

EPISODE 5: ATTRACTIVE NUISANCE

Written by

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INT. FAITH'S LOFT - DAY

We are looking out the window at the building across the street.

MAXWELL (O.S.)
Don't say it like that.

FAITH (O.S.)
You mean, like, tone of voice?

MAXWELL (O.S.)
I don't want you to stop to think.
The answer has to come immediately.
Because it's natural, it's honest,
it's what you actually feel. Don't
think of a clever answer, just tell
the truth.

PRINCESS walks up to the window and sits. She stares out.

FAITH (O.S.)
What gallery am I going to be at?

MAXWELL (O.S.)
Let me worry about that, you just
do this.

FAITH (O.S.)
Yeah.

MAXWELL (O.S.)
So. What is your work a reaction
to?

FAITH (O.S.)
I don't know. I guess-

MAXWELL (O.S.)
You *always* know. And it's not a
reaction to anything. Reaction is
negativity. It exists because
something else provoked it. Your
work doesn't react, it inspires
reactions.

FAITH (O.S.)
I don't feel very inspirational.

We are on MAXWELL and FAITH. They sit facing each other.
MAXWELL stands and points up at a completed canvas on the
wall.

MAXWELL

What does this mean? What is this?
Is that Jesus on the cross or is it
a car's drive shaft? You're not
painting, Faith, you're preaching.
Your work is your sermon.

FAITH

I don't preach, okay? I paint a
picture. I don't know what I'm
saying in the picture. 'Where does
it come from?' It's there and I do
it.

MAXWELL

And that's great for a high school
art class but I'm putting you in
front of the international
community.

FAITH

Are my paintings good?

MAXWELL

I wouldn't be here if they weren't.

FAITH

Then that's all that matters. What
I have to say should not matter.

MAXWELL

It doesn't work like that. Look,
if this was the Renaissance and
you're Michelangelo, that would be
enough. But we're past that. Art
evolves and it moves on a single
trajectory. You can't just make a
beautiful painting and sell it
because people are buying the
ideas.

FAITH

You're getting me mixed up. You're
putting words in my mouth.

MAXWELL

I don't want to put words in your
mouth. I just need you to
understand what you'll be asked so
you can answer correctly. The
content is up to you but the
presentation is my job.

FAITH
You're wearing me out, man.

MAXWELL
You promised to give me twelve hours.

FAITH
Fine. How much do we have left?

MAXWELL
(looks at his watch)
Eleven hours and forty-two minutes.

OPENING CREDITS

INT. SLATE'S OFFICE - DAY

SLATE is on the phone, listening. TORITA stands across his desk, waiting. They are anxious, nervous.

SLATE
Yes. Oh, I agree.
(pause)
Okay, so if I'm hearing you correctly-
(pause)
Then you're saying-
(pause)
(he reacts, becomes animated, but silently; TORITA mirrors his pantomime celebrations)
That is fantastic. Just fantastic.
Thanks, Clive.

He hangs up the phone and their celebration becomes audible.

SLATE (CONT'D)
Judy! Bring in the dessert cart!

TORITA
You got the first new artist EVER a single show at Maison.

SLATE
Judy!

JUDY pokes her head in.

JUDY
We don't have a dessert cart.

SLATE

Let the proclamation go forth to
all corners of the land: I placed
an emerging artist at Maison!

JUDY

I don't know how to type a
proclamation...

SLATE

I did not put together a group show
for new artists. I secured a solo
show for an emerging artist.
Something that Maison has never
agreed to. We are going to need
champagne.

TORITA

Did you want to call Max or can I?

SLATE

No. No...call Gerard. Let him
deliver the news.

TORITA

Any reason?

SLATE

The kid could use a win.
(beat)
Where can we get a bottle of
champagne at 8:20 AM?

TORITA

I doubt they're-

SLATE

JUDY!

INT. FAITH'S LOFT - DAY

MAXWELL is still coaching.

MAXWELL

Who are your influences?

FAITH

I don't know, man.

MAXWELL

Even if you don't know, you know.
You know?

(MORE)

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

If you don't know what to say right away, be flippant. Be self-deprecating. Speak nonsense.

FAITH

Nonsense?

MAXWELL

Malarkey.

FAITH

Malarkey?

MAXWELL

Gibberish. Just make it sound intellectual but esoteric.

FAITH

I don't know what any of those words mean.

MAXWELL

Some of them are pretty common.

FAITH

Fine, put me an example.

MAXWELL stares at him for a second.

MAXWELL

You've got your own unique way of phrasing things, you know. Okay: If you don't know your influences, then just philosophize. Sun Tzu influenced you. You were influenced by the guy that drew the first Superman comic. See?

FAITH

But that stuff's not true.

MAXWELL

Of course not. And I'm not answering for you. I'm giving you examples. It's a scenario, not a list of things to memorize. I'm helping you improvise, not rehearse. Got it?

FAITH

Yeah.

MAXWELL

Okay. Who was the first artist to
turn your head?

FAITH stares at him.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

What?

FAITH

This is stupid. When do I start
making money?

MAXWELL

Oh. You won't at first.

FAITH

Why not?

MAXWELL

We'll get to that.

FAITH

I want to know.

MAXWELL

I place you in a gallery.

FAITH

Right. And I sell paintings.

MAXWELL

No. I give them away.

FAITH

Aren't they worth money?

MAXWELL

Not much at the moment. A few
hundred.

FAITH

That's better than nothing. So why
are we giving them away?

MAXWELL

Not we, just me. In fact, you hate
that I'm giving them away.

FAITH

Yeah, I kinda am.

MAXWELL

Yeah, but you're not actually angry. You're only angry in public.

FAITH

No, I'm actually angry if you're just going to give away my work.

MAXWELL

This is above your head. If you knew how this stuff worked, you wouldn't have to hire me. You're going to have plenty of money, just give it time.

There is the sound of glass hitting the floor but it does not break. The empty liquor bottle rolls between them. MAXWELL looks over at the couch where PRINCESS has passed out.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

She's married, you know.

FAITH

So you put me in a gallery but you won't sell my work. Why does the gallery want that? What do they get?

MAXWELL

Before we show at the gallery, I'll have an art advisor in to look at your work.

FAITH stares at him blankly.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

I don't know what you think about how the art market works but it's pretty much the same as the financial market. How much is a stock worth? It's worth what you're willing to pay for it. How much is art worth? It's worth what someone is willing to pay for it. The big art investors, you think they don't do research? There are two or three that work the art world junk bond market but most of them are looking for blue chip investments. And that doesn't mean a Picasso or a Rembrandt. They're dead. They aren't going to have new paintings on the market.

(MORE)

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

The value of their work is pretty well established already. So they're taking the gamble to buy low and hopefully sell high in the future. That means they need someone to guide their investments and tell them which new art is the most likely to appreciate and generate a profit.

FAITH

I'm not a stock.

MAXWELL

You? No, you're not. But your career is. And building it to maximum value is my job. So let's get back to work.

FAITH

How much do you think my work is worth?

MAXWELL

Right now? A few hundred. Where do you want it to be? What do you want it to be worth?

FAITH

I don't now. Ten million.

MAXWELL

Ten million? Let's see. Five years. Five to seven years, we can get one of your paintings to sell for that at auction.

FAITH

Five years I gotta wait to get ten million for a painting? Is that good or bad?

MAXWELL

Look, when one of your paintings sells for that much at auction, you won't see any of it. So who cares?

FAITH

Why won't I get the ten million?

MAXWELL

Because the person that sold the painting gets it. Minus the auction house's fees.

FAITH

But it's my painting.

MAXWELL

Well no, I gave it away before your first gallery show.

FAITH

I don't get this.

MAXWELL

You're not going to make your money by selling a painting, okay? You'll make money painting a lot. Then I put those paintings in the hands of the right people and they talk about you. Then everyone wants your work. They want it cheap and they want it to be worth more than you can get for it. That's what makes it worthwhile for them.

FAITH

But it's my work.

MAXWELL

Yeah. And you'll get money. The more you paint, the more you'll make. But you won't ever get anything from auctions. Auctions will just raise the price that you can sell for to dealers and private collectors. And they'll all expect a discount.

FAITH

(a long pause while he considers)

What if I put my work up for auction?

MAXWELL

As the seller?

FAITH

Yeah. Why not go direct? What do I need you for?

MAXWELL

You know what happens if your paintings don't reach the reserve price? You want to sell them individually or as a lot?

(MORE)

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

Would you take a guarantee from the dealer with the auction house splitting the profit 50/50? What do you do if someone tries to flood the market when your work goes up on the block? What if the auction house inflates the price with chandelier bidding and then tries to sell it at a discount later? What if dealers form a ring to get your whole body of work with almost no competitive bidding driving up the price? You might need my experience more than you think.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - DAY

SLATE is entering a liquor store.

INT. LIQUORE STORE - SAME TIME

As SLATE browses the aisles for champagne, he spots PRINCESS a couple rows over. She hasn't spotted him yet. She is talking on her cell phone.

PRINCESS

No, I'm at the lab.

(pause)

We don't have to worry about that.

(pause)

I can turn on the equipment if you need me to.

(pause)

Just make sure.

SLATE is approaching her. He freezes when he hears the next words.

PRINCESS (CONT'D)

I don't think it matters if he dies. Either way works.

SLATE ducks behind a display of corkscrews before she can turn to see him.

PRINCESS (CONT'D)

No, it's part of the spectacle. I can't talk right now. I'm doing that thing.

(pause)

Yes. I will be there. 8 PM.

Perpetual Sorrow.

(MORE)

PRINCESS (CONT'D)

(pause)

No? I thought it was...?

(pause)

Okay then. 8 PM, Holy Cross. Love you too.

(she disconnects and lays a basket of bottles on the counter)

Sorry. My husband. I have an AA meeting tonight.

CASHIER

We do deliveries.

INT. FAITH'S LOFT - DAY

MAXWELL stands opposite FAITH, holding a dictionary in his hand.

FAITH

You were serious about this?

MAXWELL

No, I was kidding about balancing it on your head. But I want you to look these words up: Artist. Arrogant. Fame. Wealth. And you'll find yourself.

FAITH

I'm in the dictionary?

MAXWELL

There's not like a picture of you.

FAITH

But like when someone says "If you look up whatever in the dictionary, there's a picture of Faith."

MAXWELL

I've got this whole thing planned where we do this. Can you just look up those words?

FAITH

No. I refuse.

MAXWELL

Why?

FAITH

I'm not defined by a book.

MAXWELL

Okay, except this is a dictionary.
Everything that exists is defined
here. But that was a clever answer
and it would look good in print.
So we're getting somewhere.

(looking around)

Where did Princess go?

FAITH

Dunno.

MAXWELL

She's married, you know.

FAITH

Why do you keep telling me that?

MAXWELL

(leaning in)

What do you do when you're alone?

FAITH

That's personal.

MAXWELL

Let's go get a hotdog.

FAITH

I don't feel comfortable with this
conversation.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - DAY

MAXWELL and FAITH eat hotdogs while watching gazing across
the East River.

FAITH

When does that appraiser dude get
here?

MAXWELL

She's not an appraiser. She's an
advisor.

FAITH

Fine, whatever. What time?

MAXWELL

Tonight.

They chew their hotdogs.

FAITH
You really know your stuff, huh?

MAXWELL
When I was coming up, they said I
could be the next Harry Rothchild.

FAITH
Who's that?

MAXWELL
I don't remember. How was she?

FAITH
Who?

MAXWELL
Princess.

FAITH
What do you mean?

MAXWELL
How was she?

FAITH
To paint?

MAXWELL
To sleep with.

FAITH
I didn't sleep with her.

MAXWELL
Why not?

FAITH
Why would I?

MAXWELL
I don't know. She's pretty. Why
wouldn't you?

FAITH
You say really stupid stuff
sometimes.

MAXWELL
Do I?

FAITH drops the last bite of his hotdog into the river and
begins walking away.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Hey, come back. What if a fish
chokes on that?

INT. SLATE'S OFFICE - DAY

SLATE is seated behind the desk rubbing his chin and staring
at nothing. TORITA enters.

TORITA
Where's the champagne?

SLATE
I didn't....

TORITA
What's wrong?

SLATE
I ran into Princess at the liquor
store.

TORITA
What did she say?

SLATE
She's trying to kill Faith.

TORITA
She told you that?

SLATE
No, she was on the phone.

TORITA
The liquor store has a phone?

SLATE
No. I mean, yeah. They do
deliveries.

INT. FAITH'S LOFT - DAY

MAXWELL enters and peers around. Calls for FAITH as he walks
around the empty loft. He exits.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - DAY

MAXWELL is on his cell phone as he walks.

MAXWELL
I've lost Faith.

GERARD
In yourself or....?

MAXWELL
We had a fight. Or I offended him.
Maybe both.

GERARD
About what?

MAXWELL
I don't know. I thought he slept
with Princess.

GERARD
Who cares?

MAXWELL
He does. I do. Don't you? When
we all start sleeping with each
other-

GERARD
You sleep on my floor.

MAXWELL
That's beside the point.

GERARD
What's the point?

MAXWELL
I lost Faith. I can't find him. I
need to find a subway.

GERARD
Where are you?

MAXWELL
(looking at the nearest
intersection)
I'm at 12th and 12th. That can't
be right. A street can't intersect
itself.

INT. SLATE'S OFFICE - DAY

TORITA
I'm not sure you really heard
anything.

SLATE

She said it doesn't matter if he lives.

TORITA

That's not necessarily a threat.

SLATE

What was it, then?

TORITA

Social commentary?

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - DAY

MAXWELL stands in front of a storefront staring at a mannequin in a suit. A passing woman, SARAH, slows and stands beside him. MAXWELL senses her presence.

MAXWELL

I don't have any money.

SARAH

Uh...okay.

MAXWELL

I'm sorry. I thought you were a hooker.

SARAH

What?

MAXWELL

Not a hooker. I meant a mugger.

SARAH

Why would I be either?

MAXWELL

Did you need something?

SARAH

I...I can't read you.

He stares at her, uncomprehending.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Oh, I should explain. I get a sense of things, you know, past and present and future. But I can't read you. I've never had that happen before.

MAXWELL

You can predict the future?

SARAH

No, no. Not predict. I just know
what to expect more often than not.

MAXWELL gives her an indiscreet study.

MAXWELL

(softly)

Princess?

SARAH

Pardon?

MAXWELL

Never mind. Anyway. Good luck
with the psychic thing.

He begins walking away.

SARAH

We don't like that word. It's not
some trick. Just access to
different information.

He turns back.

MAXWELL

You wanna show me?

SARAH

I can't read you though. Normally
I can feel a sort of map. You
know, where the past is and where
the present is and then I see where
the lines are going for the future.
But you don't have a map.

MAXWELL

Right. Well. Have a good day.

SARAH

You miss it.

MAXWELL

Most of it.

SARAH

Oh, no, I meant the suit. You
owned one, didn't you?

MAXWELL

Three of them.

SARAH

All that same color.

MAXWELL

I don't like making choices.

INT. SLATE'S OFFICE - DAY

TORITA

She said she was at a lab.

SLATE

Not a lab, THE lab.

TORITA

Does that emphasis make a difference?

SLATE

I don't know. It could.

TORITA

She's probably a scientist. She was talking about a lab rat.

SLATE

She called it a spectacle. She called something a spectacle. And it doesn't matter if someone dies because that won't affect the spectacle.

TORITA

Stop saying spectacle.

SLATE

Should I tell Max?

TORITA

That you saw her in a liquor store?

SLATE

That she's okay with someone dying.

TORITA

I think most people are okay with someone dying.

SLATE
Strangers, maybe. People are upset
when someone they know dies.

TORITA
You kept grinning at my mom's
funeral.

SLATE
I tried to hide it, though. At
least give me that.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - DUSK

MAXWELL and SARAH are approaching FAITH'S building.

MAXWELL
If you can't read me at all, does
that mean I don't exist?

SARAH is thinking about this.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Okay, the fact you didn't answer
right away is really freaking me
out.

INT. FAITH'S LOFT - DUSK

MAXWELL and SARAH step off the elevator.

SARAH
Is this your place?

MAXWELL
Sort of.

SARAH
Are we alone?

MAXWELL
Do you want us to be?

PRINCESS
Hey.

MAXWELL
Oh, hey. That's Princess. She
knows the future too. Princess,
this is Sarah. She's a psychic.

PRINCESS shakes SARAH'S hand.

PRINCESS

Nice to meet you. Care for a cocktail?

SARAH

I don't drink.

PRINCESS

Good policy. You want a drink, Maxie?

MAXWELL

Maybe. You seen Faith?

PRINCESS

He's with that woman.

MAXWELL

What woman?

PRINCESS

You invited her.

MAXWELL

(turning to SARAH)

She's usually more specific than this.

SARAH

What does she do?

MAXWELL

She saves my life.

SARAH

Mhmm.

MAXWELL

Hey, Princess, are they in...?

She turns on the blender and FAITH enters from the bedroom.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

(to FAITH)

Hey, buddy. What's up?

He sits on the couch, his back to MAXWELL.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

(to SARAH)

Please excuse me, I need to have a word in there.

He enters the bedroom.

INT. FAITH'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

The bedroom has transformed into a small gallery. FARRAH is examining a canvas from inches away.

MAXWELL

Nice to see you, Farrah. Thanks for coming in.

FARRAH

Hey, Maxie. Tell me: How fast does this kid paint?

MAXWELL

I don't know. Torita found him.

FARRAH

Give me the odds.

MAXWELL

I wish it were 50/50. Probably 20% chance of launching a career.

FARRAH

You should let him know that. He's already spending the money.

MAXWELL

I've talked to him about it. He gets it.

FARRAH

I don't think he does. Neither do you.

MAXWELL

(sensing her reluctance)
Level with me. Can you place these?

FARRAH

When is he showing?

MAXWELL

Four days.

FARRAH

Don't do it.

MAXWELL

You don't have anyone that would buy these?

FARRAH

I can't sell them. Look at this.
(points to the canvas)

MAXWELL

I like it. The colors, the composition. If it's the subject matter-

FARRAH

Not the picture, the materials. Super cheap canvas won't last 50 years. And the paint? Latex house paint. It's going to be falling off in chunks within five years. Fluorescent lighting will discolor it. The paint will crack when the humidity and air pressure change.

MAXWELL

(sinking onto the bed)
We can't sell a single one.

FARRAH

He didn't know any better. He's got talent but he has never had any training. He doesn't know why he can't use house paint or a six dollar canvas. You've only got four days to recreate all the paintings in this room with the proper supplies. But don't do it. Start over and give him all the time he needs.

MAXWELL

Jesus. Even 20 percent was too optimistic.

FARRAH

You should let him know.

MAXWELL

I have a very precarious relationship with this artist.

FARRAH

Max...he needs to know he can't sell this work.

MAXWELL

He's not going to take it well.
(considers)
Will you tell him?

FARRAH

Max, I don't even know that guy.
He's your client.

MAXWELL

I'm a little bit scared of him. He
keeps firing me. Everything that
happens makes me look small and
petty. And he's got a really nice
home. I don't even have a home.
I'm living with my assistant.

FARRAH

Have your assistant tell him if you
lack the confidence.

MAXWELL

No. They became friends. Faith
respects him.

FARRAH

I don't blame him.

MAXWELL

Neither do I. He's better than
me.

FARRAH

I'm going. Should I bill you?

MAXWELL

Bill Slate. And bill it through
Torita's division. Can you
overbill by a couple hundred and
loan me half?

FARRAH

God, Max. What the hell is wrong
with you?

MAXWELL

I'm figuring that out. I'll
get back to you on that.