

TRENT KENNEDY JOHNSON

THEY KNOW WHAT YOU

THINK

A GLIMPSE OF

PLAGIO

EPISODE 6

“So fire me!”

“I certainly have that authority!”

“Do it!”

“I...” He sniffed the air.

“Do it already!”

“You’re not drunk. Not actually. Are you?”

“Why would you say that?”

“I know drunk. I know the stench.”

Something vibrated between them. It wasn’t an emotion; it was Neville’s phone, in his pocket. He pawed it out, checked the caller, then looked back once at the officers through the glass wall. They didn’t turn away, as one might out of respect for one’s privacy. They’d all lost that impulse a long time ago.

Neville answered his phone. “Neville here.”

She couldn’t make out the caller’s voice, but Neville’s face turned increasingly inward.

“I understand,” he said. “Whatever the agency needs. Of course. Thank you.”

He hung up.

“Who was that?” asked Think.

“How did they know...? How’d they know to call now?” Neville asked no one in particular. “The serendipity. The concurrence... Someone’s looking out for you. Aren’t they? Is this...” He gestured at her, and then the tequila bottle, and then the phone, “...a trick?” He asked partly out of frustration, but she sensed real concern.

“No trick.” She pointed a finger at the floor, but she really meant what was below: “Do you even know what your little construction project does, Neville?”

Neville’s eyes thinned. He raised a palm high, then lowered it, slowly, as if to suggest that they decrease the volume.

“You shouldn’t have seen that.”

“What is its purpose?”

“I don’t know yet. It’s not done. I’m following orders. Why were you down there?” Then, even lower, almost a mumble, he asked: “And how were you down there?”

Pull the chute, Renee. PULL IT.

“A little voice told me,” she said. “You can’t fire me. Can you? You can’t do anything.”

Neville lost eye contact with her, which was, in itself, a confession.

“Because,” she continued, “they are listening, whoever they are. And if they’re listening, to all of us, then that makes you redundant. A smokescreen. A cover. A fake boss. Aren’t ya, Neville?”

He shook his head, but it might’ve been a half-hearted lie.

“What do you all know?” she asked.

“Nothing.”

“Neville-”

“I don’t know anything. I keep it that way.” His eyes flitted to his side. “Please, let them have the illusion I’m in charge,” he said. She realized he meant the officers in the conference room. “Keep the perception alive. For the moment. For their safety. For your

safety. And for your patients' safety. Including your new one. Miss Lipinski, that call, it was..." He sighed again, pocketing his phone. "Your, uh, next mind is ready."

"What mind?"

"As if this is the time for such a thing."

"What? Mind?"

"You already know it." Neville turned around, back for the conference room door.

"They're presently transporting him downtown."

"Who?"

"Who else? Maddox Horne."

TEN – Agent JX-88

Due to the Glimpse of Suspicion identified within Kathy Lipinski's SOC, as well as Agent SL-51's Glimpse of Distortion, this agent has decided it would be to the benefit of Total Information Awareness if the two were, for a moment, assessed in an abbreviated form.

(In full disclosure, revealing our own subconscious biases, we also confess personal concerns brought on by current events, and this has, at least in part, led to our most recent decisions.)

Kathleen Lipinski departed the Transference "Linc" office shortly after her heated exchange. She drove her double-parked vehicle to a cafe, pawed again at the tequila bottle's lid for a half-hour, then left it, and went inside, and tried to quiet her shaky, nervous leg with two iced coffees, before finally reporting early to the Los Angeles Metropolitan Detention Centre, whose rooms still weren't equipped to adapt to a flux in the temperature (or that's what she told herself; in truth, per our data, her hot flushes were only physiological in nature).

At the same time, Agent SL-51 drifted in and out of Leviathan's crippling nightmares, over and over again, as a form of torture. The agent crawled in terror past invisible monsters, cackling ghosts, endless pits, high school jobs that could never be completed, meaningless rivers of words and text. In short bursts, the agent succeeded in seeing past all this, and tried to make sense of errant Res Extensa conversation. Most importantly: he heard word of a possible 'Think' location, courtesy of the agent's stream-of-consciousness. A few of the underlings were planning a visit.

Would they kidnap her, like the agent? Would they send an electromagnetic pulse? Something worse? This information is unclear to us.

(In full disclosure, revealing once again our own subconscious biases, we must confess a desire to distort our findings slightly so as to justify a proactive response to this observation. You well know our Glimpses of Self-Interest, despite the strict guidelines of Total Information Awareness, and so this should come as no surprise. Nevertheless, we find it necessary to craft a disclaimer.)

We also must readily admit we find this Leviathan's methods admirable. You'll recall from Total Information Awareness's orientation that there is an Italian term for this: *plagio*. An utter psychological domination of another. True control. True power. That's not for us, no, no, because we trust the operation.

But it is attractive. Isn't it?

In any case, as we listen to Kathleen waiting in one of the Detention Centre's conversation rooms, and as we track Agent SL-51's subliminal observations of Res Extensa terrorists leaving the warehouse, we will continue this report while in transit. As

previously notated in ancillary reports, we must prepare for a flight to an off-site Total Information Awareness obligation. Thank you, and please stand by.

ELEVEN – *Think*

“They’re escorting the prisoner up to you now. Coffee?” asked the guard.

“Iced.”

The guard nodded and shut the door behind him. She remained in her metal seat, with her hands in her lap, fingers clasped, as if in prayer. Her legs were crossed. She uncrossed them, then crossed them again.

“Why do you do that?” Maddox had once asked her, back when business cards boldly called her a therapist. She uncrossed her legs and crossed them again, then, too. Had that been the last time she’d seen Maddox? In her office? Or, no, she went to the trial. She’d been blitzed out of her mind in front of the judge. Her foggy memories were fabricated combinations of stories she’d heard from others, later, or scenes from legal dramas she’d watched on television (that’s why John Cusack kept popping up in the jury). Could she even imagine Maddox’s face in her mind’s eye anymore? His voice, yes. His questions, certainly. But his face was as nondescript as this conversation room: smooth and bare, white paint and blank walls, with grooves and hooks to hold cuffed wrists and ankles.

Watch it!

Knock knock!

Do your homework!

Let out the dog!

Be a good daughter for once, Kathleen!

Her mother and her father kept spiralling in, for no good reason, at the most arbitrary moments, with these benign demands that meant nothing. Nothing. And yet it bothered her deeply.

They’re constructs, Renee.

Shut up, Sebastian.

They don’t have to be monsters, Renee, to give you grief.

Shut up, Sebastian!

You have to let them bother you... and that’s why you began to drink in the first place.

Sebastian?

And now that you don’t drink? They’re back!

Shut up!

Someone slammed a door shut down a hall, soon followed by the pelt of footsteps. She mentally counted one, two, three individuals amongst the march. One of them would have her iced coffee. One of them would be escorting the prisoner. One of them would be the prisoner himself, or the probationer, or her patient: Maddox.

She crossed her legs again.