

EPISODE 4: EMPTY ORCHESTRA

Written by

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INT. GERARD'S APARTMENT - DAY

GERARD is busily cleaning the debris of living with MAXWELL.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - DAY

GERARD bikes his way down an avenue. His phone is ringing.

INT. SLATE'S OFFICE - DAY

GERARD leafs through a magazine in the outer office.

INT. SLATE'S OFFICE - DAY

SLATE is standing in front of a large screen tracking bidding at an art auction in Paris. GERARD enters behind him. SLATE turns and sees it is not MAXWELL.

SLATE:
Why'd he send you?

GERARD:
He's dealing with the Faith
problem.

SLATE:
Been there.

GERARD:
So what did you want?

SLATE:
You ever go jogging?

EXT. THE ROOF OF SLATE'S BUILDING - DAY

SLATE is now in jogging gear and they are running a path around the top of the building.

GERARD:
I don't understand what that means.
Max almost never uses contracts.

SLATE:
Most of the industry hasn't until
recently. When you conduct
business based on a handshake, it's
easy to steal or commit fraud.

(MORE)

SLATE: (CONT'D)

And it's hard to prosecute with nothing on paper. Max just isn't in the habit of using contracts. I am.

GERARD:

Can't you just call them?

SLATE:

Look, let me tell you three reasons this might be happening. The first is that they found out Max is involved and they're calling it off. Problem with that is that I'd get a courtesy call.

GERARD:

What would Max get?

SLATE:

He gets the door slammed in his face. Number two: They talked directly to Faith and he cut a deal without management. Problem with that is they don't talk to artists without representation. And number three is: There was no offer. Torita made it up.

GERARD:

Why would she-?

SLATE:

Why did she give her ex the new artist?

GERARD:

No. No, it's not like that. She wants to help Max. She's not setting him up to fail.

SLATE:

You don't know much about women, do you?

EXT. A FERRYBOAT - SAME TIME

MAXWELL is talking with one of the crewmen.

MAXWELL:

I was told this was faster than driving in the city.

CREWMAN:

Well, when we go full-speed, it's an equivalent time. There are no stoplights out here.

MAXWELL:

Why aren't we going full-speed?

CREWMAN:

They captain thinks we're a little bit lost.

MAXWELL:

Lost? The shore's right there. That's 57th Street.

INT. SLATE'S OFFICE - DAY

SLATE is now getting a pedicure while GERARD watches.

SLATE:

This isn't gay at all. Details was right. Where is Max staying now?

GERARD:

He's with me for the moment.

SLATE:

What kind of roommate is he?

GERARD:

He's...unusual. Instead of washing dishes, he just throws them in the trash.

SLATE:

Does he treat you like a servant? Torita said he does that.

GERARD:

I don't feel comfortable talking about him behind his back.

SLATE and the PEDICURIST exchange a glance and then laugh.

EXT. FAITH'S LOFT - DAY

MAXWELL buzzes FAITH. FAITH sticks his head out the window.

FAITH:

You here to represent all of us?

MAXWELL:

I can't do that. The deal was for you.

FAITH:

Come back when you're ready to man up.

MAXWELL:

Would you rather talk to Jamal?

FAITH:

Why? Because he's black?

MAXWELL:

Is that a no?

FAITH shuts the window.

INT. SLATE'S OFFICE - DAY

SLATE is throwing a foam boomerang around the office.

GERARD:

Should we call her?

SLATE:

Who?

GERARD:

Torita.

SLATE:

Why would we call her?

GERARD:

To find out what's going on.

SLATE:

Why would she know?

GERARD:

I don't get this.

SLATE:

Max is running a crackerjack operation over there. Or he did until it blew up. Say, you guys got any idea where Princess is?

GERARD:

She sort of does what she pleases.

SLATE:
Yeah, that makes sense.

INT. JAMAL'S APARTMENT - DAY

JAMAL is sitting next to a hospital bed. His sister, DENISE, is laying on the bed. He puts a hand on her shoulder. His phone rings.

MAXWELL:
I need you down here.

JAMAL:
I'm taking the day off, Max.

MAXWELL:
We're making history here. No time for maternity leave. Faith's loft. Get down here.

INT. SLATE'S OFFICE - DAY

SLATE'S office is being repainted. Painters ignore SLATE and GERARD while they work.

SLATE:
Maybe this is a good thing. Le Desenee is on the way out. Did you see their Spitman show?

GERARD:
No.

SLATE:
You didn't miss anything. They're losing relevancy. I'd rather place him in Tribeca.

GERARD:
Max wants-

SLATE:
Max wants a lot of things. He can't get them.

GERARD:
I still don't get why Torita would lie about it.

SLATE:
Women lie. It's what they do.

GERARD:

I didn't know you were a misogynist.

SLATE:

Women are irrational. Even the butch lesbians. You'd think you could be buddies with them but they hate guys the most. And we have a common interest!

EXT. FAITH'S LOFT - DAY

MAXWELL is still buzzing FAITH and receiving no answer.

INT. FAITH'S LOFT - DAY

FAITH takes a break from painting and looks out the window. In a building across the street, MAXWELL has rigged a large sign that says "FAITH RICH IN 7 DAYS?"

INT. JAMAL'S APARTMENT - DAY

JAMAL is on the phone.

JAMAL:

What does the doctor say?

(beat)

How can he know that? He's not here.

(beat)

I don't care what's normal. She's not getting better.

(beat)

I have to leave. Can you stay with her?

(beat)

I have a job. This is my job. Can you watch her?

EXT. FAITH'S LOFT - DAY

JAMAL arrives to find GERARD loitering. They ring the buzzer but there's no answer. JAMAL starts shouting up at FAITH.

GERARD:

I don't think he's here.

JAMAL:

Where the hell else is he gonna be?

JAMAL shouts again.

GERARD:
I'll bet the neighbors love us.

JAMAL:
You cab it?

GERARD:
I left my bike at Slate's.

JAMAL:
Don't fall for that dude.

GERARD:
He's not as bad as-

JAMAL:
He's worse.

GERARD:
He hates women.

JAMAL:
Ain't he got a mother? Let's walk.

GERARD:
Where are we going?

JAMAL:
I know Faith's friends.

They walk.

JAMAL: (CONT'D)
Would you rather be Donald Duck or
Daffy?

GERARD:
Donald.

JAMAL:
Man, you're nuts.

INT. SLATE'S OFFICE - DAY

SLATE is at the window peering through a telescope. MAXWELL
sits on the other side of the desk.

SLATE:
Do you remember that time the three
of us went to...oh, where was it?
One of those oil countries.

MAXWELL:

Vaguely.

SLATE:

You seemed so annoyed by all of it.

MAXWELL:

Yeah.

(long pause)

It used to be better, didn't it?

SLATE:

What, life?

MAXWELL:

The business. People used to care about the art. Now it's an investment, it's just....

SLATE:

Junk bonds.

MAXWELL:

I miss it. They used to shop smart. Estate sales painted a portrait. Now paintings are just part of the retirement package. Now if someone buys a two million dollar painting, it's probably the only one they didn't get at a flea market. They put it in storage.

SLATE:

Capitalism was a lot more fun before everyone got in on it. Don't you have any of Philo's work anywhere? You can sell that if you need money.

MAXWELL:

They're tearing up the floor of his studio because it has his blood on it.

SLATE:

Is it a conceptual piece?

MAXWELL:

No, it's just where he died.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - DAY

JAMAL and GERARD are still walking.

JAMAL:
Can't we take a taxi?

GERARD:
No.

JAMAL:
You don't have ten bucks for a cab?
What are you worth?

GERARD comes to a stop.

GERARD:
What a profound question.

INT. SLATE'S OFFICE - DAY

SLATE:
Max, we're burning daylight.

MAXWELL:
I know.

SLATE:
So...is there an answer?

MAXWELL:
I've never had a client that
refused to talk to me this much.
And he's only been a client for
four days.

SLATE:
This is making me look bad.

MAXWELL:
Botox will probably fix that.

SLATE:
I'm making the call. I'm telling
them it's a no.

MAXWELL:
Don't you use contracts though?

SLATE just looks out the window.

MAXWELL: (CONT'D)
Did you make them sign a contract?

SLATE still avoids him.

MAXWELL: (CONT'D)
 Jesus. You were going to let me
 think this was all my fault.

SLATE:
 It almost worked.

MAXWELL:
 You're a con man. I may lie for my
 clients but I never lie to them.

SLATE:
 You only have one client.

MAXWELL:
 But I won't lie to him.

He stands and walks to the door.

MAXWELL: (CONT'D)
 For a second there, I thought you
 had a soul.

INT. TORITA'S OFFICE - DAY

TORITA sits at her desk, look through slides of paintings.
 GERARD enters.

TORITA:
 Hello.

GERARD:
 I'm not interrupting, am I?

TORITA:
 No.

GERARD:
 I think you know why I'm here.

TORITA:
 Something wrong with Max?

GERARD:
 He has delicate ankles.

TORITA:
 Is that all?

GERARD:
 It's one thing.
 (beat)
 You never submitted to Le Desenee.

TORITA:
Of course I did.

GERARD:
Slate never got the contract.

TORITA:
Did Max tell you that?

GERARD:
Is it true?

TORITA:
I submitted Faith's work. It's out
of my hands after that.

GERARD:
So why would Slate lie?

TORITA:
Habit, probably.

GERARD:
(beat)
What do I tell Max?

TORITA:
Tell him to grow a pair and come
see me himself.
(beat)
But you're becoming quite
assertive, aren't you? And
handsome.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - DAY

JAMAL has packed his camera in a large pink purse. He finds
MAXWELL standing at a crosswalk waiting for the light to
change.

JAMAL:
Maxie.

MAXWELL:
Are you following me?

JAMAL:
Nah, just ran into you. I was
looking for you though.

MAXWELL:
What for?

An ELDERLY WOMAN waiting near MAXWELL leans toward JAMAL and says

ELDERLY WOMAN:

Excuse me, I just wanted to say how tickled I am to see a strong young black man carrying a pink purse.

MAXWELL:

He keeps his drugs in there.

The light changes and they begin crossing.

MAXWELL: (CONT'D)

Where's Jughead?

JAMAL:

Who?

MAXWELL:

Gerard.

JAMAL:

He went to see Torita.

MAXWELL:

Asking about a contract?

JAMAL:

Listen, man. My sister-

MAXWELL:

What?

JAMAL:

My sister. She's got multiple sclerosis. Her immune system is attacking her central nervous system.

MAXWELL:

Okay. You want me to wear a ribbon?

JAMAL:

Could I borrow some money?

MAXWELL:

I don't have any money, Jamal. You know that.

JAMAL:

Then, uh, I think I need to wrap up the project.

MAXWELL:
And do what? Flip burgers?

JAMAL:
I have enough material to edit and
present the film.

MAXWELL:
You don't have an ending.

JAMAL:
What's my ending?

MAXWELL:
Faith's show.

JAMAL:
I don't have time.

MAXWELL:
It's the redemption, Jamal. Watch
me come back from nothing and make
another huge star. That's what
people want to see. Or me getting
killed. But I can guarantee the
redemption.

JAMAL pulls the camera out of the bag.

MAXWELL: (CONT'D)
I'm glad you're not just going to
throw in the towel before-

JAMAL:
Say goodbye, Maxie.

MAXWELL just stares at him. JAMAL shuts off the camera and
walks away.

MAXWELL:
What am I supposed to do now?
(beat)
I'll deny everything you have on
tape!

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DUSK

MAXWELL sits against a low brick wall staring at the ground
in front of him. GERARD walks up.

GERARD:
Everyone's been looking for you.

MAXWELL:

I can not think of one moment in my life that I'm proud of.

GERARD sits beside him.

GERARD:

You've done a lot of great things, Maxie.

MAXWELL:

Oh, sure. I've done good things. But I can't be proud of them. Because days or weeks or years later, I ruined them by bragging or lying. I make everything dirty, Gerard.

(beat)

So what's the situation?

GERARD:

Faith isn't talking to you and refuses to show anywhere without his friends. No galleries are interested in showing him with or without his friends.

MAXWELL:

Yeah. It's been a fairly typical day.

GERARD:

Have you seen Jamal?

MAXWELL:

He's gone.

GERARD:

He...he died?

MAXWELL:

We're not invading Normandy, kid. His sister-

GERARD:

The one with MS?

MAXWELL:

Am I the only one that didn't know about that?

GERARD:

You don't take much interest in people.

(MORE)

GERARD: (CONT'D)

(he stands)

I'm not ready to give up on you.
So you can't give up either.

MAXWELL:

I think you're the only one that
really cares anymore.

GERARD:

Torita cares.

MAXWELL:

No she doesn't. And I don't blame
her for that. Let's go to a bar.
A day like today should end in a
bar.

GERARD:

I hear a car.

MAXWELL:

Yeah, there are a lot of cars in
the world.

GERARD gets an arm under MAXWELL and hoists him up, .

MAXWELL: (CONT'D)

One night I was closing out a bar
with a friend. This was back
before I was anybody. There's this
one guy in a booth and he's so
drunk. More drunk than I've ever
seen anyone. The bartender pulls
him out of the booth and he falls
on his face. My friend says we'll
get him in a cab and get him home,
whoever he is. We got an address
out of him but he falls down
anytime we let go. We drag him out
to a taxi and head uptown. We open
the taxi door and he's down on his
face. We drag him to the door and
his wife comes and she's just
looking at us puzzled and I thought
he'd given us a bad address. So my
friend explains that we don't know
the guy and he was drunk at a bar
and we got this address out of him
and we're just hoping to drop him
off and go home. And finally she
says, "Oh. Okay. But...where's
his wheelchair?"

GERARD:

What are you gonna do?

MAXWELL:

I'm going to talk to Faith.
Without him, I'm just a drunk
without a wheelchair.

GERARD:

That's a weird metaphor.

MAXWELL:

It's a parable. I don't want to
walk. You think anyone would stop
if we try to hitchhike?

INT. A CAR - NIGHT

MAXWELL and GERARD are crushed tight in the front seat of a
small car, a TRANS WOMAN driving.

MAXWELL:

And it will never be as good as it
used to be. And I didn't even
enjoy it the first time.

TRANS WOMAN:

But Max, why are you trying so hard
to get something you already know
hasn't made you happy?

MAXWELL:

Because I don't really know any
other life.

TRANS WOMAN:

I think you just found out what
every famous person finds out: With
all the love and money that comes
with it you still have the same
problems. You still hate yourself
and you're nervous about losing
everyone you care about and your
parents are still divorced and you
still feel like you aren't a good
person.

MAXWELL:

There's a lot of truth in that.

TRANS WOMAN:

Tell me about Faith.

EXT. FAITH'S LOFT - NIGHT

The car comes to a stop and Maxwell and Gerard exit.

TRANS WOMAN:

Have you ever considered that
Torita only treats you this way now
because you stopped being a success?

MAXWELL:

Frequently. Thanks for the ride.

The car pulls away.

GERARD:

She was helpful. Really
insightful.

MAXWELL:

She understands my life
better than I do.

They look up to FAITH'S window.

GERARD:

What are you going to say?

MAXWELL:

About his friends or about the
gallery?

GERARD:

I don't know. Both?

MAXWELL:

As of now, we don't talk about the
gallery. If I get him to ditch his
friends, they were the hold up and
now we have to find a new gallery.
If that show comes through, then I
pulled off another miracle.

GERARD:

And if it's his friends or nothing?

MAXWELL:

Then I guess we'll have to take his
friends. But I can fix that.

GERARD continues staring up at the window.

GERARD:

I think I'm in love with Torita.

There is silence. He looks down. He is alone.

INT. FAITH'S LOFT - NIGHT

The elevator door opens and MAXWELL finds PRINCESS standing on the opposite side. She has a drink in her hand.

MAXWELL:

Well, that figures.

PRINCESS:

We were starting to worry. The taxi shouldn't have taken that long.

MAXWELL:

I didn't come in a taxi.

She knots her brow then shrugs it off.

PRINCESS:

Where's Gerard?

MAXWELL:

He's downstairs.

PRINCESS:

Well have him come up.

FAITH appears at the door of his bedroom. He's not wearing a shirt and his abs are toned.

MAXWELL:

She's married, you know.

The elevator descends.

MAXWELL: (CONT'D)

Something's not about to blow up, is it?

FAITH:

Just me and my crew.

PRINCESS:

They're not, though.

MAXWELL:

So where are they? I'm dying to meet the guys.

FAITH:
They're over at the studio.

MAXWELL:
I need all their info. Full name,
education, parental contact, arrest
records-

FAITH:
What do you need all that for?

MAXWELL:
I need to vet them. And their
parents are going to need to be at
the opening.

FAITH:
Why?

MAXWELL:
I'm sorry, have you shown in a
major gallery before? Do you know
more about this process than I do?

FAITH:
I don't think everyone will want
their parents there.

MAXWELL:
It's a package deal. You want your
friends there, I get their parents.

The elevator opens and GERARD steps off.

FAITH:
Just leave the parents out of this.

MAXWELL:
Why wouldn't anyone want their
parents to be there?

FAITH:
I, uh, well...I don't...

MAXWELL:
This isn't going to be a private
affair, you know. There will be
art journalists there probing for
hidden sexual desires, subconscious
impulses. They'll want to know if
anyone has had an STD.

FAITH:
We're Christians, Max.

MAXWELL:

So's Bill Clinton but he enjoys a cigar now and then.

PRINCESS:

You don't need your friends, Faith. You're the star.

MAXWELL:

I can't remember the last time any artist was an authentic upstanding, positive role model. John Denver? No, wait, Rocky Mountain High got banned for being a drug reference.

FAITH:

John Denver wasn't a pothead.

MAXWELL:

Don't be scared. I'm sure none of you has a single skeleton in the closet. Nothing your parents would find objectionable.

FAITH:

They wouldn't do that. They wouldn't hurt people just to sell newspapers.

MAXWELL:

They're magazines, not newspapers. And they'd do it if it attracts one more sponsor. When you're a celebrity, you stop being a person with a right to a private life. You're not a person anymore, you're an idea. And if people are shocked and hate you, then they'll love watching you flame out and they can sell more ads. Even Jesus had to spend time on the cross. And we never stopped feeding Christians to the lions.

FAITH:

They'll hate me if I cut them out.

MAXWELL:

Tell them to hate the game. You didn't invent the rules. And there's no reason they can't ride your coattails after.

FAITH walks back into his bedroom. Princess drains her drink and puts an arm around GERARD for support.

PRINCESS:
You kissed someone!

GERARD:
No I didn't. That's ridiculous.

PRINCESS:
There's something off about today.
I never get these things wrong.

FAITH walks back out of the bedroom.

FAITH:
If anyone asks, you were the one
that refused them.

MAXWELL:
You're back in?

FAITH:
I need this show.

PRINCESS:
You'll have it.

FAITH smiles and walks back into the bedroom.

MAXWELL:
Have you told him he's not going to
save the world?

PRINCESS:
That's just something you say.
Let's go to a bar.

INT. GERARD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

GERARD is tossing and turning in bed. MAXWELL is snoring on the floor. This goes on for quite some time. GERARD finally gets out of bed and squats down to shake MAXWELL awake.

MAXWELL:
(waking)
What? What is it?

GERARD:
(frantic)
Max...what am I worth?

END