

BEN

SC 1

29.

ELIZABETH

I'm asking you. Maybe if you convinced her to talk to me, I wouldn't have to.

Ben chuckles. So that's what this was about.

EXT. BEN'S HOUSE - DAY

Laura's stepping out of her car, which has just stopped at the driveway, when her cellphone rings. She answers.

Start →

LAURA

Hey, babe.

INTERCUT WITH:

BEN'S IN HIS OFFICE, on the phone.

BEN

She summoned me today.

Laura walks in the house. When she hears this, she stops.

LAURA

She did? What did she want?

BEN

Just to talk. About art... about you.

Ben waits a beat, but Laura doesn't answer.

BEN (CONT'D)

She wants to take you out for lunch.

LAURA

So now you're her errand boy.

BEN

I'm your husband. And her son-in-law.

LAURA

Sorry.

BEN

Look, Laura, just meet her. If she's going to be a grandmother, she has a right to know.

LAURA  
Right, cause she has "grandmother"  
written all over her.

BEN  
Laura...

LAURA  
I'll think about it. OK?

BEN  
OK.

LAURA  
What time are you coming home  
tonight?

BEN  
I'm... we were thinking about  
going out after work.

LAURA  
Who's we?

BEN  
Roger, a few of the guys. You're  
welcome to join us.

A slight feeling of dread creeps up on Laura as she asks...

LAURA  
Where's the fun going to be?

BEN  
They're thinking Southgate.

Ben's answer sounds casual, but it isn't. The name reaches inside of Laura and pushes a painful button. Ben waits for an answer, hoping that it will be...

LAURA  
You guys have fun. Just come back  
with both your ears.

Ben exhales, relieved, but he's not happy. He feels like a scumbag for having to manipulate her.

BEN  
(guilty)  
I'll do my best. Love you.

LAURA  
Me too. But seriously, though...

BEN

Yeah?

LAURA

Be careful out there.

Laura hangs up. The conversation's left a bitter aftertaste in her mouth when...

RACHEL (O.S.)

Madam?

Laura turns: Rachel is at the kitchen door, waiting. How long has she been standing there?

LAURA

Yes?

RACHEL

I wouldn't ask if it wasn't important, but--

LAURA

What is it?

RACHEL

I was hoping I could leave early today.

LAURA

I don't think that's going to work today.

RACHEL

I mean it's just--

LAURA

(snaps)

I said not today.

Beat.

RACHEL

Very well.

She nods and backs away. Laura immediately regrets it, kicking herself for snapping at Rachel, but by the time she turns to the kitchen door, Rachel's gone.

LAURA

Shit.

end

# BEN SC 2

43.

INT. DERELICT HIGH RISE - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The lobby makes the outside of the building look good. Concrete floors, the guts of the building out for everyone to see. The ELEVATOR SHAFTS are just two black, gaping holes.

Inside, a PUNK sits on a DIRT BIKE. The bike starts with a VROOOM and Ben sits behind the driver.

BEN  
Eighteenth.

The Driver nods and guns the bike towards a STAIRCASE...

INT. DERELICT HIGH RISE - STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

The bike drives up the stairs, carrying its passenger floor after floor, until...

INT. DERELICT HIGH RISE - 18TH FLOOR - NIGHT

The bike bursts out of a staircase and comes to a stop.

Ben gets off the bike and peels off another bill. The driver takes it and roars back down the stairs.

Ben is left alone in the dark hallway, the only light source being the moon that seeps in through the holes in the walls.

He approaches an UNMARKED DOOR and knocks...

...then waits, until...

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Yeah?

BEN  
It's me.

The sound of numerous locks. Then, the door opens, revealing... THEO. Very much alive.

He turns back, leaves the door open, trying not to face Ben.

THEO  
Hey, Aaron.

That name again. Who's Aaron?

BEN  
Theo.

start →

Ben enters and closes the door behind him.

INT. DERELICT HIGH RISE - THEO'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The inside of the apartment is modest, but someone's done his best to make it livable.

THEO  
(brusque)  
What are you doing here?

BEN  
Getting the usual warm and fuzzy  
welcome, I gue-- What's that?

Ben's noticed something on Theo's face: is that a bruise?

BEN (CONT'D)  
What happened?

THEO  
Nothing.

Ben grabs Theo's shoulder and spins him around: there's definitely a bruise on his cheek, and a cut on his lip.

BEN  
What do you mean "nothing"?

THEO  
It's just the training. I've...  
started training.

BEN  
You mean for the cage.

THEO  
Yeah.

Ben takes a beat to process it.

BEN  
That's insane.

THEO  
That's not what Terrence says.

BEN  
Terrence?

THEO

Terrence, he's... "the guy" around here. He says we'll make a shitload of money together.

BEN

He'll make a shitload of money. You'll end up soiling your underwear in some street corner.

Suddenly, the LIGHTS in the apartment DIM AND FLICKER. Without missing a beat, Theo reaches for a LAMP on the table. The lamp has a handle, and Theo starts cranking it while he speaks... This is not unusual.

THEO

What do you want me to do? Join one of the corporate armies? Get blown to pieces in some gas field in Siberia?

By the time the lights die out in a full-blown BLACK-OUT, the HAND-CRANKED LAMP has enough power to light up the room, however faintly.

THEO (CONT'D)

(re: the black-out)

I bet you miss these.

Ben ignores the comment. He's still concerned about Theo.

BEN

I bring you cigarettes, Theo. Real ones. There's good money there.

THEO

And what do you think got me in trouble with Terrence in the first place, Aaron?

BEN

It's Ben.

Beat.

THEO

Sure. I'll call you Ben. As long as you don't forget Aaron.

BEN

I don't.

Ben produces a folded piece of paper. He hands it out to Theo, who unfolds it by the glow of the lamp:

It's a PRINT-OUT from the FACE-RECOGNITION SOFTWARE. It shows the GIRL being escorted out of the minivan.

Theo's mouth suddenly goes dry. He finds it hard to speak when he says...

THEO

Is that... is that her?

BEN

Seventy-three percent chance.  
Never even got close to forty  
before.

The printout shakes in Theo's hand.

THEO

So you found her?

BEN

I may have.

THEO

Where is she?

BEN

If it is Elena--

THEO

Where. Is. She?

Ben points at the print-out.

BEN

That's a group of girls being  
escorted to Arcadia. New girls.

THEO

(afraid)  
That's a...

BEN

It's an Executive Club.

THEO

Sure, keep telling yourself that.

BEN

Theo--

THEO

Can you get in there?

BEN  
Not at my level, I--

THEO  
You can't--?

BEN  
Not till I get a promotion...

THEO  
You fucking Suits.

BEN  
...not till I get to the fortieth  
floor. Access is restricted to  
senior execs.

Theo sits on a mangy couch, deflated.

THEO  
Tell me you got a plan.

Ben produces the SMALL VIAL WITH CHAD'S BLOOD.

THEO (CONT'D)  
What's that?

BEN  
Opportunity.  
(beat)  
A position is about to open up on  
the fortieth.

Theo stands up and faces Ben.

THEO  
You better get that promotion then.  
For your sake and the sake of that  
dumb piece of ass you ma--

BEN  
(shutting him up)  
Careful.

Theo smiles.

THEO  
See, Ben? You're already  
forgetting.

Theo was testing him and Ben took the bait.

~~END~~