

EPISODE 6: CHARADES

by  
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INT. FAITH'S LOFT - NIGHT

MAXWELL sits at the window looking at the building across the street. He is drinking a scotch. FAITH is noticeable, painting in the background. GERARD takes a seat beside him.

GERARD:  
Hey, Maxie.

MAXWELL:  
Where have you been?

GERARD:  
I was doing stuff. Why? What's up?

MAXWELL:  
We're basically finished.

GERARD:  
The appraisal went well? Because Torita wanted me to tell you that Slate got him a show at a gallery.

MAXWELL:  
Which one?

GERARD:  
Maison.

MAXWELL:  
That's- Wow.  
(beat)  
Call Slate and let him know it won't happen.

GERARD:  
How?

MAXWELL:  
With a telephone. Faith probably has one if you don't have your-

GERARD:  
I meant, why not?

MAXWELL:  
None of his canvases can sell. He used materials that will fall apart too quickly. They wouldn't even make it to the secondary market.  
(MORE)

MAXWELL: (cont'd)  
Nobody with a clue will spend any  
money on them and no advisor will  
allow a client to spend money on  
them.

GERARD takes a cautious look back at FAITH painting in his  
room.

GERARD:  
Is he trying to recreate all of  
them in four days?

MAXWELL:  
I haven't told him.

GERARD sneaks another peek.

GERARD:  
Shouldn't you tell him?

MAXWELL:  
If you want an artist to stop  
working, tell him you need work.  
He'll just ask me for money anyway.

GERARD:  
You want me to tell him?

MAXWELL:  
Maybe. You don't have any money.

GERARD:  
Neither do you.

MAXWELL:  
I don't think he realizes that.  
(beat)  
Where's Princess? I need a better  
brand of scotch.

There's silence so he turns to GERARD but the seat is now  
empty. GERARD is in FAITH'S room talking to him as he  
paints. We stay on MAXWELL. He takes a drink and watches  
GERARD and FAITH. Turns back to the window. Eventually  
GERARD walks back to him.

GERARD:  
He'd like to talk to you. If you  
have any cash on you, it will help  
a lot.

MAXWELL lays his head down on the ledge.

OPENING CREDITS

INT. FAITH'S LOFT - NIGHT

We're now P.O.V. looking in from the window. GERARD sits at the ledge. FAITH'S door is now closed behind him and we hear shouting. GERARD is uncomfortable. The shouting stops. The door opens and MAXWELL steps out.

GERARD:  
Are you okay?

MAXWELL:  
I'm going to see someone.

GERARD:  
Like a therapist?

MAXWELL:  
Why would I see a therapist?

GERARD:  
Well he yelled at you a lot. I thought maybe you were going to cry.

MAXWELL:  
I'm not a little girl, Gerard.

MAXWELL is departing.

GERARD:  
(under his breath)  
You throw like one.

GERARD'S cell phone rings. He answers.

GERARD:  
Hey.

TORITA:  
Are you with Max?

GERARD:  
No. Are you with Slate?

TORITA:  
Slate thinks we have a problem.

GERARD:  
Did you tell him...?

TORITA:  
It's about Max. He thinks Princess is trying to kill him.

INT. SLATE'S OFFICE

Same conversation.

SLATE:

We both think it, don't we?

TORITA:

I honestly don't know what to think, honey.

GERARD:

Don't know what to think about what?

TORITA:

Not 'you honey', my 'husband honey'.

SLATE:

Let me talk to him.

TORITA:

It's not Max; it's Gerard. You can gloat later.

SLATE:

It's not gloating. I don't want him dead. What kind of person would want someone to die? It wouldn't be the worst thing but I'm not like wishing for it.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - SAME TIME

MAXWELL steps out of FAITH'S building. SARAH is waiting for him.

MAXWELL:

God damn it. You're not another Princess are you? How'd you know I'd be here?

SARAH:

I couldn't find the subway after six blocks so I came back to ask directions.

MAXWELL:

Oh. Sorry. I'm...things aren't going so well. I didn't mean to be rude.

SARAH:

...So how do I get back home?

MAXWELL:

Can't you just like sense it?  
You're psychic, don't you have a  
radar or something?

SARAH:

Radar?

MAXWELL:

Isn't there like a frequency or  
some sort of beacon so you always  
know how to get home? You live  
here, you found your way here, why  
can't you get back?

SARAH:

(with an edge)

Because I'm not a homing pigeon,  
Max.

MAXWELL:

I'm sorry. I'm kind of being a  
jerk, aren't I?

SARAH:

We've known each other for about an  
hour and so far you've called me a  
prostitute and then demanded to  
know why I can't get home from an  
area I've never been in before.  
You're no Will Rogers.

MAXWELL:

I'm headed uptown. I'll walk you.  
I really am sorry.

They begin to walk together.

MAXWELL:

What did Will Rogers do?

SARAH:

I don't know. He just said stuff,  
didn't he? He was supposed to be  
really polite and clever.

MAXWELL:

I think he was a cowboy that said  
stuff. Or he sang. He was a  
singing cowboy that said stuff, I  
guess.

SARAH giggles.

SARAH:  
That's a unique job. I'd do that.

MAXWELL:  
I don't think they have cowboys  
anymore.

INT. SLATE'S OFFICE - DAY

SLATE, TORITA, and GERARD are now gathered.

SLATE:  
So. Do we go to the police?

TORITA:  
Of course we do. She's trying to  
kill Max.

SLATE:  
I'm not sure about that.

TORITA:  
You said you were positive.

GERARD:  
Why would anyone try to kill Max?

SLATE:  
Is there some side of him I'm not  
seeing?

TORITA:  
Why?

SLATE:  
Because I want to kill Max half the  
time and you two don't. And you've  
lived with him. What's his secret?

GERARD:  
I like how he smells after a  
shower.

TORITA:  
So we go to the police. Right?

GERARD:  
He uses a dab of cologne as a  
styling gel. It's really pleasant.

SLATE:  
Do you take showers with him?

TORITA:  
Can we focus here?

GERARD:  
We should warn him first. See what  
he wants to do.

SLATE:  
He's not talking to me.

GERARD:  
Me neither.

TORITA:  
I don't want to talk to him.

GERARD:  
Why not?

TORITA:  
I'm not his mother, Gerard.

GERARD:  
You'd rather call the police than  
talk to him?

TORITA:  
Yes. Let them handle it.

SLATE:  
My mother was like that.

GERARD:  
My mom was a switchboard operator.

SLATE:  
They still have switchboards?

GERARD:  
They did then. I mean, she retired  
when she had me.

SLATE:  
How old was she?

GERARD:  
Like 23.

SLATE:  
Retired? Is that the right word?

TORITA:  
You're both driving me crazy.  
(she storms out)

GERARD:  
We should get her flowers. And a  
card.

SLATE:  
I really think she's being  
unreasonable.

GERARD:  
Yeah. Should I call Max, you  
think?

SLATE:  
Who? Oh, right. Well. I don't  
think he's actually in any danger.

GERARD:  
You don't think Princess was  
serious about killing him?

SLATE:  
I think most people want him dead  
but nothing's come of it. He'll be  
fine.

GERARD:  
Why'd you have to tell Torita and  
get her upset?

SLATE:  
Honestly? We had run out of things  
to talk about. I was excited  
because this was something new.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - NIGHT

MAXWELL and SARAH are still walking and talking.

MAXWELL:  
I'm sorry. Really, I am. I  
usually know the neighborhoods in  
this city.

SARAH:  
It's really dark out here isn't it?

MAXWELL:

I'm pretty sure it's just a few blocks up. Does any of this look familiar?

SARAH:

Wasn't it dark when we left?

MAXWELL:

Yes.

SARAH:

And the sun came up.

MAXWELL:

Yes.

SARAH:

And now it's dark again.

MAXWELL:

I wish you'd let this go.

(beat)

What were you doing there?

SARAH:

Hmmm?

MAXWELL:

You said you'd never been in that neighborhood before. Why were you there?

SARAH:

I got a letter.

MAXWELL:

Right.

SARAH:

Well I did.

MAXWELL:

You seem to think that clears things up. You could have gotten a letter asking you to go there. You could have a letter you need to hand-deliver to someone there. You could have found a letter from 40 years ago and are seeing where it was meant to go. "I got a letter" does not clarify things for me.

SARAH:

A letter was left for me and I had to go pick it up.

MAXWELL:

Why wasn't it delivered to you?

SARAH:

What's with all the questions?

MAXWELL:

I'm curious.

SARAH:

No, Max. You're not curious. And that's something that everyone dislikes about you.

MAXWELL pauses and she takes a few steps more before realizing she's hurt his feelings.

SARAH:

What? Was that harsh?

MAXWELL:

No, it was appropriately sugarcoated.

SARAH:

You know what really frustrates people about you?

MAXWELL:

No. But go on, this is a very enjoyable conversation.

SARAH:

It's that you're not a baby but you want to be treated like one. You want to be coddled and you want to bend everyone to your will and be the center of attention. It's surprising.

MAXWELL:

Is it? I thought all men-

SARAH:

It's surprising because that's usually characteristic of artists. And you've never been one but you help artists to succeed and let them take the spotlight that you want for yourself.

MAXWELL:

Yeah. Well. I had a mortgage to pay.

SARAH:

No you didn't.

MAXWELL:

I haven't always been homeless.

SARAH:

But you didn't have a mortgage when you started out. You didn't care to own property until you were already successful, and even then it was because your wife wanted a home. And now where is she? Where's your home? Where's the spotlight?

MAXWELL:

You said you couldn't read me. Where are you getting this?

SARAH:

I can't get your future but your past is simple. If I were a psychologist I wouldn't even need the information.

MAXWELL:

You're saying things that aren't nice. It's...rude.

SARAH:

Oh, right, I guess I should get back to working the corner, huh?

MAXWELL:

I'm sorry, I forgot you're the hooker with the heart of gold.

SARAH:

Are you happy, Max?

MAXWELL:

I don't know. I stopped expecting to be. By the time you're 40, you've been screwed over so many times you don't care anymore.

SARAH:

That's sad. Why don't you turn it around?

MAXWELL:

Turn what around?

SARAH:

Max, you stopped trying to be happy. Seriously, you just gave up. If you settle for what you're getting then maybe that's all you deserve.

MAXWELL:

I rode the ferris wheel, okay? I've been to the top. I've seen the puppet show from behind the curtain. It doesn't last forever.

SARAH:

Nobody's put you on an ice floe, Max. And nobody wants to watch you put yourself on one. Why do you think there are so few people in your life anymore?

MAXWELL:

Let me ask you a question. Just your opinion, maybe, but also I could use some psychic guidance.

SARAH:

Okay.

MAXWELL:

Is it wrong to forge art?

SARAH:

Forge?

MAXWELL:

Counterfeit.

SARAH:

Sure.

MAXWELL:

You're positive of that?

SARAH:

It's deceitful.

MAXWELL:

No it's not. It's only deceitful if you get caught. Otherwise everyone profits.

SARAH:

Why are we talking about this now?

MAXWELL:

Okay. Look. It's... You have to understand the art market. In a way, it's the stock market but there's no real reason for that capital. The artists don't get that money when the painting is actually worth something and the only reason to spend millions on a painting is to inflate the resale. And nobody that can spend that money is in danger of using the money for anything useful.

SARAH:

I don't-

MAXWELL:

Just listen. If you spend five million on a Warhol Marilyn, you might like the picture but you're not paying that much for the painting. You could pay someone to reproduce that painting very easily at a fraction of the cost. You buy that Warhol Marilyn as a symbol of your wealth. And if you sell it or give it to a museum, it'll end up being worth more money than you paid for it. You bought it to show everyone that you're rich and can generate money with your wealth. See?

SARAH:

But if it's fake, it's not real.

MAXWELL:

That sounds meaningful but it's naive and stupid.

SARAH:

Don't sugarcoat it.

MAXWELL:

(sighs)

I'm trying to explain. You don't understand this because you're not part of... I wish I had some magnets.

SARAH:

What?

MAXWELL:

Never mind. Okay, how about this: Could you look at a painting and tell if it's authentic? If there's a Rembrandt in front of you, can you tell if it's one of the Master's or an imitation?

SARAH:

No, but I'm not an expert.

MAXWELL:

I am an expert. At least in post-war paintings. And if you put a Pollock or a Rauschenberg in front of me and asked me if it were authentic, I couldn't tell you. Almost no one in the world can tell you and be absolutely certain.

SARAH:

Are you saying there are counterfeit paintings floating around the art world?

MAXWELL:

Are there- Sarah, there are over 800 Rembrandts in museums or private collections and the best scholars of his work have a consensus that he painted no more than 400 of them.

SARAH:

That can't be true.

MAXWELL:

It's true. And those very same Rembrandt scholars won't eliminate any of the paintings as forgeries. That's the only way that anyone would actually get hurt, see?

SARAH:

What does any of this mean? Why are you telling me this?

MAXWELL:

Faith's paintings can't sell. He used the wrong materials and they're worthless.

(MORE)

MAXWELL: (cont'd)

They're authentic but they're worthless and we've got a show in a few days and I need about 20 paintings to display.

SARAH:

Are you going to forge them? Are you asking for permission? Are you testing this out on me to see how I react? Here's my reaction: If you forge those paintings and get caught, it'll ruin his career before it even starts. What the hell is the matter with you?

MAXWELL:

Who ever finds out? The only liability is a living artist to say "That's not one of mine."

SARAH:

Are you asking if it's okay to kill him?

MAXWELL:

No, of course not. I just asked if it's okay to counterfeit paintings. You have a moral objection but no logical reason for it.

SARAH:

It's going to sound stupid if I say it.

MAXWELL:

Go ahead.

SARAH:

It degrades art. It... I don't know. It's just not what art's about.

MAXWELL:

Nobody knows what art's about.

SARAH:

Maybe. But I think honesty is prized. Authenticity does have value. I don't care what you say.

MAXWELL:

But why? Tell me why I'm wrong.

SARAH:

I...it's hard to... Okay, fine.  
How about this? Your argument  
can't be valid because the base of  
it is that dishonesty is okay if  
nobody gets hurt. But it's  
dishonest. Someone gets hurt when  
there's deception, even if they  
never know it. You're taking  
advantage of people. It's a con.

MAXWELL:

Wow.

SARAH:

What?

MAXWELL:

You actually found the first valid  
argument against cheating in the  
art business.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

GERARD and TORITA are giving a report to an officer. SLATE  
is picking at the paint on the wall behind them, clearly  
bored.

OFFICER:

And what is your relation?

The OFFICER looks to TORITA.

TORITA:

He's my ex-husband.

OFFICER:

Does he have distinguishing  
characteristics? Scars or tattoos?

GERARD:

I think that's a personal question.

OFFICER:

Why is he here?

TORITA:

This is Max's assistant and the man  
behind us is my current husband.  
He does not want to be here.  
Officer, I assure you, this is a  
very serious matter.

OFFICER:  
Because your ex-husband overheard a  
plot to kill him.

TORITA:  
No, my current husband overheard a  
plot against my ex-husband.

OFFICER:  
(eyeing SLATE dubiously)  
And he told you about it?

TORITA:  
He was gloating. He didn't want to  
tell you, as is evident.

OFFICER:  
Right.

TORITA:  
Is there anything you can do?

OFFICER:  
Like what?

GERARD:  
Max is wealthy.

OFFICER:  
So?

GERARD:  
Rich people get special treatment.

OFFICER:  
What does he do?

TORITA:  
He's a failed art agent.

GERARD:  
He's not failed. He got that  
offer to be the advisor for a  
mutual fund.

TORITA:  
He got fired, Gerard.

GERARD:  
No he didn't. He rejected the  
offer.

OFFICER:  
Why didn't he take the offer?

GERARD:  
The guy was mean to him.

OFFICER:  
Right. Where does he live? Upper  
West Side? Park Avenue?

TORITA:  
His homes have been foreclosed.

GERARD:  
He lives with me in Queens.

OFFICER:  
Okay, people, I'm going to tell you  
this right now: If you want me to  
take you seriously you have to stop  
contradicting everything you say.

TORITA:  
Can we talk to Detective Evans?

OFFICER:  
About something you overheard a  
stranger say?

SLATE:  
She blew up my car.

OFFICER:  
Your wife right here? She blew up  
your car?

TORITA:  
No, Princess did. And before you  
ask, she's a fan of Max's and the  
one that's trying to kill him.  
Detective Evans is investigating  
the explosions.

GERARD:  
She's not a fan, she just wants to  
use him.

TORITA:  
Yes. This is a very serious  
matter.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - NIGHT

MAXWELL enters an apartment building.

INT. JOEL'S STUDIO - NIGHT

JOEL opens the door for MAXWELL.

JOEL:  
Haven't heard from you in a while.

MAXWELL:  
Times haven't been great.

JOEL:  
Where are you living?

MAXWELL:  
A secure location.

JOEL:  
Really?

MAXWELL:  
No. Someone broke in the other  
night. Stole a \$400 shoe.

JOEL:  
You paid \$400 for shoes?

MAXWELL:  
I paid \$400 for the one he stole.

JOEL:  
Have a seat. Go 'head.

MAXWELL:  
There's nothing to sit on.

JOEL:  
Yeah, man. Hey, you ever had beef  
broccoli?

MAXWELL:  
I don't know what that means.

JOEL:  
Want a cigarette?

MAXWELL:  
No.

JOEL:  
Amyl nitrate? Moonshine? Meth?

MAXWELL:  
Where did you find Moonshine in  
Manhattan?

JOEL:  
Nah, Brooklyn. Hipster brewery bar makes it.

MAXWELL:  
Are they licensed?

JOEL:  
I didn't check. Don't sit on my t-shirt.

MAXWELL:  
What t-shirt?

JOEL:  
Oh, right, I'm wearing it.  
(he pauses and collects himself)  
Hey, Maxie.

MAXWELL:  
Yeah, so anyway...

JOEL:  
You're not a polite person.

MAXWELL:  
I know.

JOEL:  
People ever tell you that?

MAXWELL:  
Every day.

JOEL:  
They're right.

MAXWELL:  
You're not being a very gracious host either, you know.

JOEL:  
What? I told you to sit down and offered some moonshine. Stop being a snob.

INT. POLICE STATION - SAME TIME

DETECTIVE EVANS is now listening to TORITA'S warning at his desk. He is making a cup of tea with lemon.

TORITA:

So you can understand why I am  
upset.

EVANS:

I honestly can't.

TORITA:

Because it's important to me! Why  
isn't it important to you?!

SLATE:

Honey, let me try. Detective  
Evans. You're a detective for the  
New York City Police Department.  
They make tv shows about you guys.  
You should have an office. You  
should at least have a cubicle.  
Just a desk in a sea of desks...she  
doesn't feel that's appropriate and  
it upsets her a great deal.

EVANS:

You came here to criticize my  
office?

TORITA:

What office?!

SLATE:

Well...no. Didn't the officer at  
the front desk-

EVANS:

That wasn't an officer. We don't  
have the manpower to waste on  
reception. He's a temp from a  
staffing agency.

INT. JOEL'S STUDIO - SAME TIME

MAXWELL:

You know why I'm here?

JOEL:

You finally came to give me a deal.

MAXWELL:

I'm really sorry about that.

JOEL:

Nah, why should you be?

MAXWELL:

I am though.

JOEL:

I'm not a real character.

MAXWELL:

You were bland then. I was wrong  
and I admit that.

JOEL:

What do you want?

MAXWELL:

I need some more paintings done.

JOEL:

Why?

MAXWELL:

Because I do.

JOEL:

Don't give me a parent answer. If  
I wanted a parent answer, I'd call  
my parents.

MAXWELL:

I can't give you any money. Not  
right now.

JOEL:

This is just like talking to my  
parents, actually.

MAXWELL:

I've done whatever I can for you,  
Joel. I always have, you know  
that.

JOEL:

Well, Max, you haven't really. You  
gave me a studio to paint in and-

MAXWELL:

Live in.

JOEL:

And-

MAXWELL:

Do drugs in.

JOEL:  
Maybe I should quit. Just stop painting.

MAXWELL:  
No. At this point in your career, that would be a terrible idea.

JOEL:  
I don't have a career. You wouldn't let me.

MAXWELL:  
You have a career. And I'm your patron.

JOEL:  
I don't want a patron, Max. I want to be a painter.

MAXWELL:  
You are a painter.

JOEL:  
I've never been able to sign my own name on a canvas.

MAXWELL:  
You're still painting, though. Tell me one thing you don't get to have?

JOEL:  
I don't get to be famous.

MAXWELL:  
Okay, just that one thing.

JOEL:  
I'm an artist. That's kind of everything for me.

INT. POLICE STATION - SAME TIME

EVANS is sipping coffee and listening to TORITA explain the situation.

TORITA:  
I think it should be taken seriously. We all do.

SLATE:  
I said not to take it seriously.

TORITA:  
You said that because you want Max  
dead.

SLATE:  
I don't want him dead. But I  
wouldn't mind if I didn't have to  
deal with his...prickery anymore.

TORITA:  
That's not a word. You're being  
childish.

EVANS shifts his attention to GERARD, who is sniffing and  
weeping a little.

EVANS:  
Are you crying?

GERARD:  
No. I have allergies. It's the  
flowers.

EVANS:  
There aren't any flowers in here.

GERARD:  
You handled flowers. It's on you.

TORITA:  
Ignore him.

SLATE:  
No, he's right. Gerard is all  
wheezy sneezers over there.

GERARD:  
Too much flowers.

TORITA:  
There are no flowers in here.

EVANS:  
I own a flower shop. I have this  
job just for the health benefits.

SLATE:  
Should we get you to a hospital?  
Can you die from this?

TORITA:  
He's not going to die from being in  
the same room as someone that was  
once in the same room as flowers.

SLATE:

You're discounting his mortality!  
You care more about your ex-husband  
than about his assistant!

(to GERARD)

I'm taking you to the emergency  
room. I'll call a cab.

TORITA:

Call an ambulance if it's an  
emergency.

SLATE:

I'm not paying for an ambulance. I  
own a cab company.

SLATE grabs GERARD by the arm and leads him away.

TORITA:

I want you to put out an APB.

EVANS:

APB? We don't do those. That's a  
tv thing.

TORITA:

Put out an alert. "Keep your eyes  
peeled," whatever.

EVANS:

I put out an alert ten days ago.

TORITA:

Then renew it. I'm going to ask  
Max to leave town.

EVANS:

Should have done that during the  
divorce.

TORITA:

I did, but he wouldn't listen. He  
was upset at the time.

Her cell phone rings.

TORITA:

(to EVANS)

It's my husband.

(answers the phone)

Couldn't get a cab?

(pause)

TORITA:  
Why do you have a head wound?

SLATE:  
(o.s.)  
The cab was occupied so I had to  
pull a woman out of it. She hit me  
with a perfume bottle. Gerard is  
crying from the fumes.

TORITA:  
Is it even one of your cabs?

SLATE:  
(o.s.)  
I have no idea. It's dark out here  
and there's blood in my eyes. The  
cab left without us.  
(away from the receiver)  
Gerard! Stay still! You're about  
to walk into traffic!

TORITA:  
(to EVANS)  
Can you have someone drive us to  
the hospital?

EVANS:  
They sold this precinct's cars. We  
have horses now.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - NIGHT

A dark blue, metal wagon being drawn by two horses. SLATE, GERARD, and TORITA are in the wagon, a police officer holds the reins. The carriage has graffiti tags spraypainted on it.