

WEAVER, Chapter Four:
"An Olive Branch"

By Newton Sweeney

[CONTENT WARNINGS](#)

Scene: 1

MUSIC: OPENING THEME PLAYS AND THEN FADES OUT.

LORNA:

They heard me.

They *heard* me. How did they- I'll start at the beginning, Helena. Maybe, maybe it will make sense if I retell it.

It was early. I had found myself waiting, restless in anticipation of what would happen next between Evelyn and Goose, wondering if they had resolved their conflict or would continue to allow it to simmer under the surface of their conversations. And I was... on edge, the fog in my mind withdrawing only enough to allow a new name to join yours: Duncan Blair.

How had he been in this house for so long, watched by me for so long, without his name ever entering my head? Had it simply never been stated? Surely that's not the case... It was new to me. It is new to me, and it sits heavy on my mind, and something is just beyond my reach.

SOUND: WOOD CREAKING.

If only I could- But I'm getting sidetracked.

Helena, this would be easier if you were here to keep me focused. I think it is... against my nature, speaking so bluntly. Sometimes I don't know where the fog ends and I begin.

Finally, though, they came down the stairs. First Evelyn, rising in her usual fashion before the light had lost that cool blue hue of the early morning hours. The day progressed as most do; there was nothing at all out of the ordinary aside from Evelyn hesitantly taking down a different mug, one that had seen little use before today. From a small distance I stood and observed her. No spirit had come to bring her to her final rest in the night. She

was safe, even if she had to make use of a new mug, the shattered one now lost, existing only in memory. Just like the man. Just like Evelyn's mother. Just like... Hm.

Soon enough, she was gone, out in the world and far from my reach. Goose's form eventually descended the stairs, they made themselves breakfast and got to work. Today, they were working on what looked to be a story of their own, told in many frames on their screen. They painstakingly crafted the movement of two boys, who moved in jerky motion from standing on opposite sides of the screen to holding each other like lifelines, like a dying wish, their mouths pressed together before parting, twin smiles on their youthful faces.

I looked away. It... hurts, to see others in love. You are so far from me, Helena.

Eventually, though, Evelyn returned, weary from the library that she so despises. Goose greeted her, and she scarcely said hello before skulking up the stairs-

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS AS EVELYN WALKS UP THE STAIRS.

-her chunky shoes clacking with each step. Goose simply shrugged and returned to their work, but... I don't know. They looked sad. Conflicted and confused.

If I could view myself in a mirror, I wonder if my face would have that same expression. Brows knit, lips pressed together as if they were two lovers in a dying embrace, shoulders drawn up tight.

Goose didn't stay there long, though. Evelyn had, it seemed, decided she would no longer wait patiently for the spirit of... him to take her away, and she descended the stairs again before Goose had even started the process of coloring their work. She had changed out of the clothes she wore out there, had swapped it out for a plain gray shirt and jeans, her hair pulled up and out of her face.

She marched up to Goose, stopping to face them where they sat at the kitchen table, crouched over their tablet. I... I came closer, too. Carefully, but. I think I had started to grow comfortable, confident enough to enter their space, knowing that I was too far from them to be seen or heard.

(A SMALL LAUGH)

I suppose I was wrong, I- Helena, be patient with me. I'm getting to that.

Slowly, Goose looked up from their work. That distance between the two of them, that chasm that stretched wide no matter how near they stood, it kept Goose alert. On edge. Ready to adjust according to Evelyn's mood, but she simply sat down across from them, placing her hands on the table, almost like a peace offering. An olive branch.

Despite this, she didn't speak at first. She just... gazed at Goose, both of them tense and ready to flee at the first sign of danger.

"So," she said after a moment. "I've been thinking."

Goose watched her silently.

"I've been thinking," Evelyn said again, "and I think we should start to redecorate."

Redecorate. As if what the man had here wasn't enough. As if his life deserved no place in this house. Am I simply attached to the familiarity? It's... It's hard, Helena, to tell if I held any affection for the man or simply liked his habits.

But Goose agreed. They said that it would help to make this place into a home. Right now it is a tomb, even if the man's body is... is gone?

SOUND: WOOD CREAKING.

Where is it? Is it buried under layers of dirt? Is he ash? Scattered to the wind? Helena-

I'm sorry, I- I'll continue.

SOUND: STATIC.

Evelyn seemed more at ease, then. She told Goose that maybe they were right. Goose's eyebrows raised at that.

"Really?" they said. They did not seem to believe her.

Evelyn let out a deep sigh. "Maybe," she corrected. "Maybe you were right, I don't know." There had been nothing to suggest a spirit, she admitted, maybe it was just her mind playing tricks, that she was still so upset over her mother that she had decided any house with a history must be haunted. There had been no activity in the house. No activity that she had seen, Helena. She wanted to settle in, or at the very least, start to. And if there was a ghost, she added, she could at least enjoy the time she had left.

She said that with a smile, but there was fear in her eyes.

The more I watch, the more I realize how much Evelyn is led by her fear. Whatever happened to her, whatever spirit haunts her, is why she runs. She ran to this house as an escape, she runs to work and she runs to the bedroom, but sometimes, running cannot save you. Sometimes, whatever chases you is faster, so you have to stand your ground.

I can't run. I can't fight, either. I can only wait for you, and... and after what happened today, I don't know how much longer I have.

They started on a list. Writing down things to do, items to purchase and boxes to sort through and possible places they could rid themselves of his items in exchange for money. Ways to sell away his life. Is it funny, that they have been here so long and have only just done this? Maybe they have not been here long, maybe it's just the slumbering

part of myself that thinks they have. I don't know, Helena. There is so much I don't know.

With the list done, Evelyn stood-

SOUND: A CHAIR SCRAPING AS EVELYN STANDS.

-declaring that today would be a day of cleaning. Goose looked at her in confusion. They had already cleaned, swept the floors and wiped down the counters and ran that horrible loud vacuum over the carpets, but Evelyn shook her head. Deep cleaning, she said. Down to the very soul of the house.

That bit was implied. I don't think she realizes houses can hear. That houses can have souls, even when girls are trapped and have no soul or mind or heart or skin or eyes or ears but see and hear despite this.

But when Goose and Evelyn began their work, I found myself... on edge. Tense. Waiting for... something? Helena, you know I am a being of fear, of anxiety and caution and silent observation, but this was different. I felt... dread. Deep in my being, and despite being weightless I felt so heavy, watching them pour over the books that the man had owned, the cabinets in his furniture, the clothes in his closet upstairs. They still didn't touch the basement, though, Evelyn and Goose left with no choice but to leave it sealed up tight. I was relieved at that, for only a moment, but then they started to talk about the wallpaper.

Helena, do you remember the bedroom? Not the man's, not... *Duncan's*, but the one he sealed up, so long ago? I think it was long ago, it feels more... distant, than the other memories, before he fell, before he slept and did not wake again.

I remember watching him, standing back as he nailed planks of wood over the door, making it flush against the rest of the wall. He didn't cry, he never cried, not even when he cut open his hand and his head and he had to go away. But

he was sad. He must have been, to seal it up as he did. I didn't mind, I never liked the room, it frightened me like the basement frightens me, makes me think of men with knives and of pain and loss. I was perfectly content to let it be buried.

And since the day he sealed the room, it has been hidden, buried under the old and ugly wallpaper that concealed that room-

SOUND: WOOD CREAKING.

-that room that must, must not be opened, must remain shut and sealed and lost.

But they didn't know that. They were upstairs, debating whether the wallpaper was tastefully tacky or just simply ugly, whether it would be permitted to remain or if it would be eroded away like the rest of the man. I followed, letting that sense of dread guide me where you could not.

They decided to take down the wallpaper, peel away the skin of the house, leaving it naked and raw. Evelyn's idea, to make the house less of the man's and more her own. This was enough to make me angry; I had been left with no choice but to allow them to clean, to sweep away the dust. I was even nearly grateful to them for doing what I could not. But this, this - violation, it sparked more than simple annoyance.

They started next to the bedroom that the two of them share, using a knife to pry it off as carefully as they could. I could tell that they had not anticipated what a process removing wallpaper would be, and on more than one occasion they had to stop, pull out one of their little screens and find a new method.

Slowly, painstakingly so, the wallpaper was removed-

SOUND: A KNIFE SLICES ALONG THE WALLPAPER.

-and all the while I watched, waiting for them to find that terrible room. It was only a matter of time, once the project had begun. And there was nothing I could do, nothing at all, but simply... watch. Helena, I ached to pray to you, but my voice refused to come. My heart, if I have one, was lodged in whatever passes for a throat in this shape, and I was helpless and mute.

When they reached the point that I know that door stood, I looked away. I couldn't stand to bear witness, but I couldn't bring myself to leave, either. Still I heard Goose call for Evelyn, excitedly, as if they'd discovered a secret treasure, and I knew exactly what they had found.

Maybe they *had* uncovered a secret treasure. One with a curse that would rip apart a life or many lives and serve as a warning for generations to come. Or something like that.

Evelyn looked at where the corner of the door had begun to peek through, high enough that she had to stand on her toes to get a good look. Without a word, she locked eyes with Goose, understanding written on both faces. So, with renewed vigor, they pulled the paper off, using a small knife to feel the outline of the door underneath.

And then it was revealed. Standing tall and proud, despite its years of solitude, of existence just under the surface of human perception, and for a moment I admired its strength. When Evelyn began to reach for the boards that hold it shut against anyone who might try to go against the man's wishes, though, I could-

I could stand by no longer.

I would not, I could not allow them to open this room.

And I don't know how, Helena, I don't. But a... *sound* ripped through me.

I've screamed before. Out of boredom, out of desperation for you, out of something close to fear when I realized the man was gone. But never, not once in... however long it is I have been here, not once has anyone heard me. Before today.

I screamed, then. It was the only thing in my mind, my desperation to have what is lost stay lost, what's dead stay *dead*, and it, somehow, let me rip through whatever keeps me distant from the world of the living for just a moment. I was overcome by it, the all-consuming instinctual compulsion to protect. What it is I must protect, I do not know. There is a secret there, I think, something raw and private and not meant for their eyes, for my eyes, for any eyes, and I had to, I had *no choice* but to keep it hidden. Keep it *safe* from prying eyes. From the peeling back of paper skin and uncovering of long-sealed tombs.

(SHE LAUGHS, DISBELIEF AND SHOCK STILL COURSING THROUGH HER)

And they heard me. Helena, they heard me. They *heard* me. I screamed and they turned and they did not see me but they knew that I was there they know that I am here they know I'm here. They know I'm here.

(ANOTHER FRANTIC LAUGH)

They know I'm here.

So what happens now?

THE END

MUSIC: END THEME PLAYS.

VOICE:

Weaver is written and produced by Newton Sweeney. This episode featured Newton Sweeney as Lorna. Our script editor is Veda Wheeler. Our production consultant, sound designer, and sound engineer is Newton Schottelkotte. Our theme is composed and performed by Rhea Ming. Our cover art is by James Smith. To find cast and crew bios, links to our social media, episode transcripts, and more, check out our website at weaverpod.carrd.co for more information. Thanks for listening.

CONTENT WARNINGS

- Static SFX
- Memory loss