

IS IT RAINING IN YOUR BEDROOM?

[exit music: act III]

SUGGESTED LISTENING: "PLUSH" BY STONE TEMPLE PILOTS



[\[Music\]](#)



EARLY MORNING — DUSTIN KELSER'S BEDROOM

East-facing blinds leak thin bands of gold. That familiar Asheville hum is faint, a low engine idles and sputters into death somewhere down the street.

The room smells of sweat, perfume, and bare skin - a ghost of last night's bourbon still curling in the air. The sheets are a tangled map of choices two grown-ups made with their eyes open and hearts steady. On the dresser: a coil of diamond-studded chain, a black leather wallet, a small photo strip from some battered arcade booth, and a folded flyer from a local band's street team that must have been slipped under the bar door. You could chart a life from the edges of this room. A legend's life. A man's life.

Thunderwolf wakes the same as he does any other morning — one eye first, then the other — a veteran's body inventorying itself in neat, unhurried beats. Right shoulder, the same old grind. Left knee, the phantom twinge that never quite leaves despite the copious amounts of titanium. Lower back, actually serviceable today. He exhales, breath catching all those noticeable scents surrounding him upon inhale.

The blinds split the sunrise across his chest, highlighting scars he has long since stopped recognizing as ugly. The silver in his hair throws back the light, iron filings under a sun magnet. He is in boxers, and the sheet rides his hip like a lazy tide.

Beside him: Natasha Estella in a black nightgown that would have gotten a standing ovation from a quieter century. The silk is minimal, the lace impertinent, the hem a rumor. She sleeps on her stomach, one leg bent, toes pointed like a dancer's even in dreams. Strawberry hair spills everywhere, an expensive mess. Her face is turned toward him, mouth faintly parted, the ghost of a smirk like she's mid-eulogy for someone who deserved it.

He reaches for the glass on the nightstand. Two swallows, cool and bright, then a third for good measure. He sets it down and thumbs his phone awake, squinting against the rectangle of daylight in miniature.

Missed notifications stack like poker chips. A booking confirmation. A message from Gregory Price timestamped 2:18 a.m. A reminder about medicals. A "we good?" from an old training partner who always worries too much and too late.

And then — a name that pulls the floor two inches out from under his feet.

MISTY.

He taps. Reads. Rereads.

Thank you for the other night. I really, really needed it. Sorry I waited so long to text. I don't know where this thing with us is going. If there even is a thing, but... truly, I miss you. I need you to know that above all else. I think my life is a whole lot better when you're in it. Could we meet and talk about us?

No ornament. No coyness. A message written like a person walking a high wire with no net and choosing not to look down. He feels the old heat right beneath the ribs, the one he pretends is just acid reflux when the truth is far less clinical.

He sets the phone face-down, then flips it back, like he's checking to make sure the words didn't evaporate under the glass.

A rustle behind him. Silk whispers. A lazy, wicked purr of a voice.

Natasha Estella: "If you're ghosting me for room-temperature water and push notifications, I'm leaving a terrible Yelp review."

Dustin Kelser: [without turning] "You don't even use Yelp."

Natasha Estella: "I would create an account just to destroy you. Five paragraphs. Oxford comma. Pulitzer-quality slander."

He laughs despite himself and turns. She is half propped on an elbow now, nightgown strap fallen,

hair slanting across one eye like a noir curtain. Her expression is what it always is around him – playful, predatory, protective. The holy trinity of best friends with no illusions.

Dustin Kelser: “Morning, Tasha.”

Natasha Estella: “Morning, Dusty. Do I want to know what time it is?”

Dustin Kelser: “Early enough to pretend we’re responsible.”

She flops back onto her pillow with theatrical despair, the hem flashing more leg than the FCC approves.

Natasha Estella: “Ugh. Here I was, thinking we’d order pancakes and flirt with the delivery guy.”

Dustin Kelser: “The delivery guy is seventy and calls me ‘sir’ like it’s a threat.”

Natasha Estella: “Exactly my type.”

He reaches for the water again, buys a few seconds with the rim at his lip. His eyes drift to the phone like water to ice.

Natasha sees it. Of course she does. Her gaze slides from his face to the phone and back again, and when she speaks, the joke is still there, but softer around the edges.

Natasha Estella: “Misty?”

He doesn’t bother lying. He turns the screen and offers it like a confession. She reads. Hands it back without commentary. For a beat, there is nothing in the room but the thin buzz of the city and the calculus of two people who have always told the truth to each other, even when it was uncomfortable, and especially when it mattered.

Dustin Kelser: “Tash... this has been... you know.”

Natasha Estella: “Fun. Filthy. Therapeutic. Outstanding cardio. Great for skin tone. Please continue.”

Dustin Kelser: *[smiling]* “Fun. But I’ve got a lot moving. Contract. The kids. Old ghosts that don’t stay buried. Feelings I can’t file under ‘miscellaneous’ anymore. And I think... we should stop before this gets complicated.”

She stretches like a satisfied cat, then sits up, tucking one leg under herself, the nightgown adjusting with laws of physics known only to stage magicians and wardrobe departments.

Natasha Estella: “Stop? Babe, I have been a working professional in the adult industry, managed three nightclub launches, and was once a fixer for a congressman who thought Signal was a cologne. You and me? That’s the least complicated sentence in my entire autobiography.”

He huffs a laugh. She lets it land, then tips her head, eyes keen. This is the gear shift. From fun to friend.

Natasha Estella: “But yeah. We should stop.”

He blinks. “We should stop” hangs there like a chandelier he didn’t expect to see fall.

Dustin Kelser: “You were waiting for me to say it.”

Natasha Estella: “No. I was waiting for you to admit it. I could’ve said it first, but I wanted you to hear the shape of your own heart in your own voice.”

He rubs his jaw, buying time with the scrape of stubble against palm.

Dustin Kelser: “You think I’m a coward.”

Natasha Estella: “I think you’re a human with nerve endings. Also, when you saw Misty in that press box, you lit up in a way I haven’t seen in you since, what... the Bush administration? You could have been surrounded by four of my award-winning colleagues demonstrating advanced doctoral techniques, and you still would’ve been staring at that woman like she was the last uterus-wielding female on planet earth.”

He doesn’t deny it. He couldn’t if he tried. The admission moves through him like a slow, hot truth.

Dustin Kelser: “I’m afraid. But I still love her. Always did. Maybe always will. What do you think?”

Natasha folds her hands around one knee, the nightgown nothing but suggestion now, and considers him. The showgirl is gone. The friend remains.

Natasha Estella: “Of course you do. You always have. You know how I know? Because you’re calmer when you say her name. Not giddy. Not crazy. Calm. Like the fight stops being noise and becomes a song you actually know the words to. Go get your girl.”

He nods, then stops nodding, because the next thought is a brick in the blender.

Dustin Kelser: “What if it’s a scheme? Another manipulation angle. A trap. A plot with a bow on it.”

Natasha Estella: “Dusty. The only plot was the one you ruined over two decades ago. Styx built an empire of hurt and you put your shoulder through it. You’ve been living like every good thing has a string tied to it. At some point, you have to let the kite fly.”

He stares at his chest. The scars. From her. The life he chose and the life that chose him. He nods, slow.

Dustin Kelser: “...Shit.”

Natasha Estella: “That did not sound like kite-flying enthusiasm. What?”

Dustin Kelser: “Part of the deal Dominique squeezed in. Misty and I have to go visit **Enika**.”

The temperature drops. Not the air – the soul.

Natasha’s posture changes. She folds her arms. The nightgown’s flirt becomes armor.

Natasha Estella: “Dominique.”

Dustin Kelser: “Yeah.”

Natasha Estella: “She’s still playing chess on graves. Enika didn’t get a fair world. She got branded and broken by a man who thought suffering was a toy. And Dominique wants to turn that into leverage?”

Her voice frays, then tightens. She inhales through her nose, a controlled burn, and shakes her head.

Natasha Estella: “You follow through. Not because Dominique asked. Because Enika deserves two faces from her past who will stand in a doorway and not lie to her. But don’t mistake that woman’s pain for a contract clause. It’s a life.”

Dustin Kelser: “I know.”

He does. In the marrow. He knows.

For a beat, neither of them speaks. The blinds redraw the gold across the room. Outside, a truck downshifts. A siren coughs awake and then thinks better of it.

Natasha exhales, unknots her arms, and drags the mood back to the living room of their banter like only she can.

Natasha Estella: “Also, while we’re cataloging brave deeds, remember this for when your memoir hits shelves: You, sir, survived Friends With Benefits with me. The sex will never live up to yours truly. I have trophies and an IMDb page. The adult industry taught me things that could get an Olympic gymnast indicted, and still, you kept up. Frankly, I’m giving you five stars on Yelp.”

Dustin Kelser: “You just said you don’t use Yelp.”

Natasha Estella: “I will create a burner account named NotMisty69 and write a review so glowing the server farm overheats.”

He barks a laugh that breaks the tension’s neck. She soaks in the sound, pleased with herself, then throws a pillow at his head with no warning. He snatches it out of the air one-handed, because of course he does.

Natasha Estella: “Chase your heart, Mr. Thunderwolf. That’s your soulmate. You need to forgive, and you need to ask for your own forgiveness. Those are two different prayers, and you owe both.”

He lowers the pillow, the grin fading into something gentler. He looks at her the way you only look at the people who helped hold you together while you were learning how to hold yourself.

Dustin Kelser: “You sure you’re okay?”

Natasha Estella: “With what? Losing perfect-ten cardio and a man who insists on hydrating like a responsible adult? Please. I’ll survive. We said what this was on day one. Two best friends. Mutual maintenance. No tethers. You’re not breaking my heart, Dusty. You’re keeping your promise to it.”

He reaches across the small country of the bed and squeezes her hand. She squeezes back, firm.

Dustin Kelser: “If you ever need me—”

Natasha Estella: “I’ll text Pancakes, no flirting and you’ll show up in sweatpants like a divorced dad who just discovered TikTok. I know. We’re good.”

He lets go. She flops onto her back again, hair a halo of red mischief, and stares at the ceiling.

Natasha Estella: “Text her.”

He looks at the phone like it’s a detonator. Then he picks it up.

His thumb hovers. He types.

I got your message. I’ve been thinking about you too. About us. If you still want to meet, name the place. I’ll be there.

He doesn’t send it. Not yet. He sits with it, feeling the shape of the words, testing them for weakness. Natasha watches him the way a stage manager watches a wire — not to catch him if he falls, but to make sure the rigging holds while he crosses by his own choosing.

Natasha Estella: “You know, for a man who once suplexed a guy through a lighting rig, you’re remarkably tender with a ‘send’ button.”

Dustin Kelser: “I know what a button can do.”

Natasha Estella: “So do I. Hit it.”

He does. The little blue whoosh feels like a city changing traffic lights all at once.

He sets the phone down, breathes out.

Dustin Kelser: “Now I shower. And then I call Price and tell him that if he blindsides me with a manager pitch ever again, I’m invoicing him for emotional damages.”

Natasha Estella: “Tell him you’re billing him for **my** emotional damages. I had to hear ‘Misty’ before coffee. That’s hazard pay.”

He swings his legs over the side of the bed, stands, stretches until vertebrae sound like rain on a porch roof. The light loves him for a second — a small benediction — then moves on.

At the bathroom door, he pauses and looks back. Natasha is watching him with that look again — the one that says she has seen his worst days and still chooses the front row on the next one.

Dustin Kelser: “Thank you.”

Natasha Estella: “For what?”

Dustin Kelser: “For being the kind of friend who never made me pay for the friendship with the benefits.”

Natasha Estella: “Please. You paid. In electrolytes.”

He laughs, shakes his head, disappears into steam. The shower hisses on. The mirror fogs. In the bedroom, Natasha gathers the sheet around her and leans back against the headboard, eyes closed, lips curved.

After a moment, she opens them and frowns thoughtfully, running the Enika thread through the loom of her mind again. Dominique, contracts, old sins that insist on the present tense. There is more there. She can feel it like a door with a draft.

Natasha Estella: [to the empty room, soft] “We follow through. And we don’t let anyone turn her into a victim again. We owe Enika that much.”

The phone buzzes against the nightstand. One new message.

New York City. Name the time and place. Hopefully where it all begins again. I’m ready.

Natasha sees the glow, doesn’t touch it. She smiles to herself, then grabs another pillow and flings it at the bathroom door with perfect aim.

Natasha Estella: “Text your soulmate back, you goon! And for the love of God, moisturize! You’re forty-eight and the 4K cameras are not your friend!”

From the steam: a muffled curse and a laugh. The good kind. The still-alive kind.

Outside, the city makes its daily promise to be too much and just enough. Inside, two friends keep theirs. And somewhere across town, a woman with emerald eyes watches a screen light up and lets hope stand on its own legs for the first time in a very long while.



LIVE
RECORDING
●

Late Night— American Airlines Flight 4346

The front-facing camera on a one-generation back Galaxy clicks on, showing the back of a late-night flight. Cabin lights dimmed, engines humming low. Thunderwolf leans back in a worn leather seat, aisle empty on both sides. A glass of water sweats on the tray table alongside an empty glass stained in brown. He’s wearing that worn Drakken-Wolf T-Shirt that they stopped selling at the merch booths sometime during the Obama administration . He smirks at the lens – the kind of smirk only twenty-five years of scars and receipts can buy.



THUNDERWOLF

Thunderwolf: “It’s like... you know...”

“I’m sitting on a red-eye to New York, Asheville already fading out the window, my patience right along with it. Only so many salted caramel espresso martinis you can pound on a flight before the stewardess gives you the look. Yeah. You know the one.”

He adjusts in his seat. He shoots her a look back. An eyebrow and a grin. One she doesn’t notice. Some things never change. Especially these god forsaken seats.

Thunderwolf: “You’d think after all these years, all the scars, all the plot twists, I’d be done with trying to prove... well... anything. But nah... COVID came and went. Mulletts made a comeback that nobody asked for. TikTok turned grown men

into influencers doing dance routines in their kitchens. And somehow, I'm back here, four lazy-left turns later."

He sighs. Deep. He loved hearing himself talk. Kyle Lee was right, yet again.

Thunderwolf: "Hell, it's been, what — five years since I laced up in front of a live crowd? Closer to ten if you count *real* competition and not that one-off exhibition match. Which, by the way — I won. Fuhhh-huck you, Silverback, and the roid raging cowboy who's shoulder you rode in on."

"But the truth is? We were robbed. I was robbed. Hell, you *all* were robbed of me during what should have been my best years. 'Moushoun'ed,' as we called it back in the day. Ninety percent of you won't get that joke — and that's fine. The old heads know. And for the rest of you? Go spin in concentric circles on Reddit trying to figure it out until your brain melts. Won't change the fact that the guy sitting in at Gorilla during every Fall from Grace became a Director of Academics — yeah, I'm looking at you — and yet here I am, holding the last broken piece of the Charm legacy, trying to keep it from crumbling in my hands."

He gestures to himself, smirk fading to something harder.

Thunderwolf: "But none of that matters anymore. Not here. Not now. New era. New faces. Kids who will never understand why November was always the most dangerous month in wrestling. Adults who still don't know why Jeffery Drake was *in fact* The Perfect Hero."

He tilts his head, eyes narrowing, smirk tugging.

Thunderwolf: "I digress. **King Homewrecker**. We'll start there. Yeah. I guess you're uh... shattering marriages and building kingdoms from the rubble? Good for you. I mean, I guess when you're aiming for well drinks and not top shelf liquor, anything's possible. Funny story, my agent sent me a video of you where you had a barbed wire baseball bat, shaking it around like a crazy man, and you called someone a puss-filled infection. That's omega-level shit talk, my man. I almost wish you had signed-up for my corporate cup team instead of my son's. With that level of witticism and tom-dickery, me and you could've really gone places, sport."

"Except, well, have you taken a look in the mirror lately?"

He edited in a still of Homewrecker from the Prime Wrestling website - a quick flash, and done. He shakes his head in disgust.

Thunderwolf: "Look at you, stuffing yourself into that shirt like it's a sausage casing at a state fair. Pretty sure the word Legend is just fighting for survival and air at this point. Instead of King Homewrecker, you master of originality you, how about Man-Titties Magee? And those boots? Don't lie to me. Those ain't wrestling boots, those are your momma's cowgirl specials with the orthopedic arch support still inside. Hell, I can hear the Dr. Scholl's squeaking from here."

"Here's an idea - get a haircut, Cliff Young Junior. Or better yet, don't. Because right now you look like Jeff Bridges got lost in an Australian ultramarathon and nobody had the heart to tell him his career was over. Double entendre number four on the evening for those keeping score at home."

"One more Marlboro red, Chance. One more Marlboro red for this man and you're walking into a handicap match at Daybreak. See? All those times I told you that smoking was bad for your health? I wasn't playing. That's what twenty-five looks like at three packs a day. You can thank me later for that life lesson."

He runs a hand through his silver-and-black hair, snickering low.

Thunderwolf: "Sunflower Cartel. **Driftwood**. **Meadow**. You two look less like prophets and more like you just got done selling sage bundles out of a van at Bonnaroo. Cute hustle. But when that cage shuts at Daybreak, there's no sunlight, no open fields, no drum circles — just me, steel, and a reality check. You're not a movement. You're material for my highlight reel."

He leans forward now, smirk fading into something heavier.



Thunderwolf: “But you, **Chance...**”

He takes a beat, eyes fixed, no smirk now.

Thunderwolf: “My son. My blood. You’re the one that answered the call, aren’t you? You wanted to stand across from me at the WarGames Invitational, like that cage is the place where you finally burn the name Kelser from your own skin. You’ve been out there with your paint, your sermons, your unbridled anger. Talking about shadows like you’re choking in mine. Let me make this crystal clear — that shadow? It built you. It doesn’t define you. But it did build you. Every ounce of fight in your body? You got that from your mother and I. Every scar you’ve earned? You carry it because you saw us do it first.”

“I’m not walking into that cage to bury you, Chance. I’m walking in there to humble you. To remind you that fighting for something is harder than screaming atrocity at the top of your lungs. To remind you that fathers don’t just give life... they teach you how to survive it. And you better pray I don’t have to teach you with these hands more than once, sport. If you think those training regimes with Uncle Cliff were rough? Wait until I catch you. I may be older, and this may be my first match back - but trust me when I say this - the disrespect you’ve thrown at yours truly, much less your mother? Will be paid back in full.”

He straightens again, smirk crawling back across his face.

Thunderwolf: “But let’s not forget - lucky me - I’m not walking in there alone.”

“I’ve got **Chad Kyle** — the same guy who dragged you to your limit, Chance, and left you sore in muscles you didn’t even know you had. I saw that limp when you went to the back. Don’t think I missed it.”

“I’ve got **Aiden Vanity** too — kid’s more in love with his reflection than anyone I’ve ever met, and that **includes** Matt Attict, but underneath that fake tan and hairspray? I see a fire that could burn down a pentecostal church on Easter Sunday.”

“And then there’s **Emiko Fujimoto** — tougher than nails, meaner than hell, and the only person in this whole match I’d hesitate to swing on... at least until I get back in rhythm.”

He smirks, leaning forward just a bit.

Thunderwolf: “That’s not a team, boys. That’s a firing squad.”

He reaches for the glass of water, swirling it once before setting it back down untouched. His eyes flick back to the lens, steady.

Thunderwolf: “So go ahead. Preach about your non-existent Abyss. Crown yourself king of the trailer park. Pretend that that sun you worship is gonna shine on you forever. Because at **Daybreak**? The only light you’re gonna see is the reflection of my teeth while I’m smiling, putting each and every one of you down.”

“And Chance?”

He leans in, voice low, measured, like it’s just between them.

Thunderwolf: “I’m sorry I wasn’t the father you needed me to be. I’m sorry Styx got in your head. But when this is done? You’re always welcome home. No matter what happens out there — your mother and I love you.”

Thunderwolf cuts the feed, the cabin hum returning to fill the silence.

- End Transmission -