

*The chronicles of*  
**Wild Hollow**

**HIGHPERION DAY**

**PART THREE**

A **Shouting Is Funny** production.

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## TITLE SEQUENCE

MUSIC: 'The Chronicles of Wild Hollow: Highperion Day (Main Theme)'

SCENE 1 - HIGH TOWER CENTRAL STATION. EXT. DAYTIME.

SFX: The squeal and hiss of an arriving steam train. The bustle of a busy station platform.

**NARRATOR** The wheels of the locomotive squealed as the train pulled into High Tower Central. Arthur hopped down from the carriage and pushed through the billows of steam, an anxious look in his eyes. He'd been replaying it over in his mind for the whole journey. The charred ruins. The black ash in the cold white snow. The curling finger pointing into the sky.

SFX: A thud and scuffle of footsteps.

**HEN** Ey! Watch where you're going, will ya!?

**NARRATOR** Arthur blinked the dark thoughts away as a large hen pushed past him, followed by a gaggle of chicks.

SFX: Soft chirping from the chicks.

**ARTHUR** Sorry!

**NARRATOR** He followed the crowd out into the daylight and made his way to the Hollow Herald, muttering to himself as he went.

**ARTHUR** I have to tell someone, I have to, those poor villagers.

**NARRATOR** He hopped between the pedestrians on the pavement, engrossed in his conundrum.

**ARTHUR** Think Arthur, think... Who can you trust?

**NARRATOR** Arthur cut down a side street. The gutters were littered with leaflets, the faces of political candidates staring up from where they had been crumpled underfoot.

**ARTHUR** Something's going on. First the letters were hidden, now everyone in the village is...

A pause.

**ARTHUR** The letters. I need the letters. Then I've got something to show.

**NARRATOR** The owl turned a corner and emerged at the rear of the Hollow Herald. He made his way towards the back entrance, but before he could cross the street, the doors opened.

SFX: The Herald doors creaking open.

**NARRATOR** Merlin stepped out, followed by Enid Scrufe. Arthur froze. They spoke a few words to each other, but Arthur was too far away to hear. The spider reached out and shook the FACT official's hand, before the falcon turned tail and disappeared into the back streets. The Editor stood for the briefest of moments, then went back inside. A cold shiver ran through Arthur's bones.

**ARTHUR** No, they can't be...

**NARRATOR** Before the owl had a second to utter another word, a black station wagon pulled up in front of him with a screech.

SFX: A car screeching to a halt, and a window rolling down.

**SAMSON** Master Hoot, you need to come with me.

**NARRATOR** Sat in the driver's seat was a wizen mule, his deep brown eyes staring at Arthur. He adjusted the thin-rimmed spectacles on the end of his nose.

**SAMSON** Your father is most insistent.

**ARTHUR** The last thing I need right now.



**NARRATOR** Arthur gave a final glance to the Herald and then climbed into the car.

SFX: A car door opening and closing, the city ambience fading. The engine revving as Samson sets off.

**ARTHUR** Now look, Samson, I really don't have the time or the patience for this-

**SAMSON** -And I've about lost all patience with the both of you. You and your father do have one thing in common, you know. A stubbornness like no other.

**NARRATOR** The mule shifted gear as the car headed out of the city centre.

**ARTHUR** Well, whatever he wants to tell me, I'm sure it can wait.

**SAMSON** On the contrary, Master Hoot, wait it cannot. He's reached a new level, I tell you, those incessant radios he tinkers with won't stop, and neither will he! I feel you need to talk some sense into him.

**ARTHUR** What am I going to say to him?

**SAMSON** Frankly sir, I don't care, as long as it gets him out of that bloody workshop.

**NARRATOR** They reached the edge of the city and set off down a country road, the towering trunk of the Highperion slowly shrinking in the rear view mirror.

SFX: The car's engine fading into the distance.

SCENE 2 - HIGH TOWER GATES. EXT. AFTERNOON.

SFX: A light breeze, distant city ambience. The rustling of bushes.

**NARRATOR** Fandango and Artemis stepped out from behind the thick bushels, as a black station wagon disappeared out of sight.

**FANDANGO** That was close.

**NARRATOR** The bounty hunter leant gingerly on his wooden crutch, as the duo gazed ahead at the grand entrance gates to the city of High Tower.

**ARTEMIS** Well, aren't you a sight for sore eyes.

**NARRATOR** It had been a full night's trek to arrive at their destination, with barely a moment to rest. But with Senator Brittle's death still fresh in their minds, they knew time wasn't a luxury they had.

SFX: Footsteps as they approach the gates.

**FANDANGO** Busier than my last visit.

**ARTEMIS** Yeah well, lucky us for popping by during election week. Okay, let's go.

**FANDANGO** Err... Umm... I might have forgotten to mention...

**ARTEMIS** Go on?

**FANDANGO** I may or may not have a bounty on my head.

**ARTEMIS** A bounty?!

**FANDANGO** Big one.

**ARTEMIS** And you didn't think to tell me this before recruiting me as a travelling companion? Hell, there are FACT agents right there!

SFX: Marching footsteps of a group of patrolling agents.

**NARRATOR** At that very moment, a FACT patrol had appeared at the gates. Artemis seized Fandango and the two of them pressed their backs to the outer city wall.

SFX: A thud as their backs hit the brick wall.

**FANDANGO** Would you have come with me if I'd told you?

**ARTEMIS** Absolutely not.

**FANDANGO** Well, there's your answer.

Pause.

**ARTEMIS** What's it for?

**FANDANGO** I don't know. Woke up one morning and had to shoot my way out of Dust Town. Still owe someone a horse and cart...

**ARTEMIS** Listen, there's probably nowhere worse for you to be right now, two days before the biggest event in Wild Hollow. So might I suggest we keep our heads down, and move quickly?

**FANDANGO** Not a problem.

**NARRATOR** With a final incredulous shake of her head, Artemis slipped around the corner of the wall, and into the city. Fandango followed suit, his eyes darting left and right. Artemis wasn't wrong. Patrols were marching the streets in every direction, heavy truncheons hanging at their sides. The pair ducked down a shaded alleyway, emerging at the other end into a bustling crowd.

SFX: Crowd ambience.

**FANDANGO** You know where we're headed?

**ARTEMIS** Roughly. Never been inside the Herald myself, but I've worked a few jobs nearby. There's a route through the old markets.

**FANDANGO** You're turning into a regular tour guide.

SFX: Fandango swigging from his bottle.

**ARTEMIS** Are you serious?! I need you sharp here, Boursin.

**FANDANGO** Don't sweat it, ginger. Let's get back to the walking tour.

**NARRATOR** Artemis glared at the mouse, before pressing on into the crowd, her head bowed. Fandango popped the collar of his duster, and followed.

SFX: The crowd noises swell.

**ARTEMIS** I think we're close.

**NARRATOR** They turned another corner. At the far end of the street, with the iconic stork proudly displayed above the doors, was the Hollow Herald office.

**ARTEMIS** Bingo.

SFX: Shouts off left.

**TOFFEE** No! Please, no, I didn't mean anything by it!

**FACT 1** Make a habit of tearing down party property, do you?

**TOFFEE** No, I was just-

**FACT 2** Freedom of speech not a concept you agree with or something?

**TOFFEE** It was covering my opening times! I was just moving it!

**NARRATOR** The labrador barista of Toffee's Coffees cowered as one FACT agent raised the poster high in the air.

**FACT 1** Highperion law dictates that the removal or attempted removal of any party campaign material is to be seen as a direct act of aggression towards said party.

**NARRATOR** The PDPs slogan of ‘Skies, Land and Sea’ flashed into view as the agent waved the poster in Toffee’s face.

**TOFFEE** I was just moving it from my door, I wasn’t taking it down, I swear!

**FACT 2** I wouldn’t lie to a FACT agent’s face, if I were you.

**FACT 1** Maybe we ought to call The Plague down here. Reckon they’d be interested in hearing about this.

**NARRATOR** What happened next, Artemis couldn’t explain. One moment, he was standing beside her. The next, Fandango had seized one of the guards by the scruff of the neck.

SFX: The sound of a fist closing around a shift collar. The indignant cries of the FACT agent.

**NARRATOR** He launched his head forwards, making contact with the agent’s nose with a sickening crunch.

SFX: A crunch, and a scream of pain.

**ARTEMIS** No!

SFX: Dashing footsteps.

**NARRATOR** Artemis dashed forwards, pulling something from her pocket. Launching it at the ground, the smoke bomb activated, plunging the group into a plume of thick, grey smog.

SFX: The smoke bomb exploding, the hiss of the smoke filling the street.

**NARRATOR** The fox grabbed Fandango’s paw and dragged him down another alleyway. They ran as fast as the mouse’s wounded leg would allow, before diving behind a low wooden fence.

SFX: A thud as they drop down behind the fence.

**FANDANGO** Why did you-

**ARTEMIS** -Shut up!

**FACT 1** They went this way! Come on!

SFX: Footsteps passing by their hiding place, then dying away.  
Fandango and Artemis panting.

**ARTEMIS** What... the HELL... was that.

A pause.

**ARTEMIS** Hey. Hey! What was that?

**FANDANGO** I'm not a fan of bullies.

**ARTEMIS** No, no, I'm not stupid, Fandango. One mention of The Plague and you were on top of them.

A pause.

**ARTEMIS** Well? What's The Plague?

**FANDANGO** Who.

**ARTEMIS** What?

**FANDANGO** WHO is The Plague. They're a bounty hunter.

**ARTEMIS** Like you?

**FANDANGO** They are nothing like me.

**ARTEMIS** Okay... Okay. I'm sorry. But we had a deal. Heads down, move quickly. What you just did could have put us both out of the game before we'd even started. So you need to tell me, Fandango, what is going on?

A pause.

**FANDANGO** I told you I lost someone. Billy Bob. The Plague killed him. That explosion in Dust Town. It was them.

**NARRATOR** Artemis's eyes widened.

**FANDANGO** There was nothing I could do. The Plague used him. To get to me.

**ARTEMIS** But why? No offence, but you're hardly priority number one. Why target one bounty hunter?

**FANDANGO** I've been wondering the same thing. Taking out the Lilypad must have ruffled a few feathers. Then I worked a job for FACT not long after-

**ARTEMIS** -You worked with FACT?

**FANDANGO** I didn't know any different at the time. They were offering a payout to bring in a fugitive. Normal job.

**NARRATOR** Fandango shifted, stretching his bandaged leg out in front of him.

SFX: Fandango grunting in discomfort.

**FANDANGO** Didn't quite go to plan. They sent me after a bogeyman, but really it was just Neil, the kid we're after now. He'd uncovered some dirt on FACT that they wanted to be kept hush hush. I told them he'd been dealt with, but... Well, it's clear now, they've got eyes everywhere. Maybe it was some kind of test after the frogs? Guess I failed. Next thing I know... Priority Number One.

A pause.

**ARTEMIS** You deserve justice, Fandango. For your home. Your friend.

**FANDANGO** Thank you-

**ARTEMIS** -But what you just did was careless and stupid. You can't punch your way to the top of this. We have to be smart.

**FANDANGO** You make a habit of carrying smoke bombs?

**ARTEMIS** Some friends of mine stocked me up. Courtesy of the Pirate King.

**FANDANGO** The Pirate Ki-

**ARTEMIS** -A story for another time. Come on. We have a hedgehog to find.

SFX: Clambering to their feet.

**NARRATOR** She extended a paw, and helped Fandango back to his feet. Cautiously peering out from behind the fence, they slipped back out onto the street. They glanced in the direction of Toffee's Coffees. The windows were shattered. The FACT, and the labrador, were gone. Fandango's fists clenched.

**ARTEMIS** We'll make this right.

**NARRATOR** Artemis gently guided the mouse away. Reaching the end of the street, they spotted a tabby cat emerging from the doors of the Hollow Herald. Fandango made to call out, but Artemis nudged him.

**ARTEMIS** Maybe I should do the talking? Excuse me!

SFX: Artemis jogging across the street.

**PEARL** Oh, hiya. If you're after a personalised horoscope I'll say it now, I'm a proper bargain.

**ARTEMIS** No, I'm actually all good for prophecies of the future. I was wondering if you could help me, though.

**PEARL** Suit yourself. What can I do for?

**ARTEMIS** I'm looking for someone. They might have come this way, asking for an Arthur J. Hoot?

**PEARL** You're looking for Arthur?

**ARTEMIS** No. Someone called Neil. Just wondered if any hedgehogs have been sniffing around with a story to tell?

**PEARL** Hedgehog? Hmm... Well, there haven't been any hedgehog's IN the office, no.

**NARRATOR** Artemis sighed, beginning to turn away.

**PEARL** But one did get shot in the carpark last night.

SCENE 3 - HOOT MANOR. EXT. DAYTIME.

SFX: The station wagon pulling onto the drive, the engine cutting out. Doors opening, and footsteps on gravel. A soft wind.

**NARRATOR** Arthur and Samson had arrived at the house. It stood defiantly against the bruising sky, and the trees that surrounded it seemed to lean in, like hands around a candle flame. The words 'Hoot Manor' coiled through the stained glass windows above the front door. Samson ushered Arthur inside.

SFX: The front door opening, and the footsteps transitioning from gravel to wood. The wind fading away as the door closes.

**SAMSON** He was never good at relaxing, your father, finding anything he could to keep himself busy.

**ARTHUR** Anything but be with his son.

**SAMSON** Well, quite... But it's... escalated.

**NARRATOR** They walked down a wood-panelled corridor, and then up a narrow flight of stairs. Samson paused to straighten a small picture frame, then continued.



**SAMSON** I try my best to maintain the place but...

**NARRATOR** They arrived at the top of the stairs. Samson pushed the heavy oak doors open, releasing a cacophony of buzzing, beeping and whirring noises from inside.

SFX: The door opening, and a variety of mechanical and electronic sounds emerging from inside.

**NARRATOR** The carpet of the room was littered with notes, scrunched-up balls of paper and empty coffee cups. Cables and wires ran like snakes, winding around pillars of machines with flashing lights and displays. In the middle of the ceiling was a small skylight, with a large telescope beneath it, perched on a plinth of stacked boxes. In the centre of the room stood Phineas R. Hoot.

**PHINEAS** Arthur, finally, you won't believe it! Look at this transistor.

**NARRATOR** The grey-haired owl turned to one of the bleeping machines beside him.

**ARTHUR** Nice to see you too, Dad.

**PHINEAS** There are voices coming out of the radio!

**ARTHUR** Isn't that the point?

**PHINEAS** What? No! Hidden voices! Voices we're not meant to hear! Secrets, I'm sure of it!

**NARRATOR** Arthur looked to Samson, who gave him a shrug. Phineas was tinkering frantically with the dials on the machine.

**PHINEAS** If I can just...

SFX: An electronic surge and a loud bang, accompanied by sparks.

**NARRATOR** Sparks flew up into the air like the spout of a whale.

**ARTHUR** Blimey, dad, you're going to hurt yourself, why don't we just-

**PHINEAS** -I've been tracking the voices, Arthur, the signals. Look!

SFX: *Hurried footsteps.*

**NARRATOR** Phineas shot across the workshop and pulled down a wall chart to reveal a large hand-drawn graph.

SFX: *The chart being unfurled.*

**NARRATOR** Across it were dozens of spidery scrawlings and hastily sketched diagrams of what looked like...

**ARTHUR** The... Moon?

**PHINEAS** Exactly! I've cross-referenced the increasing regularity of the radio fluctuations against the upcoming lunar positionings, all the way up until they meet. And boy, just you guess where they converge!

**ARTHUR** (Sighs) Dad, I really think-

**NARRATOR** Phineas released the wall chart and it snapped back up with a crack.

SFX: *The chart spiralling back into place.*

**PHINEAS** The Eclipse! They're building to the Eclipse!

**ARTHUR** Who is 'they'?

**PHINEAS** The voices, Arthur! The secret voices! Voices we aren't meant to hear, my boy.

**ARTHUR** Dad, I know you love your radios-

**PHINEAS** -There's more to it than that, Arthur-

**ARTHUR** -I know, I know, setting up the radio station was your last big hurrah at the Herald, and that was great, but maybe you need a new hobby, now? Have you tried backgammon?

**PHINEAS** Don't mock me, lad, this is serious. Something is coming. On Highperion Day. It's all building to the Eclipse. You need to forget the Herald, we have to leave Wild Hollow before it's too late.

**ARTHUR** Oh, you'd love that, wouldn't you! Me dropping everything and following you blindly off to who knows where. I've got work to do, Dad.

SFX: Arthur's footsteps towards the door.

**NARRATOR** Arthur turned to leave but Phineas grabbed his arm.

**PHINEAS** This is more important.

**ARTHUR** You don't get to decide that. Not anymore.

**PHINEAS** For goodness sake, Arthur, forget the drawings and-

**ARTHUR** -You just don't want me at the Herald, sullying your achievements!

**PHINEAS** Arthur, I got you the job at the Herald. You're a Hoot!

**ARTHUR** Well, I never asked to be!

SFX: Sudden sparks from the transistor.

**NARRATOR** The transistor crackled loudly behind them, sending a couple of sparks into the air. Phineas ran to his notebook.

**PHINEAS** Arthur, if you just wait another minute, I can show you. There's a transmission due any second.

**ARTHUR** Dad, I don't have the time-

**PHINEAS** -Have some patience damn you!



**ARTHUR** Patience?! All I've ever had is patience with you, dad, and still you go on and on, about nothing but yourself. I've had it.

SFX: Arthur's footsteps leaving the room and fading down the hallway.

**NARRATOR** Arthur stormed off down the staircase. He called out as he left.

**ARTHUR** Don't try to contact me again!

**SAMSON** Master Hoot, please!

SFX: The distant slam of the front door.

**NARRATOR** But Arthur was gone. Samson stood awkwardly for a moment, then left the room. A tear began to form in Phineas' eyes, then he blinked it away. He turned to the machine and tweaked the dial delicately.

SFX: A crackling of static.

**GEORGE** -earlier this morning, Jasper Bosch was arrested for the fifth time this year, for assaulting a Scumwarter resident -

SFX: More crackling.

**ADVERT VOICE** -and with just one wash, your fur will be softer than a piglet's belly-

**NARRATOR** Phineas inched the dial clockwise, and adjusted the arial. The static hissed.

SFX: Static giving way to a distorted voice.

**VOICE** -optimisations are on track. Magnetic field density increase, successful.

**NARRATOR** The strange voice crackled away, the static returning. Phineas sat back in his chair, his eyes wide. He leant over his notepad and continued to write.

SFX: The scribbling of Phineas' pencil.

SCENE 4 - HOLLOW HERALD OFFICE. EXT. DAYTIME.

SFX: A cab slowing to a halt outside the Herald. City ambience.

**NARRATOR** Arthur tipped the cab driver and hopped out onto the street. He took a deep breath, then he entered the Hollow Herald.

SFX: The door opening and the sounds of the city replaced by gentle conversations of office staff.

**NARRATOR** The owl ducked and weaved through the hallways, trying to avoid any unwanted coffee orders. He turned into a quiet corridor. A copper plate hung on the door in front of him. 'Ruffian O'Toole, Senior Journalist'. Arthur quickly glanced around him, then let himself in.

SFX: The door clicking open and shut. Arthur's footsteps slipping inside. A ticking clock.

**ARTHUR** Oh, wow.

**NARRATOR** The office smelt of fresh pine, and hanging on the walls were front page spreads, framed in gold. Above the mahogany desk were black and white photos, showing Rusty shaking hands with various celebrities and politicians, or posing majestically in expensive-looking knitwear. Arthur stood for a moment, admiring the display, then shook his head.

**ARTHUR** Focus, Arthur!

**NARRATOR** The owl stepped behind the desk, grabbed a piece of paper and began writing a note.

SFX: Pencil scribble.

**ARTHUR** Rusty, I need your help. Meet me at the Sheep's Baa - seven o'clock. Regards, Arthur.

**NARRATOR** He folded the paper and popped it into the tiger's drawer, tucking it gently under a heavy metal stamp.

SFX: A drawer opening and closing.

**ARTHUR** See you later, Rusty.

**NARRATOR** He turned and slipped out of the office, clicking the door shut as he went.

SFX: The door closing and Arthur's footsteps fading.

SCENE 5 - PDP HQ, OBSIDIAN'S OFFICE. INT. DAYTIME.

SFX: Wind howling outside the window, a pen scribbling on paper.

**NARRATOR** Obsidian Vandersplat sat at his desk, documents stacked in neat piles before him. He was busily writing a letter, when he was distracted by the distant approach of footsteps outside his office.

SFX: Distant running footsteps, then the door slamming open. Panting as Giles enters.

**BERTRAND** I'm sorry, sir! He just ran straight past me!

**NARRATOR** Bertrand panted nervously in the doorway, as a coyote barrelled into the room. His fur was singed, and his boots left sooty footprints on the red carpet as he gingerly approached the desk.

**GILES** I'm... I'm so sorry to interrupt, Mr Vandersplat, sir. I came here as fast as I could.

**NARRATOR** Obsidian gazed calmly at the foreman, before returning the lid to his pen, setting it precisely beside the half-written note. He waved a wing at Bertrand, who bowed and left the



room. Then he looked back at the quivering coyote, expectantly. All in complete silence.

**GILES** Umm... There's been... an incident, Mr Vandersplat. Umm... At the depot.

A pause.

**GILES** We were visited, last night, by Artemis Gray, sir. She used to move the Sludge for us, into Fortuna City. There was a mouse with her, sir. Reckon it was Boursin, the one you told us about...

A pause. A gulp.

**GILES** They destroyed the depot, sir. Burnt to the ground. Two-hundred barrels. And they might be heading for High Tower.

SFX: Obsidian's chair scraping backwards. His footsteps approaching Giles.

**NARRATOR** Obsidian stood. Emerging from behind his desk, he walked calmly towards the foreman, his wings clasped as ever behind his back. Only when they were face to face, did he finally speak.

**OBSIDIAN** Not to worry, my dear fellow. Giles, wasn't it?

**GILES** Mhm...

**OBSIDIAN** Naturally, I received word of all this several hours ago, but I do appreciate you taking the time to deliver the news personally. Boursin and Gray are indeed within the city walls. They are being closely monitored. Out of interest, just how much did you reveal to our slippery friends?

**GILES** Oh, nothing, Mr Vandersplat, sir! Nothing at all!

**OBSIDIAN** And yet, they visit your depot, and then immediately arrive in High Tower. A curious turn of events, wouldn't you say?



**GILES** Oh, well, you know... Letters from High Tower... The Sludge locations... They sort of, pieced it together...

**NARRATOR** The pigeon extended a wing, wrapping it around the foreman's shoulders. He walked him towards a large portrait hung upon the stone wall. It depicted a young Obsidian Vandersplat, with an older pigeon standing proudly by his side. His father, Igneous.

**OBSIDIAN** Mistakes happen, my friend. Terrible shame about your depot! You must be in need of alternative employment? As it happens, a position has just recently opened up. Most fortunate.

**NARRATOR** Obsidian pressed a button, neatly concealed within the portrait's intricate frame. A panel in the wall slid open, a clinical white light pouring out.

SFX: The button clicking, and the wall panel sliding open.

**OBSIDIAN** We've simply been waiting for a willing volunteer. An opportunity to redeem yourself, might I add. Thank you, Giles.

**NARRATOR** He gestured forwards with his wing.

SFX: Giles' footsteps disappearing through the concealed doorway. The crackle of a radio being activated.

**OBSIDIAN** New test subject coming your way.

SFX: The radio shutting off, then another click of the button in the frame, and the panel sliding back into place.

**NARRATOR** The pigeon slowly crossed to the window. Snow flecked against the glass, the Frosted Peaks towering above him on either side. In the valley far below, High Tower glimmered in the evening gloom, the Highperion standing sentinel.

SFX: Distant wind swelling.

SCENE 6 - THE SHEEP'S BAA. INT. EVENING.

SFX: Ambient chat, glasses clinking and the sound of a band in the corner of the room.

**NARRATOR** Nighttime welcomed the sunset, and the revellers that came with it. The Sheep's Baa was a dimly-lit tavern in downtown High Tower, sandwiched between tenement blocks. Creatures of all sizes sat hunched around small tables, or whispering in shadowy corners. The sound of the band wafted through the smokey bar, a ewe crooning gently into a microphone.

SONG: 'Darker'

**(THE CROONING EWE)**

THINGS ARE GETTING DARKER IN THE HOLLOW  
LONG SUMMER DAYS BEGIN TO TURN  
FLOODS IN THE PASTURES  
UNNATURAL DISASTERS  
THE EMBERS OF FEAR BEGIN TO BURN

**RUSTY** They were all dead? The whole village?

**ARTHUR** It was awful, Rusty. And I don't know what to do.

**RUSTY** And you say they sent us letters?

**ARTHUR** Yes! Direct to Enid Scrufe, I've seen them, got her stamp on them and everything. Hidden away where no one would find them.

**RUSTY** But you found them.

**NARRATOR** Rusty gave Arthur a wink and a reassuring smile. The owl beamed.

**(THE CROONING EWE)**

THINGS ARE GETTING DARKER IN THE HOLLOW  
TRUST IS A CURRENCY IN DECLINE  
IF YOU SEE SHADOWS IN DOORWAYS  
HEAR FOOTSTEPS DOWN HALLWAYS

AND FEEL A SENSE THAT YOUR LIFE IS ON THE LINE...

YOU BETTER WATCH YOUR BACK  
LOOK AROUND  
GET YOUR FEATHERS, FUR OR WHISKERS  
ON THE LAST TRAIN OUT OF TOWN  
THE TIME HAS COME TO PACK YOUR BAGS AND SCARPER  
IT MIGHT BE DARK RIGHT NOW BUT IT'S GETTIN' DARKER

WATCH YOU BACK  
SAVE YOUR FUR  
RUN TO THE DESERTS OR THE MOUNTAIN TOPS  
WHICHEVER YOU PREFER  
THE KNIVES ARE OUT AND ONLY GETTING SHARPER  
IT MIGHT BE DARK RIGHT NOW BUT IT'S GETTING DARKER

SFX: The ewe chuckles as the band takes over.

**RUSTY** And to be clear, you haven't told anybody else about this? Not your father, for instance?

**ARTHUR** I need your help, Rusty. Nobody else's. You're the only one I trust, especially after seeing the Editor and that creepy Merlin from FACT looking so friendly with each other.

SFX: A glass being lifted from the table, ice cubes clinking merrily.

**NARRATOR** Rusty took a slow drink of his gin and tonic, the ice cubes twirling as he set down the glass.

**RUSTY** Hmm... This is heavy stuff. But I think you're onto something. I've had my suspicions about Scrupe for some time. She's always seemed a career type.

**ARTHUR** This could be the beginning of something huge, Rusty.

**NARRATOR** The tiger nodded, rubbing his paws together pensively.

**RUSTY** This is good work lad. I think your old man would be proud.



**ARTHUR** He's too busy tinkering with radios to care about what I'm up to.

**(THE CROONING EWE)**

OH WATCH YOUR BACK  
LOOK AROUND  
SAVE YOUR SKIN  
FLEE THIS TOWN

THE TIME HAS COME TO PACK YOUR BAGS AND SCARPER  
IT MIGHT BE DARK RIGHT NOW BUT IT'S GETTIN' DARKER  
HEY!

SFX: Polite applause from the crowd. Conversations strike up again.

**CROONING EWE** Thank you, thank you. You're very kind.

**ARTHUR** We can't let them get away with it. Whatever Scrupe's hiding... I bet it's in her office.

SFX: Arthur's stool scraping back.

**NARRATOR** Arthur leapt to his feet, knocking back the dregs of his beer before starting towards the exit.

**ARTHUR** You're right, Rusty! We need to nail Scrupe!

**RUSTY** That's not what I said-

**NARRATOR** But the owl was already halfway to the door.

SFX: Arthur's footsteps travelling across the bar.

**CROONING EWE** I wrote this next song after a particularly torrid affair with a goat last summer. It's called "You Make My Heart Bleat".

SFX: More applause. The piano starts up again as the door to the bar opens and closes.



SCENE 7 - HIGH TOWER MEDICAL FACILITY. INT. DUSK.

SFX: An elevator grinding to a halt. The doors sliding open.

**ELEVATOR** Floor Six - Toxicology Ward.

SFX: Fandango and Artemis' footsteps echoing off the deserted corridor walls.

**NARRATOR** Fandango and Artemis exited the elevator, walking out onto the sixth floor of High Tower Medical Facility.

**ARTEMIS** The cat said he'd been rushed straight to hospital. He's got to be here somewhere.

**NARRATOR** However, as they proceeded along the corridor, a looming absence became apparent to both.

**FANDANGO** Where is everyone?

**NARRATOR** The ward was deadly quiet. Their words echoed off the walls.

SFX: A door creaking ajar.

**NARRATOR** Fandango poked his head through the first doorway, and was met with the view of several empty beds.

**FANDANGO** Who killed the party?

**NARRATOR** Artemis walked further, turning right into the doctor's office.

SFX: The office door opening. Artemis' footsteps crossing the room.

**NARRATOR** A single sheet of paper lay on the centre table. "URGENT: all patients and staff on Toxicology Ward to be transferred to floor seven by 8pm this evening. Emergency gas repair to take place tonight. IMPORTANT: Do not transfer room 209." The note was signed with an unintelligible scrawl.

**ARTEMIS** Fandango...

SFX: Approaching footsteps.

**NARRATOR** The mouse appeared at her side. Artemis nodded towards the desk.

**FANDANGO** What are you betting...

**NARRATOR** They returned to the corridor, peering towards the far end. Room 209.

SFX: Two sets of echoing footsteps.

**ARTEMIS** Something's very wrong here...

**FANDANGO** This is an attempted murder case, so where's the security detail?

**NARRATOR** The mouse drew his trusty Smith and Wesson from its holster, aiming down the barrel as he approached the door. Artemis pulled her dagger from its sheath, the blade poised.

SFX: The dagger sliding from its sheath.

**FANDANGO** We go together, I've got you covered.

**NARRATOR** Artemis nodded. They breathed as one... then Fandango kicked the door open, and the pair swiftly entered Room 209.

SFX: The door slamming, the rush of Fandango and Artemis moving forwards. Then the steady beeping of a heart monitor.

**NARRATOR** The room was quiet. A hedgehog lay in a hospital bed, his eyes closed, wires protruding from his tiny arms. Artemis checked behind the door, then crossed to the window, peering out at the street below. All was dark, and still.

**FANDANGO** Hello again.

**NARRATOR** Fandango stood by the bedside, looking down at the sleeping creature.

**ARTEMIS** They sent a bounty hunter after him?

**FANDANGO** I should have gone with him. He was in danger, and I sent him off to High Tower alone.

**ARTEMIS** You couldn't have known.

**FANDANGO** I could have tried.

**ARTEMIS** Listen, we all have things we wish we could go back and change. I... I know I do.

**NARRATOR** Fandango turned away, fists clenched. His eyes fell on the bedside table, a clinical metal tray sat atop. On it, lay a single feathered dart.

**SLUG HUNTER** (Echoed) You fool, you fool!

**NARRATOR** Fandango's heart began to beat faster in his chest.

**SLUG HUNTER** (Echoed) They're everywhere! They-

**SFX:** The echoing in Fandango's mind of the smash of a window, the whoosh of a dart and the squelch as it impacts with Slug Hunter's neck.

**FANDANGO** (Echoed) NO!

**NARRATOR** The mouse shook his head hard.

**FANDANGO** We need to go. Now.

**NARRATOR** Without another word, Fandango began detaching the wires from Neil's limbs.

**SFX:** Wires being pulled from Neil. The heart rate monitor flatlining as it loses its readings.

**NARRATOR** Sensing this was not the time for questions, Artemis dashed forwards, lifting the brakes from the bed's wheels and steering the comatose creature out into the corridor.

SFX: The squeaking of the bed's wheels and the hurried footsteps of Artemis and Fandango.

**FANDANGO** Stop, stop, stop!

SFX: Skidding and squeaking from the sudden halt. The grinding of elevator wires at the end of the hall.

**NARRATOR** The numbers above the elevator had begun to rise. Someone was coming.

**ARTEMIS** Back!

SFX: Renewed squeaks from the bed frame.

**NARRATOR** They turned, pushing the bed back along the hallway.

**FANDANGO** In here!

**NARRATOR** Fandango pushed open the door of a supply closet, and Artemis swiftly guided the bed frame inside. Fandango took one last glance towards the elevator, before slipping in beside the fox, and pulling the door to.

SFX: The creak of the closet door closing, as the elevator doors grind open. The elevator voice once again, distant and echoing off the walls.

**ELEVATOR** Floor Six - Toxicology Ward.

SFX: Fandango and Artemis breathing. Heavy footsteps approaching down the hallway, accompanied by a soft fluttering sound.

**NARRATOR** Before they had even stepped into view, Fandango knew who it was. The Plague slowly made their way along the corridor, their overcoat rustling with every step.

**ARTEMIS** (Whispered) Fandango...

**NARRATOR** The bounty hunter had stiffened, his every muscle tensed. The Plague was almost directly outside the closet door.

**ARTEMIS** Fandango, please...

**NARRATOR** Fandango's paw wrapped around the handle of his revolver. The Plague drew closer, and closer.

SFX: The Plague's footsteps approaching... and then passing by.

**NARRATOR** The footsteps disappeared further down the corridor towards Room 209. Fandango was shaking visibly.

**ARTEMIS** You'll get your chance. I promise.

SFX: The door slowly opening.

**ARTEMIS** Coast's clear. Let's go, quietly.

SFX: Soft creaking from the bed's wheels.

**NARRATOR** They rolled the bed back out into the corridor, and began the excruciating final stretch to the elevator. Fandango looked over his shoulder, ensuring they had remained undiscovered.

**ARTEMIS** Fandango, the bed!

SFX: An enormous clatter as the bed clips a trolley, sending medical equipment crashing to the floor, echoing throughout the hospital.

**ARTEMIS** RUN!

SFX: Loud rattling as the bed frame is launched along the corridor.

**NARRATOR** The pair took hold of the bed and sprinted the length of the corridor, slamming the elevator's button. Sudden heavy footsteps approached from behind.

**FANDANGO** Come ON!

SFX: Hammering against the elevator button. The doors creaking open and footsteps dashing inside, pushing the bed with them.

**NARRATOR** They piled inside. The footsteps were getting closer. Fandango turned. The Plague was striding down the corridor, their coat billowing out behind them, their pointed mask glinting horribly.

SFX: Heavy approaching footsteps, the fluttering sound intensifying.

**THE PLAGUE** Hurry, little mouse... Time is running out...

**NARRATOR** Fandango's blood ran cold, as the doors closed, just in time.

SFX: A final snatched gasp of breath from Fandango and Artemis, before the elevator doors slide closed with an echoing thud.



SHOUTING  
IS FUNNY.



## CREDITS

You have been listening to a **Shouting Is Funny** production.

Sound design and music by Christian Powlesland.

### ‘Darker’

Music and lyrics by Harvey Badger  
Arrangement by Christian Powlesland

Artwork by Harvey Badger.

|                             |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>NARRATOR</b>             | Joshua Riley         |
| <b>ARTHUR J. HOOT</b>       | Khai Shaw            |
| <b>ARTEMIS GRAY</b>         | Heather Gourdie      |
| <b>FANDANGO BOURSIN</b>     | Christian Powlesland |
| <b>OBSIDIAN VANDERSPLAT</b> | Damien James         |
| <b>RUFFIAN O'TOOLE</b>      | Saikat Ahamed        |
| <b>SAMSON</b>               | Rose Quentin         |
| <b>PHINEAS R. HOOT</b>      | Richard Hough        |
| <b>THE CROONING EWE</b>     | Emma Levy            |
| <b>TOFFEE</b>               | Bethan Barke         |
| <b>FACT AGENT 1&amp;2</b>   | Henry Avedian        |
| <b>PEARL</b>                | Elizabeth Chadwick   |
| <b>GILES</b>                | Daniel Briggs        |
| <b>BERTRAND</b>             | Alice E. Mayer       |
| <b>THE PLAGUE</b>           | Eve de Leon Allen    |

Additional voices by Emma Levy, Loris Scarpa, Rose Quentin, Tom Chudley-Evans, Christian Powlesland and Harvey Badger.

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