

Recovering the Heirloom

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EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

Long shadows blanket the courtyard below. Several FIGURES overlook the courtyard, their silhouettes black against the lantern light of the surrounding balconies. One of the figures, a SMALL MAN, gestures with his knife across to another balcony.

KINGFISHER

How are we supposed to get in there?
The place is a rat's nest. More traps
than my father's kitchen.

KINGFISHER finishes with a slight smirk and a wink at RIZZO, who gives him a grin. HILLARK BLOODWING, a tall and gray avian, is less amused. His yellow eyes flit over the courtyard below and across to the long balcony beyond. It is lit only with lanterns and crawling with guards.

HILLARK

My initial analysis is still accurate. This is the most vulnerable entrance to the manor. With proper execution and deft movement we will complete the job before arousing suspicion.

The bird leans forward, his beak clicking slightly as he speaks.

HILLARK CONT.

However if you are not confident in your abilities Fisher, you have the option to abort this mission entirely, and abandon your portion of the reward as well.

Kingfisher raises his hands and stares back, a look of bored indignation on his face.

KINGFISHER

You know what Rizzo, let's get what we came for before Hillark starts molting.

Rizzo nods and draws a small harpoon gun from her belt. With a steady breath, she fires a short line across the courtyard into the upper window ledge of the far building. She pulls hard on the line and ties the end off to a post.

RIZZO

Better make it quick, this line will be hard to keep secret for long. The family in this house are light sleepers.

KINGFISHER

Then I'll leave them some milk and cookies on the way out.

He climbs nimbly onto the rope with his knife in his teeth and begins to cross. Hillark quickly follows, pointing out his bracelet to Rizzo.

HILLARK

One tap is an alert, two is -

RIZZO

Two is distress. I got it. Hey get me a new set of dice while you're in there will you? Fisher loaded mine.

HILLARK

Right.

EXT. OPPOSITE BALCONY - NIGHT

Kingfisher lands on the windowsill and shimmies the lock with his knife. The window swings open, revealing a softly lit room with a wide rug and lavish furniture. Both enter.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

KINGFISHER

Boy, they really know how to spend
money don't they?

Hillark moves about the room, marking the animal heads mounted on the walls and shaking his head.

HILLARK

Repulsive. These are trophies only an ill minded person would keep.

KINGFISHER

Yeah, I don't think they had you in mind when they called the decorator.

He moves across the room and puts an ear to the door. The sound of creaking floorboards and muffled laughter can be heard from the room beyond.

KINGFISHER CONT.

Time to disappear.

Both thieves drop to one knee and crush the small black pellets they are holding, and a cloud of inky black MIST billows around them, extinguishing the lights in the room. The door seems to click itself open, and the mist drifts lazily into the next room.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Hillark and Kingfisher enter as the darkness descends on the hallway. The lone party goer begins to notice and move away in alarm.

PARTY GOER 1

My word! What in the blazes -

The man's words are cut short by a heavy thud as his unconscious figure drops into the mist.

HILLARK o.s.

Third door on the left. There are two locks, both mechanical in nature. You'll need to keep them synchronized or the mechanism won't release the door.

KINGFISHER (Whispering)

And you'll need to keep your voice
down or the guards will release the
hounds.

HILLARK

Charming. (Then to himself) I hate
dogs.

Kingfisher begins working the locks on the door while Hillark stands like a sentinel atop a GRAND STAIRCASE looking down on a BALLROOM. Snips of conversation drift up from the party below. He cocks his head slightly.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

LOGRAN KOILER

Don't get nasty now, Breya. The guild has already compensated you for your losses - quite handsomely too I might add. This is business (he stresses the word) after all, not some childish trophy hunt.

BREYA REVIAN's eyes narrow in fury at the small man before her. She does not suffer fools, nor foolish accusations.

BREYA REVIAN

If you think for a moment that I would put my family's well-being in jeopardy for a mere prize, you're a bigger fool than I thought.

Just then a waiter bumps Breya from behind and knocks her scepter from her hand. It clatters to the floor loudly. She moves to pick it up but the large MAN behind Logran is already handing it to her.

BREYA

Thank you Halim, always a gentleman.

(Turning back to Logran)

The pursuit of trophies may seem trite to you Logran, but in the world of relationships, it is the difference between a payday and bankruptcy. (Brandishing her scepter

at him) See that you don't fall in the latter category.

As their eyes clash, an assistant taps Logran on the shoulder and whispers in his ear.

LOGRAN

Come Halim, there's work to be done.
If you'll excuse me, Madam Breya.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Above the party the locks open with a satisfying "click" and Kingfisher smiles, very pleased with himself.

KINGFISHER

They thought they could keep me out.

Just then a soft ring is heard from across the hallway. Through the dark mist a tall FIGURE emerges, carrying a slick silver sword. The sword flashes across Kingfisher's vision and Hillark's bloody body hits the floor with a thud. He struggles for a moment, then falls unconscious. Kingfisher stares, momentarily thunderstruck, then dashes through the open doorway and closes the door behind with a snap. In the hallway, we see Hillark's bracelet glow once, then twice.

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

Rizzo struggles against the large man who is holding her. The situation is desperate - she is kicking and biting at his arm. Another MAN appears from behind a column. He is lean and well dressed, with a flat brim hat and glasses.

LOGRAN

You can cease your meaningless squirming. Halim's grip is nigh unbreakable.

The moonlight shifts and reveals HALIM's metal features hidden under thick clothing. Rizzo's eyes go wide with disbelief. She stops struggling.

LOGRAN

That's better. Now, to what do we owe
the pleasure of your company?

RIZZO
Eat shit Logran.

LOGRAN
At this hour? I'll ruin my dinner.
Unless you have a more appetizing
option, I suggest you try again.

The grip on Rizzo's neck tightens and she winces slightly. Her resentment of Logran is palpable.

RIZZO
Fucking scum.

LOGRAN
Such brave words from such a doomed
person, I really think it
commendable. But as you seem dead set
on hosting a funeral, I won't make
you wait long. Just long enough to
see your friends die too.

Halim throws a gag across Rizzo's mouth and she shouts against it, her muffled voice lost among the music and noise of the party. As she is dragged down the stairs to the courtyard, a light goes on in the house behind them.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Kingfisher frantically searches the room for the treasure he is there to steal. He tears through bookshelves and desks, leaving a trail of trash behind him as the FIGURE from the hallway tries to kick the door down.

KINGFISHER
C'mon, c'mon. You rich sack of shit
where do you keep it?

Kingfisher stops over a small corner of the rug, and pulls hard - revealing a hidden hatch in the floor. The stash.

KINGFISHER

Gotcha.

He wrenches open the trapdoor just as the door opens with a crash. Opposite, the FIGURE looms in the doorway for a moment, surveying the room before entering. The square jaw and thick, ropey arms of KILLIAN RIGA are all flexed as she enters the room. Her blade is hungry.

KILLIAN

Nowhere to go, wretch. Give me the satisfaction of begging for your life and I'll make this quick.

The room is silent, Kingfisher is nowhere to be found. The window clatters lightly as Killian moves across the room. As she approaches the window, Kingfisher drops from the ceiling and buries his dagger into her shoulder. She wheels about, grunting, and grabs him with one hand over her shoulder before chucking him into the bookcase. He hits the ground, hard as the books above rattle on the shelf.

KILLIAN

I offered you a chance to die, with dignity.

She pulls the knife from her shoulder, her face maniacal glee. Both she and it are drenched in blood.

KILLIAN

Now you die with only your own knife to thank.

KINGFISHER

Better than living like you.

A shadow appears over Killian's shoulder. It's her boss, Logran.

LOGRAN o.s.

Well put, my pilfering friend. How would you like to live then? Out in the countryside, away from all this? Or perhaps in the heart of Falmerin, with nobody chasing you.

Logran puts his hand up and Killian lowers her blade - a bit.

LOGRAN

Now. You could have that future for yourself, and your friends. You could live out your days in comfort and luxury. Shit, you could disappear forever with only the open road for company. And I will happily oblige. But in exchange I need from you that which you took from me, and the name of those who hired you.

KINGFISHER

What a tempting offer. Gosh why have I never thought of riding off into the sunset before?

LOGRAN

Make light of it all you want. Your friend doesn't have that luxury.

Halim enters, dragging Rizzo in - still bound. Kingfisher's expression becomes one of curdled milk.

LOGRAN

Now that I have your attention, perhaps you will reconsider my offer. Give me back what is mine, and tell me who sent you. (Leering) This is not a debate, nor a negotiation. It is your ticket to freedom. Think on that as you consider your friend's predicament.

Kingfisher leans away from Logran as the spectacled man looms over him, long enough to palm a set of dice that had fallen to the floor from the bookshelf.

KINGFISHER

Fine Logran, you win. Let her go and I'll give you what you want.

Logran is skeptical - it was too easy. But he chooses to play along.

LOGRAN

Fine. Halim, give the girl back her voice. We'll see about releasing her when you release my property.

Halim releases the gag on Rizzo's mouth and she gives an audible gasp of air.

RIZZO

This is bigger than us Fisher, don't
do this.

KINGFISHER

No choice Riz. I'm not one to catch a falling knife.

RIZZO

No! My grand-

KINGFISHER

It's over! We. Lost.

Rizzo shrieks and struggles against Halim's grip. In the moment of confusion that follows, the shadow of Hillark flits across the open doorway and settles among the furniture on the other side of the room. Kingfisher notices but says nothing.

LOGRAN

Good. I'll be having that treasure back.

Kingfisher reaches into his pocket and pulls out the TREASURE - a small ring. It is nondescript, common even. He gets to his feet and holds it up. Logran takes it and begins to put it in his breast pocket.

LOGRAN

Now, the matter of your employer.

BREYA

That would be me.

Everyone looks up, as Breya Revian brings her scepter down on Logran's outstretched hand. The ring bounces up, and with a swoop Hillark is on it, tumbling out of the doorway and down the hall. Killian raises her sword and swings it down at Breya, but her blow is

stopped by an outstretched steel hand. Halim is standing between them, having released Rizzo.

LOGRAN

You would betray me?

HALIM

I would decide my own fate.

BREYA

I build relationships (she stresses the word), Logran. Not something you would know anything about.

Killian shouts in frustration and lashes out with her other arm, still holding Kingfisher's knife. It buries itself in Halim's neck joint, which tears much of the wiring inside. One of Halim's eyes flashes and then goes dark.

KINGFISHER

Go!

Breya, Rizzo, and Kingfisher bolt for the door, as Halim and Killian exchange blows. As Logran starts to run after them, Halim reaches out a hand and pulls down a large bookcase. It topples over himself and the two assailants. We see a close up of Halim's other eye going dark.

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

BREYA

Where is he? Hillark?!

Her calls are soft in comparison to the chaos that has consumed the building behind her. Then she spots him. Across the courtyard, the bloodied avian is standing next to a SMALL MAN in a robe, the lights of his house twinkling behind them.

HILLARK

Over here, Breya. Your father and I were just talking about you.

TOLI REVIAN

Breya, is that you? It's hard to see at this hour. Your friend here

brought me back my ring. The one I
had lost, you remember?

BREYA

(With tears in her eyes) Yes papa, I
remember.

(A beat)

We have to go papa. All of us.

TOLI

I see... to the family shrine?

BREYA

We will start there. And then to a
new home.

Breya looks at Rizzo, then at Kingfisher.

BREYA

You're welcome to come with us
Fisher. There's always more work on
the road.

FISHER

(Considering it) Nah, I think big bird
and I will stick it out a few more
times in the big city. What do you
say Hillark?

HILLARK

That seems agreeable. Until such time
as I find a more proficient lockpick,
yours is the one I will trust.

FISHER

See? He still can't get rid of me.

(To Rizzo) Oh, I almost forgot.
Here's your new set. Courtesy of
Logran Koiler.

Kingfisher hands Rizzo the set of dice he lifted in the bedroom. They
are bloodied but well made.

FISHER

Something to remember us by.

RIZZO
Goodbye Fisher. Goodbye Hillark.

HILLARK
Until the wind finds you next.

He and Kingfisher exit the courtyard, leaving the Revian family alone together.

RIZZO
This isn't how it was supposed to happen. We shouldn't have to run scared.

TOLI
(Looking at her clearly for the first time that night)
We do not run when we are scared, Rizzo. We run when we have a new destination in sight. Come. Your grandmother is waiting.

All three walk up the stairs and exit the courtyard. On a wall we barely see the silhouette of Killian strapping a knife to her belt.

END