

Homecoming

A dark, atmospheric photograph of a prison cell. The room is mostly in shadow, with a small, high window featuring vertical bars. Bright light streams through the window, creating a strong contrast and casting long, parallel shadows of the bars onto the floor. The walls appear to be a dark, textured material.

Episode 21

Jefferson Park, Chicago...





C'mon, man, say the line... Say it!



Knock, knock, knock!

Ugh. Somebody's at the door?
It's like 10 pm! Better not be the
landlord again. I'm not even a
week late, yet!



Hello. Mr. Alan Diorio?

Y-Yes. Who's asking?

My name is Stacy. I'm a friend of a friend.
Remember Kris?

Er, I...I don't—

It's okay, I'm not cop or anything. I work
with her, and I know she's not staying here
anymore. But she needs your help. Again.





God. Is Kris in trouble? I told her to call me if she needed anything.

Oh, you know Kris. She's such a proud girl, Al.



The good news is you can help her. And all you have to do is say exactly what I tell you to say.

*The Elysium Grand Hotel
Downtown Chicago...*





Damn, that's quite the view. The city looks so nice at night. Peaceful, almost, when you're up this high. You picked a good spot.

The best money can rent, anyway. Hey, so what's with the briefcase you brought from the car? You always travel with it?

No. I brought it in case I met someone like you tonight. Call it... preparation for a memorable evening. Like I told you, I have particular tastes.



You know, there's something about you. You're not like the others.

Should I take that as a compliment?

Take it however you want. But you've got this... aura. Like you've seen things. Been through hell and back.

Hell is other people. And sometimes you get dragged down by them, kicking and screaming.

That's pretty cynical. But I like that. It means you understand the game. No delusions about fairy tales or happy endings.

Happy endings are just stories that aren't over yet. 'They lived happily ever' - until one of them gets stage four cancer, or gambles away the house, or disappears one night getting Chinese take-out.

Want to hear something funny? I was going to be a doctor. I'd almost graduated. Life has a fucked-up sense of humor.

A doctor, huh? That's... unexpected. What happened?

I didn't like to study. I mistook a pre-ganglionic fiber for a post-ganglionic nerve, flunked out.



Damn. Sounds like you've been through the wringer.

Let's just say I know what it's like to lose everything you thought made you who you are.

And now? Who are you now?

Someone who makes the most of what she's got left.

And *that's* my cue to get changed. I left a special outfit in the bathroom. Why don't you get undressed, Victor?



Just freshen up your lipstick.
You can do this, Kris. You *must* do this. Obey. Be free.

Oh, Chris... Look at you. So angry, so full of rage. But it's pointless. You can't talk; you can't change anything. You're just a reflection, a shadow of who we used to be.

I know what you're thinking. Victor... he doesn't seem like the monster we imagined would deserve Bella's special treatment. But he's still part of the problem, isn't he? Men like him – they objectify and commodify women like they're toys for their amusement. And let's face it – there is no perfect candidate for this nightmare. No one deserves this hell.

And it's not about deserving! It's about survival. Ours and Kayla's. We do this or we both know what happens next. And I can't—I *won't* let that happen.

So, he...he goes to Bella. We have to protect Kayla at all costs—even if she can't love us like she used to, even if it means sending someone else into the abyss.



No more hesitation. We do the deed with Victor, and then we finish what was started.





Ready for those surprises I mentioned?

Damn, you weren't kidding. You look incredible.

This is just the beginning. I— Wait, what's *that*?



Oh. A strap-on. I thought...I hoped...

I know it's a strap-on, Victor. But it's huge! That is *not* going inside me. Not for four thousand dollars – not for four *million!*

No, no, you got it all wrong. I want... I mean, I thought maybe you could use it...





...on me. Please.

Oh!



Oh...



