought it would
annoy me.

CRUTCHFIELD

Well, uh, one and the same, my
love.

BROTHER ARGYRE

Ah, the universe provides. Yes, we
all thought it best that someone
keep an eye on you. The good
brother kindly volunteered to make
contact.

CRUTCHFIELD

Waaaiit...

BROTHER ARGYRE

Especially after the
...circumstances of the last time we
met.

CRUTCHFIELD

Cheese is a *spy*?

BROTHER ARGYRE

Well...

CRUTCHFIELD

Cheese has been spying on me *this*
whole time??

BROTHER ARGYRE

Uh, er, no. Apologies, I was
attempting to be humorous.

MOLINA

Wait wait, YOU make jokes now?

BROTHER ARGYRE

Sister Andromeda gave me an update
once all had made it safely to
Ceres. She told me about your

situation and your cat and I was quite taken with the name. It was fun to imagine you both having a "minder".

BROTHER ARGYRE chuckles

BROTHER ARGYRE

I must admit, you seem more shocked about my having a sense of humor than your cat potentially being a religious informant.

CRUTCHFIELD

Padre, there are certain things that cat's seen...

MOLINA

Uh, NOTHING ILLEGAL THOUGH, *right*, Cee?

CRUTCHFIELD

Oh, uh, no. But if cats also have the ability t'perform blackmail, uh, you'd tell me, right?

BROTHER ARGYRE

You have my word. Any indiscretions are safe with him.

MOLINA

We saw you earlier. With the baby. She's...ok?

BROTHER ARGYRE

Ah. Yes. Circumstances have certainly improved. It seems I could say the same for the two of you as well.

CRUTCHFIELD

Oh you know how it is. Second chances and all that.

MOLINA

You're raising her yourself then?

BROTHER ARGYRE

Again, you sound surprised.

CRUTCHFIELD

Well I think we just assumed that an infant wouldn't be the most natural companion for your style of wanderin'.

BROTHER ARGYRE

No, you are right. I happened upon a favorable environment for her to be raised in. Safe and secure. A loving and reliable father. A protective and, quite frankly, oversized dog. I try to check in when I can. It's...it's at the point where the visits are as much for my benefit as they are for her.

MOLINA

You all seemed very happy together.

BROTHER ARGYRE

I think that's a fair assessment, yes. And what about you? How did seeing her make you feel?

MOLINA

I, uh...relieved, I guess? Sad. I don't know. It wasn't something I thought I'd have to confront today.

CRUTCHFIELD

Hey, hey. I don't want you walking down that dark alley again. We'd both rather be standing here than

-

MOLINA

I know, I know. You're right. I'd much rather be here.

CAT RECRUIT meows

CRUTCHFIELD

(to the cat)

Yeah, you definitely do need a hat, here, hold on a second. I made this one for Llama Dama Ding Dong, but it's kinda small, we might be able to fit it on your head, c'mere.

BROTHER ARGYRE

I'm glad to see that you seem to have taken my advice to heart. About allowing yourself support.

MOLINA

I'm trying, anyway. It helps when that support comes from someone who knows me so well as Cee does. I can't hide being upset no matter how hard I try.

(beat)

But you were right. Things are much easier to shoulder when there's someone else to share the weight.

BROTHER ARGYRE

I sense something is still troubling you, though.

MOLINA sighs

MOLINA

I just...I wish there had been something different we could've done. Even now, I keep catching myself looking for it, trying to figure out what the right decision would have been.

BROTHER ARGYRE

That is understandable. What I would ask is, even if there had been an alternative to the course you both took, what possible good would come from knowing it now?

MOLINA

None.

BROTHER ARGYRE

Do you remember what I told you
when we first spoke of this?

MOLINA

You're always exactly where you're
supposed to be, you just have to
figure out why you're there.

BROTHER ARGYRE

Precisely. You were there so you
could get here.

MOLINA

I try to remind myself of that.
Some days it's easier to remember
than others.

CAT RECRUIT meows

CRUTCHFIELD

(at a distance, to the cat)
Well, yeah, yeah, but he was, he
was eatin' the cheeseburger - I
mean if I had like, waited until
I'd get to know him better his
name probably would've been
Brother Asparagus.

MOLINA laughs

MOLINA

Today's one of the easy days. I
probably wouldn't even be thinking
about this if we hadn't seen you
and the baby.

BROTHER ARGYRE

Etta.

MOLINA

Etta. That's pretty.

BROTHER ARGYRE

I would have to agree. She, too, is where she is today as a result of a string of decisions, partly yours, mostly others. I cannot say that there weren't better choices out there, but from what I know of her parents and their business, I can in all honesty say that this might be one of the better outcomes for her, at least.

MOLINA

Really?

BROTHER ARGYRE

There was more than one reason I was called to the Cerulean Cloud.

BROTHER ARGYRE takes a deep breath

BROTHER ARGYRE

Besides, I cannot deny that having Etta in my life isn't...beneficial.

MOLINA

I'm glad she has someone like you watching over her.

BROTHER ARGYRE

I just wish I could do it more often.

(beat)

Now, please humor an old man and tell me how you have been. Have you enjoyed the fair so far? I assume you've been over at the petting zoo, given the straw in your partner's hair?

CRUTCHFIELD

Huh?

MOLINA

Oh my god, he's right! Cee!

CRUTCHFIELD

What, where?

MOLINA

Here, hold still, I'll get it. How do you still have straw in your hair, you showered this morning before we...you had to hug all the llamas before we left, didn't you?

CRUTCHFIELD

Of course I did, we're gonna be gone for a week, I didn't want them to worry about us.

(beat)

What are you looking at?

MOLINA

Nothing.

(beat)

My husband's adorable, shut up.

CRUTCHFIELD

Pffft.

BROTHER ARGYRE

Wait...you two got married?

CRUTCHFIELD

Oh! Yeah! Uh, Molly is my wife now.

BROTHER ARGYRE

Huh. It seems to have made you both very happy.

MOLINA

Yeah. We really are.

CRUTCHFIELD

How about we buy you a drink so we can fill you in on everything?

BROTHER ARGYRE

An excellent proposition. I'd particularly like to hear more about those llamas of yours. To

hear Andi tell it they are quite the characters.

CRUTCHFIELD

Oh, pff, *definitely*, so we've got nine of 'em, Carl is kind of the elder statesman who tries to keep all the others in line, he wears a hat, then you've got Barack, he's a mischievous little fucker who eats my clothes, but I love him anyway. Uh, Llama Mia and Dalai Llama are real sweet on their own, but if you put 'em in the same pen they'll break out within the hour

-

MOLINA

We'd better make that two drinks, we're gonna be here a while.

CRUTCHFIELD

You joked about Cheese watching us, but he's actually really good with the llamas. They all love him, so if he's out in the yard they tend to behave better. He's almost like a sheepdog.

MOLINA

Except for that one time they all conspired together to ruin a day's worth of baking.

CRUTCHFIELD

Oh, right, the Great Pie Heist. That was...uh, not funny at all.

MOLINA

...it was pretty funny. In hindsight, at least

BROTHER ARGYRE chuckles

BROTHER ARGYRE

Now this is a story I must hear.

CRUTCHFIELD

What you gotta understand is that
llamas love apples. Like, love
love them. So if you're baking an
apple pie, they will follow the
smell and start milling around
under the window. And if you
happen to leave the pies to cool
on the window sill...

Dialogue fades out

Closing theme fades in under credits

ANNOUNCER

Well, another day at the Grand
Circumsolar Exposition is comin'
to an end. Hope you folks had fun
here. Don't worry. There's more to
come next week. Y'all take care
now.