

JT: RADIO: Outcast is an uncanny, gunslinging podcast for mature audiences. Content warning: this episode contains depictions of violence, guns, blood, character death, and implied child abuse that may be upsetting for some listeners. We encourage our listeners to prioritize their safety before venturing ahead. Thank you.

(Eerie mystical ambience)

EMI: Well, well, well. What do we have here? Last time we saw my *sweet* Helix, she had her arm linked with that *(She scoffs)* broody [Short beat] cowboy. *(sigh)* Not even *one hour* in 1887 and she's already at a *(she gags)* human party. Whatever. I've got that annoying poindexter tracking her for me. What was his [Short beat.] name again? Ch-Chuck? Ches-ter? Charlie? One of those. *For now*, all I can do is sit here in the Heavens, hoping she gets to that tower. Just have to bide my time. *(She laughs)* Well, [Short beat.] time I have. And Helix? I'll have her again, too.

(Safe Travels (main theme) plays)

(wind...no, people talking in the distance)

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Charles coughs)

CHARLES (NARRATION): From outside the property gates, --

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): -- I found it so astonishing, how *ornate* and illuminated the mayor's mansion was, as compared to the utter neglect down the road. How the Lone Flats brothel and saloon were constructed of a pitiful patchwork *wooden rot*, while the yellow manor stood bright and wide.

(Charles takes a drag of his cigar: inhale, exhale)

CHARLES (NARRATION): After the young cowboy and his mysterious partner made their way into the mansion, I counted nine more couples, [Short beat.] nine men and nine women, sally across the mayor's threshold. Now, [Short beat.] how would I steal myself into such a gathering without [Short beat.] being partnered?

(Charles chuckles)

CHARLES (NARRATION): It is doubtless to me that the Mistress *anointed* me, against all others, *due to my particular* [Short beat.] talents. *That* of a shapeshifter. She knew there would be moments like these.

CHARLES (NARRATION): Moments for risk [Short beat.] and subterfuge. And though I am still mystified about my divine mission, to locate this "woman out of time," I would not fail when —!

(Charles coughs, wheezes, coughs)

CHARLES (NARRATION): I would not fail when there —

(Charles coughs, wheezes, coughs, COUGHS, COUGHS)

(He sighs)

(...)

CHARLES (NARRATION): I walked around the mansion. To look for a rear door.

(Charles takes a quick drag off cigar, exhale)

(Cough)

(Takes a deep breath)

CHARLES (NARRATION): *Thus*, I circled the perimeter. And there I located, of course, a servant's back entrance. The door left *wide* for kitchen steam to escape.

(People talking in the distance)

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Charles smacks the Sonny Machine: Clang! Clang! Clang!)

CHARLES (NARRATION): You will certainly get me into a mess if you do not cease —

(Clang! Clang!)

CHARLES (NARRATION): — that incessant —

(CLANG!)

CHARLES (NARRATION): — ruckus!

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Naturally, I soon discovered a ridged knob on the side of the Sonny Machine. *Which* I promptly flicked downward and the sound burrowed itself.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Click! Click! Click!)

(Charles chuckles)

(A man clears his throat)

KITCHEN HEAD COOK (An old man, tired but stern): Sir, the front entrance is on the other side.

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Some wispy elderly man, wearing a drooped toque *blanche*, pointed his wooden spoon toward the property's anterior. This was, *no doubt*, the chef for the mayor's salon.

(People talking in the distance)

CHARLES (In a frail, breathy voice with a lisp): But I - I think this is the r-right place. The back d-door.

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): I had to shift quickly. The apron-wearing gentleman had many years on him, eyes *wrinkled* and *piercing*, squinting me up and down. No doubt, he had sussed *countless* phonies across his days.

(People talking in the distance)

KITCHEN HEAD COOK: And you are?

CHARLES (In a frail, breathy voice with a lisp): I'm D-D-D-Daniel.

KITCHEN HEAD COOK: *Daniel?* There wasn't a Daniel on the contractor dossier.

CHARLES (As Daniel): *Oh?* I-I was told to c-come here.

KITCHEN HEAD COOK: You don't look like a servant. Nor my very late commis chef.

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): He pointed the wooden spoon toward my chest.

(People talking in the distance)

KITCHEN HEAD COOK: Those are some nice garments for a contract servant.

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): In the West, even chefs keep pistols hidden beneath their aprons. And for what, to shoot the rats with? I could not know. But I needed to string my words carefully. I *had* successfully carried the interrogation long enough to gather some useful context. But, in the end, the oldest trick in the book came to fruition: You make the victim come to their own resolutions.

(People talking in the distance)

KITCHEN HEAD COOK: Oh. Now I see. You must be the page-turner commissioned from Albuquerque. The master has talked about employing a music-learned man. If not for this one night. [Short beat.] I wasn't aware he sent along the contract. But, now the costuming makes some sense. Come in. It's sweltering.

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

(Charles laughs victoriously in narration)

CHARLES (NARRATION): The common man rejects chaos. When left to silence after the suggestion of disorder, he *fills* the void with *comfortable* thoughts: This finely-dressed man couldn't be a criminal, *or* a con man, or an agent of Death. *This man* is a page-turner. Of course! A contractor. He has nothing *sinister* at work.

(People talking in the distance)

(Footsteps on hardwood)

(Pots and pans rattle together)

(Charles, as Daniel, chuckles nervously)

CHARLES (In a frail, breathy voice with a lisp): Th-th-thank you, sir.

KITCHEN HEAD COOK: You can leave your coat on that rack. The mayor *doesn't* allow boots on his carpet, so [Short beat.] leave those there near the door. One of the attendants can provide you some temporary show-loafers. *And* some cleaner socks. That thing in your hand, [Short beat.] I-I *really don't know* where you can put that. What is that?

CHARLES (In a frail, breathy voice with a lisp): O-oh. This is a - um, uh, a *page-reading tool*. It's a musical th-thing.

KITCHEN HEAD COOK: You mean a *metronome*?

CHARLES (In a frail, breathy voice with a lisp): Exactly, sir! (*He chuckles*) It's new. (*In a calmer, more sinister way*) Very new.

KITCHEN HEAD COOK: *Hmm*. I heard Edison keeps other inventors on double-time. Looks like it's true. Anyways, the mayor *will* like to see it. Carry on into the gallery room, down the hall. *Remember* the show-loafers.

CHARLES (In a frail, breathy voice with a lisp): M-my appreciation, sir. (*He chuckles nervously*) Thank you!

(*Echoing, ethereal piano*)

CHARLES (NARRATION): The *old fool*. I trotted along down the hall into the foyer, where I exchanged boots for loafers, and then followed an attendant into the wide-windowed gallery room. As the curtains were drawn, all the partygoers were sweating from the New Mexico sun, and thus the room smelled of *nauseating* perspiration. I elected to breathe through my mouth.

(*Charles coughs*)

(*Voices, a crowd, a party*)

(*Soft footsteps, creaking floorboards*)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD (He speaks grandly with a twang in his voice): *Apologies*, sir! I must've glanced over you at the front door.

(*Echoing, ethereal piano*)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Tobacco stains on the bottom lip. A silver ring for each finger, aside from his two bulbous thumbs, *which flaunted gold*. The only difference between a small town mayor and any other, is that small-town mayors still believe the monocle is *en vogue*.

(Voices and sounds from the gathered party)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: Mayor Orville Lyngood. *And* you are?

(Charles chuckles nervously, clears his throat)

CHARLES (In a frail, breathy voice with a lisp): Daniel, *sir*.

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: You are *Mr. Daniel*? Or is *Daniel* your Christian name?

CHARLES (In a frail, breathy voice with a lisp): T-the uhm uh. It's my first name. I uhm I am D-Daniel ... Plain ... view.

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: Mr. Plainview?

CHARLES (In a frail, breathy voice with a lisp): Mmm.

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: You mustn't be a *Lone Flatsman*, then.

(Ice rattles in a glass)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: *Unless* you are another of Miss Marigold's newly initiated? I would be curious to hear she's invited *service-men* under her fold.

CHARLES (In a frail, breathy voice with a lisp): N-N-No. No, I -I-

(Charles taps the Sonny Machine: Clack! Clack! Clack!)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): I lifted the Sonny Machine to my chest and tapped it, as a child might gesture toward another to escape blame.

(Voices and sounds from the gathered party)

CHARLES (In a frail, breathy voice with a lisp): The p-*page*-turner?

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Mayor Lyngood leaned forward into my face, *squinting* behind his monocle, [Short beat.] then surveyed the Sonny Machine in my arms. He leaned closer, *cheek against cheek*, and whispered into my ear.

(Voices and sounds from the gathered party)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: My wife must have sent for you. Do understand: *My daughter*, brilliant as she may be, cannot truthfully read the music. We have whipped the tune into her fingers.

(Ice rattles in a glass)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: Memorized, of course. She is marvelous with her memory, but *all the same*. Turn the pages. [Short beat.] I was not aware the Misses sent for you, but [Short beat.] she knows optics, *no doubt*. And a page-turner *will* portray the *illusion* of musical knowledge. It's important to a robust education. So, Mr. Plainview, *please*, do make her look musically learned.

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Mayors *such as these?* In the *American West?* Truly, the cowboy days have concluded. Commonwealth pretension has ascended its arms out to the frontier. [Short beat.] A shame.

(Voices and sounds from the gathered party)

CHARLES (In a frail, breathy voice with a lisp): O-of course, sir. That's *completely* underst-st-st-standable.

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: *Ah!* There's the entertainment *herself!* Come-come, darling!

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): A most *wretched creature* emerged. I had never seen anything so [Short beat.] ghastly. Standing at four feet, the mayor's daughter *shambled* across the gallery with a face painted ivory white, hair *curled* into a dozen wheaty cyclones, and the gown, the *offensive* gown, a *billowing* mass of *pink* netting. Perhaps her legs were replaced with pegs? She-She walked as if taking her first steps.

(Voices and sounds from the gathered party)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: Hello, my sweet dear. Isn't she a *marvel* and a wonder? Truly?

(Ice clatters in glass)

(Crowd clap)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Just as Mayor Lyngood began ushering me and his alarming daughter toward the grand piano, I spotted across the gallery the barefoot woman and her young cowboy companion. They stood out as an oasis in the desert, *speaking* with none others, not even amongst themselves. They *stared* obliquely around the room, the woman perhaps mystified, the man [Short beat.] determined.

(Voices and sounds from the gathered party)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: Annabeth, this music man will assist you in your *page* reading. *(Serious)* Understand? [Short beat.] You have brought the music sheets with you, yes?

(Pages shuffling)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): The decorated husk of a girl nodded, smirking with the same unfounded arrogance as her father. Then she withdrew a fold of sheets from behind her back.

(Voices and sounds from the gathered party)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: And, Mr. Plainview, this *machine* you've gestured toward, it is aaan instrument for accompaniment?

CHARLES (In a frail, breathy voice with a lisp): Ooooh. It's - it's the metronome. For p-p-pacing.

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: Ah! I had only seen such things in *acoustic* form. How exciting! *(To the room)* My dear guests--

(Voices and sounds from the gathered party come to a murmur)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: --come round for this musical interlude. I introduce you to *not only* the age of invention, but the age of beauty: *Annabeth Lyngood*.

(Crowd claps)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: With accompaniment from the electric metronome. In one frame, such is our *bright* futures!

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): The haughty creature named Annebeth took to her piano stool, and I stood beside her, peeling open the first page of her recital song. *Neither of us* could read the damned script, so I would make do flipping pages whenever the moment felt right. *No doubt*, she would be playing a slow children's tune, something [Short beat.] rudimentary. It would be a simple deception. I set the Sonny Machine on the piano's lid [Short beat.] and *flicked* its ridged knob.

(Voices and sounds from the gathered party)

(Wood squeaks as Annabeth and Charles ready themselves)

(Flick!)

(Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Crowd gasps)

(Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep)

(Crowd claps enthusiastically)

CHARLES (NARRATION): The crowd was *awe*-struck by the machine. The beeping. Faces lit as though they had seen a *grand illusion*. Some looked fearful, that technology had progressed beyond their comprehensions. All were enamored *except for two*: the terrified little girl on her piano stool, *and* the mysterious woman across the gallery hall. She squinted toward the Sonny Machine, almost knowingly. Yes. A woman out of time, indeed.

(Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep)

(Voices and sounds from the gathered party)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: N-not a matter!

(Guests murmur amongst themselves)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: *(He laughs anxiously)* Come now dear guests!

(Ice clatters in glass)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: Let us *rouse* Annabeth to the musical challenge! No doubt our beauty is *learned* and skilled to such a degree. *Come, come!*

(Crowd claps)

(Record scratch, scratch, scratch, scratch,

scratch, scratch,

scratch, scratch

scratch, scratch

scratch, downwwnn)

(Echoing guitar strings playing)

(Sfx: a page is flipped and then pen writing on paper)

(Pen writing on paper)

JESSE (NARRATION): Snuck off as everyone clapped for the mayor's kid. Even Helix looked lost in the fun. She'd had two glasses of wine already. *Mine* and *hers*. Didn't know if I could trust her to come with me and not bring any more *unwanted* attention. Pretendin' to be a rich cattle farmer was bad enough.

(Crowd claps)

JESSE: I'll be back.

HELIX: Really? The show's just getting started. *(She sighs annoyed)* Fine. Where are we going?

JESSE: *You're* stayin' here.

HELIX: Says who?

JESSE: Just *please* keep an eye out. Stay close to the exits.

(Light footsteps on hardwood, wood creaking)

(Echoing guitar strings playing)

JESSE (NARRATION): With everyone gatherin' together to watch the mayor's girl at the piano, no one paid me any attention. Didn't run into a soul, not guest or servant, as I dipped back down the way the mayor brought us in. [Beat.] Rooms on the first floor were all busts. Nothing but guest bedrooms, a study, a library, some storage rooms. [Beat.] Second floor was *a little* better. After openin' and closin' a couple extra doors, found Mrs. Lyngood's room. I mean, *who else?* Four-poster bed with red *satin* pillows. Don't wanna think about what goes on in this room, with those two. Most importantly, glimmerin' in *all* its glory on a marble vanity was her famous...emerald...necklace.

(People talking in the distance)

(Light footsteps on hardwood, wood creaking)

JESSE: *Gotcha'.*

(From afar, in another room maybe, a child is crying)

(Echoing guitar strings playing)

JESSE (NARRATION): Was a toe-step from the jewel when I heard it. [Short beat.] Almost thought I'd *imagined* the sound, [Short beat.] but it got louder the more I wondered what it was.

(People talking in the distance)

(Light footsteps on hardwood, wood creaking)

(Closer, louder, but still as if from another room a child is crying)

(Pen writing on paper)

JESSE (NARRATION): First I thought it could've been a cat. Some stray in the attic. But when I walked over to what I *thought* was a small closet 'cross the hall, heard it *loud and clear*. There was a kid in there. Someone *other* than the mayor's so-called *only* daughter.

(The Southpaw (Jesse's theme) plays: a soft and melancholy tune on the guitar, an echoing melody whistled on top, church bells ring)

JESSE (NARRATION): Looked at the room with the necklace, then back at the door where the kid's cries was comin' from. [Short beat.] *No* choice. Had to go check on her first. [Beat.] Children always come first.

(Warbling melody -

- scratch -

- warbling melody)

(Awkward piano playing)

(The Sonny Machine beeps! Beeps! Beeps!)

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): It had been [Beat.] a *while* since I'd heard music. How long was that trial anyways? It's hard to tell time without Emi's help. [Short beat.] Anyways, *Jesse* said not to wander away from the lounge's exit. I wondered if I *should* listen to this *(She chuckles)* random mortal. He seemed to know what he was doing but [Short beat.] I'd just been punished for lowering my station *and* listening to a human's orders is *not very godly*. I figured a *couple* steps closer to the piano wouldn't hurt. I wanted to feel the music *vibrate* against my skin.

(Awkward piano playing, Annabeth missing a key)

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(The crowd murmurs amongst themselves)

(Someone laughs in the room, perhaps at Annabeth perhaps at something that was said to them)

(The Sonny Machine beeps faster: Beep, beep, beep!)

(Annabeth continues to play, she speeds up to match the beeping)

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): *Also*, the metronome looked out of place. Kinda like a Walkman? Even if it wasn't, it didn't belong. Just like me. *And* I hadn't noticed until then but *the house* had *light bulbs*. The 1980s isn't a far shot from the 1880s but I couldn't remember if that was *right or not*? A-Are lightbulbs a thing yet? Sometimes I think I should've gone to human college. Just for the trivia.

(The crowd murmurs amongst themselves)

(Awkward piano playing)

(Beep-Beep-Beep!)

(A woman clears her throat)

(Annabeth continues to play, trying to match the beeping)

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): Even at a *shitty concert* at least I could always turn to the friend I was with to see their reaction and *(she chuckles)* laugh with them. But [Short beat.] I don't know who I expected, at this mayor's party. Jesse had left and *who else* do I know on the [Short beat.] *mortal plane* in 1887? *(She laughs)* Forget it. The Mayor's daughter sucked, by the way. She had *no rhythm*. The party was looking like a complete bust. Some people *clapped politely* to get her to stop but the little thing was determined.

(Beep-Beep-Beep!)

(The crowd claps enthusiastically)

(Annabeth continues to play, trying to match the beeping)

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): The mayor made *such* a big deal when he presented Annabeth as his *only daughter, his pride, the joy of the town* and now he was hiding behind his hand in a corner. *(She laughs)* Usually, if I had my powers, I would have given her a hand, *but* Emi's punishment doomed more than just me. Poor girl. I decided to leave the lounge and find Jesse before things got worse.

(Beep-Beep-Beep!)

(The crowd claps enthusiastically)

(Annabeth continues to play, trying to match the beeping)

(Light footsteps on hardwood, wood creaking)

(The sounds; the beeping, the piano, the clapping; fade into the distance)

(People talking in the distance)

(Light footsteps on hardwood, wood creaking)

HELIX (Quietly): *Hello? Je-- (She clears her throat and drops back into the poor accent from when she met the mayor) Mr. Eaton?*

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): He wasn't on the first floor so I went up the stairs. Along the walls were *huge* photos of the mayor, his wife, and Annabeth. In the center of the upstairs hallway, crouched down with his ear to a door, was Jesse. He looked at me, put a finger to his lips, and waved me over.

(People talking, beeping, the bad piano playing in the distance)

(Wood creaking)

JESSE (Whispered): *(To Helix) You hear that?*

(Muffled, from another room, a child is crying)

(Wood creaking)

HELIX (Whispered): The terrible piano playing? Wait.

(Clearer, from another room, a child is crying)

HELIX (Whispered): Wait.

(Clearer, from another room, a child is crying)

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): Had I had my powers [Short beat.] I would have heard it before even *getting* to the stairs. Once Jesse pointed it out, I couldn't [Short beat.] not hear it. I pressed my ear against the door.

(The child cries harder)

(Coda flaps around)

(Coda tweets sadly)

JESSE: Sounds like a kid.

(A door knob is turned, jiggles, but doesn't open)

JESSE: Door's locked.

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): All of a sudden Jesse pulled out two thin bits of metal and began picking the lock. He did it quickly and silently. Then he turned the brass knob.

(Behind the door, the child cries harder)

(The door creaks open)

(Clearly now, the child cries)

(Light footstep on hardwood)

JESSE (Shocked): What the hell?

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): *(In disbelief)* A human...child. [Beat.] She was huddled in a ball crying in a corner, surrounded by *big, beautiful* paintings that looked straight out of a museum. [Beat.] Fantasies of *purple wheat fields* and pink sunsets with *clouds* shaped like horses. Paint *stained* her palms and *arms* in a swirl of colors. Her hair *tumbled* to the ground around her, *knotted* and *clotted* with old paint. The left side of her face was *a lot* smaller than the other half, and the skin around that side of her jaw looked chapped. She looked a bit like Annabeth but older, [Short beat.] like they might be sisters. [Short beat.] She was *too skinny*. She stared at us without making another sound. No more crying. She didn't even scream. She was completely still [Short beat.] and wary.

(People talking, beeping, the bad piano playing in the distance)

HELIX: Hi. [Beat.] A-Are you okay?

JESSE: Hey. What's your name? [Long beat.] *(Kind)* No? That's alright. Know somewhere safe we can take you?

HELIX: *(Unsure)* Maybe she doesn't want to go with us.

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): The girl looked at the door and stood up. *As soon* as I thought to reach out my hand to help, the girl ran between us and took off down the hallway. [Short beat.] Jesse took a step back like he expected this and gestured for me to join him as he followed her.

(People talking, beeping, the bad piano playing in the distance)

(Hurried footsteps on hardwood)

(Wood creaking)

(Piano playing in the distance)

(A light scratch, like the needle is skipping on a record)

(Piano playing in the--

(Piano playing loudly and echoing--

(An echoing melody interrupts)

(A light scratch, like the needle is skipping on a record)

(Piano playing clear--

(A light scratch, like the needle is skipping on a record)

(Piano playing loudly and--

(A tap)

(A scratch)

(A scratch)

(Beep-Beep-Beep!)

(Annabeth continues to play, trying to match the beeping)

(People speaking in the room)

(Charles coughs)

(A page is flipped)

(Hurried footsteps on hardwood)

(Glass shatters)

(People gasp)

(The piano playing ends on a sharp note)

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): *Ohhh.* I was suffering my [Short beat.] seventh minute of page-turning when, from a staircase across the gallery, emerged a *grim* little girl. She perhaps was not characteristically grim, but her conditions certainly were. The left frame of her jaw was sunken, a formation from birth, no doubt, left wrinkled and reddened. Though *this* was not cause for any concern. Rather, the apparent sight of malnourishment, the rings of darkness beneath her eyes, and the utter lack of a child's glow: Well, I knew better than to minimize. Before the crowd had ample time to collect themselves, the mysterious woman and her cowboy companion emerged behind the girl. In such a conspiratorial fashion, the both of them glared across the gallery toward the mayor.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: Who let this creature into my gallery room?!

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): The mayor pointed his ringed finger across the way, turning his head in *disgust*. as if he could not bear the sight of such a thing, this poor girl. And much of the crowd followed suit, turning *their heads* the opposite way. Just as the mayor's hand reached its *revolted apex*, the cowboy took one step closer into the gallery.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Footsteps on hardwood, wood creaking)

JESSE: How'd this child wind up *locked* upstairs in your home, [Short beat.] Mayor Lyngood?

(People gasp)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD (Shaken and upset): What?! You *dare* enter my home, wander through private areas as though it were your own, and then invent--invent falsehoods to question my integrity.

(Crowd murmurs)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): At this point I wished it were but a mere piece of theatre. The temperature within the gallery room spiked and the crowd soon parted as the *terrified girl* took steps across the room, an ocean of terribly mistreated hair trailing behind. Annabeth turned from her piano stool and watched the older girl tremble toward Mayor Lyngood. It was clear now, to me and *all* observants, as we glanced between the two girls, that they were not unlike. The cyclones of hair, the two dimpled chins. There was no doubt. These were sisters.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Crowd murmurs)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: Now where are my attendants? Someone take this *thing* away.

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): At the utterance, the head cook emerged to *whisk* the poor thing from the gallery room, taking her gently by the arm and guiding her from sight.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Crowd murmurs)

HELIX (Fuming): Are you her father? *Hello?* Jackass, I asked: are you her father?

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): *Well.* It did seem I found my "otherworldly woman." I'd not heard a woman confront a man, *especially a man* with status and power, in such a way since, [Beat.] well, *(Amused)* I suppose never. The mayor's crowd went *utterly cold*. They stared at each other in what felt like an eternity of silence.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Crowd murmurs)

HELIX (Fuming): You *don't* deserve her. You don't -

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD (Voice breaking in anger): I have heard *enough from you*. [Beat.] You two wretches will see yourselves out of *my home*. At once. [Beat.] I ordered you to leave.

(GUNSHOT!)

(Gunshot!)

(Crowd screams)

(Ping!)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): I would take the time for elegant elaboration, but the unfolding was bloody and swift. So I will narrate all the same.

(Echoing, ethereal piano fades out)

CHARLES (NARRATION): The mayor, having taken offense to the strange woman's scolding, revealed his gun and shot a bullet across her left shoulder. A thin *shower* of blood splattered across nearby guests, and then, not one breath later, the woman's cowboy companion revealed his *own* sidearm. At an almost ungodly speed, the young man took a shot at the mayor, and with fantastic precision, took a similar chunk from the mayor's left shoulder. Uh *this time*, the thin shower of blood sprayed on myself, and *I* held back a retching sensation.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Angry computer sounds, like dial-up, or a radio tuning)

(Cassette tape warbles)

(Tape winds down)

CHARLES (NARRATION): And yet again, the poor Sonny Machine had been struck. It flew from the grand piano and crashed onto the floor.

(Angry computer sounds, like dial-up, or a radio tuning)

(Cassette tape warbles)

SONNY MACHINE: *(A woman's voice)* Tu-Tu-Tune in now--

(Crowd gasps)

SONNY MACHINE: *(A woman's voice)* --for the best -- *(Upbeat classical music and a woman's voice)*
Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher -- *(Male radio announcer)* You remember it as good fun -- *(Static)* --
(Echoing female voice) Sounds of the past and future-- *(Female, almost Siri-like, voice)* First tower
activated.

(The Sonny Machine whirs)

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Crowd murmurs)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): It is a wonder, after these past few days, and weeks, how a bullet has not managed to *strike me* yet. How I've seen so many fly about, and this *poor* Sonny Machine, and that *poor* mysterious woman knelt on the ground, clutching her bleeding wound. After Sonny made its strange proclamations about a Prime Minister and whatnot, the woman looked toward the machine, and then myself, with a *curious* intensity.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

HELIX: Tower?

(Crowd murmurs)

JESSE: We don't have time.

HELIX: The tower. I-I need *the tower*. I need -

JESSE: Alright! *Alright*.

CHARLES (NARRATION): The cowboy took the woman by her arm and guided her past the staircase and out the front entrance. All the while, the mayor *spat and cursed* as he collected himself off the floor.

CHARLES (NARRATION): You can discern a capable mayor, I believe, through the loyalty of his citizens. Of course, no one in the gallery room reached for their own guns, nor said a word, as the woman and her companion made their escape.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Footsteps running)

(Crowd gasps)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: Men, *by God!*

(Cutlery crashes as the mayor hits a table)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: Chase after them! [Short beat.] And *someone* grab my horse.

(People whisper)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): A few *hesitant men* made their way toward the front door, while others ran out to collect the mayor's steed. I would not get in the immediate way of a man with a gun, but I *couldn't* lose track of my target: the mysterious woman. I strode over to collect the Sonny Machine and made my way swiftly out the mansion, shadowing their trail toward the mesa.

(Beep...Beep...Beep)

(Crowd murmuring)

(Beep--

(Scratch, scratch, scratch, scratch-scratch--

(Music warbling)

(Flare scratches)

(Beep)

(Flare scratch, drumbeat, flare--flare--orbit scratch)

(Echoing guitar strings playing)

(Sfx: a page is flipped and then pen writing on paper)

(Pen writing on paper)

JESSE (NARRATION): Things went to hell pretty fuckin' quick after that.

(Hurried footsteps on dirt)

(Helix pants and grunts in pain)

(Echoing guitar strings playing)

JESSE (NARRATION): Soon as we got out of the house, Helix got out from under my arms and started runnin' to the slope of the Enchanted Mesa.

(Hurried footsteps on dirt)

(Helix pants and grunts in pain)

(Echoing guitar strings playing)

JESSE (NARRATION): Helix clutched the hurt arm as she kept movin', blood dyeing the ground redder than usual as we moved. Pushed her up a crop of rocks and pulled her aside long enough to tie my red handkerchief tight around the wound.

(Footsteps on dirt come to a stop)

(Helix pants and grunts in pain)

JESSE: It's a *long* climb. *Tell me* when you need help or you'll slow us down. Got it?

(Helix pants and grunts in pain)

HELIX (Breathless): Okay.

(Echoing guitar strings playing)

JESSE (NARRATION): Had to keep an eye out for the mayor's men. A man like that, *pigeon-livered*, once you injure his pride, he'll come for you until the *grave*.

(Hurried footsteps on dirt)

(Horses galloping, neighing)

(Helix pants and grunts in pain)

JESSE: *(Calling out to Helix)* Better have a plan. They're comin'.

HELIX: The tower. I *just* know it.

(Hurried footsteps on dirt)

(Click, GUNSHOT!)

(Horses neigh in alarm!)

(A man groans)

(Safe Travels (main theme) plays)

JESSE (NARRATION): Soon as one of 'em was at shootin' distance, I *fired* a bullet. Rattled the horses up. Got one to rear back and kick off their rider with the first shot.

(Hurried footsteps on dirt)

(Horses galloping)

(Gunshot! Gunshot!)

(Click)

(GUNSHOT!)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: *Don't* lose them! Keep [Short beat.] firin!

(Gunshot! Gunshot! GUNSHOT!)

(Horses galloping)

(GUNSHOT!)

(Horses galloping, neighing)

JESSE (NARRATION): Only three guys followed the mayor. I managed to scare *all three off* in just three shots. The second shot I aimed at a loose spot in the mesa to drop rocks on 'em. Got rid of a second rider that way more than halfway up the mesa.

(Hurried footsteps on dirt)

(Horses galloping)

(Jesse panting)

(Gunshot!)

(GUNSHOT!)

(Jesse panting)

(Gunshot!)

(GUNSHOT!)

(Horses neigh in alarm!)

JESSE (NARRATION): The third shot I made cut through the *reigns* of the other. The rider panicked and lost control almost immediately. *Never* shot to kill. Their lives weren't mine to take, but *I could* get 'em out of the fight. By the time we reached the top the only head I saw left was the mayor's. Face as red as a sunset. [Short beat.] He was *so* angry. When I looked back over at Helix, saw that giant black tower sprouting up outta the ground. Was taller than the mayor's mansion. It was *a long* straight run once we reached the flat top of the mesa.

(Horses galloping)

(Hurried footsteps on dirt)

(Helix grunts in pain)

JESSE (Breathless): Keep goin'! I'm right behind ya!

HELIX: Just shoot the motherfucker!

JESSE (NARRATION): We were *halfway* across the mesa's face when the mayor came up behind us. *Couldn't aim to kill*, but figured *I could* leave his fate to the gods. Assholes who keep their own kid locked in rooms. I closed my eyes and let the spirits guide.

(Horse galloping)

(Mayor Lyngood rousing his horse in the distance)

HELIX: *What are you doing?*

(GUNSHOT!)

(Horse galloping)

JESSE (NARRATION): The ground shook under my feet. The mayor was gettin' closer. Couldn't see it. *I could feel it*. I shot blind again. The mayor screamed, but the horse kept runnin' my way.

(Horse galloping grows louder, closer)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: Die, you bastards!

(GUNSHOT!)

(Horse galloping)

JESSE (NARRATION): It ain't my call, to kill. *Only* for fate to decide. And I'd be *nothin'* but fate's hand. Kept my eyes closed, took my final shot, and when I opened my eyes, *I saw*. [Beat.] *(defeated)* I missed.

(Horse galloping grows louder, closer)

(Horse neighs)

HELIX: Jesse!

(GUNSHOT!)

(Human flesh squelching)

(Jesse gasps)

JESSE (NARRATION): I felt the *sting* first. [Short beat.] Then I looked down and saw the hole through my chest. [Short beat.] Blood spread all across my front. [Short beat.] *Couldn't breathe*. [Short beat.] Was like drowning. Next thing I knew, I was on my back watchin' the *mayor* gallopin' straight for Helix. We were only a couple feet away from the tower. She didn't get what she wanted. (*Mournful*) And neither did I. [Short beat.] I never got my hands round the throats of the bastards who killed my dad.

(*Horse galloping*)

(*Jesse gasps weakly*)

(*Jesse struggles to breath, grunts in pain*)

(*GUNSHOT!*)

(*Jesse continues to struggle the same*)

(*Echoing guitar strings playing*)

JESSE (NARRATION): Only thing I managed *to do* was watch the mayor shoot at her and *miss*. And then, like magic, a weird lookin' bird appeared out of thin air in front of her. It looked like it was made of glowing blue glass as it flew straight for the horse. It opened its beak and louder than the sound of bullets, it cried out.

(*Distant tweet*)

(*Horse galloping*)

(*Coda fluttering their wings*)

(*Coda tweets loudly --- the sound is distorted, echoes*)

(*Again, Coda tweets loudly --- the sound is distorted, echoes*)

(*Horse neighs in alarm*)

(*Echoing guitar strings playing*)

JESSE (NARRATION): Horse panicked and kicked about. Mayor held on. But the bird kept followin' 'em around, cryin' growin' louder and louder. Till the mayor finally lost his hold and the horse kicked him right off the side of the mesa.

(Horse galloping)

(Coda flaps around)

(Horse neighs in alarm)

(Mayor Orville Lyngood screams)

(Thud!)

(Mayor Orville Lyngood cries out as he falls, cry fading out)

(Fump.)

(Coda flaps around)

(Wind)

(Scratch, scratch, scratch

scratch, scratch, scratch

scratch, scratch)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

(Charles takes a drag of his cigar: inhale, exhale)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Monsieur *Lyn-good* flew right off that mesa. Bucked from his stallion like a ragdoll. Fell off the highland's steepest edge. Down to a dusty [Short beat.] desert [Short beat.] death. And good riddance! It's due to the mayor that I've these *sores* from those god-damned show-loafers.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Hurried footsteps on dirt)

SONNY MACHINE: *(Female, almost Siri-like, voice)* First tower located. Anomaly...13 meters distant.

CHARLES: *Sonny. A bit quieter now.*

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Call me craven. But what-with all the *bloody theatrics* and *projectile* drama, I was not ready to confront the otherworldly woman. *Or her* companion of misfortune. I needed more information: What is their mission? What is the strange *obelisk*? I tucked Sonny beneath my jacket flap to muffle its noise, and lowered to the mesa's floor, spying the couple from afar.

(Footsteps on dirt)

(Muffled: Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Wind)

(Muffled: Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Piano riff--

(Scratch, backward scratch)

-- piano continues --

(Scratch, backward scratch)

-- a man sing to the melody --

(Scratch, backward scratch)

-- piano continues --

(Slow scratch, backward scratch)

-- a man and woman sing to the melody --

(Scratch, scratch, scratch)

(Jesse gasps)

(Footsteps on dirt)

HELIX: Jesse.

(Jesse struggles to breathe)

HELIX: *Shit.* I - I - I don't know what to do. A - A - A hospital? No. *No, no, no. Fuck.*

(Eerie mystical ambience)

HELIX (NARRATION): He didn't answer. [Short beat.] *Why? Wh - Why was he shooting with his eyes closed? It - It - It made no sense.* [Short beat.] I - I didn't know what to do. Jesse's eyes fluttered opened, then shut. *Blood was everywhere.* I - I put my hands over the *stomach wound* but - I - I didn't - I couldn't do anything.

(Wind)

(Coda tweets)

(Coda flaps around)

(Coda tweets disconcertedly)

HELIX: The tower isn't important right now, Coda. He's literally bleeding out!

(Eerie mystical ambience)

HELIX (NARRATION): I still don't know if the towers are from you, Mom. I - I *don't know.* But in that moment, I needed a miracle. A huge fucking *Goddess-sized* miracle. Everything depended on that tower being exactly what I needed it to be.

(Wind)

(Coda flaps around)

HELIX: *Shit. Okay,* okay we have no other option.

(Coda tweets)

(Eerie mystical ambience)

HELIX (NARRATION): I had no idea what I was doing. But it's all that I knew to do. I ran to the tower. My hands [Short beat.] were completely soaked in Jesse's blood. It dripped off my fingertips. There was no *door* to the tower, but I could feel it. *My power.*

HELIX (NARRATION): It radiated off the tower like it was *heat* coming off a machine. I pushed my hands against the surface, the smooth black reflecting [Short beat.] *nothing at all*, not even the sunlight, and I closed my eyes. I could feel it grow hotter, *burning* my hands.

(Tower pulses)

(Coda flaps around)

(Helix grunts)

(Tower pulses)

HELIX: *C'mon!* Do something!

(Tower pulses)

HELIX (NARRATION): The blood on my hands turned brown from the heat, then *white* from the divine.

(The Goddess reprise (Helix's Theme) plays: 80s-style synth, slower melody, ticking clock)

HELIX (NARRATION): It hurt. The shoulder where I was shot fucking hurt. It all hurt. Then, it stopped. The burning on my hands. The *heat* from the tower. But not the pain in my shoulder. The *hollow* feeling in my body, the *absence* of my Godly powers. That remained, too.

(Tower pulses)

(Coda flaps around)

HELIX: *(Whispered)* No. *(Normal volume, in disbelief)* It didn't work?

(Coda flaps around)

(Jesse gasps suddenly, he coughs, coughs, coughs)

(Coda tweets happily)

(Jesse coughs)

HELIX (Whispering): *Wait.*

(Footsteps on dirt)

(Coda flaps around)

(Jesse breathes in deeply, catches his breath)

HELIX: No.

JESSE (Disoriented): What?

HELIX: How? *(Noticeably upset)* No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. This *can't* be happening.

(Eerie mystical ambience)

HELIX (NARRATION): I assumed the worst. I mean, *(she sighs)* for Jesse, it was the best. But he didn't know. *He had no idea.* And neither did I. Not until I ran over to him and tore his shirt wide open.

(Footsteps on dirt)

HELIX: No.

(Shirt buttons quickly popping open)

JESSE: Hey! What the fuck are you--?

HELIX: This *can't* be *happening*. It's - it's gone.

JESSE: This -

HELIX: *Hello*, McFly? Not the hole in your chest! My immortality! You stole it. It's a long story that I don't feel like going through right now, but-- Okay. *(She sighs)* Okay so I was banished here by *my stupid ex* and I thought the tower would give me back my essence but it didn't. It gave it to *you*. I don't know how, or why. But it means you're back from the dead, *forever*, and my shoulder is still fucking bleeding! *And this hurts like a bitch!* Do humans always feel this--

JESSE: You're joking again. Or - no, I'm just dead. I'm dead and you're some sorta thing I'm seein'. *That's* what's happening.

(Eerie mystical ambience)

HELIX (NARRATION): I grabbed his hand and pressed it against his chest. His heart was racing. *Beating* like it was supposed to. I could feel the same divine heat from the tower coming off of his skin into our hands. No more than a *hot breath* of air.

(Wind)

HELIX: That's mine. That's *me*. But it's like - you only have a part of me? My divinity. Maybe-- *(She sighs)* Hold on.

JESSE: Your what?

(Eerie mystical ambience)

HELIX (NARRATION): I got up and went back over to the tower. I put my hands back on it but the surface had gone cold. It was empty too. *That was it*. Just one power. That's all we were getting. *Or*, I guess, that's all Jesse was getting. Not my favorite one, but it's the big one that separates gods from mortals.

(Wind)

HELIX: This *can't* be it! Where are the rest?

(Footsteps on dirt)

HELIX: *Oh* - I - I can't be trapped here forever. I don't - I don't even know where else to look!

JESSE (Upset and confused): *Well*, take whatever it is back. I don't want *or* need it.

HELIX: You think if I knew how, I wouldn't *snatch it* right out of you right here and now? I can't. Not unless I have all of the fractured parts of me back inside of me. And that's *still* a hard maybe.

JESSE: Fractured parts? Writin' a *poem* or something? [Beat.] Whatever. Let's get 'em and then you can go.

HELIX: *Are you not listening?!* I don't know where the rest of me is! I was lucky to find this tower. *Ughhhh!*

(Quickfire beat --

*(Scr-^{scr}-scr-^{scr} Ah)
scr-^{scr} scratch)*

-- Quickfire beat--

(BEEP!)

--beat --

(Backwards scratch --

*(Scr-^{scr}-scr-^{scr} scratch)
(Ooh-^{scr}-scr-^{scr} scratch)*

(RingRing! RingRing! RingRingRing!)

(Beep! Beep!)

-- Quickfire beat--

(Slow Backwards scratch --

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

SONNY MACHINE: First tower consumed...Stand by.

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): As a child [Short beat.] in the [Short beat.] Utah territory, I'd heard stories of God-work and devil-work. I'd been educated in the distinguishing factors: that which destroys is devil-work, and that which heals is God-work. Man can neither create nor destroy. Not in any meaningful way. Mankind bores. *(He laughs)* Men flop around and then die.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

SONNY MACHINE: Stand by. Stand by. Stand by.

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): *There* was the obelisk. And that man who I saw dying — “Jesse,” it seems — I *watched* the rose of blood bloom across his chest. But then? Breath returned to him. So [Short beat.] is this all an act of *God-work*, or *devil-work*? Where do we stand? That’s all I could do, at that moment. I stood up. I’d seen something miraculous. Just like when the bullet *froze* before my face.

(Footsteps on dirt)

(The Sonny Machine beeps faster: Beep, beep, beep!)

SONNY MACHINE: Anomaly ... located. Stand by. Stand by. Stand by.

(The Sonny Machine beeps even faster: Beepbeepbeepbeepbeep!)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): As soon as I emerged from my crouch, walking onto the mesa's dusty flat top, the otherworldly woman turned to me. In her face, recognition. And then the [Short beat.] revenant cowboy, too. He turned to me. Now, if I were in any less position, I might’ve established a more *veiled character*. Shapeshifted into something further from my truth. But I had Mr. Osgood, who sufficed. I had the leveraging power. And so, I approached them.

(Footsteps on dirt)

(The Sonny Machine beeps faster: Beep, beep, beep!)

SONNY MACHINE: Stand by.

(Charles coughs)

SONNY MACHINE: Second tower...located.

(Charles taps the machine. Cling! Cling! Cling!)

SONNY MACHINE (Muffled): Second tower ... 442,890 meters.

CHARLES (Grandiosely): Good evening to you both!

(Charles smacks the machine. Clang!)

(Click)

CHARLES (Grandiosely): My name is Charles Osgood. You might recognize me from the, um, *former* Mayor's dansant, so to say. Ha ha ha. *Yes*, an odd time to be so formal. No doubt you agree, by the looks on your faces. *No worries*. I mean [Short beat.] no harm. (*He chuckles*)

(*Echoing, ethereal piano*)

CHARLES (NARRATION): The [Short beat.] cowboy glared at me with suspicion, while the woman — "*Helix*," I'd heard the man call her — *she* stared at the Sonny Machine in my hand.

HELIX: (*To herself*) That Walkman - (*To Charles*) That *thing* you're hiding beneath your coat. I saw it earlier.

(*Footsteps on dirt*)

HELIX: Across the room. It - It - It mentioned the *tower*? I thought I recognized it, too, because that's definitely —

CHARLES: *A Sonny Machine*, of course! *Or*, at least that's what I uh —

HELIX: No, *don't* interrupt me. *That's* a TCM model. But I haven't seen this one. Where'd you get it?

(*Echoing, ethereal piano*)

CHARLES (NARRATION): By the fury in her face, I knew that I should conceal my source.

CHARLES (Not missing a beat): Ha ha ha, *well*, I wish I could say, but I have truly no idea. I'm a [Short beat.] contract cartographer, you see, employed by the federal government. Uh - Cleveland himself picked me out. *Yes, yes, indeed*. I've been sent from the Commonwealth to do some *fieldwork*, especially what-with these [Short beat.] discussions of Utah's statehood and —

HELIX (disbelieving): *The President* gave you that Walkman?

CHARLES: The what? *Ohhh!* The *Sonny Machine*? No, no. I found this on a bench.

JESSE: Did he just say a bench?

HELIX: He did.

(*Echoing, ethereal piano*)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Not my *best* un-truth. But what else could I say? It's an otherworldly device. And had I pointed the finger at any one person or place, it seemed that this *Helix* would hunt it down.

(Wind)

HELIX: Well. I need it. *So give it here.*

CHARLES: Oh, uhm. *Well*, we're both headed that way, yes? Perhaps I can hold *onto this*, as I've grown fond of it.

(Charles taps the machine. Cling! Cling!)

CHARLES: And I *do know the land* quite well. See, I spent many years in the Utah territory, and —

HELIX: We're *fine*. Nate here is [Short beat.] well-traveled. Now, give that here!

CHARLES: You are Nate? *(Smug)* And here I thought you were Jesse.

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): To describe how they then *leered* at me, is to describe how a wolf might stare down a rabbit, *after* the rabbit had smacked the wolf upside the jaw. *But* I'd caught them in a moment of ruse, and now that our terms of engagement were equal, I had a chance.

(Wind)

CHARLES: I apologize. It's *no matter, these names*. We are strangers. But we are strangers who can help one another. Mr. Jesse, *or* Mr. Nate, *whichever you choose*, you may have knowledge of the West. But I have - *hmm* - affordances of privilege that you will no doubt *need*. I have friends in *high* places, whereas you two, perhaps, can cover the more *(he takes in a sharp breath) lowly places* of cama-ra-de-rie. *Yes? You see?*

JESSE: *(to Helix)* Untangle that.

HELIX: Are you saying you *know* something about these towers?

CHARLES: No. No. What I'm saying is *I'm the sort of person* who *could* know something about these towers, given the *time* and some opportunity to -

JESSE: It's a *yes* or *no* question.

(Click)

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

SONNY MACHINE: Second tower ... 442,182 meters distant.

HELIX: *Second* tower?

CHARLES: You see, madame?

HELIX: How does it know?

CHARLES: I couldn't tell you. [Short beat.] Only that this companion of mine has guided me *here*, and surely it will guide *us* to the next of its kind. *Yes?*

(Click)

JESSE: *(to Helix)* Could just take it from him.

HELIX: *(to Jesse)* This guy seems desperate to help. *(she sighs)* And my shoulder is fucking killing me, so, *(she sighs)* whatever.

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): It was not the most *enthusiastic* welcoming, but it was where things were. And *now* I am here, in this Lone Flats inn, sat on the edge of this bed speaking into this "TCM," Helix had said. Sonny Machine is much more exciting, however, don't you think?

(Charles coughs, coughs, coughs)

(He laughs)

(Charles coughs, coughs, clears his throat)

(He sighs)

(Charles takes a drag of his cigar: inhale, exhale)

CHARLES (NARRATION): After our journey down the mesa, listening to Helix and Jesse discuss their next day's plans, I've made some estimations. It seems that both of them are seeking someone.

CHARLES (NARRATION): Perhaps that puts *me* one step ahead, as I've already found my target. But Mr. Jesse seems to be looking for more than one person.

(Charles coughs, clears his throat)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Oh, but we had an errand's run of an evening. First we took the mayor's troubled daughter to the bordello's forewoman, Miss Marigold. She intends to make some connections in Albuquerque, where the girl will go to live with a proper family. No doubt a better life than that *decrepit closet* Helix and Jesse spoke of. As for the Mayor. *Who will be Lone Flats' next mayor?* *(He laughs)* Who cares! Jesse had made mention of some necklace he sought to collect, but decided that he would leave it for the daughter. Well, the *decent* daughter. Not the accursed thing that played piano. And Helix? Well, she seemed to stew inside her mind. She seems intent on chasing down this second tower. Could this have been the Mistress of Death's plan all along? To gather us three to —

EMI (NARRATION): Oh [Short beat.] my [Short beat.] *Gods!*

(Heels approaching)

(Charles stammers)

EMI (NARRATION): Could you *please* stop saying that.

(Clock ticking)

EMI (NARRATION): It's so, like, creepy.

(Sinister plays:

CHARLES (NARRATION: Madame? I'm doing as you said, I'm recording into the - um—

(Emi laughs mockingly)

(Eerie mystical ambience)

EMI (NARRATION): Yeah, yeah. I get it. But like, *gag me*, just call me Emi. That's *my name*. Like, Mistress of Death? That's somebody else's job. I'm *leagues* above that. And *(she sighs)* anyways, if I were you, which like--eugh, thank the gods not, right?--I'd quit *pissing people off*. I'm keeping you alive but remember, *(she chuckles)* a bullet's still a bullet, you know?

CHARLES (NARRATION): Emi. *Yes*. I apologize. [Beat.] How [Short beat.] long have you been listening in? I feel [Short beat.] *so embarrassed*. I —

EMI (NARRATION): Ugh, long enough. Look, *Charles*. You're still using Charles? Anyways, you keep it up. Things are moving nicely. Just like, don't lose sight of Helix. I mean, (*she sighs*) it's hard to. She's *loud*.

CHARLES (NARRATION): *Yes!* Yes, of course. Uhm, anything. Especially what-with your protections, helping me with this ... *you know*.

EMI (NARRATION): It's gonna be a long road, Charles. Time to stop acting like we're strangers. Ha ha ha *ha*. Time. I'm honestly, like, so clever.

(Heels walk away)

(A door creaks shut)

CHARLES (NARRATION): *Aaand* she's gone. Heh.

(Charles sighs)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Tomorrow ... northwest. Toward this *second tower*. Whatever it may bring.

(The Conman (Charles' theme): slow guitar, a whistled melody echoes, a bell tolls)

CHARLES (NARRATION): And what shall it bring? [Beat.] In this new world that's dawned upon me, *truly*, who could know.

(Music ends)

JT: RADIO: Outcast was created by María Fernanda Vidaurrazaga and JT Lachausse, and produced by Ann Hughes. Starring Daniel A. Stevens as Charles Osgood; Griffin Otto Deniger as Kitchen Head Cook and Mayor Orville Lyngood; Ivory Amor D'Francisca as Jesse Rogers; Jade Duong as Helix; and Daniel Sotelo as Coda, and Ann Hughes as the Sonny Machine and Emi. This episode was written by Fernanda and JT, directed by Fernanda with dialogue editing by Ann, sound design by JT, and music by Samuel Kinsella. A special thanks goes out to Madeline Holler for giving us pointers on that Kansan accent and to Professor Rickerby Hinds for being such a guiding light during the early days of our show. You can find us online at radiooutcast.com or follow us on Instagram at [radioutcastpod](https://www.instagram.com/radioutcastpod) and Twitter at [radio_outcast](https://twitter.com/radio_outcast). If you like what you hear let us know by leaving a review on Apple podcasts, Podchaser, or Goodpods. It helps us reach more listeners and gives us a chance to see what y'all think of the show. If you'd like to help us grow, consider becoming a Patron at patreon.com/radio_outcast.

JT: Our Patrons get access to behind the scenes material, original scripts, and bonus content including newspaper clips of an assassination attempt on President Cleveland and text messages between the gods. If you become a Patron at the Coda tier, for as little as one dollar a month you too could get a special shout-out at the end of our episodes such as...

(Gentle guitar playing)

♪♪ Kyrie O. How are ya? ♪♪
♪♪ Stefani C. You rule. ♪♪
♪♪ Gnome H. I dig the name. I think it's pretty cool. ♪♪
♪♪ Patrick C. ♪♪ Miss ya!
♪♪ Alan L. you're swell. ♪♪
♪♪ Daniel W. I think you're talented as hell. ♪♪
♪♪ Tuvie, my bestie. ♪♪
♪♪ Melissa L. Hey mom! ♪♪
♪♪ Sarah F. your poetry is like *totally* the bomb. ♪♪

And...

♪♪ Rax W. the orb keeper ♪♪
♪♪ Marcos L. my dear ♪♪
♪♪ Patricia D. you're golden and that's something you should hear. ♪♪
♪♪ VCA Staging, howdy! ♪♪
♪♪ Val V. the queen ♪♪
♪♪ DJ I wore your jacket like two days ago, the one that's *beige-cream*? ♪♪
♪♪ Juan P. you're super! ♪♪
♪♪ Andy S. it's been awhile. ♪♪
♪♪ Aron B. you've got the stuff that makes a whole room *smile* ♪♪

♪♪ And we have two *moore*... ♪♪
♪♪ Physix thanks bro. ♪♪
♪♪ Susan D. helloooo. ♪♪
♪♪ And this concludes the credits for our happy little show. ♪♪

♪♪ Dada-dun-dun, dadada, dun dun... ♪♪

To all of our patrons, thanks again. We appreciate you. And to everyone listening, safe travels.

(Safe Travels (main theme) plays)