

He yanks off the headphones.

Start

There is a sharp, piercing ringing, like deafening feedback. She doubles over, holding her ears. Thick silence descends – only the hum of the overhead discs remains. SQUEAK tries to regain her bearing.

FAYETTE: This area is off limits.

SQUEAK: ...

FAYETTE: You can't be down here. It's trespassing. I won't report you if you leave. Now.

She nods but doesn't move.

FAYETTE: Get up.

SQUEAK: I can't.

(beat)

FAYETTE: What?

SQUEAK: I can't feel my legs.

FAYETTE: That's why you don't touch shit that isn't yours.

SQUEAK: What's happening to me?

FAYETTE: You're fine.

SQUEAK: I can't stand up.

He puts out his hand for her to take, but she doesn't see it.

FAYETTE: Hey. I'm not fucking around. Look at me.

SQUEAK: I am.

He realizes she's blind.

FAYETTE: I – sorry – I didn't –

It will pass. Your legs. It's just sometimes what happens when you... they'll feel normal quicker if you stand.

He helps her to stand. A rush of physical sensation passes between them.

FAYETTE: Alright?

She nods.

FAYETTE: Try not to move too much. Just breathe, yeah?

 What's your name?

SQUEAK: Isobel.

FAYETTE: What are you doing here, Isobel?

SQUEAK: I'm a Listener.

Pause.

FAYETTE: No you aren't.

Pause.

SQUEAK: I... want to learn.

FAYETTE: There are no more Listeners. No more 'new' Listeners. Who brought you out here?

SQUEAK: I walked.

FAYETTE: Alone? Do they know you're here?

SQUEAK: Who?

FAYETTE: The Council. Anyone.

SQUEAK: They wouldn't have let me come.

FAYETTE: It's seven miles. Two hours of walking through the desert. You didn't get here alone.

SQUEAK: 14, 340 steps. Walk to the Western edge of the settlements. The point where the ground starts to get steep and leads you out towards the mesas. Wait for the sun to start going down – you'll feel it on your face. Follow it. Start counting then. 14, 340 steps out through the Ears

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.

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.

End

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.