

FERNANDA: RADIO: Outcast is a funky, gunslinging podcast for mature audiences. Content warning: this episode contains depictions of violence, guns, and gunshots throughout the episode that may be upsetting for some listeners. We encourage our listeners to prioritize their safety before venturing ahead. Thank you.

(theme music)

(wagons passing)

(horses trotting by, huffing)

(Charles' motif: slow guitar, a whistled melody echoes, a bell tolls)

(Charles coughs)

(the wagons and horses grow louder, closer)

(Charles coughs)

(A button on a tape recorder clicks once, twice. Cassette tape warbles. Static.)

(A button clicks)

(sfx note: light static is heard in the recording since the narration is given through a tape recorder)

(Charles coughs, clears his throat - it turns into a satisfied chuckle - and takes in a breath through his nose)

CHARLES (narration): Allow me, *if you will*, an opportunity to *lament* about the state of transportation in this the year, 1887. You see, the common folk speak of these Pacific Railroads as if *God-Himself pushed* them through His own *bloodied tracts*.

(Horse neighs)

GRUFF CARRIAGE DRIVER: Mm-hmm.

CHARLES: Uh, apologies. I don't speak in Grunt.

CHARLES (narration): The Mistress of Death demanded me toward some *bump town*: Lone Flats, New Mexico. *However*, what could've been a three day's journey became six, and then eight, and then ten. *Because*, I could not risk travelling the Union Pacific through Utah, where I spent an *eternal*

[he chuckles] fifteen years, and where my past now waits. And I could not risk connection with the Southern Pacific through Texas, where my [short beat] future awaits. *You see*, I've learned that Texans are the most unforgiving brutes [self-conscious chuckle]. *Particularly*, the mustachioed sort. [beat] Am I losing you? *Please* try to keep up. So, with all *conveniences* gone, I was forced to take a carriage to Richmond *and then* rail to Louisville, *and then* rail to St. Louis, where I bathed in whiskey until I became spiritually paralyzed, so that I might've forgotten my recent near-death experience, *but I did not*. I remained [short beat] blurred through my travels across Kansas City, and woke to [short beat] Albuquerque and its intolerable desiccation. A city as dried as my liver.

(Feet hit the ground, movement on the saddle)

(Charles coughs, clears his throat)

GRUFF CARRIAGE DRIVER: Mmm-hmmm.

CHARLES: *Ahhh*, your carriage fees. Uh -- Please forward the charge along to Mr. Matthews at the Texas *Car-to-gra-phers Guild*, out in Abilene. *He* is my *superior*.

(The horse's reins shift and jingle)

CHARLES (NARRATION): To conclude my journey westward, I was granted a **golem** of a man for carriage. He steered us into the orange desert deeps of New Mexico, refusing courtship *of any kind*, and seemed impervious to my stories of *travel* and geographical expertise. [beat] Wh-When I [short beat] *suggested* I could not pay him immediately, he glanced down at the rusted pistol on his hip. And, *at last*, he spoke.

(The horse's reins shift and jingle)

GRUFF CARRIAGE DRIVER: I kill men.

CHARLES (NARRATION): I had evaded one bullet. I did not expect to survive another.

(Charles coughs)

CHARLES: *Of course*. [short beat] Here you are! [he laughs]

(Coins jingle together)

CHARLES: *Now*, would you be so kind as to direct me toward --

(Reins snap)

(Horse neighs)

(People nearby shout in surprise)

(The carriage rustles away until one last neigh fades away into the distance)

CHARLES: Charming.

(Charles's footsteps move along on a dirt road)

CHARLES (NARRATION): As instructed by the Mistress, I was to *carry* the leaden Sonny Machine and search for a woman [beat] "*not of this time.*" How was this speaking metal machine meant to assist me in my travels? [short beat] I could not know. That was the *extent* of her details. Indeed. I'm on a fool's errand.

(Charles coughs, coughs, coughs, coughs, gasps, gathers himself)

CHARLES (NARRATION): But even a *genius* would *comply* with such demands. Wh-When a bullet *lingers* at the bridge of your nose, and when your lungs further collapse with each passing cough, you welcome *any* extension of life. Be it *divine* or infernal. [he chuckles]

(Charles's footsteps move along on a dirt road)

(Bracelets jingle together)

(Working women giggle and call out to men passing by)

WITTY PROSTITUTE: Hey, handsome. [she chuckles] You here to build a bank?

(The other women laugh in delight at the joke)

CHARLES: *Ladies.* I have *no judgement* for your craft. [he laughs] Well in fact, I respect the art of performance and the [short beat] grit and *beauty* that comes with -

WITTY PROSTITUTE: Mr. Banker, my time ain't free. If you wanna talk, I'll listen [beat] *for a price.*

CHARLES: I -- *Mmm.* Perhaps -- [he laughs self-consciously] Where might I, uhm, *find* information on this sanctuary of a town?

(The women giggle and laugh)

CHARLES (NARRATION): The chorus of *hyenas* pointed me onward *into* town, if you could call that barren Lone Flats a *town*. I followed the gaze of their long pointed nails until my eyes met a pair of saloon doors.

(Charles's footsteps move along on a dirt road)

(Charles coughs)

CHARLES (NARRATION): In such *dust towns* as Lone Flats, the landscape reveals itself in pieces. The deeper I walked into the town's belly, the more that I could make out. [beat] A rickety general store, a saloon with two rocking chairs out front, and a *two-storied* brothel. No doubt the origins of those cackling working women. [beat] As I approached the steps of the Lone Flats saloon, I spied in the dust-covered distance something [short beat] *peculiar*. Through the orange fog, there *rose* a tall and slender [short beat] obelisk, of sorts. Something of a bell tower, I supposed -- uh -- *pitch black* and perfectly rectangular. At the moment, I considered it one of two possibilities: my utter dehydration had gotten to my senses, or it was something of a local monument. Of course, it was *neither*.

(Charles's footsteps move along on a dirt road)

(People chatting on the street)

(Creaking floorboards)

(Charles coughs)

(Creaky saloon doors whine open and closed)

(Footsteps on a wooden floor)

CHARLES (NARRATION): As I approached the saloon doors, another peculiar sight appeared. A young cowboy, a *black* cowboy, strutting right out the saloon doors on some private mission. He sported a beige hat with a wide brim, better cared for than any other cowboy hat you'd find in that town. I nodded, gentlemanly, toward him, and provided a smile, *and* he looked perfectly through me and carried himself forth and away.

(Footsteps on a creaking wooden floor)

(Charles coughs)

(Footsteps continue)

(Saloon doors whine open and closed)

(People chatter and laugh merrily)

(Upright, upbeat piano music plays in the saloon)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Welcome to Lone Flats, indeed. [he tries to laugh and sighs]

(Upright, upbeat piano music --

Record scratches --

-- piano music plays --

-- scratches --

-- plays in the --)

-- scratches into a drumbeat)

(Echoing guitar strings playing)

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

JESSE (NARRATION): Day one. *This* is a diary of the bad hands God delivers us. And the true record of a man fighting the dealer. [short beat] The first man they turn away, and *the last* they wanna turn they guns on. *I* am that man, Jesse Rogers--

(Echoing guitar chord)

JESSE (NARRATION): --the Southpaw.

(Pen writing on paper)

JESSE (NARRATION): Just rolled up on the town of Lone Flats that day to buy some info off the *first* lead I'd had in years. [beat] Went to the saloon where I was *meant* to drop the cash. Just when I thought the bartender would take me to my contact, *he* told me the deal had *changed*. [short beat] It was a town full of skunks. On top of money, they wanted me to *steal* from the town *mayor*. Something about a necklace with an emerald so big, it's gotta at least *triple* what I was gonna pay. [beat] Could've said no. Gut told me to do the clean thing. [short beat] But they had me by *the balls*. Knew I was desperate for *any* crumb leadin' me back to those bastards. Based on the whispers, [short beat] they're too *dangerous* to

sell out cheap.

(People chatter and laugh merrily)

(Upright, upbeat piano music plays in the saloon)

(A glass is set down on the bar, ice rattles in glass)

JESSE: Not half bad. Thanks. I'll be back for another soon.

BARTENDER: *(He laughs.)* I'm sure you will. [Beat.] *(He lowers his voice)* Start next door. Ask for Marigold.

JESSE: *(Quietly)* Got it.

(A glass is set down on the bar)

BARTENDER: *(In a normal speaking voice.)* See you around kid.

(Footsteps on a creaking wooden floor)

(Saloon doors whine open and closed)

(Pen writing on paper)

JESSE (NARRATION): Some dandy, a *banker* maybe, smiled at me as I left.

(Echoing guitar chord)

JESSE (NARRATION): A short man, ash-white hair that made him look *older* than his face. Fuck knows what he wanted from *me*, so I just kept movin'.

(A page is flipped)

(Footsteps continue)

(Charles coughs in the distance)

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

(Jesse's footsteps move along on a dirt road)

(Bracelets jingle together)

(Working women giggle)

SWEET PROSTITUTE: Back so soon? My friend out there told me you weren't lookin' to spend?

JESSE: *(Chuckles uncomfortably)* Lookin' for Miss Marigold.

(Bracelets jingle together)

SWEET PROSTITUTE: Hmm. Inside.

(Working women giggle)

(Jesse's footsteps move along on a dirt road)

(Jesse's footsteps move along wood -- the brothel's front steps maybe?)

(A doorknob is turned)

(The brothel's door creaks open)

(Jesse's footsteps continue along wood)

(The brothel's door creaks closed, it shuts behind him)

(Windchimes ring indoors)

(Jesse's footsteps continue along wood)

(Echoing guitar chord)

(Pen writing on paper)

JESSE (NARRATION): Before Marigold's place, I'd *never* been in a whorehouse. [Short beat.] Not even for a job. The entrance stretched into a room covered in gold curtains with *star shapes* painted on. There was a flight of stairs that was covered in a long rug which led up to the private rooms. [Beat.] The curtains parted.

(Curtains swish open)

JESSE (NARRATION): A *small* woman came out in a *fancy* dress. With her lips painted purple.

(Windchimes ring)

MISS MARIGOLD: How *can* I help you?

JESSE: Miss *Marigold*?

(Heels move closer on hardwood floor)

MISS MARIGOLD: Do you need something, young man?

JESSE: I ain't here to start *any* trouble.

MISS MARIGOLD: *Well then*, you may follow me to meet the girls.

JESSE: Need a way into the *(he chuckles nervously)* mayor's party tonight. Was told to come *here*. Look for a Marigold.

(Heels on hardwood floor)

MISS MARIGOLD: Are you a man of business, Mister...?

JESSE: *(Casually)* Could be.

(Heels on hardwood floor)

MISS MARIGOLD: Your name?

JESSE: Jesse.

MISS MARIGOLD: *Family name*?

(Footsteps on hardwood floor)

JESSE: *(lowers his voice)* Can you get me in *or not*?

(Windchimes ring)

MISS MARIGOLD: (*Annoyed*) Listen Mr. Jesse *No-Name*. The mayor and I *have* an agreement.

(*A spoon taps against a teacup*)

(*Tea is poured*)

MISS MARIGOLD: My girls and I are not *owned* or bothered by anyone so long as I *grease* the *wheels* of negotiation for 'im.

(*A spoon taps against a teacup*)

JESSE: *Meanin'?*

MISS MARIGOLD: Seein' how you don't seem the type to be in Lone Flats for negotiations, I'll make it *clear* for you.

(*Teacup set down on a table*)

MISS MARIGOLD: We *flatter* men's egos to the point where (*amused*) they make poor deals, [Short beat.] but great ones for the *sake* of the town. [Beat.] The *smarter* ones pay me [Short beat.] directly, so that the *mayor* is the one whose ego gets stroked to feel *he's* the one winnin' instead. In the end, (*sighs*) my house is free. [Beat.] If you've been *led* to find me *here*, I will *a-ssume* you're *smarter* than *most* rich men.

(*Miss Marigold takes a sip of tea*)

MISS MARIGOLD: You'll find me a neutral ally, though my friendship does *not* come for free.

JESSE: Anyone ever tell you, you *talk too much*?

(*Miss Marigold chuckles*)

MISS MARIGOLD: You should feel *flattered*.

(*Teacup set down on a table*)

MISS MARIGOLD: Your company has put me *so at ease* I couldn't help but tell you my [Short beat] whole [Short beat] *tale*.

JESSE: *Yeah*, I'm sure. [Beat.] How much?

MISS MARIGOLD: Twenty dollars.

JESSE: *Are you crazy?* [Beat.] What about me tells *you* I can afford *that*?

MISS MARIGOLD: As I said.

(Heels on hardwood floor)

MISS MARIGOLD: *That* is the fee necessary for the services you would need: --

(Beaded curtains rustle)

MISS MARIGOLD: -- an invitation, an escort, *and* my silence.

(Heels on hardwood floor)

JESSE: Jesus. [Beat.] *Fine*. Fine. But, I'll pay you *after*.

(Miss Marigold laughs heartily)

(Heels on hardwood floor)

MISS MARIGOLD: *Ohh*, now you've offended *me*, Mr. Jesse. [Beat.] It was a pleasure meetin' you.

JESSE: No! I can spare five *now*. I'll get you the rest after, I swear.

MISS MARIGOLD: *(Cheerfully)* Good day, Mr. Jesse.

(Heels on hardwood floor)

(Curtains swish open)

JESSE: *Goddamn!* *(He sighs.)* Now what?

(Heels on hardwood floor)

(Suddenly, a door slams open afar)

(A page is flipped)

(Echoing guitar chord)

(Pen writing on paper)

JESSE (NARRATION): Just as I was about to go, a door flew open upstairs. A woman emerged, had a *wild* look about her. She wore a yellow dress the same color as the lil' lightning bolts danglin' from her ears. [Short beat.] Should've taken my chance to leave, found *another* way. Then I wouldn't be stuck in the mess I'm in now.

(Pen writing on paper)

(Echoing guitar chord --

(Record scratches --

(Echoing ethereal -

-- scratches --

-- ethereal tune --)

-- scratches into a fantastical whistle)

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): Mom? *All-mother?* [Beat.] Please. *C'mon* just answer me. [Beat.] Fine. Guess I shouldn't expect you to answer when you wouldn't even talk to me at the trial. *(she sighs)* Listen I know I never took prayer seriously, though I bet you'd say I never took anything seriously. *Shit*, I can-- *Fuck*. I mean, whoops? Probably shouldn't cuss during a prayer.

I'm sorry. Okay? You told me this would happen with Emi. That I wouldn't be able to give her what she wanted and only get myself *burned*. No matter how [Short beat.] *pretty* it is, that's what happens when you play with fire, right? But you *know* this isn't fair. I shouldn't be here, I shouldn't be lost, powerless, stuck in a place that's so quiet it's eerie and where no one wears deodorant. [Beat.] I miss the 80s. The real 80s. I thought I put the 19th century *well* behind me, but I guess Emi had other ideas.

(Creaking floorboards)

(Clinking buttons)

HELIX: *(mumbling to herself.)* Ugh. What the fuck?

(Creaking floorboards)

(Shuffling fabric)

HELIX: *Ugghhhh!*

(Thud)

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): She sent me back in time and threw me in a brothel. As soon as I stood up, I nearly fell back down to the ground. Something wasn't right. Someone as used to the mortal plane as me should not have felt like that. Coda felt weird too. Said they felt [Short beat.] empty.

(A bird, Coda, flaps around and tweets up a storm)

HELIX: *No*. This can't be happening.

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): I didn't have any of my powers anymore. I was mortal. And *(chuckles in disbelief)* in a bit of denial, I won't lie.

(Coda flaps around)

HELIX: But if my powers are gone, why are you still here, Coda? It doesn't make any sense.

(Coda flaps around)

(Coda tweets attentively)

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): Coda fluttered to one of the brothel windows. I followed them. Outside, the world looked and felt older. *Obviously*, I was no longer in the Bronx. I wondered if I might not even *be* in 1987 either. There was just one long dirt road with people riding on top of horses. Felt like I'd gone completely 7:30. The *weirdest thing*, though, was that outside, up on a huge bluff of land, stood a large black tower. It looked like *(she sighs)* something out of a Hitchcock film, or whatever. But, it was also sort of familiar? Why did I feel drawn to it? Maybe because, like the tower, *I* was also out of place.

Did you put it there, Mom? Is this your way of saying, I'm looking out for you? Don't say you're just sitting up there, looking down, watching me look like a total wack job.

(Coda flaps around)

HELIX: *(To Coda.)* Don't ask me why. But do you see that tower? [Short beat.] I think [Short beat.] we need to get over there. But I can't exactly walk around in a crop top and mini skirt. Help me go through these dresses for something that'll fit, yeah?

(Creaking floorboards)

(Coda tweets in agreement.)

(Shuffling fabric)

HELIX: Oh, my *god!* That is *so* cute! [Short beat.] But *(she sighs)* no. The i-dea is to *not* stand out. You see those people walking down the street?

(Coda tweets in acknowledgement)

HELIX: *Hideous.* Those dresses would get you kicked out of any decent club.

(Coda tweets in agreement)

HELIX: Coda, find me something as *terrible* so we'll fit in. Go with something *(She considers)* canary yellow? At least it'll match my earrings.

(Coda tweets enthusiastically)

HELIX: *(She sighs)* It's just like Emi to drop me in a warehouse. You know how petty she is, Coda.

(Shuffling fabric, buttons clinking together, floorboards creaking)

HELIX: Like, remember how if I even *barely* looked at another God or Goddess, she'd get all damaged? *Ooh!* Found some clean undergarments. Anyways, it's *ironic*, 'cause I'm not the one who slept around.

(Coda chirps cheerily to get Helix's attention)

HELIX: Oh, *yes!* I love the bodice. Great choice, Coda.

(Creaking floorboards)

(Coda flaps around)

(Shuffling fabric)

HELIX: *Okay.* All done! *Now* we just need some shoes.

(Creaking floorboards)

(A drawer is opened)

(Things are shuffled around)

HELIX: *(She sighs)* You know what? Who needs shoes?

(Coda tweets in wholehearted agreement)

HELIX: Let me just fix up my *hair*. [Beat.] *Aaaaaand*, there. Does that look right? I honestly can't tell if it's too modern or not.

(Coda tweets enthusiastically)

(Helix's theme: 80s-style upbeat synth, dynamic drum beat, ticking clock)

HELIX: Thanks! Now, let's get out of here.

(Creaking floorboards)

(Door creaks open)

(Door slams open)

(Bare feet running down wood floor)

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): Maybe I was a little *too* eager as I left, but I had a plan. [Beat.] *Well*, I had a destination. So I opened the door, ready to leave that brothel and the mortal plane as *soon* as I could. I saw a door outside and sprinted down the stairs, hoping no one would catch me as I left. *Lo and behold*, I immediately ran into someone. A tall man blocking my way to the door, the ivory grip of his gun sticking out from a holster.

(Creaking floorboards)

(Windchimes ring)

HELIX: *Uhh*, hi? Are you the--

JESSE: No.

HELIX: --bouncer? *Oh!* Great.

JESSE: The *what* now?

HELIX: *Like* the guard? I-I mean, *obviously* you're not the guard. Aaand *I* would *know* that. Clearly. As someone who [Short beat.] works [Short beat.] here.

JESSE: *Riiight*.

(Footsteps approach)

JESSE: Yeah, I'm, *uh*, the bouncer. Why not.

HELIX: *Riiight*. Why not.

(Heels on hardwood floor)

(Curtains swish open)

(Jesse shushes Helix)

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): The cowboy pointed a finger at the ground, signalling for me to crouch down by the stairs. It wasn't like he was bossing me around. It was more like [Short beat.] it was in both of our interests [Short beat.] to hide. So I did.

(Beaded curtains rustle)

(Heels on hardwood floor)

MISS MARIGOLD: Mr. Jesse. *Standin'* there longer, like an obstinate mule, will not change my mind.

JESSE: Sorry. I [Short beat.] dropped somethin'. *(He chuckles politely)*

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): I could tell he was thinking *really* hard about something. It's the same look *you* get, Mom, when you're figuring out how to trick me and my sisters to work together. The cowboy had a plan. And as I crouched there, *hiding* from the lady, I knew I was about to be a part of that plan.

(Windchimes ring)

(Beaded curtains rustle)

MISS MARIGOLD: *(To Jesse, impatiently)* Well?

(Beaded curtains rustle)

(Footsteps on hardwood floor)

(Door creaks open)

(Door slams open)

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): He opened the door, turned his back to her and glanced at me. It was a signal. A signal *for what*, I-I don't know. But I needed to bounce out of that brothel without *any* extra drama. And the cowboy gave me an opening.

(We hear the voices of people outside on the street)

(Footsteps on hardwood floor)

(Door creaks closed)

(Door shuts closed)

(Windchimes ring)

(Heels on hardwood floor)

(Curtains swish open)

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): I waited a bit after he left. Once I was sure the woman had gone too I ran out the door.

(Door opens and closes)

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): As soon as I stepped out on the brothel's porch, a woman in a *fluffy* tulle dress turned to me. *(Amused)* Her eyeliner went out to her ears.

(Bracelets jangling together)

SWEET PROSTITUTE: Hey. Are you new?

HELIX: *(Surprised)* Me?

(Bracelets jangling together)

SWEET PROSTITUTE: *(Kindly)* Don't look so scared. *Yes*, I mean you.

JESSE: She's with me. [Short beat.] We're just *about to leave*.

(We hear the voices of people passing by on the street)

HELIX: *Uhhh*. What? [Short beat.] *Where?*

(Bracelets jangling together)

SWEET PROSTITUTE: *(Scoffs, but continues to speak gently)* Hey, cowboy. I don't care that you gave my friend a bit of change. [Short beat.] We don't let our girls leave our doors *or* our safety.

JESSE: Already spoke to *(his voice cracks a little as he chuckles nervously)* Marigold. It's all sorted. [Short beat.] She'll be my escort for the mayor's party.

HELIX: *(Mumbling to herself)* Party? *(To the Prostitute and Jesse)* Uh-uh-*Right!* The-uh-the party!

JESSE: Marigold said somethin' along the lines of *(Mimicking Marigold)* *men with mugs as nasty as mine* needin' the opposite company.

SWEET PROSTITUTE: *(Cautious, though convinced)* That sounds like [Short beat.] somethin' she'd say. *(To Helix, kinder.)* I'm sure she gave you the rundown already but, no offense, you look [Short beat.] kinda naive. Just remember to keep your wits about you. Especially around [Short beat.] clients. Okay?

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): Her kindness [Short beat.] was a shocking jolt, after the trial. Humans are really too quick to protect strangers.

(We hear the voices of people passing by on the street)

HELIX: O-Okay.

JESSE: C'mon. Got a *lot* of road to cover.

(Jesse's footsteps move along on a dirt road)

(Fantastical synth whistle)

HELIX (NARRATION): Sooo, I [Short beat.] followed him. If *only* to figure out *where* I was and what was going on. At the time I had no idea that we were both headed to the same place anyway.

(Fantastical synth whistle)

(Turntable slows down)

(Upright, upbeat piano music --

(Record scratches --

-- piano music plays --

-- scratches --

-- plays in the --)

-- scratches into a drumbeat)

(People chatter and laugh merrily)

(Upright, upbeat piano music plays in the saloon)

CHARLES (NARRATION): A saloon [Short beat.] in the center [Short beat.] of *nowhere*. A watering hole for the untrimmed moustaches of the world. No doubt, I held more teeth in my own mouth than all those *drunken rubes* combined.

(Footsteps on hardwood floor)

(A register rings)

(Coins jingle)

CHARLES: Good sir. You are this establishment's bar-tender, *yes*?

BARTENDER: Who else do I look like ... Grover Cleveland?

(Patrons laugh)

CHARLES: *(Laughing with them)* Very humorous, *(he chuckles)* good sir. But I can assure you, I've met President Cleveland, and his moustache was *far* better.

(Patrons grumble in displeasure)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): It soon occurred to me that I'd already drawn uncomfortable attention to myself. The rat trap's patrons had their eyes on me, or, rather, fixed upon my suit and pockets. They seemed rather ... *amused*. *(Chuckles)* Some even disgusted with me. It *seemed* that my Commonwealth charms had fallen entirely flat in Lone *Flats*. *(He laughs at his own joke)*

CHARLES: *Forgive me, sir*. It's been a *terribly* long journey.

BARTENDER: Is this a *terribly* long way of askin' for a free drink?

CHARLES: Oh *(Self-conscious chuckles)* no, si-i-ir. Nothing like that. *(He sighs)* Although, I do have an inquiry. And I'd never say *no*, to a free drink. *(Refocusing)* Uh-! An inquiry about a *strange* woman. A woman [Short beat.] "*not of this time?*" Perhaps she [Short beat.] passed through this fine saloon? *Hmm?*

BARTENDER: Son. if you're askin' about the *whorehouse*, go out and turn —

(Patrons chuckle suggestively)

CHARLES: *Goodness, no. (Chuckles) Don't* misunderstand me. I'm not in search of a — well, I suppose she *could*, but — (*Dropping the charade, considering*) Well, it just doesn't seem —

BARTENDER: (*Interrupting*) Li-Listen, son. You're disturbin' the regulars. You can either *stop* speaking in codes, or go on and sort yourself *outside*.

(*Echoing, ethereal piano*)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Now, I had seen my rank degraded once too often. Nearly shot by a blood-thirsty Texan. Utterly dismissed by the *post-verbial carriage driver*. And *now* belittled by a *lowly* [Short beat.] *Western* [Short beat.] *rube*. Think me not *prideful*, however. This was merely part of the role. (*He chuckles*) Now, what would Charles Osgood say?

(*People chatter and laugh merrily*)

(*Upright, upbeat piano music plays in the saloon*)

CHARLES: *Codes?* I'm speaking in *educated* English, Mr. *Bar-tender*. I'm speaking each *word* as they are properly writ. Don't you understand? *Writ*.

(*Charles slams his hand on the counter*)

(*Glasses rattle*)

CHARLES: *Writ!* (*Fully mocking*) Have you ever *sat* and *read* a *book*? With **words**? Have *any* of you in this wretched place?

(*Echoing, ethereal piano*)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Now a true shapeshifter dedicates himself at all costs. It is the only way to make a living from it. Even if you might make a *dying* from it. Anything less, and you're nothing but a *thespian*.

(*Long inhale...then exhale on a cigar*)

CHARLES (NARRATION): It seemed that my saloon outburst had set off the wrong bells. Or perhaps the right ones. *Whichever*, the bartender and his *lazy-legged loons* started reaching for their holsters. The-They *had* that particular look in their eyes. The-The same look that Mr. Matthews, the *true* Roy Matthews, that mustachioed ogre, had given me in Virginia. And my estimations told me, *this* is the killing gaze. But it did seem the admonishments were going to (*Chuckles abashedly*) continue pouring from my mouth, without regard and with no clear reckoning.

(Charles coughs, coughs, coughs)

(He laughs and coughs)

(He choughs)

(He composes himself)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Ehhh, one might call it a *death wish*. I am, quite literally, on a mission for Death herself. Fulfilling her wishes. *(He chuckles)* Would she allow me to ruin myself so simply? *(He chuckles arrogantly)* I doubt it. I *could* say [Short beat.] whatever I pleased, and absolutely no harm would come.

(People chatter and laugh merrily)

(Upright, upbeat piano music plays in the saloon)

CHARLES: Have any of you in this wretched place ever read a book that didn't have *little pretty pictures* in it?

(Patrons grumble in anger)

(A shotgun is cocked)

BARTENDER: I *told* you. Take yourself [Short beat] *out* - [Short beat] *SIDE!*

(A bullet fire)

(Metallic ping)

(Men exclaim)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): No doubt, he could've struck me had he aspired to. I-I spent a whole childhood in the West and the years after at the *Faro table*. I know these sorts of men. They *knew* the difference between a *paralyzing* shot, and one that kills. *But* death was on my side, now. *Instead*, he struck the corner of the Sonny Machine.

(Mechanical whirring)

(Men grumble confused)

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

(Cassette tape warbles)

(Tape winds down)

SONNY MACHINE: *(A man's voice)* You are listening to --

(Patrons gasp loudly)

(Tinny, through the speakers, a bell rings)

SONNY MACHINE: *(Echoing female voice)* We are going back. Way back. [Static, the station changes] *(Ronald Reagan)* That's like trying to pull a game out of the fourth quarter by punting -- [Static, the station fades into] *(A male announcer)* All the way from the sixties, seventies, eighties--eighties--eighties-- [Static, the station changes] *(Old, vaudeville performer)* What are you doing here *stranger?* [Station changes] *(Calm male talk show host)* Typically, in a city like New York -

(Click!)

SONNY MACHINE: *(Calm male talk show host continues, this time clearer)* - one can hear songs in many langua--

(The Sonny Machine beeps!)

(Beep! Beep!)

SONNY MACHINE: *(Female, almost Siri-like, voice)* First tower activated.

(The crowd of patrons gasps)

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

SONNY MACHINE: First Tower activated.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): The *Sonny Machine* began to make a terrible rotating and [Short beat] *beep-ing* noise? Ugh. And the saloon patrons, if they did not want to destroy the screeching machine, they looked to *steal it* for scrap parts. I needed to escape. I needed to escape.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Charles clears his throat)

CHARLES: *(Anxiously)* R-Right. Yes. That's - um - all I needed. Farewell! Ha, ha, ha. *(He sighs)*

(Footsteps on hardwood floor)

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Footsteps on hardwood floor)

(Patrons grumble)

(Door creaks open)

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(The noise and chatter of people in the street)

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

(Footsteps on dirt road)

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

SONNY MACHINE: ...one hundred twelve meters distant.

CHARLES: Anomaly? *Hello?*

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Charles taps the machine. Cling! Cling!)

CHARLES: Sonny? *(Whispered, urgently)* Anomaly?

(Footsteps on dirt road)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): It was unlike *the tube*. The machine only spoke *at* me, and I could only speak *at* it, but never in conversation. *(He sighs)* I do hope these nightly recordings are coming through. I'm only doing as Death herself instructed, speaking into it as one might a -- a *diary*.

(He taps the mic on the Sonny Machine)

(He blows, blows, blows on the Sonny Machine)

CHARLES (NARRATION): She made it a part of our infernal deal, this *bastard* machine.

(The noise and chatter of people in the street)

(Footsteps on dirt road)

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

CHARLES: *(Whispered urgently)* Mistress of Death? Sonny Machine. I *need* you to quiet down, for risk of me getting shot. *Again!* Or, *(chuckles mirthlessly)* well, *again-again!*

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): On that dusty road, Sonny's interminable [Beat.] *beeping* continued, and *after* every handful of minutes, it reminded me of its First Tower and *Anomaly*. I walked the Lone Flats *thoroughfare* and strode in circles, listening to its beeping speed up and down.

(The noise and chatter of people in the street)

(Footsteps on dirt road)

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

SONNY MACHINE: *(Female, almost Siri-like, voice)* First tower located. [Beat.]Anomaly ... one hundred-two meters distant.

(Footsteps on dirt road)

(Charles coughs)

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

SONNY MACHINE: First Tower located. Anomaly ... one hundred--

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

(Slightly quicker: Beep! Beep! Beep!)

SONNY MACHINE: --thirty-five meters distant.

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Was the First Tower the Anomaly? At 102 meters, the beeping seemed faster than before. Then at 135, at its slowest.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(The noise and chatter of people in the street)

(Footsteps on dirt road)

(Bracelets jingle together)

(Working women giggle)

CHARLES: Oh! Excuse me, *madame*.

WITTY PROSTITUTE: *(Delighted)* Oh, Mr. Banker. *(Seductively)* You've decided to make a withdrawal?

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

CHARLES: Uh- *No*, madame. I'm *not a banker*. I'm looking for a woman out of —

WITTY PROSTITUTE: *Oh*, I see now. That little device of yours? You must be one of those *land* surveyors. Looking to strike some *oil*? *(Conspiratorially)* You know, I *thought* that big tower down the way was for drawin' the oil.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

CHARLES: The tower?

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): I recalled the bell tower I'd seen before. What I *presumed* to be a bell tower. But does one *activate* a bell tower?

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(The noise and chatter of people in the street)

CHARLES: *Perfect*. Thank you, madame. *Now*, have you happened to see a, um, *woman out of time*? I'm looking for someone.

WITTY PROSTITUTE: Like I said before, darling. I *charge* for my time. I see all sorts of women *every day*.

(Bracelets jingle together)

WITTY PROSTITUTE: All of them are out of time. In one way or another. [Beat.] That's why women *charge* for their time, because we are *out of--*

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): I was beginning to understand the bartender's frustrations, listening to *words* spoken in *code*, and all, when from out the brothel doors emerged a most curious duet.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(The noise and chatter of people in the street)

(Doors slamming open)

CHARLES: Wait. Sorry. Do you know *that* woman?

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): Any half-decent eye would note her hair, *unruly* and gathered by a ribbon, as *not of this time*. Less obvious, but *certainly clear* to someone with my polished skill set, was the *misfit* of her gown, the *strange, metallic earrings*, her *unshodden* feet. *(Chuckles)* The young woman's *clothes* were not *worn* with intention. As I said, the difference between a thespian and a shapeshifter is dedication. And this woman, running along after that young black cowboy I crossed earlier, she wore this for [Beat.] *survival*. Yes, the frilly yellow gown wore *her*. Quickly thrown on. This was not a character.

CHARLES (NARRATION): She —

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(The noise and chatter of people in the street)

WITTY PROSTITUTE: *(She sighs)* Which woman? I know many women.

SONNY MACHINE: *(Female, almost Siri-like, voice)* First Tower located. Anomaly located.

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): I had gotten what I needed from the woman on the road. I pushed past her and followed the couple from a distance, burrowing the beeping Sonny Machine beneath my coat flap, to muffle the noise. [Beat.] Their bodies became silhouettes against the orange dust of Lone Flats. And far beyond them, rising in the distance was the *black obelisk*. [Beat.] It looked the same as before, activated or not.

(Slower: Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(Footsteps on dirt road)

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): The beeping machine slowed down as their bodies disappeared into the layers of orange dust. *But*, I could not run closer, for risk of them hearing this *damned* machine.

(The noise and chatter of people in the street)

(Footsteps on dirt road)

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

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): No matter how I tried to *quiet* the machine, pressing its various colored *buttons* or punching into its belly, it seemed the bartender's bullet lodged itself into some *deep* part of Sonny that keeps it alive.

(Footsteps on dirt road)

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

CHARLES: *(Quietly, begging)* Sonny, I need you to *control yourself*. Are you alive, or not? Are you listening, Mistress?

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): My pleas, to no avail. I [Short beat.] chased after the shadows of the cowboy and the imposter, but they were *younger* and *faster*. They disappeared into the orange dust, presumably headed toward the mysterious tower. The most *I* could do was continue forward. *(He sighs in frustration)* What did that young man and woman have in common? Has Death given me a challenger, someone to *race* in order to save ourselves? Were he and I given the same mission? These were the questions on my mind, distracting me as I wandered forward into the ocean of orange dust, traveling into the New Mexico mist, when I walked [Short beat.] straight into the metal gate [Short beat.] of the mayor's front yard.

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(The noise and chatter of people in the street)

(Footsteps on dirt road)

(Clang! Thud!)

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

SONNY MACHINE: Anomaly located.

(Echoing, ethereal piano)

CHARLES (NARRATION): After massaging the inevitable *lump* on my forehead, I spied there, on the other side of the mayor's gates, the *couple* approaching the mayoral mansion. Why visit [Short beat.] the town mayor? Who [Short beat.] cares for a provincial landlord?

(Beep! Beep! Beep!)

(The noise and chatter of people in the street)

(Bee-Beep!)

(The noise and chatter of people in the street)

(Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep! Bee-

(Warble, warble)

- Beep! Beep! -

(A tune slows down -- speeds up -- continues forward--

(Scratch)

- continues forward)

(Scratching)

(A new energetic tune play ~~--error--~~ plays --

(Scratching)

(Scratching)

(Scratching)

(-- tune plays)

(Echoing guitar chord)

(A page flips)

(Pen writing on paper)

JESSE (NARRATION): *At first*, thought she was just another of Marigold's girls. Thing is, she was so cagey I know better than to buy into my first thought. But I *needed* an escort, quick. And this girl looked desperate to leave that place. Thought maybe she was a thief, tryin' to run after findin' some loot in the room upstairs. When that working girl didn't recognize her and thought she was new, I figured I was on the money. The girl all too quickly tagged along. Seemed she was looking for something, too.

(The noise and chatter of people in the street)

(Footsteps on dirt road)

HELIX: Uhhh, not to sound *unappreciative*, or whatever, but why did you help me?

JESSE: Cause *you're* helpin' *me* now.

HELIX: I am?

JESSE: Followin' me, aren't ya?

HELIX: Yeah, but [Short beat.] I could leave.

JESSE: And *I* could take you back to that brothel and tell 'em I caught you stealing from 'em. [Short beat.] Figured we'd make this *easier* for each other.

(Footsteps on dirt road)

HELIX: But I didn't steal? [Beat.] Well, *(she sighs)* *technically* I did, but it's *really* just borrowing. I think.

JESSE: Don't [Short beat.] care. Just need a pretty face from Marigold's to get me into the party.

HELIX: *(Annoyed)* I won't sleep with you.

JESSE: *(Offended)* I was'n--! *(Calmer)* No one's askin' you to. All you gotta do is act like you actually *work* for Marigold.

HELIX: *Weeell*, okay. But, I've got somewhere I gotta be.

(Footsteps on dirt road)

JESSE: You'll get there. *After* the party. Let's start with names. Real, *then* fake.

HELIX: Helix.

JESSE: What?

HELIX: My name? It's Helix.

JESSE: *(He laughs in disbelief)* That a joke?

HELIX: *(Surprised)* Oh-ho-kay. That's rude. *(Challenging)* What's your name, then? *(Putting on a over-exaggerated Southern accent)* Buck Johnson? Dan the Cowboy Man? Shooty McGee the Shooting Fantas--?

JESSE: (*Angry*) It's *Jesse*. Jesse Rogers.

HELIX: (*Unimpressed*) Uh-huh. *Exactly*.

(*Echoing guitar chord*)

(*A page flips*)

(*Pen writing on paper*)

JESSE (NARRATION): Could tell this wasn't gonna become any sorta friendship, me and her. Had the attitude of a *bad wind*. But all I needed was *her* to get me in and some time away from the party. Noticed she kept glancin' at that tower on the mesa behind the mayor's house. She was distracted when we got to the door. *Yeah*, (*light and teasing*) I could tell. [Short beat.] *That's* where she was headed. But this Helix woman would wait. Hoped to *God* she wouldn't ruin my best chance at gettin' this necklace.

(*The noise and chatter of people in the street*)

(*Footsteps on dirt road*)

(*Knock-knock-knock!*)

(*Helix clears her throat*)

(*Knock-knock-knock!*)

(*Door creaks open*)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: (*Cheerfully*) He-llo! Good afternoon. Who might you be?

(*Noises from inside the party filter out: people talking, plates and cutlery clattering*)

HELIX: (*Switching into a poor accent and character; her words come out choppy and unsure.*) May-yor *Lyngood*, a pleasure. I am one of [Short beat.] *Miss* [Short beat.] *Marigold's* newest girls, [Beat.] *Miss* [Short beat.] *Donna* (*she struggles*) *Summer*.

(*People talking in the distance*)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: (*Enthusiastically*) Miss Summer, the pleasure is *mine*. Anyone under the care of Miss Marigold is *always welcome* in my home, *especially* when they come accompanied. Who might you be, dear fellow?

JESSE: (*Smoothly*) Mayor Lyngood. Name's Nate Eaton.

HELIX: (*Losing accent*) The madam-- uh -- uh -- (*Catching herself, and putting on the accent again*) I'm one of the *new girls*. She sent *me* for [Beat.] Marigold, is her name. [Beat.] She said --

JESSE: The *usual* arrangement, Mayor. (*Chuckles dryly*) Marigold said you'd understand.

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: Well, of course, Mr. Eaton and Miss Summer. [Beat.] Come in, come in. There is *more* than enough room for the pair o' you. Things are barely underway. [Beat.] You too, Mr. Eaton. Uh--What did you say you do?

JESSE: Hadn't. Apologies, Mayor Lyngood. My business is cattle. Sir.

(*People talking in the distance*)

(*Echoing guitar chord*)

(*Pen writing on paper*)

JESSE (NARRATION): *Usually*, I get into fancy homes by *lowerin'* my status not *liftin'* it. But Lyngood didn't seem to care how much I contributed to the conversation. [Short beat.] Seems Marigold was right. [Short beat.] Money talks in Lone Flats, *just* like *anywhere* else. And it looked like there were deep ties between the mayor and *that* brothel. *Well*, I wasn't asking no questions. The mayor trotted us around his place. Though he didn't seem happy to play host to us for *too* long, he still went around pointin' out every shiny thing that proved just how important he was. For such a blip of a town, the mayor's house *screamed* wealth.

(*Pen writing on paper*)

JESSE (NARRATION): Took us to a large room where folks were already gathered, *families* and men who seemed *just* as rich as the mayor. Counted a few *guns* among them, plus the *shotgun* on display near the entrance, and the piece the mayor was carryin'. One of 'em touched his hip when we walked in. There were only *two* ways out the room once we walked in, *the way we came in* and a servant's door back to the kitchen. Would need to wait awhile to make any *moves*. [Short beat.] *Lose* their attention. [Beat.] A woman and young girl came over to us.

(*People talking in the distance*)

(Footsteps approach)

MAYOR ORVILLE LYNGOOD: Mr. Eaton, let me introduce my wife, Jane Lyngood. *And*, my only daughter, Annabeth.

JESSE: Mrs. Lyngood. Miss [Short beat.] Annabeth.

HELIX: *(Still in her terrible accent)* You *have* such a [Short beat.] *lovely* home. I really like the [Short beat.] candel-bras. Can-- *(losing the accent)* Candle. Candela-- *(Picking the accent back up, more sure of herself)* Candel-la-bras! *Yeah*. The candelabras.

(Echoing guitar chord)

(Pen writing on paper)

JESSE (NARRATION): I'd just been dealt either a great or *terrible* hand. Jane Lyngood was as beautiful as I'd heard rumor say. As in not one bit. The *thing was* she wasn't wearing the necklace. Her neck was bare. [Short beat.] Meant I'd have to sneak off and try to find it. [Beat.] Good thing I had that Helix girl to use as a distraction.

(Echoing guitar chord)

FERNANDA: 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 the Gruff Carriage Driver, the Bartender, and Mayor Orville Lyngood; Ann Hughes as the Witty Prostitute, the Sweet Prostitute, and the voice of the Sonny Machine; Ivory Amor D'Francisca as Jesse Rogers; Maria Fernanda Vidaurrazaga as Miss Marigold; Jade Duong as Helix; and Daniel Sotelo as Coda. This episode was written by Fernanda and JT, directed by Fernanda. Dialogue editing by Ann, sound design by JT, and music by Samuel Kinsella. 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 us a review on Apple podcasts, Podchaser, or Goodpods. Honestly, it helps us reach more listeners and gives us a chance to see what you all think of the show. Like Phyzix Teacher, thank you so much for the review! If you'd like to help us grow, consider becoming a Patron at patreon.com/radio_outcast. 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 like...

The young gun, Kyrie O

Stefani C the best bounty hunter in Lone Flats.

Gnome H, a determined homesteader heading west.

Patrick C the only camp cook to make a decent cup of joe around here.

More than just a highwayman, Alan L, who rumor says sings a mean opera.

Daniel W the mysterious undertaker.

Tuvie, the most respected cattle baron in the west.

Melissa L, the city clerk with the latest hot goss.

Sarah F, one of the greatest painters in Lone Flats.

Rax W who once saved my life at their incredible Medicine Show and definitely, definitely, *definitely* did not pay me to say this.

Marcos L the kindest and most attentive schoolmarm during the day and the *slyest* gambler at night.

Patricia D who has a warrant out for their arrest, the crime was said to do something with stolen diamonds, a pilfered pie, and rabbits for some reason.

Cosuelo U, my favorite shopkeeper in town and it's not just cause she's my Mom.

Lisbeth V a cityslicker looking to find golden opportunities in our little town.

Valeria V the best Faro player in Lone Flats till Charles arrived in town.

The retired cavalry officer, DJ.

Juan Aurelio P. the local Barber who once gave the mayor's brother an emergency leeching *all* while also giving him the most stylish and talked about haircut that year.

Our favorite man of the cloth, Andy S.

Aron B who is new in town but already making a splash with their exclusive parties.

And of course we can't forget Phyzix, who owns our famous Lone Flats saloon but (*mechanical*) cannot be held responsible for the mysterious deals the saloon's bartenders may or may not be making with out-of-towners. (*chuckles*)

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

(*Theme*)