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BRONWYN. Hey, Bronwyn here, the voice of Alice Harlow. If you're interested in supporting Station Arcadia financially, consider donating to our tip jar, linked on Stationarcadia.com. Or, alternatively, consider buying some Station Arcadia merchandise. We're constantly adding new products and removing old ones so if nothing catches your eye, try checking back in a few weeks. Thanks for your support and enjoy episode six, Slaughterhouse Red.

INT. STATION ARCADIA

KASS. Welcome, anyone. Today, you're listening to Station Arcadia.

[THEME MUSIC PLAYS]

KASS. Before we get to the story, let's see if Arcadia will let us tune into the Empire. With any luck, it can take us back right where we left off. I'll admit, I've been a little worried about Teddy, Alice and Bluebell since the last broadcast.

[TRANSITION]

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING

PIERCE. How's the seating? Nice and comfy?

TEDDY. The chairs are rotting, and these ropes are scratchy.

PIERCE. Only the finest for our prisoners.

BLUEBELL. That's a bold plan you just pulled there.

PIERCE. Had to get rid of the girl with the shotgun, didn't I? What're you two, an unarmed man and a guy packing one of those baby pistols? Me and Corben took you down easy enough without her.

BLUEBELL. It's a snub nose revolver.

TEDDY. I can't help but notice you purposefully missed.

PIERCE. Made a great distraction for a quick hit with the pipe. It's best to keep her alive. If neither of you talk... well, I figured that it'd be a nice shock to her if she woke up and saw your bodies, wouldn't it? Real great way to start off an interrogation.

TEDDY. How about you stop monologuing and cut to the chase?

CORBEN. Where are you from, what are your names and who are you working for?

PIERCE. Corben, let me handle the talking! There's an art to this kind of thing.

[PIERCE SIGHS]

What are your names?

CORBEN. That's what I just asked!

PIERCE. Shut UP!

BLUEBELL. You don't seem to have this under control. Maybe we should leave and come back when you've got your plan straightened out?

PIERCE. I have this under control!

TEDDY. Doesn't seem like it from where I'm sitting.

ALICE. *(Groggily:)* Ugh, what's happening?

BLUEBELL. We're being held prisoner, Alice.

PIERCE. Great, she's already awake. This is not going how I wanted it to.

TEDDY. Welcome to the club.

PIERCE. Stop joking about this! Your lives are in danger!

TEDDY. Can we hurry up and do the interrogation bit? I want to know if I'm going to be home in time to make dinner. Oh, wait...

BLUEBELL. Now is not the time to get passive-aggressive at me. I'm sorry you can't go home, okay?

ALICE. Can everyone shut up for a second? I'm working on this headache.

CORBEN. *(Stage whisper:)* They don't seem to be all that intimidated, Pierce.

PIERCE. I'm working on it.

[GUN CLICKS]

We're going to start talking or this time it isn't going to be the wall I hit.

BLUEBELL. Fine, ask your questions.

PIERCE. Names.

BLUEBELL. You can call me Bluebell, and these are my friends, Theodore and Alice.

TEDDY. *(Under his breath:)* Oh my god...

PIERCE. What are you doing here?

BLUEBELL. Well, you see, we are-

TEDDY. *(Interrupting:)* I'm a private investigator. They're helping me.

PIERCE. What are you investigating, then?

TEDDY. That's information for me to be discussing with my client. We're both doing illegal things here, the military has this place on lockdown.

CORBEN. Um, Pierce, can we talk in the other room for a second?

PIERCE. Ugh, *fine*.

[FOOTSTEPS]

[DOOR SLAMS]

BLUEBELL. Why did you tell them you were here on an investigation?

TEDDY. There would be certain... consequences if people found out I was hanging around with revolutionaries.

BLUEBELL. There's consequences for all of us-

TEDDY. With very specific people.

BLUEBELL. Oh.

TEDDY. It's complicated. Besides, I figured that was information you wouldn't want to give up.

BLUEBELL. But you're just taking on a different kind of risk. You could have avoided giving them more information about *yourself* if you just hadn't said anything.

TEDDY. Look, I-

ALICE. Do you guys ever stop talking?! I have a *headache*!

BLUEBELL. Sorry, Alice. (*Quieter:*) We should probably work on a plan to get out of here.

[TRANSITION]

INT. STATION ARCADIA

KASS. Well, I'm glad they're alive, and at least it's not the government that caught them. On to the story.

[TWO CLICKS]

KASS. Ankaa stands outside the slaughterhouse doors, a hand shielding her eyes as she stares into the distance. The smell of blood hangs heavy in the air and clings to her clothing, but she hardly notices it anymore. She squints and tries to trick herself into thinking she can see the shapes of the cows moving in the dust cloud. After a few more minutes, she doesn't need to pretend. They're here, and the cowboys that accompany the herd begin working to drive the livestock into the slaughterhouse pens. She walks up to the group of about twelve riders, trying to tell based on their body language who she should be speaking to. Ankaa only finished training last week, and this is her first time receiving the cows on her own. Thankfully, one of the riders comes forward to meet her without prompting, and introduces himself as Gunner. The air is tense as usual, as he signs the cows away. Karrie had told her that the cowboys feel bad about designating the herd to such a bleak fate. Frankly, Ankaa can't understand why. Their muscles bulge grotesquely, and the constant pain caused by their modified bodies makes them irritable and aggressive. They were built for one thing and one thing only - meat.

Ankaa checks over the report that Gunner had handed back to her, and she frowns slightly. They'd lost fifteen cows, which was surprising. Karrie had said that today's cowboy crew had a reputation for being diligent, and there shouldn't be any discrepancies. She flips to the second page.

"Cause of death; explosion. Did ya get bombed?" She asks.

Ankaa looks skeptically at the herd as Gunner describes the madness that had overtaken the cows the night before last and the steps they'd taken to get them under control. She's no expert, but the massive herd before her seems normal enough...

After a few more minutes, the cowboys send their last cow into the pen. Ankaa heads back inside, and stops by the control room to tell Rodney to open the entry hatch and begin tightening the pen's mechanical fence, forcing the cows inside the building.

[TRANSITION]

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING

[DOOR OPENS AND SHUTS]

PIERCE. Okay, we need to wrap this up fast. I suggest saying something that makes me change my mind about killing you.

ALICE. Actually, we have some questions for you.

PIERCE. That's going to do just about the opposite.

TEDDY. It's for closure.

PIERCE. What do I care, you're going to be dead.

ALICE. Why are you here?

PIERCE. We're here on clean up duty. Tie up loose ends, which you have all made yourselves into.

ALICE. You were involved in the shooting?

CORBEN. Kind of.

PIERCE. Even I will only go so far to honor a dying person's wish. Just know that we were gathering some items left behind.

TEDDY. That's good enough for me.

[WOOD CREAKS]

[GUNSHOT (SNUB NOSE REVOLVER)]

CORBEN. ... Pierce?

[BODY HITS THE FLOOR]

How did you... we tied you up...

TEDDY. Contrary to what your friend said, I'm *not* stupid enough to go unarmed in the Empire. There's a sword in my cane. Thanks for leaning it against the chair, by the way.

BLUEBELL. You missed out on a very embarrassing scene for us.

TEDDY. It's honestly more embarrassing you didn't notice the ropes were gone and I was just holding my hands behind my back.

ALICE. Can we just shoot him already?

TEDDY. Oh, I don't think Corben here will tell anyone. After all, that would mean he was trespassing on military property. And *that* means another five years of mandatory service. You don't want that, right Corben?

CORBEN. Yes, yes, I'm not going to tell anyone, I'll go!

TEDDY. Then go.

[FOOTSTEPS RUNNING FROM THE ROOM]

TEDDY. Let's get you two free.

[ROPE CUTTING NOISE/FRAYING FABRIC]

BLUEBELL. I'll go check Pierce's body for those items he was talking about.

[ANOTHER ROPE CUTTING NOISE]

[RUSTLING SOUNDS AS BLUEBELL CHECKS POCKETS]

ALICE. Now my head and my wrists hurt.

BLUEBELL. We'll make sure to get you some whiskey at the bar.

[MORE POCKET SEARCHING SOUNDS]

BLUEBELL. Ah, bingo. Let's get out of here.

TEDDY. Are we just leaving the body?

ALICE. Do you want to *do* anything with it?

TEDDY. ... Absolutely not. Let's get out of here.

[TRANSITION]

INT. STATION ARCADIA

KASS. Back out on the wastes, an hour or so later, Gunner's telephone rings. He and the cowboys are heading a few hours north to pick up the next batch of cows they'll be herding. He picks up immediately when he sees Myer's name pop up. Instead of a soft greeting, Myer immediately begins talking a million miles a minute, using all sorts of words that Gunner couldn't begin to understand. He recognizes this for what it is - Myer must have made a breakthrough on one of his pet science projects. Which is great, but it's even better when Gunner realizes Myer is talking about the cows. When he called yesterday he hadn't thought he'd have a theory so quickly.

Gunner shook his head slowly once he picked out what Myer was saying. Considering the state of things, a targeted chemical attack probably should have been at the top of the list of possible explanations. Gunner bets that it was a flyover drone from Clercourt - they're scoundrels over there, the whole lot of em.

"Still," he said to Myer. "Least it's over an' done with now."

Myer's words started to snowball again, but this time some of the words sounded vaguely familiar to Gunner. Omasum was the name for the third compartment of a cow's stomach, and the first one where nutrients and other chemicals can be absorbed. It was probably once the grass had gotten to that compartment that the chemical had taken effect and the cows had gone wild. Then, after a period, the drug had worn off.

There was, however, a fourth compartment to a cow's stomach, called the Abomasum. Once food makes its way there, about 36 hours later, it is broken down further and more nutrients are absorbed. It would be at that point that the cows would likely experience a resurgence of the same drug-induced frenzy. It would happen... about an hour ago.

Gunner thought back to the young woman at the slaughterhouse. He thought of all the workers inside.

"Shit."

[TRANSITION]

INT. L'AUREORE

[GLASSES SLIDE ACROSS BAR COUNTER]

[ALMOST AWKWARD AMOUNT OF SILENCE]

ALICE. So Theodore, huh?

BLUEBELL. I don't want to talk about it.

ALICE. Alright, alright.

[BEAT]

I just noticed you were looking at him-

BLUEBELL. *Alice.*

ALICE. I'm just trying to help! You know I don't really do romance, but you're like... My big brother, or something, I want to help.

[BLUEBELL SIGHS]

BLUEBELL. Thank you. It's not romance, though, I just happen to like him a little bit, and... Well, I don't think he likes me.

ALICE. Everyone likes you.

BLUEBELL. Enough people have tried to kill the both of us that you know that's not true. And besides, it's hard to make friends with the guy you're supposed to keep from spilling resistance secrets. I'm meant to watch him, not socialize with him.

ALICE. Oh, yea, if I were him I would have already punched you or something. I mean, does it really matter all that much? So he hates your guts, it's not the end of the world.

BLUEBELL. But it's like, *why am I doing this?* Any of this? There's all this fighting for a better future, but is there anything good to have right now?

ALICE. Getting a little existential there.

BLUEBELL. I don't know. I just kind of hate how people can become symbolic sometimes. We should all just... stick to being people.

ALICE. Enough philosophy, try this.

[A GLASS IS PICKED UP AND SET BACK DOWN]

So?

BLUEBELL. Hmm... It's actually pretty good.

ALICE. Sometimes you have to try things a couple of times before you get them right.

BLUEBELL. Where would we all be without you?

ALICE. Dead somewhere, I assume.

BLUEBELL. Oh, yea.

ALICE. I'm sure we'll get all of this stuff figured out. Eventually.

BLUEBELL. *(sigh)* Sure we can't just shoot the right head and have everything work out?

ALICE. If only.

[BLUEBELL DOWNS THE DRINK]

[THE GLASS IS SET DOWN ON THE TABLE]

BLUEBELL. It's been a long day, I'm gonna go grab some shuteye.

ALICE. Tomorrow's problem?

BLUEBELL. Definitely tomorrow's problem. Can I take one of those to go?

ALICE. You gonna pay for it?

BLUEBELL. *(teasing)* Friendship is priceless.

ALICE. And this drink isn't.

BLUEBELL. I'm wounded. *(sigh)* Very well. See you tomorrow.

ALICE. *(with a smile)* Don't be late.

[TRANSITION]

INT. STATION ARCADIA

KASS. Rodney watches on the black and white security cameras as the cows make their slow, winding way through the corrals. They are especially unruly today - because of the heat, he figures, and he speeds the conveyor belts up just a bit beyond protocol. The faster they're killed the better, he figures. He's too tired to deal with any incidents today.

He leans back and takes a long swig of water from his canteen. He's parched from the walk to work. He passes the flask from one hand to the other, back and forth, displeased with how light it already is. There's no clean drinking water at the slaughterhouse, so this is his supply for the day. Then, he sees a rush of movement in the corner of his vision, and looks back up at the monitors. He drops his flask. His water spills out onto the dusty floor, unnoticed.

On the processing floor, the Rander twins are cleaning the machinery, readying it for the day. They're running late, but their effortless coordination makes the work go faster. They grimace in sync when they hear thunderous hooves approaching from the direction of the corrals.

"Go faster, Gil" says Marty. "No time to dawdle."

The instant the words leave his mouth the cows burst onto the slaughterhouse's main floor, and trampling the processing equipment

that once held their grim fate. Cows fall, and are instantly trampled by the ones still standing. They come hurtling onto the processing floor, and Marty watches in horror as his brother is too slow to react, and falls screaming under a mass of hooves. Marty screams, and his screams are joined by those of his coworkers, and by the grim braying of the cattle.

Watching with his jaw dropped from the control booth, Rodney finally snaps into gear. He pages the on-site manager as quickly as he can, but the ringing seems to stretch on forever, and Rodney can do nothing about it but watch as the grim scene unfolds in black and white. He's not sure how long it's been since he remembered to breathe. When Maxine finally answers he can barely get a full sentence together and it takes him far too long to explain the disaster taking place on the screens.

"Thank you for alerting me to the situation." She says, calm as ever. "I trust you will take the necessary steps to help resolve this. Your position is one of responsibility, after all."

Rodney sees the thinly veiled threat to his job for what it is, and stutters out that he'll do his best - but, isn't she going to... Do something? Help?

"Of course!" She says. "Why else would we have such a diligent on-site manager?"

Karrie is restocking the freezing room manually. The machinery broke down months ago and ever since, someone has had to wheelbarrow the newly frozen blocks of ice to the freezer and stack them in place each day. Karrie wishes the Surrigen government would spend a couple hundred less on the military and put it towards making her life easier, but she doesn't voice the thought. It's not worth it.

She's halfway through her fifth trip when she hears shouting and screaming from the main floor. She abandons the wheelbarrow instantly and goes to check it out. As she runs down the hallway she hears Manager Maxine's voice on the crackling loudspeaker.

"Employees of Surrigen Abattoir 5, this is a reminder that any broken equipment or damaged product will be compensated for out of your

wages. I trust that this will be a sufficient motivator to find a solution for the current problem. Thank you, and have a great day."

The speaker clicks off just as Karrie pushes the heavy metal door open and runs onto the loft that overlooks the slaughterhouse floor. Terror is clear in the room, as cattle ram brutally into anything they can, destroying machinery and trampling each other. The grinding and whirring of still-moving equipment sounds out from the below, and there are irregular thumps as a few workers try to subdue what cows they can with the bolt guns. Employees run to all corners of the large room and hide in nooks and crannies, escaping the reach of the cows to the best of their limited abilities. Karrie sees Ankaa, cornered against a piece of machinery by three of these mad cows, looking around wildly, searching for an escape route. Ankaa makes a mad dash for freedom, but the beasts hone in on her movement and she is crushed between the two cows. She goes down fast, but it feels like an eternity for Karrie. Ankaa had been shadowing her not two weeks earlier, and she'd been so smart, with quips and jokes for every situation. Now she's dead.

Nothing gets better when the first gunshot rings out. Workers who served scream out at the shot, and duck, covering their ears and shielding their heads. Karrie stands in the middle of the room, holding an old fashioned and well-polished gun that normally hangs at her waist. She turns away from the frenzied cow that just dropped dead at her feet, and shoots another. Each one of her precise shots rings through the air as the commotion of angered cattle dies down, their numbers dwindling. Frightened employees hand her their spare ammunition.

Before long, she puts her gun away. Her face is determined but otherwise blank, as she stands tall and instructs employees to begin the prepping process for the meat. With shaking hands and ashen faces, everyone starts slowly clearing the dead cattle, moving them to the sticking area of the assembly line. While much of the machinery is damaged beyond proper use, they make do. They know they'll lose their job if they waste this much meat. Slowly, the bodies are piled and put into the bleeding tubs. A young man approaches the gunslinger, his anxious posture speaking louder than his words.

"I- I don't think it's smart to send this meat out." He says. "Those

cows were messed up, a normal cow don't act like that! The meat might, um, it might hurt people, you know?"

Karrie shrugs the employee off. Whether the meat is contaminated or not, she knows jobs will be lost if they let it rot. Besides, she knows what it's like to go hungry. This meat might mean the difference between life and death for someone out there.

The cows are slowly prepared to be sent to the lower levels. There are dead cattle scattered through the corrals that need to be dragged in through the narrow winding path, and their bulky corpses take two or three people to move. And then there are the dozens of employee bodies. Nobody knows what to do with them.

Their ID tags are scuffed, but each one had a name, first and last. Gilwell Rander, Rasha Dalewind, Ankaa Irius, Hermon Trink.

KASS. I... all those people... I need a moment, sorry. Lyssel finally managed to convert one of my favourite songs from my SynthTechX to cassette, so let's... let's go to that.

[TAPE IS PUT IN CASSETTE PLAYER, A BUTTON CLICKS]

[SONG PLAYS]

LYRICS. (*cheering crowd*) Stories passed through generations
Hold a ring of truth
The fables told of heroes past
And all that they can do
Now settle in and listen to a tale
Try not to get scared
Cause, dear, the worm is lurking near
And you may not know it's there

You can't run from the Monster lurking in the code
You get one silent scream
Before falling into its hold

A program born long ago in the past
Made to help and aid
Evolved to something malicious

To its coder's dismay
Growing larger, tearing through
And leaving behind its burns
This source code meant to mitigate
Became a deadly worm

You can't run from the
Monster lurking in the code
You get one silent scream
Before falling into its hold

Soon the devastation was too
Great to disregard
Some files wiped some codes retyped
Leaves behind memory barred
Widespread fear and panic rose as
Altered bodies glitched
They all tried to turn it off but
None could find the switch

You can't run from the
Monster lurking in the code
You get one silent scream
Before falling into its hold

Now we meet our hero Ether who's
White hat and skilled
At hacking she's the very best
And tech bends to her will
Our hero did not expect
To meet this wily foe
A virus replicates itself
A worm that feeds and grows

You can't run from the
Monster lurking in the code
You get one silent scream
Before falling into its hold

But Ether never gave up
Watched as it hacked the roads

It didn't notice as she
Struck through the heart of its code

Some swear the worm still creeps
In the dark corners of the web
And one day it will come again
To wreak its bloody revenge

KASS. Well, that brings back memories. We had a good time, that night.
(embarrassed at showing An Emotion) Anyway, thank you for listening.
You know the drill. Stay safe, stay moving, and stick close. You've
been listening to Station Arcadia.

[THEME MUSIC PLAYS]

ELI. Station Arcadia is a podcast by Metal Steve Productions, and
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and C.V.V.M., and directed by Tovah Brantner. It is edited by Eliana
Esdi and J. R. Steele, with soundscaping by Becker Hoang and music by
Theo Goodwin. Today's episode was written by Apollo Cedomir and Eliana
Esdi with scenes from Tovah Brantner and J. R. Steele. It featured
Jade Virginia as Kass, Andrew Simons as Teddy, Bronwyn as Alice, Cole
B as Bluebell, Kennedy Bagnol as Pierce, and Silver Kim as Corben. The
song featured in this episode was The Talsorian Worm by The Folk
Divine. You can purchase this song on their bandcamp, which is linked
in the episode description.

Join us on twitter and tumblr, @stationarcadia, for more content.
Check out our website, stationarcadia.com for a transcript of this
episode as well as information on the cast and crew. And if you want
to hang out with other Station Arcadia fans, we have a brand new
discord which you can find a link to on our website.

Today's Kass Fact of the week is that Kass's favourite breakfast
cereal is Raisin Bran.