

School's Out

By

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Teaser

1 INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

1

MAL and ZOE are drinking coffee at the table. INARA enters and interrupts their silence.

INARA

Is the wave you sent me correct?
We're headed to Sihnon?

MAL

Within the hour. We'll move quick
through the capitol and onto a
delivery at House Madrassa.

INARA

House Madrassa? I never thought I
would see Mal Reynolds so willingly
go to a town of companions.

MAL

A job's a job. I might say you've
been avoiding the place yourself.
It's been, what, three years.

INARA

Almost four. I wish you would have
told me sooner.

ZOE

Wave came in late last night. A man
in Lu'Weng, Karoff. Said he needed
the job done quick and that him and
his partner could pay well.

INARA

Is his partner at the house?

MAL

Seems that way. Maybe that school
ain't as pure as you like to
pretend.

ZOE

The name he gave us was Tanner.
Olav Tanner. Any chance you know
the guy?

Serenity begins to shake. The turbulence occurs for several seconds as Mal, Zoe, and Inara reach to hold onto the table for balance. KAYLEE runs into the room as Serenity begins to settle down.

MAL

Kaylee, is there something I should be knowing about my ship?

KAYLEE

I've been saying it for months. It's the compression engine burstin' again, Captain. Makes the whole thing shake with any acceleration.

MAL

Well, you got an hour until landing to figure it out. I don't want to feel another shaking like that.

KAYLEE

She ain't got much more left to give, Captain. We'll stick a landing, but I ain't sure we'll be able to get back off the ground.

MAL

We'll worry about taking off once she lands.

Mal heads towards the Bridge and Kaylee back to the engine room. Zoe is left alone in the room. Inara is no longer present.

2

EXT. LU'WENG PORT - CARGO BAY - DAY

2

Mal, Zoe, JAYNE, Kaylee, SIMON, RIVER, and WASH stand on the cargo bay, preparing to venture out into the city. The port is full of other parked ships. Just outside, several skyscrapers and other large buildings can be seen.

MAL

And, Kaylee, you don't be spending more money than we got. Just something enough to keep her in the sky.

KAYLEE

We'll be sure to get a good deal, Captain. Anything'll be better than what she's got now.

WASH

I can't handle another scare like that. Ship almost flew herself out of the sky.

Kaylee elbows Wash

KAYLEE

We'll get it taken care of,
Captain.

MAL

And remember, you only got two
hours. Two hours and you're back on
this ship.

(turns to River)

I don't want you talking to anyone,
you hear?

RIVER

We can help her. Get her back in
the sky where she belongs.

JAYNE

What, now she's a ship expert too?

MAL

I don't care what she knows. She
stay with you two.

WASH

Aw, but I was hoping we'd all be
making a bunch of friends today.

RIVER

There are a lot of people to meet
here.

Everyone pauses for a moment. Simon steps in front of River.

SIMON

She won't be a problem. Being in
the city will be great for her.

MAL

Two hours.

Wash moves back into the Cargo Bay to close the door. Mal
watches SIMON, RIVER, and Kaylee walk off into the city.
Him, Zoe, and Jayne then begin to walk in the opposite
direction, towards the shops.

3

EXT. LU'WENG - KAROFF'S OFFICE - DAY

3

Mal, Zoe, and Jayne walk into a small, grey office with three guards. A man of slight build sits behind a large, round desk. He stands as he begins to speak.

KAROFF

I assume you had no problem coming into the port.

MAL

Easy entrance. Seems that you've got some power over here.

KAROFF

I know some people. It's a trade city. Easy to bring in transport ships.

MAL

Ain't easy for everyone.

KAROFF

When you know the right people, it becomes easy to get rid of what you don't want.

MAL

Seems that you do. Once we get half our pay, we can be taking what you don't want off your hands.

KAROFF

Just a moment. I know you're the best at the transport, but this information is...sensitive. I need to know there won't be any questions.

MAL

I'm not here to inquire about your morals. We get paid, we get the job done. That's all there is to it.

KAROFF

All there is to it.
(he turns to his guard)
The box is in storage.

The three guards walk out of the room. Mal and Zoe make eye contact.

KAROFF

This needs to be at House Madrassa by morning, Mr.Reynolds. Late delivery is not an option.

MAL

We'll be leaving just after this meeting, granted we get half our pay.

KAROFF

Yes, yes.

Karoff reaches into a drawer in his desk and pulls out a bag. He throws it towards the group. Jayne catches it and looks inside.

JAYNE

This is only half the money?

KAROFF

Tanner pays well. The job's are important.

JAYNE

More money than we've made since in all that I can remember.

Mal flashes Jayne a look. Jayne tucks the money behind his back and looks forward. The guards walk back in, carrying a large wooden crate.

MAL

Well then, unless there's anymore business to be had, we'll be gettin' out of your way.

KAROFF

Good doing business with you, Mr.Reynolds.

Mal and Jayne pick up the box together. A strained look covers both their faces. The guards follow Mal, Jayne, and Zoe out the door.

4

EXT. LU'WENG - DAY

4

Kaylee and Simon are walking close, River is a few steps ahead, a look of wonder on her face. Kaylee is carrying a box from the repair shop.

KAYLEE

It's so nice to be out of the ship.
Even for just a day.

SIMON

I can't remember the last time I
walked around a city. I've missed a
lot of it.

KAYLEE

How different is it living in one?
Seems so much different than the
small towns.

SIMON

It's busier. There's always
something happening in the city.
Never a chance to be bored.

KAYLEE

There's never much of a chance to
be bored on Serenity, either.

SIMON

(laughing)
No, there really isn't.

KAYLEE

River seems to love it too. Maybe
it reminds her of home.

SIMON

Maybe. She takes to something about
the city.

River dashes into one of the buildings.

SIMON

River, no!

Simon begins to push past some people to catch up with
River. Kaylee follows behind. When they get into the store,
they find a craft shop. River is in the back of the shop
looking at a shelf of knick knacks.

KAYLEE

Look at it. She's just fine. You
worry too much.

SIMON

Worry too much? Have you met my
sister?

KAYLEE
 (gesturing towards River)
 Look, she's even making a friend.

River talks with a girl. She is a few inches shorter than River with waist length brown hair. She carries a large shoulder bag.

SIMON
 River, we have to get going. Tell
 you're new friend good bye.

River leans in closely to the girl and whispers in her ear. The girl waves as River, Simon, and Kaylee leave the shop.

5 EXT. LU'WENG - DAY

5

Simon, Kaylee, River are walking back to Serenity. River walks just ahead of the other two in the crowded street.

SIMON
 (looking behind him and then
 back to Kaylee)
 We probably should start heading
 back now.

KAYLEE
 I wish we had a bit longer to stay.
 I kind of like here though.

SIMON
 Something about the people don't
 feel welcoming.

KAYLEE
 I don't know. They seem alright to
 me.

SIMON
 All the places are almost empty.
 The streets are full, but even at
 the diner we stopped in
 was a desert. The place was
 almost empty.

KAYLEE
 They still seem like good people.
 River seemed to take to the girl in
 the craft shop.

SIMON
 (looking around)
 Where is River?

The two share a look of terror and begin to sprint towards Serenity.

6 INT. CARGO BAY - DAY

6

Simon and Kaylee both run up the ramp out of breath. Mal is there. Simon tries to speak, but as he is catching his breath, Mal beats him to it.

MAL
 You two best be getting back into the ship. Your sister's been back for the better part of ten minutes.

SIMON
 She...she's here?

MAL
 Anywhere else she should be?

SIMON
 No, it's not that. It's fine. We're ready to go.

MAL
 I don't think I want to know about this. Now move, I got to get this door shut.
 (turning to Kaylee)
 You best be getting that piece installed. We've got to get out of here within minutes.

KAYLEE
 Rodger that, Captain.

Kaylee hugs the box to her chest and runs out of the room. Simon runs out behind her. Mal closes the ramp.

7 EXT. LU'WENG PORT - DAY

7

Serenity takes off, leaving the city behind.

8 INT. DINING HALL - DAY

8

Mal is sitting at the table eating an apple. River and a the younger girl from the craft shop walk by the table. He watches as the two girls walk through the room, a look of surprise covering his face.

BLACK OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT 1

9 INT. INFIRMARY - DAY

9

Mal bursts in through the door. Only Simon is in the room.

MAL

I don't remember anyone asking me about bringing guests onto my ship.

SIMON

Guests?

MAL

The girl with your sister. How'd you even sneak her on?

SIMON

I have no idea what you're talking about. There's a girl with River? On the ship?

MAL

I don't know what's going on, but we're going to figure it out mighty quick.

SIMON

What girl?

10 INT. PASSAGEWAY - DAY - CONT.

10

Mal begins to walk out of the room, Simon follows.

SIMON

I'm trying to figure this out. What does she even look like?

MAL

Brown hair, young. A girl. She looks like a girl and I don't know what she's doing on my ship.

SIMON

The girl from the shop. Can we take her back?

MAL

Can't think of a way I'm getting back into an Alliance port. Don't think Karoff would be too happy to hear about a detour.

SIMON

She's from the city. I don't know her, River must have met up with her or something.

MAL

Or something? You best be getting a hold on that sister or we're going to be rearranging this deal.

SIMON

I'm not sure what happened.

MAL

I can't do not sure anymore.

The two pass Inara in the passageway. She follows as the two quickly walk through.

SIMON

I'm sorry. I'm sure there's a reason behind this.

MAL

And I'm gonna need you to find that reason quick. No one here has time for these antics.

INARA

Is there some sort of a problem?

MAL

I think we need to be asking River that.

11 INT. RIVER'S QUARTER'S - DAY - CONT.

11

Mal stops in front of River's quarters and opens the door. River and the girl are sitting in the center of the room on floor. Simon walks up to River and kneels.

SIMON

River, who is this?

RIVER

She's my friend. My friend, she needed our help.

MAL

Who's the our you speak of?

SIMON

What does she need help with River?
Who is she?

GREDA

My name is Greda. I'm sorry for any
inconvenience I've caused. River
said you were going to House
Madrassa next.

MAL

Doesn't seem to matter to me where
we're going next. I'm not running a
transportation ship.

GREDA

I only want to go to House
Madrassa. I won't cause any
problems.

SIMON

What was stopping you from going
back before?

GREDA

My master, Karoff. He would never
let me go back. I never even told
him I wanted to.

MAL

So you're running away to a whore
house?

INARA

Go back?

GREDA

I used to live there, when I was
really young. It's been years
though.

INARA

Were you taken from there?

MAL

Taken? That some sort of a problem
there? Girls gettin' taken?

GREDA

I was so young, it's hard to
remember. I've been with Karoff for
a long time. We were going to be
married next month.

MAL

Well, I suspect I'm going to have an angry old man chasing after my ship sometime soon. He didn't seem like the kind that would take too kindly to his property running away.

GREDA

You know Karoff?

MAL

Not well.

(turning towards Simon)

Take her to the infirmary, I'll be off to solve this problem. This is the last problem you'll be bringing onto my ship though, you hear?

Simon only nods. Mal leaves the room.

12

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

12

Jayne, Wash, Zoe, Book, and Kaylee all sit around the table while Mal and Inara stand at the head of the table as Mal finishes telling them the situation with Greda.

MAL

So it seems we got ourselves a passenger for the moment being.

JAYNE

Is she paying anything?

ZOE

We can't take her back, Sir. No way the job will get done if Karoff finds out about this.

JAYNE

Would he pay more to get her back?

WASH

It isn't always about the money, Jayne.

JAYNE

Seemed like a fair question.

KAYLEE

Do you think she'd make it as a companion?

INARA

She might. She's from the House,
they would accept her back. And she
has an aura about her. She's
calming.

KAYLEE

We should give her a chance,
Captain. It ain't fair to just take
her back.

BOOK

It sounds like she's something of a
slave back in Lu'Weng.

MAL

There ain't much that sounds moral
about a bought marriage. I ain't
kickin' her off the ship yet. This
can't be messing up the job though.

JAYNE

Can't afford much to lose that
money.

MAL

Head out back to your places. We'll
figure out something new once I
talk with the doctor.

13 INT. PASSAGEWAY - DAY

13

Book, Jayne, and Kaylee are walking back to their bunks.

KAYLEE

I think it'd be great. It'll be so
much more exciting.

JAYNE

(interrupting)

I don't know what the hell that
girl is thinking. That man felt
like a crazy one. He's going to
come after her. We outta kick her
off this ship now.

BOOK

Now, we don't know that he even has
the power to know where she's at.
Maybe he wouldn't bother to come
after her.

JAYNE
 (snorting)
 He's got the power to do something,
 Precher. And he didn't seem like
 one of too much moral character.

KAYLEE
 Maybe she just wanted an adventure?

JAYNE
 (opens the door to his room)
 Nice to know innocents like you are
 still around.

14 INT. INARA'S SHUTTLE - NIGHT

14

Inara is looking at a shelf of books in the corner of her room. There is a knock at the door.

INARA
 Come in.

Mal enters the room. He stays near the door, leaning against it and crossing his arms.

MAL
 You don't seem all that excited
 about getting back to your home.

INARA
 Well I left, didn't I?

MAL
 And I've never thought it was much
 my business to ask why, but taking
 this girl there, I think I need to
 know a bit more about this place.

INARA
 I'm not sure where else we'd take
 her, but no. This place could be
 just as unsafe.

MAL
 (laughs out his nose)
 I don't think you got much of a
 look at Karoff. I don't trust that
 man worth a bit.

INARA
 He hadn't hurt her yet. Other
 places might be just as unsafe.

MAL

Well, he bought her. That's enough in my book. Not really sure where you even go about making a deal like that.

INARA

People always find a way.

MAL

What is it about this place? You've never even had an inkling to go back. See old friends?

INARA

(turning away from Mal)

You weren't wrong before. I like to remember it more pure. There are people there.

(pauses for a moment)

A person there.

MAL

What all is that supposed to mean? Someone hurt you there?

INARA

I just don't think we should take her there. She could be hurt. The chances are slim, but it could be her.

MAL

I'm not so sure that I know what this danger is. I think I'm going to need you to fill in some blanks if we're going to help out this girl.

INARA

I can't do this now, Mal, not with you.

SIMON

(over the intercom)

Captain, I think you're going to want to get down to the infirmary.

Mal begins to leave. Inara follows.

MAL

You, you wait here. We're going to finish this conversation in a few moments.

Inara opens her mouth, as if she is about to argue, but steps back in resignation. Mal shakes his head as he quickly leaves the room.

15 INT. INFIRMARY - NIGHT

15

When Mal enters the room, Simon is using a device that looks like a gun to pull something out from behind Greda's ear. She is crying into her hands. River is sitting in the corner of the room.

SIMON
(speaking through his teeth)
Hold still.

MAL
What's the trouble?

SIMON
(holding up a small radio)
She's got some sort of a tracker.
It was lodged in the skin behind
her ear. I'd bet the transmission
goes back to Karoff.

Mal rips the tracker out of Simon's hand. He throws it to the ground and steps on it.

MAL
Well, why in the hell wasn't she
checked out right when I sent her.
She's been on this ship for almost
six hours now.

SIMON
She feel asleep. I didn't want to
bother her. I didn't think there
was anything that could be on her.
There wasn't a chance of disease, I
just didn't see this coming.

GREDA
I didn't know anything about it, I
swear.

Jayne slams through the door.

JAYNE
What's this I hear about a problem?

SIMON

I'm not sure there's anyway to tell who's searching on the tracker. Particuarly now that it's been destroyed.

MAL

I don't think we need to spend too much time thinking about who would've tracked this girl.

GREDA

I really didn't think he'd come after me. He didn't even seem to care.

Greda continues to cry on the table. River rocks back and forth in the corner. She waits to speak until the room is silent.

RIVER

You're wrong. You're all wrong. Someone else, someone holding the magnifying glass. Someone searching us all. Always watching.

JAYNE

(shaking his head)

It's definitely Karoff. Who the hell else would it be?

RIVER

(she begins to shake her head as well)

Don't just look at the piece. Put the whole puzzle together.

Simon is looks at River.

SIMON

I'm not sure how accurate the GPS could have been. The device is old, like it's been there for years.

MAL

Well, it don't matter too much. Obviously related to Karoff if it's tracking the girl. Seems we're focused on the wrong problem.

GREDA

The man who took me. I never saw him, he could have. It could've been him.

SIMON

I guess we'll just have to wait and see if someone contacts us.

MAL

I'm not much about waiting. Jayne, come with me up to the bridge. Simon, clean this girl up. And, River, practice talking with a bit of sense.

Mal leaves the room in a hurry. Jayne follows a few steps behind

16

INT. PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

16

Inara is walking down the passageway, as Mal and Jayne leave the infirmary. She looks determined.

MAL

We'll need to be getting back to that conversation in a bit. There's been even more of a development in this situation.

JAYNE

(looking back and forth
between the two of them)
Conversation?

INARA

I need to talk to Greda. What was the call about?

JAYNE

The girl had a bug on her.
Someone's looking for her.

INARA

Well, wasn't that already partially assumed? I need to talk to her. I need to know her reasons for wanting to go back.

MAL

(gestures towards the room)
Well, by all means. You ain't gonna get anything from that girl though. All she wanted was out of that city, she wasn't thinking about any of the repercussions.

INARA
Would you? Would anyone?

MAL
I don't suppose. I don't know
though. Seems like there might have
been better ways.

INARA
I'm not sure a girl her age could
think that far ahead. I'm not sure
anyone could. I'll talk to her,
we'll find somewhere she can go.

MAL
Well, she's all yours. I'll find
you later.

Mal and Inara begin to walk again in opposite directions.
Jayne hangs behind for a minute, looking puzzled before
running to catch up with Mal.

17 INT. INFIRMARY - NIGHT

17

Simon and River are still in the infirmary with Greda when
Inara enters.

INARA
Simon, could I by chance talk with
Greda. About Sihnon?

SIMON
(flustered)
Yes, yes. I don't really have
anything left to look at. She's
healthy.

Simon continues to clean up.

INARA
I kind of wanted to talk just her
and I if that's alright, Simon.

SIMON
Oh, oh. Yes, of course. River,
let's go to bed.

INARA
Thank you.

Simon finishes collecting his things and he and River leave
the room.

GREDA

I'm sorry that I've burdened you all so much. This really isn't what I meant.

INARA

No one is upset with you, we just don't know the best way to help you.

GREDA

Everything was just so awful. The idea of being married to him, being with him. I, I couldn't do it. I wanted to be back at the House

INARA

What makes you want to go to back to House Madrassa?

GREDA

I know what some people think. But I don't know. There's something pure about it. I was taken when I was young, but my memories are so wonderful.

INARA

I don't think you would be bad for it. You seem mature. How old are you?

GREDA

Only 13. I know I look older. I know that's part of the reason Karoff wanted me. But I'm not a woman yet. I'd be right to start again at the House again. I'm the age to start companion lessons.

INARA

I'm not sure that you'd find everything you're looking for there. It isn't as perfect as you remember.

GREDA

I was kidnapped from there, I know it isn't perfect.

INARA

The lifestyle itself, the experiences the mindset. All of

(MORE)

INARA (cont'd)
that is wonderful. But, there is no
perfect place.

GREDA
It could be though.

INARA
It could be.

The two sit in silence for a moment, Inara still holding
Greda's hand.

GREDA
I want to be safe.

INARA
I know, I know. You should go to
bed though. It has been a long day
for you. Where are you staying
tonight?

GREDA
Can I just sleep here?

INARA
(standing)
If you're comfortable.
(she begins to back out of the
room)
Good night, we'll get this all
sorted out tomorrow.

Inara turns off the light and backs out of the door.

18 INT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

18

MAL
We haven't received any waves?

WASH
Nothing has come in.

MAL
It's possible that he's waiting for
some reason.

ZOE
Well his partner was at the House.
Is it possible that he's just
waiting to leave Greda with him?

MAL

What was his name?

ZOE

Olav Tanner, Sir. It was mentioned that he was also an instructor at House Madrassa.

MAL

And what would a companion instructor be illegally trading. We probably should've been asking that awhile ago. Zoe, come with me. Wash, we're going to make the rounds of the ship. Put everything in order in case we're stopped. Hit the intercom if anything goes wrong. Jayne you go down to the cargo bay, make sure the goods are locked up safe.

WASH

Yes, sir.

MAL

We can't get slowed down too much. If it's at all a possibility, it'd be great to get rid of these goods before we have to worry about the girl.

ZOE

Do you think there's anyway that he hasn't mentioned it to his partner?

JAYNE

They aren't particularly close in space.

MAL

No, and communication would be hard with how poor Nadir's village was. Hopefully, one of them has other things to focus on.

WASH

(looking down at the dashboard)

Uh, Captain, something's coming in.

MAL

Who is it?

WASH

It's just a message.
 (reading the message)
 I'll be taking the girl. I'll take
 care of her

MAL

And who's it from?

WASH

Tanner.

MAL

I ain't doing this over words.
 (pushing a button on the
 dashboard)
 This is Captain speaking, you got
 something to say, tell me now.

A video appears accross the dashboard, replacing the message. The man has a thick mustache and his cheek bones protrude from his face. He speaks with a laugh behind each word.

OLAV

Well, well. Mr.Reynolds.

MAL

Captain Reynolds. Who in the hell
 is this girl?

OLAV

She'll be fine. I'm only going to
 take her back where she belongs.

MAL

See, I'm thinking she belongs in
 her home.

OLAV

I think our defintions of home
 might be conflicting, Mr.Reynolds.

The conversation is interrupted as River runs into the Bridge. She has a fork in her hand and quickly runs it through the dashboard screen, short circuiting the picture. Olav's face disappears in lines.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

19 INT. BRIDE - NIGHT - CONT.

19

MAL
(ripping the fork out of
River's hand)
No, no, no.

WASH
(checking buttons on the
dashboard)
Everything but the message board
looks alright.

MAL
She knows what she's doing, only
breakin' what she needs.
(turning to River)
Thought you took to that girl, now
you're cutting off the only way we
might get information.

RIVER
It won't work. He doesn't belong
anywhere. There is no where to go.

JAYNE
What in the hell? Where's the
brother?

MAL
Zoe, take her to her damn room. And
lock her in there. I'm not dealing
with any of this while I fix
problems she's bringing on my ship.

ZOE
There's no way I'm going to be able
to get that case to follow me, Sir.
I'm going to get the doctor.

Book walks into the room.

BOOK
Noise woke me from sleep.
(turning to River)
Let's go off to bed, River.

River stands slowly. She looks down as she begins to follow
Book.

MAL

Thank you, Preacher. Zoe follow them. Make sure she's locked up somewhere.

Zoe, Book, and River leave the room.

JAYNE

Karoff must've tipped him off. There ain't no way we're getting this job done without gettin' rid that girl.

MAL

I'm not so sure about that myself.

WASH

I hate to add to your long list of burdens, but with the amount of fuel we've got left, we really can't afford to skip this job. We'll need the money to fuel up soon.

MAL

How much time we got left until landing?

WASH

Not enough to out run Olav if we steal his cargo. We'll be there early morning.

MAL

Something tells me this cargo ain't something we want on our ship at all.

Mal opens the door to the bridge.

MAL

We're going to take this one head on. Wash, tell him we're coming.

JAYNE

Is there any reason we can't just leave this girl somewhere? She ain't really our problem.

MAL

I don't know if that's the case, Jayne. Stop asking questions. Grab Zoe and get to the cargo bay. We're going to take a look at that cargo.

Kaylee and Book are sitting at the table. Book is reading his Bible, Kaylee is flipping through a very beat up paperback novel. Mal quickly walks through. Book continues to read as Kaylee talks to Mal

KAYLEE

You alright, Captain?

MAL

You're both up rather late. We've got an early morning at the House.

KAYLEE

I know! I just can't sleep thinking about seeing that academy where Inara came from. I just bet it's so glamorous.

MAL

Speaking of her, have you seen Inara anywhere close?

BOOK

She's looked a bit worn out all day, I think she went off to bed.

MAL

Well, alright. Don't stay up too much later.

Mal leaves the room. Both Kaylee and Book pick back up their books.

KAYLEE

Preacher, what is it you like so much about the Bible?

BOOK

I'm not sure that like is the right word. I read it every day as a guideline. It tells what's wrong and right.

KAYLEE

But through stories, though, right? I've never read it, but I know some of the stories.

BOOK

Yes, there are quite a few stories. I guess it is rather easy to get lost in them.

KAYLEE

Oh, I just love that. Stories that take you away.

BOOK

What are you reading there?

KAYLEE

Oh, this? It's old, it was my dad's. I only took this one book on the ship when the captain hired me. It was my favorite to read back home.

BOOK

Did you read a lot?

KAYLEE

I tried, it's the easiest way to get away when you can't. Now I guess I don't need to so much though.

BOOK

No, no I guess you don't.

Both begin to read again.

21 INT. INARA'S SHUTTLE - NIGHT

21

Inara is sitting in the corner of the room looking through a photo album. The pictures are her and other girls, all when they were teenagers. They are friends from House Madrassa. She flips the page and there is a photo of her with Olav. His arm is wrapped around her as they pose for the photo. Inara begins to cry at the sight of this. There is a knock on the door.

MAL

I'm sorry, I don't mean to keep you up. Some stuff come in that I thought you'd want to know about.

INARA

No, thank you. Do we know anything more about the tracker?

MAL

There was a wave. From Olav. He seems to have taken interest in the girl.

INARA

Olav?

MAL

You seem to have an idea of him.

INARA

Know him? Yes. Yes, I know him. I haven't spoken with anyone from the House though since I've left.

MAL

But still, a familiar face might convince him to let the girl off the hook. I'm not sure how else we're going to keep him from sending her back to Karoff.

INARA

I can't talk to him. He's not a good man, Mal. There's something else here.

MAL

Good man or not, we don't have the resources to run with this girl and he's got the power to take her back right now.

INARA

He won't care what I have to say. It isn't worth the time.

MAL

(pausing for a moment)

Inara, I'm not trying to be intrusive here. But I have a suspicion that something else is going on here. I can't help anyone if I don't know what's going on.

INARA

I wouldn't even know where to start with him. He's an evil man, Mal. I thought he'd move on from the academy, but he's been there since my last year.

MAL

He was your teacher?

INARA

He was a teacher, not mine. But he took a special interest in me. We went out everywhere his first few weeks on Sihnon.

MAL

Like went out?

INARA

I knew he was older. And I knew that it wasn't going to last. Dating isn't really open in my field. But his presence made me feel safe.

MAL

I'm not so much liking the direction of this story.

INARA

I should've known. But it took a lot away from me. It's a burden to be there. I don't want to talk with him. I just can't believe he's still there.

Mal moves to a chair, putting his hands to his forehead. A look of frustration covers his face.

MAL

I don't even know where to start.

INARA

You don't have to start anywhere. This doesn't have anything to do with you.

MAL

Nothing to do with me?
 (turning to walk out the door)
 We'll be landing in the hour. You stay on the ship though. I've got to get to the cargo bay.

Simon peaks through the door of the infirmary to check on Greda. He finds that she is awake, looking at some of the tools on the counter.

SIMON
Unable to sleep?

GREDA
Oh, yes. I'm so tired, but it's
nice here. So different. Thank you
for all your help.

Simon begins to walk back out, but instead lingers in the doorway.

SIMON
You feeling alright?

GREDA
Yes. It's nice to know I'm going
back.

SIMON
I'm sorry. I'm sorry about River,
if she was too intrusive or if she
made you feel uncomfortable. She
really can't help it.

GREDA
All I wanted was to leave. River
was a comfort.

SIMON
I know that's all she thought she
was doing, all this is beyond her
focus right now

GREDA
River has given me everything I
ever wanted. I wish I knew how she
knew to approach me. How she knew I
needed help. I'm so grateful, but I
don't know how she knew.

SIMON
None of us quite know how
River...works.
(reaching for the door)
Good night.

Greda smiles and climbs into the bed. Simon turns off the light.

Jayne and Zoe are both waiting as Mal enters the cargo bay.

ZOE

I'm not sure it would be wise to be looking at any of the cargo, sir. There was a pretty strict request to refrain from that. We could wait until we're at least on the planet. Maybe 'til we're paid.

JAYNE

And I don't think we need reminding that this money coming in is quite necessary.

MAL

I'm tired of guessing what sort of cargo a man like that would have us carrying. We're going to gauge the morality of this job before we land on at that House.

JAYNE

I don't see no problem with being immoral if we get paid.

MAL

I'll decide if there's a problem.

Jayne and Zoe are silent for the rest of the walk to the storage. The three of them pull the box out together. Mal reaches in further and pulls out a crow bar.

JAYNE

If we're going to have to be using a crow bar, they're gonna know we opened the damn box.

MAL

If I had to take some guesses about the content of this box, I'm not thinking I'd care either way what they know. You want to do the honors?

Jayne takes the crow bar and pries off the lid. Mal, Zoe, and Jayne peak over the edges of the box to reveal a container similar to that which River had originally been transported in. It is much more primitive, but two, weak shivering bodies are curled in the fetal position in the container. They are both young children. Mal, Zoe, and Jayne all take a step back.

ACT 3

24 INT. CARGO BAY - NIGHT

24

After having stepped back from the open cargo box, Mal and Zoe move slightly closer to better access the damage. Jayne stays as far away as he can to access the situation. All look disturbed, but Jayne looks the most scared.

JAYNE

What in the hell is that?

MAL

Seems lie we outta be asking who the hell. Don't touch anything, Jayne?

JAYNE

Why would I do that?!

MAL

I don't want you waking them up, scaring them.

(over intercomm)

We're in need of a doctor here in the cargo bay. Quickly.

ZOE

They're alive. It doesn't look like any precautions were taken dropping them in here. It looks like there were just left in the box to freeze.

MAL

We'll know in just a second.

JAYNE

You think someone is looking for the two of them? Maybe we can get the money in a reward.

MAL

There ain't no money in this job. More important things than money right now, Jayne.

JAYNE

And for those more important things, we need some money.

MAL

Shut it.

Simon comes running into the cargo bay. Greda follows just behind.

MAL

We've seem to have made a disturbing discovery, doctor.

Simon walks over to the box. His eyes widen as he notes the two people inside.

SIMON

This version, this type of box isn't meant to house people like that.

(looks for a pulse on the closest body)

When did you open the box?

MAL

Just a few minutes ago, right before we called.

ZOE

About five minutes ago.

SIMON

They might still be able to make it. They should've woken up naturally though by now, the cold should be wearing off.

MAL

Something wrong with the box?

SIMON

They're young. And the box is old. Not meant for two people. Or usually people at all.

(looking down)

They should be reacting to the oxygen more. It should be like when we let River out. Immediate.

JAYNE

Well, what the hell does Tanner want with two dead kids?

ZOE

I don't imagine he planned for them to be dead.

MAL

Karoff was the transport man. I can't image Tanner'll be too happy when we arrive with two decesed young girls.

SIMON

Let's get them to the infirmary.

MAL

Jayne and I got the box. Go get all your supplies ready in the infirmary.

Simon runs out of the room. Mal calls Greda over from the door to the cargo bay.

MAL

Greda, do you know either of these two girls here.

Greda only shakes her head and Mal nods. Jayne and Mal lift the box together. Even with the lid off and moving, the children inside do not stir.

25

INT. INFIRMARY - NIGHT

25

Jayne and Mal drop the box in the center of the room. Zoe walks in behind them. Together the two men lay the two children, now who they are sure are both girls out on the table. Simon covers them with blankets.

MAL

Zoe, Jayne, we'll best be used in the bridge now. Simon, you can handle it here? Your sister and Greda were told to stay out.

SIMON

I can handle it.

MAL

Alright, then.

(moves to the intercom, hits it)

I want to inform you all that we'll be landing at the House tomorrow morning. But plans have changed, the trip will be shortened and you are not to leave your bunks for the duration of the time we are on planent. I'm going to repeat myself

(MORE)

MAL (cont'd)
 again. Do not leave your bunks
 while we're docked on Sihnon,
 unless I direct you other wise.
 Thank you.

Mal, Zoe, and Jayne all move to walk towards the door. Simon
 maneuvers himself in front of Mal, cutting off his ability
 to get to the door.

SIMON
 (whispering)
 I'm not sure what the chances of
 them making it are. It certainly
 isn't very high.

MAL
 Do what you can do. And don't be
 talking like that in front of those
 girls.

26 INT. PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

26

The two men are walking down the passageway.

JAYNE
 Do I still have to be going on this
 meet up?

MAL
 Not sure why you're not already
 loading up your guns, Jayne.

JAYNE
 I already know we ain't gettin' any
 money, I'm just not sure why we
 ain't trying to run. That's what's
 gonna happen anyways.

MAL
 (stops and turns to look at
 Jayne)
 We'll give the man a chance to talk
 his peace. We'll tell him what we
 found. He outta know he's been
 caught.
 (beginning to walk again)
 Even before I figure out what to do
 about it.

Mal enters the bridge with Jayne following quickly afterwards. Wash is concentrated on the dashboard in front of him.

MAL

Wash, how much longer do we have until landing.

WASH

Well.

MAL

Wash, don't talk like that. Sun just came up and already way more bad happening around than I like.

WASH

Well, I hate to disappoint you further, captain. But we've got some kind of a problem with a neighboring ship.

MAL

A problem?

WASH

Difficult to perceive with a fork hole in my dash, but some kind of a transport ship. Looks in need of help.

JAYNE

We ain't got much room for sharing. We've barely got enough for us and all of our current guests.

WASH

It looks like they sent a call for help late I think it was some kind of an oxygen problem.

MAL

They might've had a leak. We wouldn't have been able to do much for them.

JAYNE

Maybe they can do something for us. Just cause they got no oxygen doesn't mean they're lacking anything else.

WASH

It looks like it was a transport vessel. Probably had some extra fuel aboard.

JAYNE

A cushion before this throwdown you keep warning me about. Would be nice to make a little money this week.

MAL

Does it look friendly? An in and out job, we're not up on a lot of time.

WASH

I don't see any sight of reavers based on this wave. Hard to tell if there'll be anyone alive though. Could be gruesome.

JAYNE

Can we go back to this reaver thing?

MAL

We can do gruesome. If it's in and out, we can do gruesome. Jayne, let's go get suited up.

JAYNE

(as they walk out)

Is there anyway to be sure about this reaver thing? I've got an awful bad feeling about this whole plan.

28

INT. INFIRMARY - DAY

28

Simon is looking over some numbers on the computer in front of him. The two girls still lie motionless on the table. Mal comes in through the door.

MAL

How are they?

SIMON

There's still no movement. I might be able to keep them alive for the day, but if they don't wake up by then. I don't know.

MAL

But they're alive still?

SIMON

Technically, yes. Just barely though.

MAL

Do you're best. We're going to be back soon.

SIMON

Where are you?

(pausing)

You know what? Never mind. I'll be here.

MAL

Alright. And make sure your sister and Greda are staying in her bunk. We'll be back within the hour and then we'll be landing. I don't need more trouble then we'll already be getting today.

SIMON

I'll go talk to them once I'm done running this test.

MAL

Alright. Zoe will still be on the ship, everyone else is still ordered to stay in their quarters.

Mal leaves the room. Simon looks even more puzzled as he continues to look at the numbers on the computer. Kaylee enters the room shortly after Mal leaves.

SIMON

The captain wants everyone in their quarters. It isn't safe for you to be here right now.

KAYLEE

I'm fine, Simon. I'm worried about you. And I'm worried about what's going on on this ship. What's happening with the cargo and where is the captain going now.

SIMON

I think he's trying to keep people out of the loop in case we have

(MORE)

SIMON (cont'd)
 encounters when we land. He didn't
 tell me where he and Jayne are off
 to now. I don't have the slightest
 idea.

KAYLEE
 Well, the ship is docking, so that
 might have something to do with
 their mission.

SIMON
 But, we're not supposed to be at
 the House for a few hours. They
 aren't awake yet.

KAYLEE
 I said docking, not landing. There
 must be another ship. I've been
 telling the captain all month that
 this is going to be a problem. Even
 when were in the city, he wouldn't
 by more.

SIMON
 He only leaves you out because he's
 worried. We all know how smart you
 are.
 (he moves closer to her)
 I'm not sure how else to convince
 you that we all really do think
 you're smart.

He's about to put his hand on her face when one of the
 machine's attached to the comotose girls begins to blink and
 beep.

SIMON
 This is not going well.
 (shooting a shot of adreniline
 into each girl's arm)
 I've tried everything.

KAYLEE
 Are, are they dead?

SIMON
 Not yet, but they'll die. They
 should've woken up hours ago. Their
 tempertures weren't properly
 dropped, they were just shoved in.
 They froze to death.

29

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

29

Mal, Zoe, and Jayne are at the table preparing gun for Mal and Jayne, Wash is standing in the passageway.

MAL

Wash, I need you in the bridge. Zoe is going to stay down here. Jayne and I will be in and out.

JAYNE

I'm still not sure why we can't confirm there ain't no reavers on the ship.

MAL

We'll check for survivors and then hopefully pick up some quick cargo.

JAYNE

Still don't seem worth it to me.

MAL

We ain't gonna be dependent on a guy like Olav. I'm not really sure when you got any say in what we're doing.

JAYNE

Alright, alright. Let's just get this over with. How do we know they got any money anyways?

WASH

It was a transport ship. There's bound to be something valuable in the cargo. I'm going up now. We'll dock in five minutes.

MAL

Zoe, go make sure we got everyone in their bunks. Last thing I need is someone wondering around.

ZOE

Yes, sir.

MAL

Let's get going, Jayne. Wash'll be up there any minute and we still need to get suited up.

JAYNE

I swear, if a reaver kills me in that damn suit.

30 INT. AIR LOCK - DAY

30

Mal and Jayne are finishing putting on the oxygen suits. As Mal puts on the helmet, there is a loud click on the other side of the door. He opens the air lock to the passageway onto the other ship. There is a Whoosh as the door opens. They move to the other side and open the door to get onto the ship. It is clear there has been a lot of destruction, but it does not look similar to the reaver attacks they have seen before.

JAYNE

You sure this is a transport ship?
I ain't seeing no dead bodies
anywhere.

MAL

They might all be in one room.
Let's head up. Find the backroom.

They are not passing a single body or sign that anyone has died or even been on this ship.

JAYNE

What kind of transport ship don't
have any people?

MAL

I'm thinking this ain't a transport
ship.

JAYNE

You think we'd be better off
heading back?

MAL

And I think we best watch our step
while we do so.

As he finishes Mal sentence, a man comes up and knocks Jayne off balance. As he smacks into the wall his helmet is cracked and falls off his head. Mal immediately reaches for his gun and shoots the attacker. He turns and see Jayne is able to breathe as normal. Mal takes off his own helmet.

MAL

Jayne! We gotta get going. Now, we
got trouble.

There is no response from Jayne and he is not moving. Mal attempts to move him, but he is so much taller, Mal is unable to carry him. He removes his own suit and is able to drag Jayne through the, now more manuverable, passageway back onto the ship. When Mal gets to the door of Serenity, he notices that it has been left open. Mal drags Jayne out of the airlock, leaves Jayne in the cargo bay and runs up to the intercom. He hears a voice overhead before he arrives.

OLAV

(over the intercom)

Oh, Mr. Reynolds. I'd love to have a chat with you. I'm here, in Ms.Kaylee's room.

31 INT. PASSAGEWAY - DAY 31

Mal runs through the passageways to get to Kaylee's bunk.

32 INT. KAYLEE'S BUNK - DAY 32

Mal slams open the door and finds an older man with Kaylee at gun point on her hammock bed. Her hands are tied behind her back and her mouth is taped over. She shakes her head.

OLAV

I think you have some things that belong to me, Mr. Reynolds.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT 4

33 INT. PASSAGEWAY - DAY 33

Inara is running through the passageways to get to Kaylee's room.

34 INT. KAYLEE'S BUNK - DAY 34

Inara runs in, pushing in front of Mal.

INARA

Don't do this.

OLAV

Inara? I haven't seen you, since you left the house.

INARA

What are you doing? What are you doing here?

OLAV

(continues to press the gun against Kaylee's head)

Well, Inara, I never thought much to include you in my business ventures. My trade, if you will. It didn't seem to really effect our relationship.

MAL

Relationship?

INARA

That's what you call a relationship?

OLAV

What would you call it?

INARA

You took advantage of me. You didn't give me a choice.

OLAV

Tomato, tomato. Sure, I took advantage of you.

INARA

I was so young.

Olav shrugs his shoulders. He turns back to Mal. Mal reaches for his weapon, but realizes it is not in his holster. It was left with the space suit and Jayne. Kaylee continues crying. Olav grabs the novel off her desk, the one she was reading earlier with Book, and hits her in the back of the head.

OLAV

While this is an interesting surprise, I didn't come here to talk with old flings. I came here to get my cargo. I came here to get my girls. My property, Mr. Reynolds.

MAL

Cargo? You mean the two dying girls in the freezer box? That's a strange way to use the word cargo.

OLAV

They're two girls from Nadir. We told you the trade was illegal, this shouldn't come as a surprise.

MAL

They're dying. And at least one of their families thinks they're dead. That's past illegal.

OLAV

You run an illegal ship! You carry illegal goods for illegal money.

(he stands, still holding the gun at Kaylee, but moving towards Mal)

Who are you to tell me I'm not moral, not up to your standards? Standards!

He continues his manic laughter, the gun shaking in Kaylee's face.

MAL

Who are the girls? Where are you taking them?

OLAV

You might have higher standards than a low life like me, but don't

(MORE)

OLAV (cont'd)

be that innocent. I'm going to sell them. Just like I did the other stoway on this ship to Karoff.

INARA

Greda was one of your foster girls.

OLAV

I guess that's what she'd say. Take them while they're young, sell them when they're 12. They always think their parents are dead or something awful. Guess it's lucky kids can't remember much. It doesn't really matter.

INARA

She's a good girl.

OLAV

Aren't they all, sweetheart, aren't they all?

MAL

I hate putting a damper on your business with all my moral standing, but I'm gonna tell you now, you're not takin any of those girls off this ship.

OLAV

Well, Mr.Reynolds. I'm sure you're a man of your word, but I'm not sure how you plan to keep all these promises. You don't even have a gun to defend the women of this ship.

Olav raises his gun as if he is about to shoot Kaylee, but suddenly turns and runs past Mal. Mal runs after him, while Inara goes to untie Kaylee.

INARA

Did he hurt you?

KAYLEE

No, no. Where do you reckon he'd be going? He asked me where the girls were, but I didn't tell him nothin'.

INARA

You're fine, you're fine.
It's best left to Mal. You
stay here. I'm going to try and
find Greda.

35 INT. PASSAGEWAY - DAY 35

Mal chases Olav through the passageways. They pause once they get to the dining hall.

36 INT. DINING HALL - DAY 36

The two men are standing on opposite sides of the dining room table. Mal grabs a small hand gun that has been left on a chair from when they were packing guns earlier. He hopes Olav has not noticed.

OLAV

Sloopy work by Karoff is not going to be the way my business crumbles. I won't let you take away my life's worth.

MAL

You seem to think mighty high of yourself calling it a business. Moving around little kids don't sounds like much of a business to me. Sounds like stealing.

OLAV

(slams his hands on the table)
This is my life. I will not have you mock me and steal from me. You think you've created a family here, a home. You're a criminal. I'm a criminal. Let me on my way.

Olav raises the gun to Mal, his hands shaking.

MAL

You don't look too much confident with that gun there? You ever killed a man or do you only commit your crimes from behind the scenes? You even know how to use a gun, Mr. Olav?

OLAV

Shut up! Shut up! Where are my girls?

MAL

And what about those girls? It doesn't matter at all how their thinking about this purpose of theirs. Seems you've dedicated your life to a half thought out plan.

OLAV

You don't know anything! Where are they?

MAL

If you're gonna shoot me, then do it! Stop wasting our time. I'm not going to give you those girls.

Mal begins to raise a run behind his back. His finger is on the trigger. There are footsteps and Greda walks in from the hallway.

GREDA

Professor?

MAL

Professor? Your lies are good. How many names do you have, Professor?

OLAV

Don't mock me. How could you understand any of this? A petty criminal in his make shift home.

MAL

At least I've got a home. I think it's pretty obvious who's got it right here.

As Mal is about to shoot, Olav reaches up the gun and quickly shoots Greda who falls immediately. Mal shoots Olav just moments later. Inara comes running up the hallway. She begins to cry into Mal's shoulder as they look at the victims in their kitchen.

37

INT. INFIRMARY - NIGHT

37

Simon is running back and forth between the bodies in the infirmary when Mal enters.

MAL

How's it going, Doctor?

SIMON

Well, I don't have enough beds to accomadate all the decesed people in my infirmary. The only living person I have in here is this lug and he hasn't moved in an hour. All he wants to do is sleep.

(he looks up at Mal)

I've had better days.

MAL

I think we all have. I can't imagine it's too easy working with such hopeless cases.

SIMON

I just thought we'd be able to save them. They both stayed alive so much longer than they should've.

MAL

Can I ask you a question about the girl?

SIMON

Greda?

MAL

Yea. The girl. Did she go quick? She came out so fast and I just.

SIMON

He was crazy. You couldn't have saved her. The whole situation, it was just tragic.

MAL

But, she died quick?

SIMON

He hit her in the face. She wouldn't even had been concious to feel any pain if there had been any. It was instant.

MAL

Thank you. You ever wonder if people say that about your sister?

SIMON

What do people say about my sister?

MAL

Too tragic. All that you just said.

SIMON

I don't know, I've never thought about it that way. When it's someone you love, you just have to help them.

MAL

Should be like that with everyone. You just have to help.

Simon nods. Mal leaves the Infirmary.

38

EXT. SIHNON - LANDING AREA - DAY

38

The group hangs around the Landing Area. Inara is out with professors and students at House Madrassa. Mal and Kaylee talk while they sit just outside the ship.

KAYLEE

I just can't believe Inara's never been back. It's just so beautiful here. I don't think I'd ever leave if I could be from here.

MAL

I'm not so sure you'd say that if you were from here. Seems you might be restless wherever you call home.

KAYLEE

I don't know, look at the mountains.

MAL

Might be more to the story than Inara likes to tell. There's always a little bit more to the story.

KAYLEE

You think that Greda would've made it as a companion, Captain?

MAL

I think she could've. Inara thought so at least and I'm inclined to trust anyone more on the matter.

Jayne walks outside tries to venture down the landing area to the ground.

JAYNE

I think that doctor fixed me wrong. Something's still wrong with my head here.

MAL

He said you have a concussion. They hit you with a hammer or something like it.

JAYNE

The light though, I can barely stand it. Ain't helpin' that I haven't been to the country side in as many moons as I can remember.

MAL

Than go back inside.

JAYNE

Gotta take it while I can. Something tells me I ain't gonna get to come back to a planet like this for a long while.

MAL

Probably ain't a bad assumption. I'm going to be avoiding the inner planets for awhile after this journey.

KAYLEE

Aw, but you just can't beat this view.

MAL

Can't argue with you there, Kaylee. Can't argue with you there.