

COTTONHEADS
EPISODE ONE

By
Alex Mitchell

Email lxmitchell70@gmail.com

TEASER

EXT. VANCOUVER LOWER EAST SIDE - LATE NIGHT

A seedy, deserted street. A far-off car alarm PEALS unheeded.

All the storefronts are dark and gated shut except one: Prime Time Convenience. Its neon sign sputters.

INT. PRIME TIME CONVENIENCE

Married couple THEO and SANDI (mid 70's) work inside.

Sandy serves a wino at the register while Theo restocks shelves.

The wino staggers out, bottle in hand. The doorbell BUZZES. Sandi sighs.

SANDI

Only customer in the last two hours.

Theo squints through the grimy window. A man's silhouette is barely visible in the shadows across the street.

THEO

He's still there.

SANDI

Whoop dee shit.

THEO

He might casing us for a robbery, idiot.

SANDI

Nah. Folks around here don't shit where they eat. We're the only grocery store in the neighbourhood.

THEO

Maybe we should put the gate up.

SANDI

Forget it! Do the fridges next, hey?

THEO

Yeah...

Theo frowns and turns back to his work. Whistles through his teeth and loads bottles of wine into a fridge.

THEO (CONT'D)
So, where you wanna go for breakf--

THUMP on the window.

THEO / SANDI
SHIT!

SANDI
Hell was that?!

Theo rushes outside. Sandi watches him glances around, then down at the sidewalk. He bends over in front of the window, out of sight.

SANDI (CONT'D)
What? What is it?

Sandi goes to the door and opens it, uneasy now.

EXT. SIDEWALK- CONTINUOUS

Theo nudges a dead pigeon with his foot.

THEO
Stupid bird.

SANDI
No, look at it. Head's all twisted up.

Theo looks closer.

THEO
Maaan.

They glance across the street in unison. The silhouette's gone.

SANDI
Put the gate up.

THEO
Yeah.

They go back inside.

INT. PRIME TIME CONVENIENCE- CONTINUOUS

Theo pulls an old metal gate across the window. It SQUEALS loudly. Sandi winces.

Another THUMP, this time on the glass door. The pane cracks. They both jump.

THEO

Jesus!

He charges to the door and yanks it open. Sandi's close behind.

EXT. SIDEWALK- CONTINUOUS

Another dead pigeon at his feet, neck twisted.

He looks up and down the street.

SANDI

Shit's gettin' weird.

Theo kicks the bird away, his shoulders hunched.

SANDI (CONT'D)

Let's close up early tonight.

Theo's about to argue, then nods.

THEO

Awright, pussycat. It's coming on four, anyway.

INT. PRIME TIME CONVENIENCE- CONTINUOUS

Theo locks the door and turns the sign to "CLOSED".

SANDI

We'll the glass fixed in the mor--

The power goes out. Darkness and silence.

SANDI (CONT'D)

Now what!?

THEO

Fuck's sake!

SANDI

I'm callin' the police.

Sandi picks up the landline phone, listens, puts it down again.

SANDI (CONT'D)

Fuck!

THEO

That's it. I'll put the door gate up, meetcha out back.

SANDI

Okay.

Sandi scuttles away to the back of the store. Theo DRAGS the door gate across and fumbles with the lock in the dark.

SANDI (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(frantic)

THEO!

THEO

Yeah! Be right there!

He pauses, then grabs a baseball bat behind the counter. Heads to the back of the store.

THEO (CONT'D)

Alright--

The back door is wide open. No Sandi. Theo rushes out into the alley.

EXT. ALLEY- CONTINUOUS

Theo looks wildly around. Just dumpsters and rats.

THEO

Pussycat?

A silhouetted figure detaches itself from the shadows and moves towards Theo.

THEO (CONT'D)

Sandi?

Not Sandi. Theo raises the bat.

THEO (CONT'D)

Where the fuck's my wife?!

PLOP. A woman's loafer lands in front of Theo, as if dropped from high up. He jumps, then squints at it. It's Sandi's.

THEO (CONT'D)

Sandi?

Theo glances up.

The figure brandishes a large knife and charges.

Theo swings, *too slow, too old.*

The figure dodges, slashes his chest with the knife. Not deep but messy.

Theo cries out, flails with the bat again. It's a sloppy swing but the figure flinches, and it gives him just enough time to retreat back inside.

He locks the door, leans against it. Clutches his chest.

THEO (CONT'D)

(groans)

Goddammit!

THUMP on the door behind him. He jumps.

THEO (CONT'D)

Sandi... I'm comin', pussycat...

He fumbles in the dark, turns a doorhandle, and enters a tiny office.

INT. OFFICE- CONTINUOUS

Theo stumbles to the window and opens it. Climbs out.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE- CONTINUOUS

Theo climbs onto a rickety fire escape, looks down. The dark figure stands at the bottom, exposed in dim light.

He's a dishevelled young man with wild eyes and an ugly scar on his neck.

He spots Theo and grins. Starts to climb the fire escape.

THEO

Sonofabitch!

Theo clambers up the ladder and drops the bat. It CLUNKS on the rungs on the way down.

THEO (CONT'D)

FUCK!

He continues to climb to the roof.

THEO (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Sandi... I'm coming.

EXT. ROOF- CONTINUOUS

Broken tv antennae and litter everywhere.

THEO
(shouts)
Sandi where are you? Say something!

Theo looks wildly around, spots the outline of a tiny shed and breathlessly stumbles towards it.

THEO (CONT'D)
I'm here, pussycat!

He tears open the door.

THEO (CONT'D)
Sandi!?

Empty.

Something PLOPS on to the roof next to him. He yelps with a start, then picks it up. Sandi's other shoe, splashed with blood.

Something RUSTLES above him, on top of the shed. He glances up.

THEO (CONT'D)
Wh--

Theo is yanked upwards into the darkness so fast, he's just a blur.

Sandi's shoe lands on the roof again. PLOP.

Rain starts to fall.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. VANCOUVER SUBURB- MORNING

A nice neighbourhood, still wet from the night's rain.

One house stands out, and not in a good way: sagging roof, peeled paint.

The old house has a faded nameplate by the front door: Caiman.

INT. EMILY CAIMAN'S HOUSE, BEDROOM

Water drips from the cracked ceiling into a bucket on the threadbare carpet.

A wedding portrait sits on the bedside table. Half the bed is unmade.

It could be any old lady's room except for a wooden sparring dummy and giant poster of Jim Kelly.

And the PUNK MUSIC that plays on a CD player.

EMILY (64), spars with dummy. She strikes fluidly with her forearms and palms. She's fit, sharp-eyed and calm.

Her sweatsuit is damp from her workout. Her hair gets in her eyes and she pushes it away fiercely.

Workout done. She shuts off the music and stretches.

She picks up the full bucket in one hand, and a full laundry basket in the other, and walks out.

THE KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

No-name groceries on the shelves. An old laptop sits on the chipped table.

It's a dump, but dammit, it's hers.

Emily enters, drops the laundry basket, and empties the bucket into the sink.

The cracked window above the sink is mended with peeling tape. She frowns and presses the tape down again.

She looks past the crack to the street outside. Young people leave their nice homes for school and work.

She sighs. Dials the wall phone and fidgets with her hair.

EMILY

Hi, is Daniel Caiman-- Oh.

(pause)

Hi honey, I was just wondering if you want to... meet for lunch? Haven't seen you in a while. Um. No pressure, I know you're busy. I'm pretty busy too. I'll pick up some lunch, okay? See you later.

THE BASEMENT - MINUTES LATER

A windowless maze of old furniture and sports equipment. A bare lightbulb flickers on.

Emily comes downstairs with the laundry basket and loads the washer.

SCRATCH SCRATCH SCRATCH behind her. *From... where?*

She turns, slowly tracks the sound to the wall, and spots a fresh crack in the cement, waist-high.

SCRATCH SCRATCH --

She touches the crack and the sound stops. She listens in the silence.

EMILY

Huh.

She opens a rusted tool chest, grabs a tube of cement filler. Empty.

She starts the washer and goes upstairs. The door BANGS shut behind her.

SCRATCH SCRATCH.

A small hole opens in the crack. One pointed claw pokes through the hole for a moment, then disappears again.

THE BEDROOM- MINUTES LATER

Emily tries to comb out her long wet hair but it tangles. She growls in frustration.

Fishes around in a cluttered dresser drawer and finds a set of clippers.

EMILY

Fuck it.

Clippers on. BZZZZZ.

She smiles at her reflection, for the first time.

INT/EXT. SKYTRAIN - LATE MORNING

Emily rides alone and reads a book. A shopping bag sits next to her. She's dressed like a college kid, with a sling pack. Her hair's now an asymmetrical bob.

The only other passenger in the car is FRANCIS GATES (82, natty threads, cane) a few rows ahead.

THREE TEENAGERS get on. Their swagger is comical but they're bullies. They gurn at Francis as they pass his seat. He ignores them.

The LEADER's a loose cannon.

LEADER

This train goin' to the fuckin' morgue?

His friends titter. The Leader spots Emily, a better target. He leans over her, close.

LEADER (CONT'D)

(mocking)
Hey, Grandma!

His friends crack up at his comic genius. She doesn't look up.

They all sit behind Emily and the Leader shakes the back of her seat.

LEADER (CONT'D)

Hey grandma, whatcha buy me?

She doesn't react. The Leader shakes the back of her seat again.

FRIEND 1

(laughs)
Yeah, get some new false teeth?

FRIEND 2

Yeah, got any diapers grandma?

Francis turns in his seat and watches.

The Leader PUNCHES the back of Emily's seat.

LEADER

(to Emily)

Hey!

Still no reaction.

He leans in close over the back of her seat, right in her ear. Glances down at her shopping bag.

LEADER (CONT'D)

I said, whatcha buy me?

Francis stands up, both hands on his cane.

The Leader reaches down for Emily's shopping bag.

Lightning-quick, Emily grabs the Leader's wrist, twists, and hauls him over the seat.

His friends SHOUT in shock.

LEADER (CONT'D)

Fuck??--

EMILY

--Don't touch other people's stuff.
Okay?

LEADER

Fucking bi--

Another twist gets the right answer.

LEADER (CONT'D)

Okayokayokay!

EMILY

I think this is your stop.

The train stops and she lets go.

The boys scramble to get out. Francis trips one with his cane.

The car is quiet again. Francis approaches.

FRANCIS

You sure knew what you were doing.

EMILY

Thanks, I'm a little rusty. Haven't sparred with a real person in a while.

She rubs her wrist. Francis chuckles.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I could probably use a refresher.

FRANCIS

Yeah, training on your own's not like the real thing. You ever want to get some live practice in, I got some friends who can hook you up.

The train slows for the next stop. He hands her a business card.

EMILY

What, a gym?

He smiles.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Seniors' club?

FRANCIS

Invitation only. And you're invited.

EMILY

Oh. That's really nice of you, thank you.

FRANCIS

I hope we see you...?

EMILY

Emily.

FRANCIS

Emily. Francis Gates. You take care.

EMILY

Thanks. You too.

He tips his hat and gets off the train.

She studies the card but there's not much to go on: an image of two crossed canes in a circle on one side, and a phone number on the other.

INT. SUPERMARKET - MINUTES LATER

Emily waits in line with two wrapped sandwiches.

Someone cuts in front of her like she's invisible. She looks defeated.

At the register, she's short of cash. Fishes frantically in her bag.

People in the line behind her sigh and grumble, impatient.

EMILY
(mutters)
Sorry, sorry...

She finds a coupon to make up the difference. Hurries out, embarrassed.

INT. ACCOUNTING FIRM - MIDDAY

A busy reception area. Emily looks out of place and the RECEPTIONIST is too busy to smile back.

EMILY
Hi, is Daniel Caiman free?

RECEPTIONIST
Got an appointment?

EMILY
Oh, no... I'm his mom. I was just
in the neighb--

RECEPTIONIST
--'staminate.

The Receptionist types something.

Emily waits for a reply but the Receptionist doesn't look up again.

EMILY
(uncomfortable)
Um... is he--

DANIEL CAIMAN (39), bustles in. He wears an ill-fitted suit with white sugar down the front. He's doughy, fussy, socially inept.

His distracted expression changes to horror when he sees his mom's hair.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Hey, honey!

DANIEL
Mom, what happened!?

She touches her hair, her self-confidence gone.

EMILY
I cut it.

DANIEL
Yeah, it looks it. What did you do that for?

EMILY
I felt like a change. I like how it looks.

Daniel glances around, embarrassed, and lowers his voice.

DANIEL
God, Mom, I'd give you money for a haircut.

EMILY
(fed up)
It's just hair, Danny! Relax!

He sighs.

DANIEL
So what are you doing here?

EMILY
Thought you might want to get some lunch.

DANIEL
Oh. Um, I just had an early lunch meeting.

EMILY
Looks more like a dessert meeting.

Emily brushes the sugar off his jacket. He pushes her hand away.

DANIEL
You can't just show up, you
should've called ahead.

EMILY
I did!

He checks his phone, distracted.

DANIEL
And put on a hat.

She takes a step back.

EMILY
Oh. Well. This was a mistake.

He finally turns his full attention to her.

DANIEL
Look, next time you want a haircut,
I'll give you money for it, okay?

She starts to reply but his phone interrupts. BUZZZ. He
glances down at it and notices her shopping bag.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
What's in the bag?

EMILY
Sandwiches.

Daniel points at the outline of the tube.

DANIEL
No, that.

EMILY
Just cement filler.

DANIEL
(suspicious)
What's that for?

EMILY
I'm going to build a really tiny
swimming pool.

DANIEL
Mom...

EMILY
It's nothing, just a little crack.
I can fix it.

DANIEL
The basement again? You need a professional to look at it.

EMILY
I can handle it!

DANIEL
I'll loan you the money--

EMILY
--I don't need a loan because I'm gonna fix it.

His phone BUZZES. He checks it.

DANIEL
I should get back.

She takes a breath.

EMILY
Before you go, I got invited to this gym...

She hands Francis' card to Daniel. He examines it.

EMILY (CONT'D)
I didn't ask about the fee but it's a seniors' class so it can't be too expensive. I could really use a refresher.

Daniel shakes his head.

DANIEL
It's too dangerous.

EMILY
It's for seniors, Danny! How dangerous can it be?

DANIEL
No.

EMILY
Just one class! I'll pay you back!

His phone BUZZES. He checks it and retreats.

DANIEL
(already miles away)
I gotta go. I'll bring Buddy for a visit next week. See ya.

EMILY
I'll wear a helmet!

He's gone. She looks like a kid who's just been grounded.

EXT. SUNSET WHISPERS SENIOR HOME - AFTERNOON

Emily stands outside an ugly concrete block, no balconies. Grey faces stare out the windows at her like ghosts.

She goes in.

INT. SUNSET WHISPERS- CONTINUOUS

A dingy lobby with irritating MUZAK. A few residents watch a small TV bolted to the wall.

They murmur when Emily enters. It's the most excitement they've had all day.

On her way to the elevator, she pauses in front of a whiteboard that says "Today is WEDNESDAY".

She wipes off the wrong day and writes "FRIDAY". Adds a smiley faced sun.

INT. HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

A drab hallway with signs that say "KEEP HALLWAY CLEAR"

Emily knocks on a door.

EMILY
Pat? It's Emily.

PATRICIA HARDY (64), opens the door in a threadbare robe and hairnet. She's a stark contrast to Emily, stooped, defeated, frail.

PATRICIA
Hey, girl!

They hug. Emily tries to hide her pity.

INT. PATRICIA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A tiny institutional bedroom.

PATRICIA
Love your haircut. Danny'll hate
it.

Emily laughs.

EMILY
You got that right. How're you
doing?

They sit. Patricia kneads her hands.

PATRICIA
Not bad. Hurts more when it's damp
out.

EMILY
Well, it's nice today, how 'bout I
open your window?

She rises.

PATRICIA
They don't open.

EMILY
Oh.

She sits again.

Patricia waves her gnarled hand at a tray of ghastly
cafeteria food.

PATRICIA
Want some lunch?

Emily tries not to look nauseated.

EMILY
No thanks, I bought some.

PATRICIA
Ooh, la-di-dah.

Emily pulls a squashed sandwich out of her bag.

EMILY
Yeah, la-di-dah.

They share a laugh.

PATRICIA
You just see Danny?

Emily rolls her eyes.

EMILY

Yeah, what a mistake that was.

PATRICIA

You two never were much alike. That's why I stopped bringing him toys when he was little. He never played with them.

EMILY

Only thing he ever liked playing with was Rick's calculator. He's a heart attack in the making. And now he won't let me take a sparring class because it's "dangerous".

PATRICIA

He ever see you fight?

EMILY

Rick brought him to a competition once, when he was twelve. He wouldn't come in. Just sat in the car.

PATRICIA

He just worries about you.

EMILY

He doesn't worry, he likes telling me what to do.

PATRICIA

'Least *your* child's alive to tell you what to do.

A tense beat. Emily glances at the door.

Pat catches it and tries a lighter topic.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

Any juicy gossip from the block?

Emily relaxes.

EMILY

I wish. It's so boring now, all commuters. They only come home to sleep. Oh, and you should see what they did to your house! They actually paved the lawn!

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

That big old willow's gone, and
there's a big ugly extension--

PATRICIA

--Stop calling it my house! It's
not mine anymore!

EMILY

Sorry. It just takes some getting
used to. Every time I look out my
window I expect to see you coming
across the street to borrow a cup
of sugar.

(chuckles)

Or a cup of scotch.

Pat's too bitter to notice the joke.

PATRICIA

Every time I move, my world gets
smaller. My next home'll be a
casket.

Emily's at a loss for words.

EMILY

Patty...

PATRICIA

You hold onto your house, girl. You
make 'em carry you out.

EXT. VANCOUVER SKYTRAIN- AFTERNOON

Emily stares out the window, thoughtful and sad.

INT. EMILY'S KITCHEN - LATER

Emily comes in and drops her shopping bag and book on the
table.

Francis' card slips out and falls to the floor. She doesn't
notice.

She fills the kettle and stares at the window above the sink.
The tape's peeling again.

The last straw after a lousy day. She fights back tears. Deep
breath. Puts the kettle on.

Takes a tube of cement filler from the shopping bag and heads
to the basement.

THE BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

The crack in the wall is bigger. Emily approaches and peers into the hole. An eye stares out at her.

She cries out and recoils. The crack BURSTS wide open. Clumps of broken cement and dirt TUMBLE out on to the floor.

A hairless inhuman head emerges from the ragged hole stares at her hatefully. The lipless mouth is too wide. The nose is short, and it has no ears.

EMILY

Ohmygod...

The creature pulls itself out, CRASHES to the floor.

It awkwardly gets to its feet as if unused to standing.

It's barely five feet tall. Dirty grey skin stretched over bone and sinew. Its arms hang to its knees. Stares at her.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Hello?

The creature HISSSES and charges at her. The zipperlike teeth have pointed canines.

She retreats and pulls a stack of boxes down in its path. THUMPBUMP. It clambers over them on all fours and lunges.

She screams, grabs at an antique sideboard and pulls it over on top of the creature. CRASH! It's pinned.

Not for long. Its claws SCRATCH at the cement floor. Pulls itself free and launches at her, faster this time.

No time to run upstairs. She reaches into a jumble of athletic equipment pulls out a baseball bat.

Upstairs, the kettle whistle HOWLS.

She brings the bat up just in time and it connects with its head. CRACK! A solid hit, no blood. It staggers.

Her confidence builds and she steps forward, ready to swing the bat again.

EMILY (CONT'D)

My house!

The creature SCREECHES at her, but retreats.

EMILY (CONT'D)
(shouts)
MY HOUSE!

She chases it back over the shattered sideboard towards the hole. It climbs in and starts to dig.

Her fury eclipses her terror now.

EMILY (CONT'D)
(shouts)
GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!!

She swings in a frenzy. WHACK! WHACK!

Concrete and soil spray everywhere.

EMILY (CONT'D)
GET OUT! GET OUT!

WHACK! WHACK!

The creature disappears into the earth and the hole COLLAPSES.

A large chunk of wall CRASHES down. She just manages to jump clear in time.

The cellar's a mess of smashed furniture and debris. No more sounds from the wall.

She's breathless, plastered with dust and sweat.

She STUMBLES upstairs and SLAMS the door behind her.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She DRAGS a chair away from the table and SHOVES it hard under the door handle.

The kettle still HOWLS and she shuts off the stove. Leans on the counter, tries to compose herself.

Grabs the phone receiver and jams it under her chin. Dials 911 with a shaky hand.

EMILY
(frantic)
Police.
(beat)
2642 Benson Drive. My name's Emily
Caiman. Something just broke into
my basement!

INT. MYSTERIOUS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Desks, computers, all dimly lit by monitors.

A silhouetted figure sits in front of a police scanner. The scanner is tuned in to Emily's call.

EMILY (O.S.)

(filtered)

It-- it-- came through the wall, it
tunnelled into my basement and
attacked me, and I hit it and I
chased it-- it went back into the
wall. It dug right through the
wall.

INT. EMILY'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Emily grips the phone receiver, desperate and frustrated.

EMILY

No, no, it wasn't an animal. It was
a-- a person-thing! A person broke
in. In my basement! Just please
send somebody!

(beat)

Thank you.

She hangs up and dials again.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(listens in disgust)

Danny answer your goddamn phone!
Something just happened. This
creature just came through the
basement wall and attacked me. I'm
okay. The police are coming. But
uh... the wall collapsed. So...
I'll need that loan after all.

She hangs up.

Pours a cup of tea and sits facing the basement door.
Determined now.

Looks down and finally notices that the bat's still in her
hand.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. EMILY'S KITCHEN- LATER

The basement door is open. Emily fidgets and strains towards the door to hear what's happening down there.

Footsteps on the stairs. She retreats like a kid caught eavesdropping.

Daniel and two POLICE OFFICERS emerge. The officers' expressions are professionally neutral. Daniel looks fed up.

DANIEL

Mom--

EMILY

--See, I told you!

OFFICER 2

(to Daniel)

Sir.

(to Emily)

Ma'am, we didn't find any signs of an animal down there.

EMILY

That's because I chased the bastard away! And what about that stink? You can't not notice that.

OFFICER 2

We did. You sure it's not garbage?

EMILY

(defensive)

My stuff's not garbage.

DANIEL

Mom!

OFFICER 2

Sir.

EMILY

There's no garbage down there, it's just old stuff. Furniture doesn't smell like dead bodies, I don't care how old it is.

OFFICER 1

Maybe a rat got trapped and died--

EMILY

No. No. I don't have rats. There was no smell before that *thing* showed up.

OFFICER 2

Okay, can you describe what you saw?

EMILY

It was shorter than me, kinda grey skin. Really thin, like, skeletal, no ears... It was naked! And the teeth were like needles, and it had these long--

She claws the air.

DANIEL

Mom!

She lowers her hands, suddenly self-conscious.

EMILY

It was real. It looked at me like it was starving.

OFFICER 2

Did you get a photo?

EMILY

I don't have a cellphone.
(to Danny)
See, I told you I need one.

Officer 1 points at the bat on the counter.

OFFICER 1

And you struck it with that?

EMILY

Yeah, hard! In the head. And it got right back up. It's impossible. I mean, I really nailed it.

OFFICER 2

And you struck the wall several times?

EMILY

I didn't mean to, I was chasing that thing back in its hole. And it worked!

Daniel and the officers exchange a look.

OFFICER 1
You live here alone?

EMILY
My husband passed two years ago.

Another shared look.

EMILY (CONT'D)
I'm not crazy!

Daniel ignores her and turns to the officers.

DANIEL
I don't have room for her at my
place. I'll take her to a hotel for
now.

EMILY
Did I just vanish?

DANIEL
(to Emily)
Mom, go pack your things.
(to officers)
I've got to pick my son up but I
can be back in half an hour.

EMILY
Do I get any say at all?

DANIEL
Mom. No argument this time.

EMILY
I don't believe this.

OFFICER 1
(to Emily)
He's right, ma'am. It's not safe
down there.

EMILY
(bitter laugh)
You shoulda seen it an hour ago.

DANIEL
(to Emily)
That's it. You be at the front door
ready to go in half an hour. And
stay out of the basement!

EMILY

But--

DANIEL

Mom! Go!

Emily looks defeated.

EMILY

Well. Father knows best.

She goes upstairs.

Daniel sighs.

INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM- CONTINUOUS

Emily stands at the open window and watches Daniel and the officers walk out to their cars. Their voices drift up to her.

DANIEL

Sorry for all the trouble. She can be a handful. I have no idea what she thinks she saw.

OFFICER 2

She been seeing things a lot lately?

DANIEL

No, but she's definitely getting more erratic. She just cut all her hair off this morning, and she argues all the--

Emily closes the window quietly and turns away.

Suddenly she lashes out at the sparring dummy. BASH!

It SLAMS against the wall and makes a hole.

She sits on her bed, head in her hands. Looks towards the window, doubt on her face.

She goes back downstairs.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE EMILY'S HOUSE- CONTINUOUS

The police officers stand at Daniel's car as he gets in.

DANIEL

Honestly, it's like having two children. Anyway, I'll be back by six. I don't think she'll burn the place down by then. Thanks again.

Daniel drives away.

OFFICER 1

Poor lady.

OFFICER 2

Yeah, she got a monster in the basement *and* an accountant.

They don't notice a battered old station wagon parked behind them.

INT/EXT. STATION WAGON - CONTINUOUS

LAURETTE LYNNIS (75) sits at the wheel and watches the police leave. She's Acadian, and a manager's nightmare.

She shuts off a police scanner and texts on her phone.

LAURETTE (TEXT)

Found her.

She gets out and glances around. Her costume jewellery CLINKS. She wears bright pink pants and her t-shirt says "I'd rather be playing D&D".

She checks her phone.

PHONE (TEXT)

Get her out of there.

INT. EMILY'S KITCHEN- CONTINUOUS

Emily sits at the kitchen table in front of her laptop. Her face is tight with a different kind of fear. She types slowly into a search engine:

DEMENTIA SYMPTOMS SENIORS

And hits Enter.

KNOCK KNOCK.

She jumps, startled.

Gets up and opens the door. It's Laurette.

LAURETTE
Bonjour. I hear you gotta problem.

EMILY
(impatient)
I don't want to buy anything and
this is a really bad time--

Emily tries to shut the door but Laurette's pink boot is in
the way.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Hey!

LAURETTE (O.S.)
That thing in your basement's gonna
come back.

Emily freezes.

LAURETTE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Skinny grey bastard, right? Smells
like a dead rat's arsehole?

Emily opens the door.

LAURETTE (CONT'D)
C'n I come in? My dogs are barkin'.

Laurette barges into the kitchen and looks around.

LAURETTE (CONT'D)
Nice place.

EMILY
Thanks. Early Woolco.

Laurette plunks into a chair.

EMILY (CONT'D)
What do you know about that thing
in my basement?

LAURETTE
That thing down in your basement,
that was a vampire.

EMILY
Vampire...

LAURETTE
Not many folks've seen 'em. Well,
not many folks livin'.

Emily's eyes move to the basement door, and back to Laurette.

EMILY
Jesus Christ.

LAURETTE
Laurette Lynniss.

The women stare at each other.

EMILY
How'd you know about my basement?

LAURETTE
Police scanner.

Emily slumps in her chair as she processes.

EMILY
It looked... I mean, it was horrible. I thought they looked, you know--

She holds her arm up across her mouth.

LAURETTE
Frank Langella? I wish. They all look pretty fucking horrible. The movies got one thing right, they're hard to kill.

EMILY
I hit it as hard as I could. It got right back up.

Laurette nods.

LAURETTE
They can't fly, but they're good climbers. They stay up high, they don't like to touch the ground.

EMILY
Wait, wait. Then why was that thing in my basement?

LAURETTE
Most of 'em ain't like that. You got yourself a digger. Some vampires go crazy. Feral, like. They come down to the ground, they start digging, tunnelling all over the goddamn place. They'll eat anything they can find.

(MORE)

LAURETTE (CONT'D)
We've been tryin' to get that SOB
for weeks. They move around a lot.

EMILY
Vampires are real. Holy shit.

LAURETTE
Huh. That was easy.

EMILY
I know what I saw. No way that
thing was human. My son thinks I'm
going crazy. He's probably already
planning to have me committed.

Laurette reaches over and pats her hand.

LAURETTE
They like old houses, rotten
foundations. Your son got an old
house?

EMILY
Condo.

Laurette nods.

LAURETTE
Safest thing to do now's level this
place.

EMILY
What!?! This place is practically a
heritage site!

LAURETTE
What you gonna do? Wait down there
with a net, for that thing to come
back? By yourself?

EMILY
My family history's here. This was
my parents' house. I never lived
anywhere else! I worked too hard to
just--

A water drop PLOPS on the table between them. They look up.

EMILY (CONT'D)
SHIT!

She grabs the bucket out of the sink and runs upstairs.

Laurette waits patiently.

EMILY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Shitshitshitshit... arrgh!

Emily reappears. Her hoodie's splashed with dirty water. She pulls it off, drops it in the sink, sits back down. *The last straw.*

Laurette pushes her teacup over to her.

EMILY (CONT'D)
My son's been pressuring me to sell. This'll give him the perfect excuse.

She checks her watch. Groans.

EMILY (CONT'D)
He'll be back any minute. He's taking me to a hotel.

LAURETTE
I know a place out in Langley, big garden, nice and quiet.

EMILY
I don't know.

LAURETTE
I'll give you a ride out. Do you good to get outta town.

EMILY
I... I can't think right now.

LAURETTE
You better, 'cause that thing's gonna come back. You startled it good, but it won't work again. It'll tear this place apart, looking for you.

She taps her nose.

LAURETTE (CONT'D)
They remember.

Emily considers this.

Daniel BURSTS in and heads straight for the sink. He's even more flustered than usual.

DANIEL
MomIneedarag!

He spots Laurette and stops.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Oh. I'm Daniel.

LAURETTE
Laurette.

He grabs Emily's wet hoodie like a rag and heads for the door.

DANIEL
(to Emily)
Buddy's acting out, he just threw
root beer all over the seat. You'll
have to sit in the back.

He stops.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Where's your suitcase?

The women's eyes meet.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
(to Emily)
I told you to be ready!

EMILY
(to Laurette)
I'm ready.

Laurette nods.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. GOLDEN PASTURES- EVENING

Two modern buildings, flanked by a large garden and a garage. The rear building is a residence with balconies.

A high stone wall surrounds the entire property. An iron gate looms over the driveway. Everything is well-maintained. It's peaceful.

The station wagon pulls in and parks. Emily and Laurette get out.

LAURETTE

Golden Pastures Retirement Home.

EMILY

What? I thought you said it was a hotel.

LAURETTE

Better than a hotel! C'mon, look at this place!

Emily takes it all in.

EMILY

(grudgingly)
It's beautiful.

LAURETTE

Damn skippy. Been here seventeen years.

EMILY

You live here?

Laurette drags Emily's suitcase out of the car.

LAURETTE

Work here, too. Lotsa responsibility, and not much authority. But they're a good bunch. And coffee's free. I'll give you a tour tomorrow.

Laurette walks towards the residence. Emily hesitates.

EMILY

Um...

She awkwardly fishes in her purse.

EMILY (CONT'D)
You'll need my credit card--

LAURETTE
Bah-bah-bah! Put that away. It's on
the house.

EMILY
No, no, I couldn't--

LAURETTE
Shut up and come on.

EMILY
I really don't want to be any
trouble--

Laurette stops, hands on her hips.

LAURETTE
You are no trouble! You been *havin'*
trouble. Big difference. Only thing
you gotta do here is rest up. Got
it?

A motor's ROAR interrupts them. An elderly man on a motorized
wheelchair careens around the corner towards them. His toupée
flaps in the wind.

The chair SKIDS to a halt in front of them.

Its driver is HUGH JOSEPH (86), ex-army, lantern jaw and
movie star smile. Binoculars around his neck. Swing music
BLASTS from a radio mounted on the chair.

HUGH
You must be Emily! Hugh Joseph. I
been watchin' for ya. That's my
post.

He points to the main building's roof.

EMILY
Oh. Word travels fast.

HUGH
Careful, folks here aren't just
friendly, they're nosy.

He looks pointedly at Laurette.

LAURETTE
Oh, go to bed, y'old fart.

HUGH
How rude. Early to rise, early to
bed, makes a man healthy, wealthy,
and dead.

He REVS the motor.

HUGH (CONT'D)
'Night, ladies!

He ROARS off.

LAURETTE
He likes to keep an eye on things.
Gives him something to do. Come on.

Laurette leads her into the residence.

INT. RESIDENCE ELEVATOR- MOMENTS LATER

EMILY
How many people live here?

LAURETTE
Oh, seventeen, eighteen--

The elevator doors open to LOUD VOICES and MUSIC. The women
step out.

RESIDENCE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

It's like a college dorm: plants, movie posters, outsider
art, jungle murals.

The party noise pours from an open door at the far end of the
hall.

Emily's bewildered.

LAURETTE
(laughs)
You expected Shady Pines?

Emily nervously follows Laurette.

EMILY
Is it somebody's birthday?

LAURETTE

Nah, Harold & Maude Drinking Game.
Don't worry, the rooms are
soundproof.

They stop at Emily's room. Laurette hands her a key.

LAURETTE (CONT'D)

All yours. You need anything, dial
D20 on your landline. Okay?

Emily starts to well up.

EMILY

I can't even tell you--

LAURETTE

--Honey, you don't have to tell me
nothin'. You had a bitch of a day.
You sleep in, come down to
Reception when you're ready. That's
where I work.

Emily sags with fatigue.

EMILY

Okay. Thank you.

Emily enters and shuts the door. Laurette pulls out a hip
flask, and walks down the hall towards the party.

Laurette's phone BUZZES. She stops and answers.

LAURETTE

Hey. Where are you? Eh?
(beat)
Can't hear you!

EXT. METRO VANCOUVER - CONTINUOUS

Three slick motorcycles ZOOM expertly through an industrial
neighbourhood. Garbage scatters in their wake.

Each bike sports a sticker: two crossed canes in a circle.

The smallest figure's in a racing suit, the other two wear
leather jackets. Their helmets have dark visors.

They zigzag around traffic, turn down a deserted alley and
stop.

This terrible trio are AGNES "AGS" EAMES (66), BERTIE COLE
(70), and BIG AL FARRIER (68). AKA The Hammers. The muscle.

Ags, in the racing suit, taps a mounted interface on her bike. She's hard-boiled and reckless, with a Cantonese accent.

AGS (V.O.)
(filtered)
I said we're closing in!

A YOUNG MAN (20ish), emerges from behind a nearby dumpster and sprints away. He's filthy and bedraggled. There's a strange scar on his neck.

AGS (V.O.)
(filtered)
He's running again! Definitely a
Servant. We'll try and force him
into the old sugar factory.

She beckons to Bertie and Big Al. They all REV their engines and go after the Young Man.

INT. CONDEMNED WAREHOUSE- CONTINUOUS

Towers of pallets, holes in the roof. The Young Man darts among shadows and industrial junk.

Startled pigeons burst from his hiding place. The Hammers move in. Dust and debris swirl around them in the shadows.

The Young Man emerges into their headlights. He's twitchy, knife in hand.

YOUNG MAN
You're not following me! We're
following you!

Ags removes her helmet. The Young Man guffaws at the sight of her face.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
That's it? A bunch of fucking
hags?!

Bertie and Big Al remove their helmets.

Bertie's stoic, so nondescript his own mom would lose sight of him. Big Al's a tall, tattooed rockabilly.

BERTIE
(to Ags)
Can we just run him over?

BIG AL

Shh.

Ags dismounts and slowly moves towards the man, palms up. He points his knife at her and hisses.

BERTIE

(to Ags)

Careful, this one's hinky.

AGS

(to Young Man)

Hey, easy. I'm Ags. That's Bertie and Big Al. What's your name?

The Young Man struggles with the question. Cocks his head, as if he hears something the Hammers can't.

BIG AL

(to Young Man)

You hearing voices, in your head? They do that to mess with you.

Ags is close to the Young Man now.

AGS

(to Young Man)

They don't give a shit about you, you know. You're just servants to them.

YOUNG MAN

That's not true! They protect us!

AGS

We can help you get away from them. Whaddya say?

Three more SERVANTS (30ish, same scar, dishevelled) appear behind Bertie and Big Al. All three have knives.

Bertie and Big Al turn in their seats, distracted for a moment, and the Young Man grabs Ags. Knife at her throat. Young man

(to Bertie and Big Al)

Off your bikes!

BIG AL

(to Young Man)

Whoa, whoa.

BERTIE

(to Young Man)

You shouldn'a done that.

YOUNG MAN
(to Bertie and Big Al)
Get off your bikes or I'll split
her in two!

BERTIE
Okay, okay. Look...

Bertie dismounts.

BIG AL
(to Young Man)
Just getting my cane, okay? I need
it.

Big Al unhooks a cane from the side of his bike and dismounts
with exaggerated difficulty. Leans on his cane.

YOUNG MAN
(to Servants)
Get their hands!

The Servants bind Bertie's and Big Al's hands with plastic
cable ties.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
(to Bertie and Big Al)
You try anything, she dies!

Ags looks strangely calm.

AGS
I'm not armed.

Bertie and Big Al snicker.

BIG AL
(to Bertie)
That never gets old.

YOUNG MAN
SHUTUP!

Ags twists her wrist slowly. Her captor doesn't notice.

AGS
(to Young Man)
So, we get to meet your Master now?

YOUNG MAN
Mistress. She's coming and you can
all meet her!

He lifts Ags' chin.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
(to Ags)
Starting with you.

BERTIE
Ags, he's gonna blow.

The Young Man looks up.

YOUNG MAN
Come down! Come down!

The other Servants look up and join the chant.

SERVANTS
Come down! Come down! Come down!

AGS
Enough of this shit.

Ags slips her arm behind her and the Young Man cries out and drops his knife. He crumples to the ground. Blood streams from his side.

The other Servants charge.

Bertie grabs his helmet, brings it up fast into one Servant's face. CRACK! Teeth fly. One down.

Big Al whirls his heavy cane like a propeller. It connects with a second Servant's head. BASH! Blood sprays. Two down.

The third Servant turns and sprints for the door.

AGS (CONT'D)
Bertie!

THIRD SERVANT
MISTRESS! HELP ME!

Bertie flings his cracked helmet. It hits the Third Servant in the back.

Servant Three cries out, stumbles, CRASHES into jagged metal debris. Impaled.

BERTIE
Whoops.

The Hammers look up and around for any more surprises. Nothing.

BIG AL
If she was here, she's gone now.

Ags shakes blood from the stake that protrudes from her wrist.

AGS

"Mistress." Shit, that makes eight now, right? Starting to lose count.

She walks over to Big Al, pulls a knife from his boot, and cuts the men's binders.

BERTIE

Sorry, Ags. We mighta got more information outa that last one.

Big Al pulls off his neckerchief and hands it to Ags.

AGS

Nah. They were all too far gone. Fucking vamp fried their brains.

She cleans the blood off her wrist stake and screws her artificial hand back on.

AGS (CONT'D)

I keep telling Lena, we should get tasers.

BIG AL

Anybody recognize any of 'em?

The trio fans out. Bertie rolls his victim over.

BERTIE

I used to see this guy out front of the liquor store on Hastings. Panhandler.

Ags peers at the Young Man.

AGS

This one looks homeless.

Big Al checks his victim.

BIG AL

Guess they all are. Poor bastards.

Bertie wanders over to the impaled corpse.

BERTIE

Not this one. Looks like a student.

BIG AL
Fuckin' shame. Well, we can't leave
'em here.

Ags dials her phone.

AGS
(into phone)
Hey, where you been? We need a big
collection.
(beat)
Four. Drake and Cortland.

Another beat. She hangs up.

AGS (CONT'D)
He'll be here in forty-five
minutes.

BERTIE
So, can we fuck off?

Ags takes one last look around.

AGS
Yeah. I want a drink.

Ags drops the bloody kerchief on a corpse and they mount up.
Helmets on.

Ags waves her artificial hand and they ride out.

INT. EMILY'S ROOM - MINUTES EARLIER

A modern, stylish space. Nothing like her house.

She likes it. Unpacks her suitcase, kicks off her shoes,
walks to the window. Turns a handle and smiles.

EMILY
(whispers)
They open.

She notices two men outside in the parking lot, barely
visible in the dark.

EXT. PARKING LOT- CONTINUOUS

NIX NIXON (70, social butterfly, resembles a punk flamingo)
loads duffle bags and crossbows into the old station wagon.

JULIUS "JUG" BRAYBOY (66, gentle giant, squashed nose) paces and talks on his phone.

JUG
(into phone)
Got it. Try not to kill anybody on
your way home, okay?

He hangs up.

JUG (CONT'D)
(to Nix)
We got a pickup, first thing. Four
Servants. We got enough tarps?

Nix rummages in the car.

NIX
Um... yeah we're good.

They get in. The car BLASTS protopunk and PEELS out of the parking lot.

Emily watches curiously from her window, then closes the curtain. Her light goes out.

On the roof above, Hugh Joseph watches the wagon leave. He checks his watch and writes in a journal.

INT. MAIN BUILDING- MIDMORNING

Emily enters a bland, institutional reception area. Lawrence-Welkian muzak plays quietly. A whiteboard sign says, "Today is SATURDAY".

EMILY
(mutters)
Jesus. Sing Sing for seniors.

A CACKLE startles her. It's Laurette, behind the Reception desk.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Sorry.

LAURETTE
Don't be. You sleep okay?

EMILY
Like a log. It's a beautiful room.

LAURETTE
Good. Come on in, get some coffee.

Laurette beckons Emily into the back office.

INT. BACK OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Organized chaos. A heavily used coffee station. 70's funk plays on a radio buried under paperwork.

A medieval cosplay helmet sits on a hat stand. A plastic halberd mounted on a wall.

Laurette wears an acid green miniskirt and combat boots.

LAURETTE

Well, this is where the action is.
You gotta meet Lena. She's the
boss. One smart cookie.

She nods at an office door. Its sign reads:

LENA SINCLAIR. DIRECTOR.

A second handmade sign below it reads:

GRAND POOBAH, LORD HIGH EVERYTHING ELSE.

LAURETTE (CONT'D)

She's payin' for your stay.

EMILY

Oh! Sure, I'd like to thank her.

LAURETTE

I just make the coffee, try to keep
the animals in line--

A bell DINGS and they look out through the reception window.

Ags leans on the desk. She CLUNKS Bertie's cracked motorcycle helmet on the counter and sizes up Emily warily.

LAURETTE (CONT'D)

(to Emily)

'Specially that one.

Laurette sashays out to the Reception desk.

LAURETTE (CONT'D)

(to Ags)

Whaddya you want?

AGS

Helmet's fuckered.

Laurette examines it.

LAURETTE

Hm. Just the visor. Bet Jamie could fix it for now. I'll put a rush on a new one, be here Monday.

AGS

Thanks.

Ags peers at Emily again.

AGS (CONT'D)

(to Laurette)

You taking her to the basement?

LAURETTE

Jesus, she just woke up.

Ags shrugs and wanders off. Laurette brings the helmet into the back office and drops it on a desk.

EMILY

What about the basement?

LAURETTE

Just part of the tour. Coffee first. You want decaf, regular, werewolf-strength?

EMILY

Werewolf.

Laurette starts up the machine and turns to Lena's door.

LAURETTE

LENA, GET OUT HERE!

LENA SINCLAIR (72), emerges from the office. World-weary, astute, confident.

LENA

Hi Emily. Hope you're having a nice stay so far.

EMILY

Uh, yeah. Thanks so much for putting me up.

LENA

Our pleasure. You get the tour yet?

Laurette raises an enormous mug with an image of a D20 die on it.

LAURETTE

Coming up.

EXT. GOLDEN PASTURES ROOF- MINUTES LATER

Hugh is stationed on the roof of the main building. Swing music BLASTS from a radio at his feet.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

(filtered)

Ok, this one's for Hugh... how's
the weather up there, y'old goat?

(wheezy laugh)

Hugh scans the stone fence through his binoculars.

He spots Laurette and Emily as they walk together past the garden and he waves down at them.

EXT. GOLDEN PASTURES GARDEN- CONTINUOUS

Laurette and Emily wave back.

EMILY

He always up there?

LAURETTE

Most days. He watches birds,
traffic, deliveries, that stuff.

EMILY

Oh. That's sweet.

LAURETTE

It's pretty quiet here. Mostly
parkland, farmland around us.
Closest neighbour's the
crematorium, that's two miles away.

They approach the garage. Raucous punk music BLARES inside.

LAURETTE (CONT'D)

Back in the forties, it was a diary
farm. That was the milking barn.
Now it's our repair shop.

A drone BUZZES out the garage door and over the garden.
Laurette chuckles.

LAURETTE (CONT'D)

Our mechanic collects them things.
Come on.

The two women enter the garage. JAMIE MIFFLIN (77, maverick, grease monkey) leans over a motorcycle engine. Lollipop in her mouth.

LAURETTE (CONT'D)
(bellows)
JAMIE!

Jamie looks up and turns down the music.

LAURETTE (CONT'D)
This is Emily. She's up on Second.

JAMIE
You the one got a vamp in your basement?

EMILY
Uh. Yeah.

LAURETTE
Chased it off, too.

JAMIE
How'd you do that, drop a train on its head?

EMILY
My mother's sideboard.

Jamie nods, grudging respect. Points at the helmet in Laurette's hand.

JAMIE
You need that fixed?

LAURETTE
Yeah.

Laurette tosses the helmet to Jamie, who examines it.

JAMIE
Bertie's or Ags'?

LAURETTE
Bertie's.

JAMIE
Heh. He's got good aim. Tell him it'll be ready in the morning.

LAURETTE

Thanks.
(to Emily)
Let's head back.

INT. GOLDEN PASTURES- BACK OFFICE

Laurette refills their mugs. The Reception phone RINGS repeatedly.

LAURETTE

We got our own in-house radio station, too. Less watts than a toaster oven but it covers the whole property.

Emily's distracted by the phone.

EMILY

You want to get that?

The phone goes quiet.

LAURETTE

If you leave it long enough, they usually give up.

Lena emerges from her office. She looks worried.

LENA

Emily, your son's on the phone.

Emily rolls her eyes.

EMILY

Probably checking up on me, making sure I tied my shoes...

Laurette picks up the Reception phone and hands it to Emily.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Hi, Danny?
(beat)
Oh my god! Oh no... No no.
(to Laurette)
My house!

Laurette grabs a set of keys off a hook and heads for the door.

LAURETTE

I'll get the car.

EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE, MIDDAY

Laurette, Emily, and Daniel stand on the sidewalk. Emily's property is surrounded by yellow tape. A police car and fire truck are parked nearby. Neighbours mill around.

Emily's house is a pile of rubble.

DANIEL

Neighbours heard a big crash around six this morning. They said it was the roof. They called the fire department and the police, and the police they called me. I told them the house was empty.

Emily starts to weep. Daniel looks uncomfortable.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Uh, must've been all that rain lately. And then the impact of the roof probably weakened the lower structure... and the damaged foundation wall...

Laurette puts her arm around Emily and glares at Daniel.

LAURETTE

(to Daniel)

Go get your mom some tissues, willya?

He retreats to his car.

LAURETTE (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, honey.

EMILY

My house. You were right. It came back, didn't it? It did this. I might've been in there--

LAURETTE

-Shh. Hey. But you weren't. You're okay and that's all that matters.

Daniel hovers awkwardly with a box of tissues.

DANIEL

That's right, mom.

EMILY

What do I do now? What do I do?

DANIEL

I already sent photos to the insurance company. We'll have to wait and see what they say. Probably won't hear from them until Monday.

EMILY

Oh. Right. Okay.

LAURETTE

Come on back out to the Home for now.

EMILY

No, I couldn't. I should stay...

DANIEL

It's okay mom, there's nothing else to do until Monday. I'll call you when I hear back from them.

Emily looks around. Unfamiliar faces gawk at her. Someone takes a selfie in front of the wreckage.

EMILY

(mutters)

I don't belong here anyway.

LAURETTE

Come on, hon.

EXT. GOLDEN PASTURES PARKING LOT, AFTEROON

The station wagon pulls into the parking lot. Emily and Laurette get out.

Hugh's still up on the roof.

HUGH

Everything okay, ladies?

LAURETTE

Emily's house fell down.

HUGH

Oh! That's terrible! The damn vampire come back??

EMILY

(to Laurette)

What!?

LAURETTE
(to Hugh)
We don't know. Emily's gonna stay
here a while.

HUGH
Ten-four!

They enter the Main Building.

INT. BACK OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Laurette pulls a gate over the Reception Desk.

EMILY
How does Hugh know about them?

LAURETTE
Everybody here does. See, vamps
only go after seniors. They got no
use for young blood. Got no
flavour. But if you're over fifty?
You're a walking wine bottle.

EMILY
Wait, then why not warn all seniors
about them?

LAURETTE
We can't tell 'em all. Some're too
frail. They'd be scared to death.
Or they'd tell their families,
families'd call 'em crazy, lock 'em
up. And some seniors are pretty low-
risk, you know... living in new
buildings, lotsa people around
them.

EMILY
My best friend had to move to a
care home. It's horrible but I
guess she's safer there.

LAURETTE
We try and find all the high-risk
ones.

EMILY
Like me.

LAURETTE
So. Tour, part two.

Laurette walks to a narrow steel door in the far corner. It's painted to match the walls.

EMILY

I didn't notice that before.

LAURETTE

Cool, eh?

She enters a code on a keypad and the door opens to reveal a steep staircase. Emily hesitates.

Laurette knocks on a wall.

LAURETTE (CONT'D)

Reinforced concrete. Bomb couldn't get through.

EMILY

(wary)

So, what's down there?

LAURETTE

The Batcave. For old bats. Come on.

Emily relaxes slightly and follows her down.

Laurette taps a second keypad at the bottom. A shiny steel door slides open.

LAURETTE (CONT'D)

Can't be too careful, this day and age.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

A long hallway lined with dozens of photos of seniors. Emily examines them as they walk.

EMILY

Who're these?

LAURETTE

Former residents. Some moved away. Some passed away.

Laurette opens an unlocked door to a cheerful room with comfy chairs and a big screen. Emily peers in.

LAURETTE (CONT'D)

Meeting room.

EMILY

Very nice.

She follows Laurette to the second unlocked room: long tables, sewing machines, bolts of fabric, a sharpening wheel.

LAURETTE

Work room. Usually busy, but lots of people're gone to brunch. You sew?

EMILY

I used to. I'm out of practice. Story of my life.

The third room has a fingerprint door lock. Inside are racks of weapons and body armour.

LAURETTE

Armory.

EMILY

Whoa. You use that stuff a lot?

Laurette shuts the door and taps a photo on the wall of a smiling woman around Emily's age.

LAURETTE

Louise. Last one to go missing. She took the bus in to see a movie. One of our guys went in to pick her up after, and she wasn't there. Nobody seen her. Broad daylight and nobody seen *nothing*.

EMILY

That's awful.

Laurette nods at Louise's photo and moves towards the final door at the end of the hall.

LAURETTE

Every year oldies disappear. People blame dementia, Alzheimer's... "Oh, the poor thing must have wandered away, fell in the river." Bullshit.

EMILY

Can these vampires be killed?

LAURETTE

That's where we come in.

She opens the door.

LAURETTE (CONT'D)

Come in.

INT. GOLDEN PASTURES HQ - CONTINUOUS

Computer workstations, jumbles of technogadgets. A big monitor on the far wall displays a citywide map with coloured dots all over it.

A police scanner mutters in the background. It's the Mysterious Room from earlier.

Lena, Francis Gates, and Jug are huddled in conversation. They look up when Emily and Laurette enter.

Emily's bewildered.

EMILY

(nervous)

So which one of you's Batman?

Laughter.

Emily recognizes Francis.

EMILY (CONT'D)

The Skytrain! I mean, hello again!

FRANCIS

Nice to see you, Emily.

They warmly shake hands.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

I'm glad you found your way here.

EMILY

Well, Laurette found me.

LENA

(to Emily)

Francis teaches sword-fighting classes.

EMILY

Really!? I mean, not that I'm surprised, just... that's great.

FRANCIS

You're welcome any time.

Jug can't wait any longer. He extends a hand to Emily.

JUG

Julius Brayboy. I'm in charge of the Armory. It's really not as scary as it looks. If you want a tour--

Laurette swats his shoulder.

LAURETTE

Stop flirting with the new girl!

Jug blushes.

EMILY

So, what's all this for?

LENA

That thing in your house was one of eight, maybe nine vampires in the Greater Vancouver area. We try and track them, but they're smart, and fast, and they have a lot of help.

LAURETTE

Servants.

LENA

Vampires can mind-control some younger folks, the weaker ones, make 'em do their dirty work. A Servant grabs some poor senior, drags them off, immobilizes them, and rings the dinner bell.

EMILY

Oh my god.

JUG

Vampires only come down close to the ground for food. We think the earth reminds them of being buried.

LENA

After they feed, the Servant gets rid of the body.

EMILY

So how do they do the mind-control thing?

JUG

We're not totally sure. Some vampires can control three or four people at a time. We've captured a few Servants to see if we could break their control, but they were all too far gone.

LENA

They crack up after a while, turn psychotic. So they just wander the streets, with no master, and everybody thinks they're junkies.

EMILY

Sounds like they kind of are.

LAURETTE

This is your brain on vampire. Any questions?

EMILY

So, what's the good news?

FRANCIS

We are.

EMILY

You mean, the four of you?

JUG

Everybody who lives here. We all help out. We've all got our areas of expertise.

LAURETTE

Like, we got a mechanic, fighters, weapons expert, IT expert, strategists, surveillance, and a--
(squints at Jug)

JUG

--Renaissance Man.

LENA

We've got Allies all over the city. They're seniors who watch for any suspicious vampire or Servant activity. They help us protect the vulnerable ones. We coordinate everything from this room.

FRANCIS

You probably see our Allies every day. They're on the buses, in stores, everywhere. And they're inconspicuous, unlike the police.

EMILY

My husband was a police detective. I never heard him mention any organization like this.

LENA

We don't work with the police. A few of our Allies are retired cops, but they keep our secret.

LAURETTE

That's why we use the scanners. Any senior calls about bein' followed, seein' weird things, like, you know, a monster in their basement, we know it's probably vampire-related.

Emily plunks down in a nearby chair, bewildered. Laurette hands her a hip flask.

EMILY

But... why don't you just... I mean, can't you get proof of these things? Like, a photo, or a body?

LENA

(to Laurette)

Show her the basement file.

Laurette cues up a video on a monitor.

LENA (CONT'D)

We recorded this in a condemned building eight months ago.

Emily watches the monitor.

VIDEO

Shaky footage of a dimly lit boiler room. A large hole in the wall. Gravel and broken concrete on the floor.

VOICES SHOUT in confusion. Several flashlight beams point at one spot. They seem to end abruptly in the air. A savage HISSING sound.

The camera jostles around.

Bertie and Big Al grapple with an invisible opponent.

BERTIE (V.O.)
(filtered)
Fucker's strong!

BIG AL (V.O.)
(filtered)
I got it!

Bertie and Big Al pin the invisible force down. Their hands and knees seem to float above the floor.

BERTIE (V.O.)
(filtered)
Do it!

Big Al thrusts a sharp wooden stake downward into empty air.

Something beneath them THRASHES, SCREECHES, bucks them off. The stake seems to move on its own, then stops.

Slowly a dead man appears on the floor with a stake in his chest. The corpse is naked and covered in filth.

BERTIE (V.O.)
(filtered)
Nice one, man!

END VIDEO

Emily's eyes are wide.

JUG
The live ones are invisible on camera. And you can imagine, bringing a freshly staked, naked corpse to the police would be detrimental to our operation.

LENA
Besides, we can handle ourselves. We got our own ways of fighting back.

The door BANGS open and everyone jumps. The Hammers sweep in, led by Ags.

JUG
Timing...

LENA

Emily, this is Agnes, Bertie, and Big Al. Their area of expertise is combat and general mayhem.

EMILY

I can tell.

Ags frowns at Emily.

LENA

(to Emily)

They could use a fourth. Francis tells me you've got some training, you're cool-headed and fast. Laurette says you're tough. You're a fighter. We're hoping you'll fight with us.

Emily stares around at everyone.

EMILY

Me? I'm a retired cosmetics saleswoman! Most of my training came from watching Bruce Lee movies!

FRANCIS

You're a fighter, Emily. A good one. We can train you in just about any discipline you want.

LENA

And that condo you're staying in's yours if you want it.

EMILY

Oh. Wow. Thanks for the offer. I mean, it's really great... but, um, I'm pretty sure it's over my budget.

LAURETTE

That's not how things work here, kiddo.

LENA

Whatever you can afford, we'll accept.

EMILY

You're serious? You'd really do that?

LENA

You live here, work with us, and
we'll train you, give you all the
protection you need. Only rule we
have is, *nobody*--
(glances at Ags)
--tries to be a hero.

Emily looks around at the group, and notices two heavily
battered canes mounted on the wall in an X. Their handles are
turned outward.

EMILY

When do I start?

The group murmurs happily. Francis shakes her hand. Laurette
hugs her.

LAURETTE

Party time!

Lena waves her hands.

LENA

Hey, go easy tonight. We got a lady
downtown to check up on tomorrow,
and I want everybody frosty.

LAURETTE

Don't worry, boss.
(to Emily)
So, whaddya drinking, hon?

EXT. VANCOUVER APARTMENT BUILDING - NEXT DAY

A neglected low rise on the East Side. Five scruffy hoodlums
loiter around the entrance.

They watch VIRGINIA RITCHIE (83, spinster, artist, Luddite)
walk slowly to the entrance. She struggles with a heavy bag
of groceries. No one moves to help her.

Her face creases with distress. As she reaches the door, a
can falls out of her bag. She gasps.

One of the hoods grabs the rolling can. He licks the label
and waves the can at her.

She lowers her gaze to avoid his grin.

Another hood blocks the door with his foot. Her hand shakes
as she unlocks it. She wrenches it open and scuttles inside.

All the hoods laugh except one, a young man who stares at her intently.

He has a strange scar on his neck.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE