

*She punches him in the mouth. She swings again. He catches it. They fight. It's an even match. Whatever real anger has existed is burned off quickly and the fight starts to feel like a kind of release – something they both need. It has changed tone, becoming wild and more intimate – hovering just on the edge of turning into sex.*

*A charged pause. LANOLIN breaks it.*

LANOLIN: Then tell him you think he's full of shit. Or stop whining.

ROUKE: I don't whine.

LANOLIN (*as ROUKE*): "UGGGG. DON'T PUT YOUR GLOVES IN MY BOX. Don't ever put your things anywhere near where my things are. What if I have to spend THREE SECONDS figuring out which gloves are mine...???"

*There's a clicking sound – like Morse code – from the panel of instruments. They both look up. LANOLIN goes to the instruments. She takes down a clipboard hanging on the wall. She begins jotting something down - referencing the charts. She indicates to ROUKE to put on a headset. He does. He listens for a moment - nothing. He shrugs. He takes the headset off. The clicking stops. LANOLIN writes something down. She removes the sheet of paper, folds it up and seals it.*

**Start**

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SQUEAK: You're the recorder.

*LANOLIN and ROUKE stare at her. They've forgotten she's there.*

LANOLIN: Yeah.

SQUEAK: I've never heard anyone write... before. Not up close. It sounds like whispering.

*Pause.*

SQUEAK: Could you write something else?

LANOLIN: I'm not supposed to waste the materials –

ROUKE: We're not supposed to appoint new listeners either -

LANOLIN: Fine.

*She takes down the clipboard. She writes. SQUEAK listens.*

SQUEAK: What are you writing?

LANOLIN: My name.

SQUEAK: What is it?

LANOLIN: Lanolin? It's... the smell of wool. Sheep. It makes me think about things that are...real.

ROUKE: Can I see?

*She hands him the clipboard. He takes it in for a moment before passing it back.*

SQUEAK: What do you...record?

LANOLIN: I write... I write down what happens. What's heard. I seal those recordings and they go to Council for interpretation.

SQUEAK: You aren't happy about that.

*ROUKE and LANOLIN share a look.*

LANOLIN: I – it's not easy. It's trying to put things into words that are bigger than that. It means there's room for what we hear – what we report – to be made into things they aren't. To be used to prove things they don't.

ROUKE: They hear what they want.

LANOLIN: They choose to interpret what we report in ways that support things they're already doing. Things they want to do.

People believe that this Council makes choices about laws and public safety based on information we collect, but they don't.

Marcus tried to get an audience. With the Central Council. They turned him down.

SQUEAK: He waits in front of the meeting halls and tries to talk to the people going in.

ROUKE: Yells at them. He doesn't talk, he yells.

SQUEAK: He talked to me.

*Pause.*

SQUEAK: Nobody talks to me, but he *saw* me, and he talked to me.

*ROUKE goes to one of the stations and puts on the headphones.*

LANOLIN: It upsets him.

SQUEAK: Marcus?

LANOLIN: All of it.

SQUEAK: So he's Listening?

LANOLIN: It's a way to not feel like you for a while.

SQUEAK: Is something there?

LANOLIN: There was... a moment ago. Maybe too far away. He's just checking again. We'll see.

**End**

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*She goes over to a station and unplugs the headset. She turns a dial on the control panel. The sounds of deep space fills the room – they come from an old control speaker at LANOLIN's station.*

SQUEAK: You're not using the headphones?

LANOLIN: Not for this.

*They listen for a moment.*

SQUEAK: The first time... I could hear voices

*LANOLIN turns up the sound. It's just the roar of deep space – devoid of whale song.*

LANOLIN: Saying what?

SQUEAK: I don't know.

LANOLIN: What do you think?

SQUEAK: Please find me.

*Pause.*

LANOLIN: Want to hear something else?

*She turns the dials on the switchboard to new coordinates. The mechanical whirring sound of dishes pivoting above them. The sound of deep space roars louder. Hotter.*