

directly toward the setting sun. When you get close, you'll hear it. The ground will sound different under you.

FAYETTE: Who told you that?

SQUEAK: I... was invited. A Listener ... he stands out front of the Council chambers sometimes, on the steps. He gives public talks about... how things really are.

FAYETTE: He told you that you were a Listener? That you should come here?

SQUEAK: I told him I wanted to be. He said that I should... that I should be able to do whatever I want... that it's wrong of Council to dictate what functions we serve... that if I wanted to be a Listener, I should. He said I should just... come...and be one.

Pause.

FAYETTE: He shouldn't have said that. We don't decide those things. Marcus doesn't decide those things. We have to take you back.

SQUEAK: I'm not going.

FAYETTE: That's not your decision.

SQUEAK: It's the Third Era. We're not in the dark ages. We're supposed to be able to decide for ourselves. That's what they say all the time – that 'we are living in a time of unprecedented freedom'. That should mean getting to choose. That should mean not waiting to be assigned –

FAYETTE: Yeah, but it doesn't. You can choose... personal things, not –

SQUEAK: I can't think of anything more personal.

Start

FAYETTE: You shouldn't listen to Marcus.

SQUEAK: Why?

FAYETTE: Because he just says things. He doesn't think them through.

SQUEAK: He's the first person I've ever heard speak publically who makes sense.

FAYETTE: There's consequences. He doesn't think about consequences. About other people. He thinks about ideas. He runs his mouth from a place of... concepts. Philosophies. How he thinks the world should work, rather than how it does.

Pause.

SQUEAK: I would like to be a Listener.

FAYETTE: Yeah, well, I'd like a lot of things. Come on, maybe we can get you back before they start looking for you.

SQUEAK: They won't.

FAYETTE: Of course they will.

SQUEAK: It would be better for them not to have me.

FAYETTE: What?

SQUEAK: I'll cost them.

FAYETTE: What do you mean?

SQUEAK: ...Over the course of my life I will use up more resources than I will be able to contribute.

That's how I'm... seen.

They won't look for me.

FAYETTE: That's ridiculous. Did Marcus tell you that?

SQUEAK: I'm a good listener.

FAYETTE: That's not the same as being able to "Listen". First, almost no one can physically *do* it. You don't want to. It puts a space between you and them – the others. It makes it impossible to ever really go home again – even if we were allowed, and I have to believe that if you're capable of walking out here on your own, you're capable of contributing. You could garden, shepherd, cook in the mess halls –

SQUEAK: Not without supervision – without reducing someone else's efficiency.

FAYETTE: Look, there's a million things – you could be a mother. You could have children.

Silence.

SQUEAK: They might be born blind.

FAYETTE: ...

SQUEAK: People respect the Listeners.

FAYETTE: No. They don't.

SQUEAK: They're... afraid of you. You remind them that there's a world outside of themselves – something beyond their own existence. You remind us where we came from.

FAYETTE: That's not the same thing as respect.

SQUEAK: Council is afraid of you. Afraid of the place you hold in the imagination of the people - you make them curious.

FAYETTE: We're an extension of Council. Everything we do is under their directive. Any information we gather, we report to them.

SQUEAK: I'm not going back.

Pause.

FAYETTE: You have to.

SQUEAK: Why?

FAYETTE: Right now, you have to.

End

FAYETTE looks at the transmitter.

FAYETTE: It's – the circumstances are difficult - Maybe later we could argue – later – maybe- I'll ask Lanolin – maybe we could put the case forward for Council to consider – you can't tell them Marcus asked you.

SQUEAK: Why?

FAYETTE: Because they're...upset with him.

SQUEAK: I'm not a child –

FAYETTE: He's a problem for them. They will do as much as they can to stop him from getting his way. If they believe allowing you to become a Listener would make Marcus happy, then they'll deny you on principle. Right now is...not a good time.

SQUEAK: I don't want to wait for people who don't know who I am to come to a conclusion about the most efficient way for me to spend the rest of my life.

FAYETTE: It's a choice you can't unmake. If you throw your lot in with ours, you're putting yourself in opposition to Council, in a way that –

SQUEAK: You think so? That you're in opposition –?

FAYETTE: Yes. No. It's...not simple.
We're not *opposing* them, it's just...

She has moved closer to the table with the covered transmitter. FAYETTE moves to block her access with his body.

FAYETTE: To be here, right now, is to make a declaration that I don't think you want to make. It wouldn't be....right... of me to let you put yourself into the middle of a... trouble... that isn't yours. That isn't fair.

SQUEAK: Nothing is fair. At least I'm choosing this.

FAYETTE: Get your things.

Pause. She moves towards one of the listening stations. FAYETTE follows.

SQUEAK: We won't get back to the Earie before curfew.

FAYETTE: We might if we leave now.

SQUEAK: You'd have to walk back here alone in the dark. That doesn't bother you?

FAYETTE: ...

SQUEAK: You don't find it with your eyes.

FAYETTE: I just know the way.

SQUEAK: That's what 'Listening' is, isn't it?

FAYETTE: I don't know.

SQUEAK: They don't know either. That's why they're afraid of you.

Absently, FAYETTE touches the headphones.