

ROUKE: What?

LANOLIN: He's a fucking kid. We are kids. They can reach verdict for exile and call it "removing a viable threat to the community," and everyone feels okay with that, as opposed to "executing a kid who pulled some wires out of a radio telescope" which is what they're actually going to do.

FAYETTE: It's a trial. It's not a sentence. We could all come forward.

LANOLIN: As what? "Corrupted youths" who succumbed to his influence? We'd make their case, Fayette.

FAYETTE: As Listeners.  
We come forward as Listeners.  
That means something to...the people... to other citizens.  
Ask for a public trial. A public sentencing. They'll be more lenient if it's visible, if they're being held accountable. They won't want to look...severe...

ROUKE: Or it'll be worse. In public. They'll be on the spot. They won't want to seem weak. They'll need to appear consistent and decisive. They'll need to follow the law as it's written –

**Start**

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MARCUS: I can't read.

LANOLIN: Most people can't read.

MARCUS: Most of the youngest – most of this group of youngest citizens can't read.

FAYETTE: It's not important.

MARCUS: I shouldn't be able to be punished under a law that I can't read.

ROUKE: That won't hold up.

MARCUS: It's intentional.

LANOLIN: It's a choice.

MARCUS: For YOU. It was a choice for you. That's the thing... that's how... the illusion of choice. It feels like something you don't have to do, and so you don't, because there are other things. There are other more important things, like...just fucking surviving. And so you don't. And so you can't. And so that just becomes more and more of the world.

Of this world. Can't. And then we can't fight because we don't have the same ammunition, and it isn't fair. It isn't fair.

They hoard stories, in those underground vaults, in those meeting halls. Swear each other to secrecy and keep sitting on piles of words. We are kept stupid on purpose. We are kept outside and blind and needy. We are kept wanting to know. Hungry. Starved enough to gorge ourselves on occasional scraps of information and feel fortunate. Feel protected. Dependent. We are fed fear. Fear of what lived and died here. Fear of what's coming across the sand. Fear makes us...

*A silence descends.*

MARCUS: I won't recognize this council. They aren't what they're supposed to be. They aren't the ideals or vision for society they should have inherited. They are generations of increasingly less. Less than those who came before them. That isn't governance. That isn't justice and it isn't fucking fair.

FAYETTE: The first people – the Council represents those people. Speaks for those people. Their values. We can defend you on their terms.

MARCUS: But it isn't those people. This Council uses the weight of that history to govern how it wants. It isn't those people. Those people died years ago. This 'council' is a shell of their ideas.

Like this –

*He yanks one of the sets of headphones out of the wall.*

What the fuck is the point of this anymore? We record and we listen but there's no fucking function to it in a society that is no longer interested in anything outside of itself. That uses information as a weapon to generate fear. We just listen for...threat. Always. Always under threat. You can't move under threat. You can't mobilize under threat.

That's what this is. We are literally enabling a systematic crippling of our basic freedoms by allowing them to use us. People still believe that anything 'heard' is sacred – this Council twists what we feed them into bedtime stories to keep people in at night, keep their heads down, don't ask questions because "we are under attack".

FAYETTE: The world is more dangerous now than it was –

**End**

MARCUS: That's bullshit. I don't believe that. I believe that it feels that way because we know less. Because we're taught to listen for less. Taught to listen for things that scare us.

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SQUEAK: What did they used to listen for?

FAYETTE: Information. They believed there were more...pieces. That if you could build Ears that were big and powerful enough you could hear out past...what can be seen. They could know what was coming. They could prepare.

SQUEAK: For what?

FAYETTE: They'd survived something immense. I think that changes you. I think it makes it harder not to listen – not to be preoccupied with listening.

With knowing and being ready so they could protect... the most important things. They... protected all the oldest stories and all of anything people understood. They kept an understanding of who they were alive, so that it could be passed down and...

MARCUS: Read.

*A silence. FAYETTE looks at the transmitter.*

FAYETTE: Then we tell them.

MARCUS: NO.

FAYETTE: Marcus –

MARCUS: I said no –

FAYETTE: I wasn't asking.

MARCUS: Then what?

FAYETTE: Then it isn't vandalism –

LANOLIN: No. It's just treason. *(beat)* Worse treason.

FAYETTE: There's no *explicit* law against –

LANOLIN: Do you think that will matter? They're willing to *exile* him for stealing wires. What do you think they'd do if –

MARCUS: (to FAYETTE) Did you plan this?

*He looks from FAYETTE to the transmitter to SQUEAK.*

FAYETTE: Did I plan what?

MARCUS: DON'T FUCK WITH ME. Did. You. Plan. This? You turn everything over to them, nobly, reluctantly, heroically, and then what? You get a seat at the fucking table? Is that the deal here? You get an invitation OUT of here, and into a comfy Council chair, is that that what you think is going to happen?

FAYETTE: No.

*MARCUS moves toward SQUEAK*

MARCUS: What do you think?

SQUEAK: I don't know.

MARCUS: Do you think we forgot about you?

FAYETTE: Marcus –

MARCUS: That maybe we didn't remember you were here?

SQUEAK: I didn't know what to say.

MARCUS: We're talking about *dangerous things* and you don't spook. I think that's telling. Tells you something about a person's character.

*About the company she keeps.*

How about that, little mouse?

WHAT KIND OF COMPANY might a little mouse keep that she wouldn't run for the FUCKING DOOR the first second the cats look the other way? You know what I think? I think she keeps company with bigger creeping beasts.

*He makes a loud noise in front of her face.*

FAYETTE: MARCUS.

MARCUS: DID THEY SEND YOU DOWN HERE?