

[Mage and Machine theme plays.]

Announcer: **Mage and Machine. Season Two, Episode Six: "Curiosity"**

[The chow hall at the dig site. Lots of folks around having lunch.]

ELINOR: (as "Nora") (munching) Hm. Is it just me, or does the bread taste less like cardboard today?

HAWTHORN: It's probably because the Royal Sorceress is here. Gotta pretend like we're using our food budget, you know?

ELINOR: (as "Nora") Well, it's not like *she's* eating reheated sweetroot stew for lunch with us peons.

HAWTHORN: I think Breeley's wining-and-dining her in the VIP tent.

KAILIRA: Excuse me ... Hawthorn, right? Can I sit here?

HAWTHORN: (startled) A-Apprentice!

KAILIRA: (sigh) I *said* you can call me Kai, remember.

ELINOR: (as "Nora") Oh, of course you can sit here! I mean, if you don't mind the suspicious stains on the table.

KAILIRA: I don't mind.

[Kai sits down with a plate of food.]

ELINOR: (as "Nora") Kai, huh? I'm Nora. How come you're out here instead of eating the good stuff?

KAILIRA: I ... needed some air. And maybe someone closer to my age to talk to.

HAWTHORN: Well, we've got that at least.

ELINOR: (as "Nora") Just so you know ... if you dip the bread in the stew, it

almost becomes edible.

KAILIRA: (small chuckle) Thanks for the tip.

HAWTHORN: By the way, I'm sorry if I got a little weird earlier. It's just, I've never actually met someone from the Hall of Magic before.

KAILIRA: (under her breath) Lucky you.

ELINOR: (as "Nora") Oh right, magic's your hobby isn't it?

HAWTHORN: (embarrassed) Well, I wouldn't say magic *itself*. I mean, I can't *do* any. I just like learning about it. (beat) But obviously, nothing on your level, Kai.

KAILIRA: (curious despite herself) You can't do *any* magic? Not even a spell or two?

HAWTHORN: Oh goodness no. All the study that would take -- I already busted my ass to get into Hall Tech, I don't have time to go to a magical academy on top of that.

KAILIRA: (internal eye-roll) (quietly) Riiight. *Hallameran* magic.

HAWTHORN: So I just, you know, read some books in my spare time. (beat) That's why I took this summer internship. Seeing firsthand the kinds of things the ancient Senexians accomplished with magic ... it's amazing.

KAILIRA: You don't know the half of it.

ELINOR: (as "Nora") You must have learned a lot about Senexia from working with Lady Chandley.

KAILIRA: Because everyone calls *her* the country's greatest expert, you mean.

ELINOR: (as "Nora") (slyly probing) It's weird, though. In that meeting it, uh, almost looked like ... you knew *more* than she did.

HAWTHORN: Nora, do you have any idea how many papers her ladyship has written? The research she's done? Ah, no disrespect intended, Kai. But it'd take *years* to catch up to that kind of scholarship.

KAILIRA: (dryly) Several centuries, even.

HAWTHORN: See?

ELINOR: (as "Nora") Yeah ... sorry. I, uh, I have to admit, I didn't know the Royal Sorceress had an apprentice so young.

KAILIRA: I'm a special case. (beat) Let's not talk about me. Uh, what do you two do around here? Hawthorn, you do ... tech ... stuff, right?

ELINOR: (as "Nora") He's *amazing* with computers. I just, y'know, try to help out when I can.

HAWTHORN: Ah, you always sell yourself short. (to Kai) Nora's a great assistant. I wouldn't be able to keep the data flowing without her help.

KAILIRA: You mentioned you were going to Hallamere Tech.

HAWTHORN: I start there in the fall, yeah.

KAILIRA: What's ... uh wait, how do you say, um ... oh, uh, what's your major?

HAWTHORN: Computer science. Big surprise, right?

KAILIRA: How about you, Nora?

ELINOR: (as "Nora") Oh, I'm not really the scholarly type, you know.

HAWTHORN: I guess if you're already the Royal Sorceress's apprentice you're pretty much beyond college.

KAILIRA: My education's been, uh ... complicated. (sigh) Honestly, I wish I could go to college like everyone else my age. But that's not going to happen.

HAWTHORN: Why not?

KAILIRA: Lady Chandley, that's why not.

[right on cue, Chandley's footsteps can be heard.]

ELINOR: (as "Nora") I don't understand, why would she keep you from --

KAILIRA: (interrupting) Thanks for letting me sit with you, guys, but I'd better get back to --

CHANDLEY: Apprentice Kailira.

KAILIRA: (sigh) Yes, my lady?

CHANDLEY: The dig team has reached a reinforced door in the basement of Building 58.

[Chandley pulls out some papers and hands them over.]

CHANDLEY: Here. There's a picture with the markings on it -- what can you tell me about them?

KAILIRA: (reading the markings) *Anlik laetan erlaba*. "Authorized personnel only."

CHANDLEY: (with some annoyance) Yes, I can read that much. It's *this* part I'm interested in. The symbols are half worn away.

KAILIRA: (reading with some difficulty) Uh, *gevar ... altora ... porwil*. (quiet amazement) That's it. That's the generator room.

CHANDLEY: Excellent. Breeley, how soon can we get in there?

BREELEY: I've got the team clearing the hallway right now. They should be done by this evening. Tomorrow we can start figuring out how best to cut through the door.

KAILIRA: If the power's still on, all you need is --

CHANDLEY: (ignoring Kai) Do we have any indications of whether the inside will need to be dug out as well?

BREELEY: The radar tells us there's little to no debris on the other side of the door. It must've been shut tight when the building was buried.

KAILIRA: (trying again to get a word in) Those rooms were sealed --

CHANDLEY: That will save us time, at least. (beat) Let me know the moment work starts in the morning. I want to oversee everything personally.

BREELEY: You will be the first to know, Lady Chandley.

KAILIRA: I'd like to see it too.

CHANDLEY: (dismissively) That won't be necessary, Apprentice. Your personal

interests can wait until the generator room has been documented and secured.

KAILIRA: (bitter) Of course.

[Chandley, Kai, and Breeley walk off.]

ELINOR: (as "Nora") Huh. That was a little strange, don't you think? The nation's expert on Senexia was asking her own apprentice to tell her what was written on the door.

HAWTHORN: The symbols were almost worn away, though.

ELINOR: (as "Nora") (pretending to be convinced) Oh, right. Yeah. That must be it. (beat) Well, I think I've hit the limit of what's edible on this plate. I'm gonna go grab a quick nap. Call me if you need me.

HAWTHORN: Sure thing!

[Plinio's shop. He's busy tinkering with something complicated.]

PLINIO: [hums to himself]

[His phone rings, and he puts it on speaker.]

PLINIO: Orellano Cybernetics.

ELINOR: (on phone) (as herself, not pretending to be "Nora") Thought I'd check in.

PLINIO: Afternoon, Elinor. Mack's passed out on the couch, but I can go kick him for you.

ELINOR: (on phone) I'm not checking in with *him*.

PLINIO: Ah. Well, I've got you on speaker because I'm in the middle of recalibrating some spinal relays.

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ELINOR: (on phone) The job's going down tonight. Will he be ready?

PLINIO: I'm not gonna BS you, it'll be tight. But I got someone to put his eye back in, and that was one thing I couldn't do in-house. If my hands and my coffee hold out, he'll be ready.

ELINOR: (on phone) Good to hear. (beat) This is why I'm checking in with you and not him. I know I can trust you to be honest.

PLINIO: Well, it's a blessing and a curse.

ELINOR: (on phone) That said ... I'm curious about something, Mr. Orellano.

PLINIO: Uh oh. Somebody warn the cats.

ELINOR: (on phone) Seems to me that over the last couple of years you've been changing up your client list. Switching to, mm, let's say "lower-paying" clientele. (beat) Not answering your back door because you know the kind of jobs that ring that bell.

PLINIO: Call it what it is, Elinor. I've been trying to go legit.

ELINOR: (on phone) I hate to see it. You're one of the best.

PLINIO: Don't worry, I'll still be one of the best.

ELINOR: (on phone) And you'll be wasted on consumer implant repair and robotic pet maintenance.

PLINIO: All right, now look. I'll have you know that Sadie and her robodog are perfectly charming customers.

ELINOR: (on phone) So you're working above the table, on safe projects ... except.

PLINIO: That's my business.

ELINOR: (on phone) He's the fly in your ointment.

PLINIO: And the crack in my coffee mug. What's your point?

ELINOR: (on phone) You know I keep things professional. So as one professional to another, let me give you a little advice. (beat) Make sure you're getting paid for the work you do.

PLINIO: (doesn't want to get into it) Oh, please.

ELINOR: (on phone) He's costing you a lot. And not just in money. You need a return on your investment.

PLINIO: Didn't realize you were so interested in my portfolio.

ELINOR: (on phone) (chuckles) I don't want to see you get used up or burnt out. It would be such a waste.

PLINIO: Heh, well, you know me. The shiniest stars go supernova before they burn out.

ELINOR: (on phone) Getting Mechanimo from nothing to something in three days is a hell of a job. You manage that, it could remind a lot of people how good you are. Bring a lot of work your way. (beat) Work that rings the back doorbell.

PLINIO: I'm glad we know each other well enough not to mistake that for a euphemism.

ELINOR: (on phone) You need that cash flow, Mr. Orellano. Think hard before ignoring the door.

PLINIO: ('wrapping up this conversation' voice) Yes, well! Thank you for following up on this project, and I look forward to seeing you tonight with the results.

ELINOR: (on phone) Right. Until then.

[Elinor hangs up. Plinio puts down his tools and rubs at his shoulder.]

PLINIO: (exhausted groan/sigh)

[Mack wanders in.]

MACK: (yawns sleepily) Did you say somethin'?

PLINIO: Elinor just called to see how it was going.

MACK: (more awake) Oh. An' you told her I'll be ready, right? 100% fixed up and rarin' to go?

PLINIO: Yes, Mack.

MACK: Great! (beat) Oh hey, that spine stuff done already, huh?

PLINIO: Not yet. Just ... taking a break.

MACK: Okay sure but uh ... not a long break yeah? Can't use my servos right without that stuff installed.

PLINIO: You think I don't know that?

MACK: (nervous) You're still good for it aren't you? Like, your arm's not gonna crap out early?

PLINIO: (at his limit) I'm. Fine. Mack. It takes more concentration to get the fingers to do what I want, that's all.

MACK: Whew. Awesome. I'll just go uh ... (yawns) grab another forty winks then.

[Mack wanders away.]

PLINIO: Could you grab me another cup of coffee on your way past the machine? (beat, no response) (under his breath) Orrr I'll get it myself. It's not like I'm incredibly *busy* or anything. (sigh)

[Mage and Machine theme plays.]

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Featuring the voice talents of:

Genny Sherard as Kailira

Garan Fitzgerald as Mack

Dan Foster as Plinio

Emaline Tuck as Lady Chandley

Rukshin Shafer as Elinor

Elliot Jean as Hawthorn

and Daniel Santoy as Breeley

Created and written by D. X. Blink

Hammered dulcimer music by Vince Conaway at vinceconaway.com

Assistant director Tilly Bridges

Directed by Samantha Reed

Produced by Pendant Productions

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