

Hi there! Eli Ramos here, creator and editor of Under the Electric Stars. Under the Electric Stars has been nominated for both Discover Pods Awards and Audioverse Awards. This is our first year getting nominated to Discover Pods and our third year in Audioverse. Awards are a really great way to get more people talking about a show and checking them out, so please, please, please keep an eye on both Discover Pods and Audioverse and vote for us, or our sister shows on the network, Crown Jewels and SkillSet, if you see us on the ballots. Otherwise, if you want other people to hear about our show and listen to it, please talk about our show to other people on social media, or if you're feeling wild, just print out the link and tape it somewhere. Anywhere! For fun. That's all I've got to say, so I'll let you listen to the episode now. See you later in the credits. You do listen to those, right?

#### SCENE 1

MUSIC: Riverline by Tri-Tachyon.

SEBASTIAN:

Caine? It's... it's really you.

CAINE:

Guess so.

CAINE:

You know, I figured at the moment that I saw Sebastian again, that was the question I'd be asking him. But it wasn't. I didn't know him from his voice, not right away, but when I saw him, I was sure. He was a *lot* older than I remembered him. I guess you don't really feel the difference between 20 and 26 unless you're staring right at it. His hair was slicked down and longer than I'd ever seen it. And I guess at some point he'd abandoned the whole leather jacket thing he had going. But his grin. That lopsided smile that left his canine poking out his mouth. Yeah, I'd know it anywhere.

TARI:

What, what, *what*? You two already know each other? Don't tell me—Baz is Sebastian?

CAINE:

Yeah. Yeah, I just didn't expect this to happen... so soon.

TARI:

Well, check one thing off your list! I should've guessed that Baz was a criminal.

SEBASTIAN:

Hey, criminal? Whaddya mean, *Bunnie*?

CAINE:

The tracker.

SEBASTIAN:

The—oh. Shit. So, you found out about that, huh?

CAINE:

Yeah. Yeah, I did. Understatement of the millennium, but we have a lot of stuff to catch up on. Don't we, *Baz*?

SEBASTIAN:

Right. Right...

God, I think this is the first time I haven't had to interrupt you, *Caine*! You must not be very nervous. Or you're so nervous, you forgot how to talk?

CAINE:

Uh...

TARI:

Well, uh... I'd better leave you two so you can do whatever uber-deep sibling bonding and catch up you gotta do. Um, as for me, I'd better run off for now and help, uh... Ganymede with fixing stuff! Uh, Caine, call me if you need me, I'm out!

SFX: Tari scampers off.

CAINE:

Call? Oh, and... alright. Uh, shoot. I don't think I even got their comms info.

SEBASTIAN:

Oh, connection for comms is spotty anyways. You usually will call whatever area someone's in and hope they pick up. But we have phone booths everywhere here.

CAINE:

Is this place really big enough to warrant that?

SEBASTIAN:

This place is enormous. Definitely smaller than the Metropolis, but it's big enough. I should show you around, right?

CAINE:

Well, yeah, but what about—

SEBASTIAN:

We'll walk and talk, come on.

SFX: Sebastian walks. Caine follows.

SEBASTIAN:

Pfft, I bet Tari just ran straight over here and barely gave you a rundown of Cair Mallplex.

CAINE:

Uh-huh.

SEBASTIAN:

Yup, classic Bunny. You'll never catch em standing still—  
believe me, I've tried.

CAINE:

Oh. Heh. So, how long have you known em for?

SEBASTIAN:

Oh, like, basically since I got here, give or take a few  
months. Honestly, at a certain point, it all blends  
together. Ah, but come on, you're young, I figure you  
probably don't even think about time.

CAINE:

Yeah, well, surprise. I'm 22.

SEBASTIAN:

You're—for real? So, it's been like, six years. Wow. Time  
flies. But you still haven't gotten any taller.

CAINE:

Hey! Well, neither have you.

SEBASTIAN:

Well, tough luck for both of us, I guess. Okay, so gear  
shop's over here, by the way. One of three, but you can  
check out stuff that Ganymede's brought back or traded for.  
Mostly junk, but you were a decent scrapper, so you'll  
probably make use of something. You ever build a bot?

CAINE:

Mostly repurposed one. He's actually with me right now! Oh, well, um, in our room, but I think you'd like him. He's really cool.

SEBASTIAN:

Let me guess, a navsys?

CAINE:

He's an all-purpose bot, but yeah, we mostly drive around anyways. He's been with me for a while. And, um... he-he knows about you... kind of. Mostly stories and pictures, though.

SEBASTIAN:

You told your bot about me?

CAINE:

Yeah, 'cause that would make sense, I don't tell my very special bot about my kuya.

SEBASTIAN:

Heh. Oh, then most of the living spaces are down that way. This is the Northwest wing, so not many families.

CAINE:

Wow. So, people raise kids out here, huh?

SEBASTIAN:

I mean, people raise kids in the Metropolis. Honestly, better living without companies looking over your shoulder all the time. Cair Mallplex doesn't force anyone to work. Did you have a job there?

CAINE:

Uh, if you could call it a job. I had to work for Dax.

SEBASTIAN:

Right, the guy who owned the apartment complex! Man, that takes me back. What happened to him?

CAINE:

I don't want to talk about it, honestly.

SEBASTIAN:

Well, whenever you're ready.

Oh, here, check it out! Lean over the railing—

CAINE:

You better not push me.

SEBASTIAN:

I won't, I won't. I'm too old for that, anyway. But look, you can see some of our laboratories we have.

CAINE:

Huh. Gotta say, wouldn't have expected you to turn the food court into a lab.

SEBASTIAN:

Yeah, unlike other sparse colonies out here, we're thriving. We have real scientists and everything.

CAINE:

Other Glasshouse runaways, I expect.

SEBASTIAN:

Not all of them. Some of them are from the Metropolis, like me. And you! Speaking of which, how'd you get here? Hitched a ride on a truck too, huh?

CAINE:

Uh, no, actually. I drove here.

SEBASTIAN:

All by yourself? Damn, you are a good driver.

CAINE:

Well, I didn't do it all on my own. I had help from Jet, plus all of Zero Zero.

SEBASTIAN:

What? Like the... union?

CAINE:

Yeah, uh... sort of? It's a long story, it's gonna take a while to explain—

SFX: A phone rings.

SEBASTIAN:

Oh wait. Hold that thought, I should answer that.

SFX: Sebastian opens a phone booth and answers the phone.

SEBASTIAN:

Hey, Baz speaking.

GANYMEDE:

Hi Baz, it's Ganymede. Listen, are you near the parts shop?

SEBASTIAN:

Eh, more or less. What's up?

GANYMEDE:

I'm missing a part for fixing the engine of that car I brought in.

SEBASTIAN:

Hey, isn't that supposed to be my job? I thought you were working on stripping the truck for plating.

GANYMEDE:

Well, I feel awful bad how the driver busted their engine—totally my fault—so I figured I'd see to it since I already handle most of our parts that come in.

SEBASTIAN:

You've got a huge workload already—!

GANYMEDE:

Plus, Tari told me you have someone you're busy with?

SEBASTIAN:

Uh... yeah.

GANYMEDE:

Anyways. The car's a Rambler, maybe?

SEBASTIAN:

Actually, I'm pretty sure it's a Rebel model.

GANYMEDE:

You saw the car already? Guess you came to the garage before me.

SEBASTIAN:

I practically live there, but n-no. I just... know the car.

TARI:

THEY'RE SIBLINGS! ISN'T THAT WILD?

SEBASTIAN:

I take back what I said about you being a good driver. You busted the engine?

CAINE:

What? You heard what he said.

SEBASTIAN:

Ganymede blames himself for everything. What did you do?

CAINE:

For your information, I drove through a fire and your buddy Tari almost got us flattened by that truck they were working on, so yeah, I happened to push the engine a little too hard.

SEBASTIAN:

Excuses, excuses. But points for unpredictability.

Sorry, Gan, what part do you need again?

GANYMEDE:

Just got the wrong valvetrain. I'm basically rebuilding this thing from scratch. I swear I had the right one, but if you can dig up one for me, I can get this thing running by the end of the day. Or at least I hope I can, I've been working late for a few days now and I wanna get back to Ronan before we're due for another supply run.

SEBASTIAN:

Alright, well, no rush. Right, Caine?

CAINE:

I mean, I guess not.

SEBASTIAN:

I'll find them for you.

GANYMEDE:

Thank you, darlin'.

SFX: He hangs up.

SEBASTIAN:

Wanna help out? Unless you have something better to do.

CAINE:

No, no, definitely. Um... yeah.

So... by the way, what did you... what did you mean by "no rush?"

SEBASTIAN:

You're not leaving anytime soon, are you?

CAINE:

Vague as usual.

SEBASTIAN:

I mean, why else come out here, right? That's what we always talked about. Leaving and finding a better place. And that's here!

CAINE:

But—!

SEBASTIAN:

Ah, what am I saying? You've barely been here a day. Let's table that for now and just go find those parts, okay?

CAINE:

..Yeah, alright.

SCENE 2

SFX: A crowd of people.

LOLA:

Excuse me, I'll have to be going now. It was nice meeting you. Thanks for the food.

Vic. I figured I'd see you here.

VIC:

Hey, Lola. You ended up getting food?

SFX: She sits.

LOLA:

I was hungry. I also wanted to actually talk with the people living here. Did you have to agree to some task or trade, or did they do that to me specifically?

VIC:

Nah, I already had to sign off on cleaning stuff so I could get breakfast. Hm. It's a whole system, I guess. (HE SIGHS)  
Did you expect there to be so many people here?

LOLA:

Not at all. And not so many former Glasshouse citizens.

VIC:

That threw me for a loop too. It feels kind of off though, right?

LOLA:

You're suspicious.

VIC:

Oh, and you're not?

LOLA:

I'm... *mildly* suspicious. Healthily suspicious.

SFX: Lola chews her food.

VIC:

Keep telling yourself that.

LOLA:

It is strange to be recognized by people and not have them get instantly hostile towards you.

VIC:

Yeah, it was kind of like that when I first left the Berserkers. But I would say this is a good ten times weirder though. I just... why did these Cair Mallplex people take us in so quickly? They must be planning something, right?

LOLA:

Like what?

VIC:

I don't know. Why waste resources on outsiders though? Maybe they're trying to build up their own Metropolis out here.

LOLA:

Nell didn't strike me as the power-hungry type. I think she's just hesitant to talk to us too.

VIC:

She left so suddenly though. I don't know how easy it'll be for us to get her on our side.

LOLA:

I feel that way too. But I also think a big part of asking for their help is understanding what they have going on here. I know time is of the essence, but it's kind of invasive to have a bunch of maybe-revolutionaries waltz in and ask for help in overthrowing a monopoly, no matter what they might have planned here.

VIC:

Whoa, give us a little more credit than that!

LOLA:

Just trying to put it into perspective. I'd say be on your guard, but we should try to understand the place more before we pitch to people. I think in my eagerness I showed too much of my hand with Nell and scared her.

VIC:

Not to be like "that seems to be a theme with you" but, uh..

LOLA:

(SHE LAUGHS) No, no, I'm well aware.

Who do you think would be the easiest to get on our side, though? Since you brought it up.

VIC:

I've barely got a read on Nell or Ganymede, but I'd say... Tari, right? Ey were already super hyped to see you and you apparently inspired em to leave Glasshouse, so, kind of sounds like a gimme. That's my take on it.

LOLA:

Noted. I was thinking I would try to talk to any of our welcoming committee today, but they seem to have all disappeared.

VIC:

Yeah, so did the rest of Zero Zero. What happened to us meeting up if something bad happened, huh?

LOLA:

Well, nothing bad has happened yet. They're probably just trying to scope out the place too. You and I just run into each other a lot.

VIC:

If the last five years taught me anything, it's that you like people-watching. You're lucky I do too.

MUSIC: Back to Guitars -Relaxing Background Music" by Nesrality.

LOLA:

Heh.

SFX: Vic tries to sneak some of Lola's food, and she lightly smacks his hand.

VIC:

Ow, hey! I want some of your food.

LOLA:

Either ask or get your own.

VIC:

Aw, fine.

LOLA:

Okay, I feel bad for you. Take some.

VIC:

Ah, yes! Friendship wins again!

SCENE 3

SFX: Jet's powering up sound.

CAINE:

Jet? Hey, buddy, can you hear me?

JET:

I can! What's up?

CAINE:

Connection's kind of bad, but I, uh... Well, I-I found Sebastian!

JET:

Oh! How exciting! Will I get to meet him?

CAINE:

Oh, yeah, soon. We're kind of in the middle of trying to find some stuff for the car, but I'll be back at the end of the day with him. Right, Seb?

SEBASTIAN:

Yeah, yeah, of course.

JET:

Oh, man! I'm so nervous! But I also wish I could come along with you guys.

CAINE:

Yeah, I know, buddy.

SEBASTIAN:

He doesn't like settling down? Bot after my own heart.

JET:

Oh, ooh, I could screenjump to your comms right now! Unless you don't want me to?

CAINE:

Hey, Jet, listen. Not that I don't want you here, but I remember how I told you you should take care of yourself? You've been working pretty hard, and you just came back online recently. So I think that you need to take a break. And—and then next time, you'll be right by my side. How's that sound?

JET:

Oh. Okay! I'll see you later?

CAINE:

Of course. See you, Jet.

SFX: Caine hangs up.

JET:

(SIGHS) Guess it's just me again.

(HE HUMS A LITTLE TUNE) Hm, I wonder what I'll do before Caine gets back. Maybe I'll just see what's on the internet! Oh wait, I don't have connection to the mesh net here yet... Well, I can just look through my stored images!

SFX: He scrolls.

JET:

A picture of a boat! A picture of a snow globe with an island inside! A picture of a cup that says, "Don't talk to me until I eat this cup!" (HE LAUGHS) That's gotta be one of my favorites.

But I can't just do this the whole time. I already looked at this picture 348 times in the last week, which is

rapidly approaching my attenuation for an image's humor level. I'd better do something else.

SFX: Jet accesses some files.

JET:

Actually, this is a perfect time for me to start cleaning up some of my files I don't need. While we're out here, I'm sure I'll need to collect more data on lots of different things, so I can just free up some space to optimize my performance! And since I just came online again, hopefully this will clear out any issues I've been having.

Running system defrag and cleaner...

There we go, that should do it. I'll just run that in the background and...

SFX: Alert!

JET:

"479 files need your attention?" Oh, I... I guess I'll have to sort through these actively. That's a bit of a bother. But I guess I have nothing else to do anyways. Let's see... keep this one, and this one, and this one... Mm. Don't think I need this anymore... Wow, so much has happened over the last few months! And my storage space got bigger and then filled up a bunch of times. No wonder I've had a hard time adjusting. Wait, what's this one?

SFX: Jet opens a file.

VIC:

Geez, this guy's software is complicated. How many programmers worked on this? And why in the world does it need such a strong power core?

Oh, are you awake?

JET:

Ah, this must be from when USER: Vic first started hooking me up to the power systems and information in Zero Zero's base! I'll store that one... here with the rest of the Vic files.

SFX: Jet opens another file.

INDRA:

So, what exactly is that little... helmet shaped thing?

SU-JIN:

That is Jet! He's an all-purpose bot. I guess you could say he's... with Caine?

INDRA:

Like... Caine owns it?

SU-JIN:

No, like... uh, it's complicated, but he kind of has this super advanced personality core in him, so it feels weird to say anyone "owns" him. To be honest, I have no idea where Caine found him, but he's been pretty useful and he's good at keeping up conversation.

JET:

Oh, there's two copies of this conversation, so I can just remove that one and organize with both USER: Su-jin and USER: Indra files...

This one's pretty recent! I wonder which this must be.

SFX: Jet opens the file.

DAX:

You're mine! (DAX SCREAMS AS HE FALLS)

MUSIC: Cinematic Horror Drone by sscheidl.

JET:

(GASPS)

SFX: The file loops.

JET:

"Delete this file?" Yes, please, let's just get rid of this—!

SFX: The sound stops.

JET:

Phew. That was... something.

Maybe I just need to not think about that for a while.

SFX: Jet tunes into the radio.

AVA:

And I'm Ava Jafari. Today on the Moondog Transmission... well, remember how we've been talking about that radio transmission nonstop?

KALEO:

Listeners have been calling in about it, so there's a reason for that. And we've heard your theories. Oh, we've heard your theories..

AVA:

From vicious street artists to creepy collectors, we've been fortunate enough to have your thoughts. Heck, some of you are starting to make me believe in what you're saying.

KALEO:

Which is not saying much...

AVA:

Open mind, Kaleo, open mind.

KALEO:

Right.

AVA:

But we've got a new lead on our hands, so please welcome our guest speaker to the mic, Corrector officer Jordan Hobbs!

JORDAN:

Uh, hi there.

KALEO:

So, Mr. Hobbs, there's some stuff we can't say on air, but we are aware that your name's included in the reports as one of the first responders on the scene. Are you part of the Glasshouse special forces?

JORDAN:

No, I'm not. We were initially called out to investigate and track Lola Sunn after we'd received information about her potential whereabouts when she reappeared in the Panel district. The team was able to find her and Vic Vass present at the scene.

AVA:

And what happened? Why didn't you apprehend them? I mean, big team of Correctors, two criminals?

JORDAN:

Some cyborg got the jump on the captain and he went down. The rest was a firefight. Someone must have set some sort of explosive, which caught us off guard. Most of us are still off-duty and recovering, one guy on our team had to quit the force entirely, but other than him, we're a tough

bunch. By the time we'd woken up, some of us were already bandaged up.

KALEO:

Well, let's take a couple steps back here. A cyborg?

MUSIC: Machine Talk by George-Sundancer.

JORDAN:

Yeah. Came out of nowhere. Big, had some kind of sharp weapon attached. I could barely see it, it moved so fast.

AVA:

That's surprising. By any chance, was that... something the Correctors have been working on?

JORDAN:

Excuse me?

AVA:

Like, military weapons—

JORDAN:

There aren't any military forces with Metropolis West anymore.

KALEO:

Sorry, she's just a history buff. Ava.

AVA:

As I was saying, there aren't any military cyborg developments or anything? No aiming to make a big battle bot?

JORDAN:

Our job is protecting the citizens of Metropolis West. We don't need that kind of tech.

AVA:

Are you sure about that?

KALEO:

Ava!

JORDAN:

I'm sorry, why are we suddenly interrogating me? I'm giving you information you asked for. This is not what we discussed.

KALEO:

Oh, no, I know. Uh, why don't we talk a little more about your squad?

AVA:

Well, it's just something interesting that our listeners might want to know about.

KALEO:

Come on.

JORDAN:

I'm not allowed to talk—!

AVA:

Not allowed?

KALEO:

Yep, you heard 'em, let's move on—!

AVA:

If you describe it more, maybe we can—!

KALEO:

We'll be back with Moondog Transmission in just a moment, but for right now, let's go ahead and listen to a song you've all voted up in the rankings called, "Do What You Wanna Do" by The Right Mob.

AVA:

Kaleo, come on, wait, we're getting to the good part—

SFX: The Moondog Radio sting plays.

MUSIC: Do What You Wanna Do by The Right Mob.

JET:

Oh, that's my favorite song!

SCENE 4

SFX: A shop bell as Caine and Sebastian exit the store.

SEBASTIAN:

(SIGHS) We're real close to being all out of options. We might just need to get the right valvetrain on a supply run, but that means Gan won't be able to get back home in good time. Once he starts something, he won't quit till it's done.

CAINE:

Yeah, well, hopefully we'll find it. I feel kind of bad since he's fixing *my* car.

SEBASTIAN:

So, it's officially your car now?

CAINE:

Well, yeah. It has been for a while. Kind of happens when your older sibling just—

SEBASTIAN:

Hey, last stop! Uh, you go through the stock. I'll ask someone and see if they've got anything tucked away.

SFX: Sebastian runs off. A shop bell tone rings.

CAINE:

And that was what it had been for the past half hour. Me trying desperately to talk with Sebastian, and then Sebastian getting distracted by what we were doing and running off.

Honestly, when I say "distracted", think more like "avoidant." One of the things that I guess hadn't changed much either. I was starting to get why Rossum always called me out when I disappeared for a while.

I mean, we *did* have to find the parts though, so I couldn't get too mad that he kept sending me off to look at stuff. It made me feel like a little kid again, like whenever he'd just ship me off with Val so he could do something too dangerous for either of us to be around. But I was starting to get that feeling on the back of my neck, when I was figuring something out. I mean of all the scrap metal that was there, the parts we were looking for had all disappeared. Bike gears, old bot pieces, cores, and wires— but nothing for cars. I turned over that thought in my head while I looked.

SFX: Caine rummages through parts.

SHOPKEEP:

You're telling me you don't have one of these parts on hand? That's a first for you, Baz.

SEBASTIAN:

Guess I should have gotten here quicker?

SHOPKEEP:

Dunno if it would have done you much good. Some guy with the name R... well, R something or other just heaved off half the stock. People have heard about the newcomers, and I think it's making them antsy. And you're with one of them?

CAINE:

(SCOFFS)

SEBASTIAN:

Huh? Oh, you mean Caine?

CAINE:

Hey, newsflash. I can hear you.

SHOPKEEP:

Sorry, I've been here through a few batches of new people. It gets people thinking about stuff they don't always wanna think about. Didn't mean to offend.

CAINE:

Hahaha. Good job at that.

SEBASTIAN:

Think we'd better split. Thanks for the help.

SHOPKEEP:

No trouble at all. See you around.

SFX: The shop bell rings as they exit.

SEBASTIAN:

You alright?

CAINE:

It's... it's whatever, you know? I just feel like, if a person's going to gossip about me "behind my back", then they should either whisper properly or just say it to my face, y'know? Like, if you're gonna half-ass it, then what's the point, you're just making it easier for me to just—!

SEBASTIAN:

Whoa, whoa, slow your roll! Look, I... I know I haven't really said much about what it was like when I first got here, but people got freaked out of me too, okay? It's only 'cause I've stuck around that they even got used to me. You should've seen them though. I think they've mellowed out a lot.

CAINE:

Well, are you going to talk about when you first got here, like, ever?

SEBASTIAN:

Hey, you're mad at the other guy, not me.

CAINE:

No, Seb, I'm—I'm kind of... I'm not mad, but not happy with you either.

MUSIC: Overcast by GeriArt.

SEBASTIAN:

Come on, we just met each other again for the first time in six years, today!

CAINE:

That's what I'm talking about, Sebastian! We haven't seen each other for six years and we're just walking around an old mall looking for car stuff. Like, are you serious? All this time and I'm not even spending it with you. I mean, what are we doing?

SEBASTIAN:

We are spending time together!

CAINE:

No, you are dragging me around Cair Mallplex, and we haven't actually *talked* about anything! And then on top of that, you keep treating me like I'm just your kid sibling. That—that—that's all I am, that I haven't grown up since then.

MUSIC: Soundscape - D125 by Tri-Tachyon

CAINE:

I used to feel like we were so close. And I thought it would be the same this time around.

SEBASTIAN:

I... (HE STUTTERS, THEN SIGHS) Look, I'm sorry, Caine. Yeah, this has all just been... really unexpected. Honestly, I thought I'd never see you again, so I don't really know how to react. And I haven't been there, so I haven't seen how you changed, but... yeah.

I thought I knew you pretty well too. Like everything you did, I would just have figured out. But you surprise me. A lot. You did, right before I left too.

CAINE:

Wait, hold on. Hang on a second.

SEBASTIAN:

Hey, I'm trying to be heartfelt!

CAINE:

Yes, yes, I know, and I appreciate it, Sebastian, I do. But it-but... the thing is I-I-I've had this funny feeling the whole time we were looking for parts and I think you just helped me figure something out. Quick, say what you just said!

SEBASTIAN:

"Right before I left?"

CAINE:

No, no-before that.

SEBASTIAN:

You... surprise me?

CAINE:

Yes, exactly. That's it!

SEBASTIAN:

That's why the parts are missing from all the shops. Come on, let's go talk to Gan. And then, I swear, we'll talk properly.

SFX: They run off.

SCENE 5

SFX: Pages turning.

NELL:

Oh, this one's far too damaged to be kept. Oh, what a shame. I'll have to copy down the information before we recycle it... put that in this pile..

SFX: The door opens.

SU-JIN:

Miss Palomo? Er... Nell?

NELL:

That's me.

SU-JIN:

Uh, I got told to come here to help you with... sorting? Honestly, I don't really know what I'm doing.

NELL:

Who sent you?

SU-JIN:

Chita, from the bookstore.

NELL:

Ah, well. That makes sense. You'll be sorting books with me. Take a seat.

SFX: Su-jin sits.

NELL:

Just examine the books and see if we can recover anything. If it's water damage, go ahead and put it in this pile. Fire damage goes here, and everything else can just go in this bin here.

If Chita sent you, you'll only need to help for an hour or so. Keep track of how much time but take a break if you want to in the middle—as long as you finish an hour at some point.

SU-JIN:

Uh, sure! Big stack of books, but I'm sure we can put a dent in it. So, are these going back to the bookstore?

NELL:

No, these are mostly in bad condition or rare, so they go to our library.

SU-JIN:

A library!

I'm sure you get this a lot from new people, but your community's pretty loaded for being out here. I'm impressed.

NELL:

It takes a lot of time and hard work. And a lot of it is much older and hard to salvage. We still have largely paper copies of everything.

SU-JIN:

Oh, I figure. I feel the same way about the tech I scrap—so much of it is just built to fall apart, so you spend like, 70% of the time soldering stuff together. But it's exciting to hold physical books. Where are these even coming from?

NELL:

Trash, mostly. The Metropolis doesn't incinerate all of its garbage—just sends it out here and expects it to catch fire. Which it often does.

SU-JIN:

I was gonna ask about that. I assume from the gas masks that people who live here are at least kind of accustomed to flames, but... you can't really live like that, right?

NELL:

We can. It's not ideal, but... I've been doing it for a while. And I've taught a lot of other people here how to handle it.

(SHE SIGHS) It's, um... getting worse lately though. Much worse.

SU-JIN:

I'm sorry to hear that. I'm sure you guys are resilient, but it still must be hard to deal with that.

NELL:

We're managing.

SFX: Su-jin and Nell organize the books into bins.

SU-JIN:

You know, I was expecting there to be more textbooks and manuals, but there's a lot of novels and kids' books here. That's kind of sad.

NELL:

Isn't it? I find myself mourning them while I work here. So much waste from the Metropolis. It'd be better if it were manuals for the tech they toss, but instead they discard stories.

SU-JIN:

Pardon me for asking, but before you lived here, did you come from Metropolis West? You seem to know at least a little bit about it. But not, like, recent stuff, like Lola. So maybe you moved here when you were younger?

NELL:

(SHE LAUGHS) Good guess. But it's the other way around. I grew up here and went to the Metropolis for a little bit. But that was a long time ago.

SU-JIN:

Can't be too long ago. You don't look like you're over 30.

NELL:

You flatter me.

SU-JIN:

Just being honest.

NELL:

(SHE LAUGHS, THEN CUTS HERSELF OFF WITH A COUGH)

Sorry.

SU-JIN:

What are you saying sorry for? It's not like we're in an actual library, I'm not going to shush you or anything.

NELL:

Not about that. I mean about disappearing last night. I don't mean to be rude.

SU-JIN:

You weren't rude. I assumed you needed time to yourself. Lola's pretty upfront about a lot of stuff, which works for

some people and not for others. Plus, you took us in, after all, so that's gotta count for something.

NELL:

I couldn't very well leave you out there. But once your car is fixed, feel free to leave.

SU-JIN:

Kind of sounds like you want us to.

NELL:

I don't mean to offend you, but having people who the Correctors are still seriously chasing after is...

SU-JIN:

Dangerous.

NELL:

*It's different.*

I had Tari explain a little bit about both Lola and Vic. I intend to keep Cair Mallplex safe, but that sort of noise coming here is a risk I don't want to take.

SU-JIN:

And it's still something you have to be careful about. I get it.

NELL:

Mhm. But it's not like I don't want to house "criminals." I mean, who hasn't committed a crime in the eyes of the Metropolis?

SU-JIN:

Gonna be bold in asking this again, but... have you?

NELL:

How about you answer first?

SU-JIN:

But of course. I'm Su-jin Yi, I've been called an information terrorist, a rogue scrapper, union sympathizer, a threat to the Metropolis, and of course, a scoundrel of a graffiti artist. Your turn.

MUSIC: Modular Ambient 03 by sscheidl.

NELL:

Nell Palomo. I'm not quite as burdened by titles as you are, but... dishonorable discharge of the 207<sup>th</sup> and final Fleet.

SU-JIN:

W-wait, what?

NELL:

If you'll excuse me, I'd better take my break now.

SFX: Nell gets out of her chair.

SU-JIN:

Whew! You sure know how to leave someone on a cliffhanger.

NELL:

What can I say? I like telling stories.

SU-JIN:

Then, tell me one. When you're ready.

NELL:

About what?

SU-JIN:

About the 207<sup>th</sup> Fleet. I don't even really know what that is or what happened. How you got here.

NELL:

Well...

Okay. I'll tell you. When I see you again.

SU-JIN:

I'll look forward to it.

SFX: Nell exits.

SCENE 6

SFX: The clattering of tools.

GANYMEDE:

Oh, I swear to... where'd I just put that spanner?

SFX: Cloak swoosh.

INDRA:

Here.

GANYMEDE:

(YELPS) Whoa, geez! How'd you even get in here?

Hi there newcomer. You're... Indra?

INDRA:

That's me. Didn't mean to startle you, just wanted to check in on what you were doing.

GANYMEDE:

Got sent by someone?

INDRA:

Nope. Just doing my own rounds.

GANYMEDE:

If you'll be here awhile, you may as well pull up a chair. Should be one over in the corner there.

SFX: Indra pulls up the chair. Ganymede screws in a screw.

INDRA:

So. Mechanics is your thing?

GANYMEDE:

Not really. I'm actually responsible for most of the crops and plants you see in the building. I'm a farmer.

INDRA:

Huh.

GANYMEDE:

Plenty of people here to feed, but at least POTEN Co.'s not slashing prices and making people dependent here, you know?

'Course, I end up doing lots of other things to make sure things run smooth here. It's a lot of work, but I couldn't very well let Nell do it all on her lonesome.

INDRA:

So, you're close.

GANYMEDE:

We're friends.

SFX: Ganymede screws in a few more screws.

INDRA:

Hm. I haven't seen much of her since last night. She ran off.

GANYMEDE:

Yeah, she's pretty elusive, that lady. I sometimes go days without seeing her, but like I said, we're busy people. Heck, I don't usually see most people if I'm having a particularly productive day.

INDRA:

Sounds fun.

GANYMEDE:

Yeah.

SFX: Knocking.

GANYMEDE:

Come in.

SEBASTIAN:

Hey, Ganymede.

CAINE:

Hey—oh. Indra?

INDRA:

I thought you'd be keeping tabs on Tari. Who's this?

CAINE:

(SIGHS) Yeah, about that... kind of a long story. Anyway, this here's Sebastian.

INDRA:

Quick work, huh?

GANYMEDE:

Well, hey there, Baz and... don't tell me... Caine. You got my parts?

SEBASTIAN:

They were fresh out of spare parts, unfortunately.

GANYMEDE:

All out? That's a shocker. I guess you'll have to wait until our next run.

CAINE:

Actually, I think we know why we couldn't find anything.

GANYMEDE:

I'm all ears. I don't let just anyone mess with my workspace.

SEBASTIAN:

Ronan.

GANYMEDE:

What? What does my husband have to do with this?

CAINE:

Yeah, well, the thing is someone with a name starting with R picked up a bunch of parts from all the places we hit up. And, uh... well, I figure he'll be here right about... now.

RONAN:

Well, isn't it a party in here? I don't usually see so many people in the garage. Having fun without me?

GANYMEDE:

Sweetie, I didn't know you'd be here!

RONAN:

I have a couple surprises for you!

SFX: Ronan picks up a heavy box and sets it down.

CAINE:

Ronan wanted to surprise you by getting you the stuff you needed, since you haven't been back in a while.

RONAN:

Well, don't go ruining it now.

Here you go, love. All the car parts I could find. When you called me last night and said you'd be busy another day, I thought I'd just make your life easier and pick up new parts for you. I didn't know what'd work best, so I got it all.

GANYMEDE:

Oh, you do too much. Did you miss me that badly?

RONAN:

Yes, and someone else missed you more.

SFX: Ronan reveals their kid.

MUSIC: Morning Light - Ambient Acoustic Guitar Background Music For Videos by Lesfm.

ADINA:

Papa! (THEY LAUGH)

INDRA:

You have a kid? Out here?

RONAN:

Yep. This is Adina.

GANYMEDE:

How are you, cutie?

ADINA:

I miss papa!

GANYMEDE:

You missed me? Aw, I know, I missed you too. But since dad brought all these nice parts, we're gonna put them in the car and I'll come home later today, okay?

ADINA:

Put in car.

GANYMEDE:

Yes, that's right. Put these in the car. I'm sorry, Indra, do you mind putting the spanner back? Di's gonna hurt themselves grabbing for it.

INDRA:

Uh... sure.

ADINA:

Indra.

INDRA:

Oh-uh. Should I be letting them grab my hair?

RONAN:

Adina, gentle touch. Gentle touch.

ADINA:

I pet Indra now.

GANYMEDE:

(HE LAUGHS A BIT) Sorry if they're making you feel uncomfortable.

INDRA:

Uh, I've just never really... been around kids. This is weird.

RONAN:

I can understand that. Here, I'll take Adina back. Guess I'll have to let you work for the rest of the day?

GANYMEDE:

Now that I have some parts, it should be faster—!

SEBASTIAN:

I got it from here. Caine and I can fix it.

GANYMEDE:

Oh, but it's my fault that Caine got their car busted.

CAINE:

Yeah, well, don't sweat it. We got this.

RONAN:

Well, thanks you two.

GANYMEDE:

And Indra, you can—wait, where'd xe go?

CAINE:

Oh, probably went to check on something else.

RONAN:

Adina spooked xir that badly, huh?

GANYMEDE:

Oh, pfft. Come on, hon, let's go home. I'll see you on Sunday, Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN:

See ya!

SFX: The door shuts.

SEBASTIAN:

Well, let's take a look through here for the right  
valvetrain, shall we?

CAINE:

Not like we got anything better to do.

SFX: They rummage through the box of metal parts.

CAINE:

S... Sebastian? Um, about earlier...

SEBASTIAN:

Yeah?

CAINE:

I'm really sorry. What I said back there... I didn't mean to  
blow up at you for us not seeing each other or not having  
the perfect reunion or whatever, I-!

MUSIC: Dust (Ambient Guitar)" by Tri-Tachyon.

SEBASTIAN:

Yeah. Guess there's no use in pretending no time has  
passed.

CAINE:

But I really want to talk with you about all the stuff  
that's happened: to me, to you, to... But I also get if it's  
a bit much for the first day.

SEBASTIAN:

I'm not ready now, but I might be some day. Hopefully soon.

CAINE:

Well, I can wait. I've been waiting for a long time.

SEBASTIAN:

Thank you.

SFX: Sebastian rummages and then—

SEBASTIAN:

Hey, we're in luck! I think this is the right valvetrain.

CAINE:

Alright, nice!

SEBASTIAN:

But, uh, Caine? I have a question for *you*.

CAINE:

Shoot.

SEBASTIAN:

Are you going to stay here? 'Cause once you have your car, you could leave.

CAINE:

Yeah, you're right.

I don't really know.

MUSIC: Reyes Family Theme by Eli Ramos.

SEBASTIAN:

But this is the place we always wanted to be, you know? Far away from the Metropolis, a better life. That's what this place has for us.

CAINE:

I know, Sebastian, I know. But I came here to do something. And I guess... I-I guess I just want to ask for us to be okay with some questions unanswered. But at the very least, I won't be leaving as soon as this gets fixed.

SEBASTIAN:

Okay.

I'm glad.

CAINE:

Yeah, me too.

END EPISODE.

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Our voice talents are as follows: John Patneaude as Sebastian Reyes, Rhea Anne as Caine Reyes, Philomena Sherwood as Tari de Whitte, Rue Dickey as Ganymede Moreno, Chaitrika Budamagunta as Lola Sunn, Kevin Paculan as Vic Vass, Robin Guzman as Jet, Serena El-Hajali as Ava Jafari, Matheus Nogueira as Kaleo Hale,

Katriel Charoite as Nell Palomo, Christine Kim as Su-jin Yi, Rey Ángel Yoáli Olachea Martinez as Indra, and Bridget Guziewicz as Ronan Moreno. Additional voices were provided by yours truly and Kai Ramos.

Attributions for sounds and music used can be found in the show notes. Thanks to Ezra Lee Buck, our \$20 Patron on Patreon. And to everyone, thanks for listening, and see you in Metropolis West soon.