

XII: A SCENE IN WHICH KELLY AND SARAH ARE REUNITED, BRIEFLY

*(The road. Kelly is resting beside the roadside. Sarah enters, walking determinedly towards her goal. She passes Kelly without seeing her. Kelly is momentarily frozen, but then--)*

KELLY

Sarah.

SARAH

... Kelly?

KELLY

No! Don't turn around. Don't look at me.

SARAH

Kelly, you're ...

KELLY

Please don't turn around. I don't know what'll happen, but I think it'd be bad.

SARAH

Why?

KELLY

It's this place. The rules are all arbitrary and nonsensical and based on something some old guy wrote down eons ago, but the consequences are real. A lot like academia that way.

SARAH

Oh god. It really is you.

KELLY

Huh?

SARAH

You came back from the dead to shit on academia. It has to be you.

KELLY

I did other things when I was alive!

SARAH

Sometimes.

KELLY

Did you think it wouldn't be me?

SARAH

I don't know. I'm still having trouble believing any of this is real.

KELLY

It's ... true. The question of reality is a little more debatable.

SARAH

But it's *happening*. It's really happening.

KELLY

Yes.

SARAH

You came back.

KELLY

... No.

SARAH

What do you mean?

KELLY

Don't turn around!

SARAH

You've been *dead* for *eight years*. And now I can't see you?

KELLY

I don't -- I don't know. I can't risk it. What if you looked at me and something happened to you? I couldn't handle that.

SARAH

*You* couldn't handle it? I had to handle something happening to *you*.

KELLY

I -- I'm sorry.

SARAH

No -- no, Kel, that's not what I meant, I didn't--

KELLY

I missed you too.

SARAH

(*Still talking.*) I meant I've missed you, so much, every goddamn day, the -- I tried to write you songs and I couldn't, for years I couldn't, all I could do was scream, or write this *shit*, that didn't make any sense and didn't, couldn't--

*(Kelly steps up behind Sarah and touches her back. Sarah stops talking.)*

KELLY

Hey. Breathe.

*(Kelly embraces her from behind. They hold each other as best they can, without Sarah ever looking back at her.)*

SARAH

Is this real?

KELLY

Yeah. Yeah. Real enough.

SARAH

What's happening, Kel? What's going on here?

KELLY

You're trying to get to Hell. To get Sam back.

SARAH

And what about you? What are you doing here?

KELLY

I'm dead, Illy. This is one of the places dead people go. This is where I ended up.

SARAH

No. No no no, Kelly, you can't be serious. This is Hell. You don't deserve to be here.

KELLY

This isn't Hell. I guess this is Purgatory, if it's anything that resembles a Christian worldview. Or maybe it's Dante's woods. Maybe it's none of those. I don't have a good answer for it. It's the road and that's all there is to it.

SARAH

This is bullshit. You should be in Heaven.

*(Silence.)*

SARAH

Is there a Heaven?

KELLY

If there is, I don't know how to get there.

SARAH

*Fuck this.*

KELLY

Don't look at me.

SARAH

I want to see you.

KELLY

*I don't want you to see me!*

SARAH

... Jesus.

KELLY

Sorry.

SARAH

Please let me look at you.

*(Kelly moves away from her.)*

SARAH

Please. Okay. Okay. Fine. Don't go.

KELLY

Maybe I should. Maybe this was a mistake.

SARAH

Don't do that. You didn't come here for no reason.

KELLY

I can't stay here looking at you. I feel like I'm going to fly apart at the seams. I have to go before I ...

SARAH

Then just tell me where to find you. Kelly, please!

*(She whirls around. But Kelly is gone.)*

SARAH

*Fuck this place!*

*(She tries to play on thin air, to bring Kelly back, but the notes come out jumbled and discordant. She tries again, increasingly upset. The wind blows.)*

SARAH

*(Trying to sing "Breathe Slow.")* Wait -- wait, the feeling -- dear diary-- weight, wait,

THE DEVIL

Poor thing.

SARAH

*You.*

THE DEVIL

It's hard to be alone, isn't it, Sarah.

SARAH

Did you do something to her?

THE DEVIL

I did not.

SARAH

I don't believe you.

THE DEVIL

There's no reason to lie to you about this one, sugar. Your ex is as free as a bird in the trees. Dust in the wind.

SARAH

Bullshit. I know her. She -- she would never stay someplace like this if she didn't have to. Why isn't she in Heaven? Huh? Why's she's stuck here in Hell?

THE DEVIL

This isn't Hell, Sarah.

SARAH

... Kelly said that too.

THE DEVIL

Yeah? She told you the truth. You think this is Hell because it's cold, and dark, and you're sad and scared because your lovers aren't here. But the road isn't Hell. No. Hell is a garden. Just like Eden was. Yellowing lawns under a red sky. Weeds underfoot. Hectic flowers on the edge of the paths. Trees standing in dark soil with their roots twisted around the bones of everybody's sins. But the fruits that hang off those trees are the sweetest you ever tasted, honey. They taste like everything your heart desires. Fame, wealth, love, reprieve ... And every night the clouds rain salt, and every day the damned rake leaves under that hot sun, and they squint into the branches and reach for the same fruits that put 'em there.

SARAH

*(Eventually.)* And Sam is there?

THE DEVIL

And Kelly is not. And, hey, neither are you, at the moment. You could avoid it entirely if you wanted. You could even help Kelly avoid it.

SARAH

How?

THE DEVIL

How do you think?

SARAH

We already made a deal.

THE DEVIL

Deals are negotiable. Deals are always negotiable. But if you're not interested--

SARAH

Wait. What are you proposing?

THE DEVIL

You miss her, don't you? Taken from you the way she was. A blameless death on her side. Plenty of blame on the other. That driver walked away with barely a scratch, didn't he? *God* protects fools, drunks, and the United States of America.

SARAH

*(Hushed.)* He did a year and a half in jail.

THE DEVIL

A *year* and a *half*? What about you? Eight years, you've done. What about Kelly? The world's a cruel fucking place, isn't it. You don't think this would be the first time I made a deal to bring someone back from their untimely death, do you?

SARAH

You could do that?

THE DEVIL

I wouldn't make the offer if I couldn't deliver.