

EPISODE 27: DYSTOPIAN YA EXCERPT: MOVING WALLS BY ROBERT OWENS

Summary: Mary, a high school girl was kidnapped by a demon and made into his slave. Imbued with his unholy powers, she serves him by destroying other demons that roam the earth.

Mary knelt down, running her hand through the desert sand. It sifted through her fingers, trickling back down, appearing unaltered. It was hot and dry, an extreme contrast to the humid east coast of America. Her skin burned red in the air, as if in an oven. The city itself was no different than any American city, however. Stone and glass buildings with shops stood as far as the eye could see. She leaned against a stone shop and pretended to watch a television playing inside.

Mary stood up. Cautiously, she watched a girl from this land cross the street. She followed the teenage girl from a distance, entranced by the cobalt headdress that she wore. David had told her it was called a Hijab.

She thought of David for a moment, smiling dreamily. She had to keep her head in the mission, at least for now. She continued her silent pursuit.

The young Muslim girl was still young like Mary. Attached to the hand of the young woman was a small girl, whom Mary assumed was her younger sister.

The teenage girl and her younger sister crossed another busy street. Mary stopped in an alleyway, opened her phone, and typed.

"I found her. She's walking her sister to school...what is so important about her, and where the Hell are we."

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Mary looked around, trying to remain undetected. She readjusted her headscarf nervously while she waited.

Her phone vibrated.

"She is the most skilled of the girls I am collecting and once again, it's called Tehran".

The girl stopped at a small building made of yellow stone. She was greeted by an old lady. Her younger sister ran inside, met by other children. Mary watched from the alleyway, and when she was sure she wouldn't be seen, she crept closer to the building and sat on a bench.

A man arrived and sat next to Mary. Mary looked at him without speaking for a moment, enchanted by his unnatural beauty that only a shape shifter could achieve. The scent of his smell and feeling of his aura charmed her inner soul and only made it more impossible for her to resist his still undiscovered mission. She shook her head, coming out of her trance.

Mary clenched her hands in a fist. "I don't know what I am supposed to be doing, David!"

David ignored her and continued to watch the girl. Mary stared at her confused "What is so special about her?"

David cleared his throat in frustration, once again ignoring Mary. He'd already answered her more than once and didn't feel like talking again. They cautiously followed her to a skate park where she met two other teenage girls holding skateboards. David and Mary took a seat in the bleachers, watching on. The girls skated and performed advanced tricks to the amazement of Mary. "I thought the woman here were uncultured and uneducated. Here they are skating and having a good time."

The girls looked towards them, and seemed to notice two out-of-place white teenagers, and wanted to impress them.

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Mary crossed her arms and smiled. "I will admit that I am impressed." Her exhilaration quickly waned, however, due to the scorching desert sun which pulsed through exotic red clouds as it lowered on the horizon. "It's so fucking hot here". Mary hesitated for only a moment before taking off the hijab she'd worn to blend in. She ran her fingers through her hair.

"Fix your head dressing," David snapped, his features rigid. "The people around here will give you trouble if it's not right. They will confiscate your passport or worse."

Mary rolled her eyes, exasperated, and adjusted her hijab. When she was done, she once again stared into David's hazel eyes. As out of place as she felt here, she loved pleasing David. She was addicted to his aura; it enveloped her inside and out. It was only through her headstrong nature that she didn't fully succumb. She suspected that was one of the things he liked about her, though he rarely made light enough conversation to allow for compliments.

"I want to know why you are collecting girls. If I'm going to help you, I need to know what's going on."

David stared silently at Mary, his eyes half open as if he was bored; he turned his gaze towards the skaters.

"I am collecting this girl because she is linked to creatures in power, both in the government of this city, and in the world"

"That doesn't explain how you know all this. Who taught you about these things?" Mary cautiously asked, not expecting an answer.

"I lost everything to them. My life, my family..." He said, his tone verifying his words. Mary had rarely seen David give way to emotion, but this was the first time she'd ever seen him capable of sadness. His eyes began to water. Mary opened her mouth, surprised. She tried to think of something to say. She hadn't expected an answer, much less one denoting so much pain.

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Just as quickly as it had come, his emotions subsided. David straightened, rigid. He looked straight ahead.

"Just know I am here to protect humans from them."

Mary looked at him, puzzled. David had always been an enigma, but he never ceased to amaze her.

"Humans. You sound weird and creepy again. I never asked you this but: are you American? You don't talk like us."

David sighed and looked up at the desert sky in his aversion to answering questions about himself but this question left him visually dismayed.

"No."

The odd moment of bonding was cut short by what David had apparently been waiting for. He smirked at Mary. She frowned, knowing that he rarely smiled at lighthearted humor. She'd only seen him smile in the face of danger.

A police officer entered the park. He walked drunkenly, nightstick in hand. The girls on skateboards adjusted their Hijabs nervously as they watched him approach. The officer talked to the three girls out of earshot from Mary and David. Mary saw the girls back nervously away from the officer. She glanced at David for a moment, and he immediately motioned for her to continue watching. The officer grabbed the arm of one of the Iranian girls while the other two ran away in escape. Mary recognized her as the girl David had ordered her to follow.

David rested his cheek in his hand, as if watching a rerun on television. Mary stood up, alarmed, her posture and attitude in stark contrast to David's.

"I can feel it, David! It's one of them! We have to do something!"

David patiently examined the officer before speaking in his usual, drowsy monotone.

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"Mary, if you want to survive this quest, then I suggest you learn quickly." He didn't move.

Mary clenched her fists. She watched as the girl struggled and fell to the ground, her Hijab falling back, long dark hair spilling out. The young girl crawled backwards away from the officer, terrified of whatever she saw. The officer drunkenly stumbled towards her, moving slowly enough to give her time to stand up and run away. He sped up his pursuit, close on her trail. His movements were so clumsy, it reminded Mary of a toddler still learning to run. The girl jumped over a tall chain-linked fence surrounding the skate park, and ran into the city streets. The officer stopped at the fence and laughed, his voice deep and menacing.

David tapped Mary on the shoulder. She jumped, startled. He motioned towards the officer, whose hysterics were gradually sounding less and less human.

"This is what happens if you abuse your gift." He sighed in despair. "It is a red type, take care of it and remember what I told you". He folded his arms and leaned back on the bleacher behind him, as if about to take a nap.

Mary took two worn daggers from sheaths hidden in her lower back. She ran a finger over the Old English text, as a quick reminder.

"1492 Lord Baltimore"

"Yo, cop, get your ass over here!"

David rolled eyes and put his hands in his pockets. "So unprofessional." He leaned back further and looked up at the purple sky, appearing to only notice the sunset.

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The officer ran drunkenly towards Mary. She stared at the creature full of hatred, waiting for it to come to her. She remained still, unfaltering. It wore a standard police uniform, with fresh scinge marks, as if it had been immersed in a freshly-douse blazed. Its eyes melted, running down its face in a horrifying mess.

It was enough for Mary to temporarily freeze with horror. She remembered David's training, but the sight of this beast was beyond anything his usual expressionless description could have prepared her for.