

Arden, Episode 2.10
"To a Nunnery"
By Libby Hill and Emily VanDerWerff
Created by Emily VanDerWerff, Christopher Dole & Sara Ghaleb

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REGULAR CAST:

DANA HAMILL: Libby Woodbridge
OLIVIA BRECKENRIDGE: Saoirse Ó
Súilleabháin
BEA CASELY: Michelle Agresti
BRENDA BENTLEY: Tracey Sayed
ROSALIND URSULA: Shannon Estabrook

GUEST CAST:

CLYDE HAMILL: Zach Grenier
TRUDY HAMILL: Rebecca Metz
JAKE WUNDER: Mike Bash
PAUL BRECKENRIDGE: Oscar Jordan
BRAD: Caleb Del Rio
MALE VOICE: Zach Grenier
OLIVIA BRECKENRIDGE (singing): Laura
Stratford

OLIVIA: Previously on...

[click play; cicadas, the sound of a crackling fire, an evening out in the open somewhere... and a few carefully chosen guitar chords... someone is feeling out a song]

DANA: [singing slowly, deliberately, feeling out the tune] I was stuck in place. I was feeling low. [she hits a bum chord and sucks in her breath] Nope. Not that. [the next chord is the one she wanted] *There* we go. [singing] Cut off from the future, I predicted long ago. My closest friend--

[from the distance, shoes crunching on the gravel path she's walking up, Olivia walks, loudly belting the refrain to "Pomp and Circumstance." A note: Olivia is still living as a man here.]

OLIVIA: [singing] DAH, DAH DAH DAH, DAAAAAH DAAAH. DAH DAH DAH DAH DAHHHHH!

DANA: Oh my God, please stop. We graduated months ago. "Pomp and Circumstance" isn't a "going off to college" song. [beat] There aren't any going off to college songs.

OLIVIA: Yeah, but "Pomp and Circumstance" is a banger! [she starts to sing a few bars again]

DANA: Please *stop*. [she strums her guitar threateningly]

OLIVIA: Ah, shit. Were you writing? I hope I didn't chase the song away.

DANA: Nah. It's the same song. As always.

OLIVIA: The fire one?

DANA: Yes. "The fire one." That's what I'll call it when I release it as a single.

[she returns to her guitar, feeling out chords under the next]

OLIVIA: I'm going to miss you.

DANA: Stop. You're gonna be too busy when dad turns this ranch over to you.

OLIVIA: He would never turn it over/ to me.

DANA: Oh come on. He's sick of it. Anybody can see that. And I sure as shit don't want it.

OLIVIA: [a long moment] Dana, I want to say--

DANA: [singing] "Cause you're the spark, and I'm the flame. We lit the match. We took our aim."

OLIVIA: [raising her voice over the music] Dana. Please just let me say--

DANA: No. I know what you're going to say, and no.

OLIVIA: How can you possibly know what I'm going to--

DANA: You're going to make a grand declaration of love. I'm going to say, it's been a great summer, you're really special, and I have loved our time together, but-- [she strums a chord]

OLIVIA: But--

DANA: You really want me to follow up the but? [a longer pause] Besides, I'm a railroad track, baby. The *last* thing you want is to be tied down to me.

OLIVIA: And I'm a damsel in distress?

DANA: I guess. Then who's the train?

OLIVIA: In this metaphor, love..

DANA: Bang. [beat] Here, listen to this. I can't quite figure out this bridge. [singing] "From the ashes we will rise/ it took some growing up/ for me to realize/ blah blah blah blah/ blah blah blah blah/ this fire's something something/ blah blah blah blah."

OLIVIA: So you have "fire." Not even a temp lyric?

DANA: I kind of chased "love machine" down a dead end. But it's all wrong.

OLIVIA: Hm. [beat] Well, what's the song about? Two friends who look across the fire and realize there's something there that wasn't there before.

DANA: Dude--

OLIVIA: I'm just *saying*.

DANA: I do like you. A lot. But you have to understand, this is the end. This is *it*. Tonight. After this, I'm going. I'm gone. [beat] Besides. You're ripping off "Beauty and the Beast." [a long silence as the fire crackles] Oh Jesus, don't look at me like that. [she sighs] Fine. Here. [the sound of the guitar being set down] A gift. Ta-da.

OLIVIA: [amused] A flower?

DANA: Yes, yes. I'm the one getting you flowers. Imagine it. Gender roles lie bloody at our feet.

OLIVIA: There. You like that?

DANA: Tucked behind your ear like that? Hell yeah! [beat] I am sorry. I wish it was different. It's just that... [beat] You know how it is. I gotta go. I just gotta... [beat] Look: The flower's from that bush over there. I didn't think you would even want-- [beat] You're supposed to eat it.

OLIVIA: Eat it?

DANA: My dad taught me about it. "In the big city they'd call these a delicacy. Know what I call 'em, Danes? A weed." [beat] They're delicious. Promise. Swear to God.

OLIVIA: I don't want to eat the flower. [beat] Listen. I can press it between the pages of my scrapbook while I wait for your return.

DANA: You can visit me in Bozeman! I'm going to college, not... the *war*.

OLIVIA: Nobody's ever given me a flower before. It was just sweet.

DANA: There's a whole bush of them over there. Don't make this weird.

OLIVIA: Do you even care that I'm going to miss you? That I'm a *gap* without you? I love you, Dana. I love you, and I'm not eating the flower.

DANA: [pause] What do you want me to say? [beat] No. Really. Do you get how unfair this is? If I say I love you, it's true, but it's also a lie, because I don't mean it like you do.

OLIVIA: And how do I mean it?

DANA: Like I'm the only thing you'll ever want.

OLIVIA: You are not the only thing I want.

DANA: Okay *fine*. I love you. Are you *happy*?

OLIVIA: [her voice very small] I just don't want to eat this flower.

DANA: [beat, the fire crackles] It's not that I don't love you. You know that, right?

OLIVIA: I do.

DANA: You are... [she wrestles with this, but it comes out sincere] You are the *best thing* that has ever happened to me. It's that... I know every day with you, good and bad. I know where we

work, where we live. But... I'm not sure I know *you*, Lars. [pause] It could be good. We'd live in a little trailer on the ranch. See my parents every day-- [beat] It's him. [she sucks in her breath] I love him. I do. But something in him scares me. He got stuck here. It made him mean.

OLIVIA: Your dad?

DANA: [starts playing her guitar again] If I stay here I'll die. And if I stay with you, I'll stay here. This place is poison. Cursed.

OLIVIA: Well maybe... maybe we don't have to live his life. Maybe we can be different. Have you seen this place? It's *beautiful*. Big and open and... like if you just knew where to look, you'd *get it*, right? The sky turning purple. The cattle calling. The sun glinting off the snowcap.

DANA: [skeptical] It's poison *and* it's the most beautiful place on Earth?

OLIVIA: It can be both.

DANA: [even more skeptical] Uh huh.

OLIVIA: I love it. If I never leave-- [beat] But we could go somewhere else. Denver, maybe.

DANA: Get thee to a mid-level metropolis, huh? [beat] He likes us together. He likes us together because he thinks he can control you. He said that to me, point blank. He was so drunk, and--

OLIVIA: This world is tough. This world is mean.

DANA: You said it.

OLIVIA: The song. [she sings haltingly] "This world is tough. This world is mean." [pause]

DANA: "This fire's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen." *Hell* yeah, dude. That just might-- [she's picking up her guitar again and starts to play... a long pause under her chords]

OLIVIA: Dana. Stay up with me. Watch the sun come up. And watch the fire until then.

DANA: Okay. I'd... I'd like that. [she laughs] It's weird. Sometimes I think I miss you most when we're together. [beat] [singing] "From the ashes we will rise. It took some growing up, for me to realize. This world is tough. This world is--"

OLIVIA: [chewing on something]

DANA: You gonna join me on this or-- wait. Did you eat it?

OLIVIA: Holy shit, this is really good!

DANA: You ate it! You ate the flower! I told you! I told you it was good!

OLIVIA: I wanna make a deal. [beat] I'd love to have another. Someday.

DANA: There's that whole bush with--

OLIVIA: Someday.

DANA: [starting to understand] Oh.

OLIVIA: Bring me another one. [beat] When you're ready. [beat] For... whatever. Deal?

DANA: [a moment and] Deal.

[click play]

DANA: Arden was brought here by me.

[Olivia enters a house, breathing hard; Brad flips off the TV]

BRAD: Hey, babe. How was your run?

OLIVIA: Adequate. The Thompsons are having their big Easter party, and I saw the Easter Bunny out behind their house smoking a joint. So. Childhood illusions shattered.

BRAD: [laughs, too jokey] Well, it's no Easter basket, but those kids weren't the only ones getting a special delivery today!

OLIVIA: What the fuck are you doing right now?

BRAD: Softening the blow. You got this package. Look who it's from.

OLIVIA: Dana? The fuck?

BRAD: You need to end this. She's toxic.

OLIVIA: [opens package] Yeah, but... you'd get it if you knew her. [in an instant, she's on edge] That bitch. That goddamn snake. She mailed me our *wedding* album. Look at this!

BRAD: Oh no. [beat] I mean, you look good.

OLIVIA: I'm in a tux.

BRAD: I see you, okay? Even underneath that stupid suit and what looks like 15 pounds of hair product, I see you. I got you, Liv. I got you.

OLIVIA: She's trying to bait me. She knows I'm sad and messed up, and she's trying--

BRAD: So don't let her. [beat] Walk it off. Walk until it feels better. Take your time. Make sure the Easter Bunny hasn't graduated to the hard stuff. When you get back, we'll start dinner. Yeah?

OLIVIA: [sigh] Yeah.

[a brief -- but not too brief! -- sequence of Olivia grabbing her keys, going outside, etc. Outside, the sounds of a spring afternoon -- cars drifting by, kids laughing somewhere]

OLIVIA: Oh fuck it.

[the sound of a phone ringing; Dana picks up. She's breathing heavily. Note: throughout this episode, we are with Olivia until otherwise indicated. Thus, Dana sounds like she's on the other end of a phone call; Olivia's voice is "real." When Dana talks to other people, they will sound even further away to Olivia.]

DANA: [panting slightly] You got the package?

OLIVIA: What the fuck are you thinking? What the fuck are you doing? I thought-- I thought... I don't know. I thought you cared about me, in your emotionally constipated Dana way.

[the sound of something big barreling by Dana]

DANA: Hey! Some of us are walking here! [beat] Sorry. Semi.

OLIVIA: Semi?

DANA: Oh. Right. I'm walking on Highway 89.

OLIVIA: Highway--

DANA: Had to get a ham from town.

OLIVIA: But--

DANA: It was a ham emergency, and Mom hid my keys.

OLIVIA: I am really trying to stay mad at you right now.

DANA: But you're also curious. There's my Liv.

OLIVIA: I'm not-- [calming] Whatever I am to you, it's not "your Liv."

DANA: I'm sorry if I upset you. I genuinely thought you would want those photos.

OLIVIA: *Why?*

DANA: I don't know. I was happy. I always thought you were happy.

OLIVIA: It was July. I was sweating through my tux.

DANA: Happiest days of your life -- does it even crack the top 10?

OLIVIA: Not even the top 100. I hated everything about myself. We were wrong for each other.

DANA: Ugh, I'm not asking how you feel about the wedding *now*. I'm saying -- weigh whatever happiness you felt that day against all of the other happy days you've had ever since. Like, I don't know... the day you got your name changed to Olivia, was that a happier day?

OLIVIA: Yes. Emphatically yes.

DANA: Okay, sure! I wasn't there, but I can see your smiling face. I'm just saying, have you, in your entire life, had 10 days happier than our wedding day. Name change day. That's one.

OLIVIA: It doesn't *work* that way.

DANA: Is this some trans thing I don't get?

OLIVIA: No. Yes. No! [beat] Feelings don't just get vacuum sealed in a moment of time.

DANA: See, I think otherwise.

OLIVIA: Of course you do. [beat] The thing is, the way I remember things is different now. It's--

DANA: Oh hold up, Liv. I gotta go. Looks like I got a ride.

OLIVIA: Fine. But I'm not calling you back! [to herself] Fucking narcissistic--

[But the call hasn't been dropped -- there's a car slowing to a halt on the other end]

DANA: [a little more distant] Oh. Hey, ladies.

BEA: [even more distant] Oh my God, are you okay?

DANA: [she sounds a little disconnected, disaffected] Sure. Just out for a walk.

OLIVIA: [loudly] Dana? Dana? You didn't hang up--

BRENDA: Get in the dang car before somebody sees us with you.

DANA: Happy to see you too. [door closes; car starts driving again, and there's a short pause]

BEA: Jesus. You look awful.

DANA: Suppose I do. Walking along a major highway will do that.

BRENDA: You don't have to run away. We can bring you to Bozeman, get you a hotel room,.

DANA: I'm going home. Mom's right. I need help. I hated being cooped up-- [a theatrical sob]

BRENDA: Look, it's just us. No microphones. Nothing. Talk to us. [beat] Is that a ham?

DANA: Thought I'd surprise mom with Easter dinner. She's been so nice to me.

BRENDA: Are you sure they have your best interests in mind?

DANA: Why wouldn't they?

BEA: I shouldn't tell you this. [beat] Never mind.

BRENDA: Yeah, "I shouldn't tell you this" is a *great* way to make someone less curious.

BEA: Well, it's complicated. Do I respect the boundaries of individual privacy? Or do I--

BRENDA: "Individual privacy"? Come on! You're a journalist.

DANA: Could you not? We're almost to the ranch and I'm running out of time.

BEA: Someone's messing with your meds. They replaced your lithium with sugar pills.

DANA: *What?*

OLIVIA: [to herself] Holy shit. It worked?

BRENDA: Those pills Olivia gave us were fakes. And the likeliest suspect—

DANA: Yeah. I know who that is.

BEA: The cops didn't make sure you got the right meds?

DANA: [scoffs] Easter weekend. And it's not like Sheriff Wunder's any better than the rest of 'em. [beat] Let me out. I'm home.

BEA: Dana. If they messed with your medication, it's pretty sound evidence the conservatorship is a bad idea. Even if they don't go to jail—

DANA: I need to finish dinner.

BRENDA: You can come with us into town. Mr. Wheyface will get his lawyers on the case.

DANA: Wouldn't that ruin whatever you're making? Ethics in true crime journalism or whatever?

BEA: [beat, long sigh] There's no way anybody's hearing this. Might as well make it official.

OLIVIA: Do it. Just go with them. Why are you even thinking about—

[knock at a window... car door opening]

DANA: Hey, mom.

BRENDA: [beat] Dana—

DANA: [she climbs out] Better get back to my trailer. Have an Easter ham to heat up.

BEA: Dana, you don't have to—

DANA: No. I do.

TRUDY: [coolly] Thank you for finding her, ladies. [they start to walk away]

BRENDA: Oh, don't forget your phone!

DANA: Shoot! Thanks! [she takes the phone; the car drives off]

TRUDY: You sure you're okay, sweetie?

DANA: I'm great. I'll come up to the house in a half-hour or so. I just have to heat everything up.

TRUDY: [pause] Well. All right. Looking forward to it.

[and they walk in opposite directions, Dana humming something to herself when--]

DANA: [into phone; herself again] Holy shit. You're still on?! Did you hear all that?

OLIVIA: What the fuck are you planning?

DANA: Huh?

OLIVIA: That night— [a pause] The night my dad died. When we—

DANA: When we spent the night.

OLIVIA: Don't say it like that. When we found out they were fucking with your medication. [beat] We made the plan. Remember the plan? We were going to get you a new prescription--

DANA: Which we did.

OLIVIA: Then you make a scene and lure your parents—

DANA: Trudy and Clyde.

OLIVIA: Trudy and Clyde, sorry, into doing something incriminating—

DANA: Which they did—

OLIVIA: And then I'd give the Arden people the pills. So they'd figure it out.

DANA: Which you did—

OLIVIA: And you'd get the fuck out of there. [a pause] Which you didn't.

[Throughout the rest of the scene, Dana is in her trailer, preparing dinner.]

DANA: I wanted to see what would happen. [beat] And nothing happened. *Nothing*.

OLIVIA: They need time to investigate. They can't just arrest them.

DANA: But if they really were worried about me, they would at least tell me to get the fuck out of here, right? And they didn't. They didn't because this town has already decided I'm a fuck-up, and I'll always be a fuck-up, and I might as well get it over with.

OLIVIA: [agonizing pause] Get what over with?

DANA: I gotta cook dinner, Liv.

OLIVIA: Get *what* over with?

DANA: I'm glad you called.

OLIVIA: Is that why you sent me the photos? Because you're going to be a dramatic idiot and--

DANA: And what?

OLIVIA: And... I mean... [beat] Dana, I've been there. Believe me.

DANA: I know. I found you. You were dead. And now you're not. [beat] Not one for follow-through, huh?

OLIVIA: [laughs darkly] First of all, fuck you. Second of all, I care about you, okay? I know it seems dark right now, but it won't be forever. You're going to wake up tomorrow, and-- [she snaps her fingers] Come visit. Just get in the car and drive.

DANA: My mom took all my car keys. Hence the walking. I'm a flight risk.

OLIVIA: Then I'll come get you.

DANA: [beat] That's a 10 hour drive. [beat] You'd do that?

OLIVIA: Yes. Brad will make up the couch and--

DANA: Ah. Brad.

OLIVIA: I'm not-- [beat] I love you, Danes. I just... I don't--

DANA: So. Brad makes up the couch. Then what?

OLIVIA: 10 hours there means 10 hours back, right? By the time we get back, I'd need a nap.

DANA: Me too probably.

OLIVIA: So we sleep in. And then there's a great diner down the street. Ham and eggs?

DANA: Love it. How's the coffee? We'll need it.

OLIVIA: This is a greasy spoon. The pot hasn't been washed in 40 years. It's *great* coffee.

DANA: And then what?

OLIVIA: Well, you get a job--

DANA: [laughs] God. I love that your fantasy of me in Denver involves gainful employment..

OLIVIA: You couldn't just stay with us forever.

DANA: What am I cut out for, Liv? I never finished college, and all I'm cut out for is ranch work. I'm not going to just suddenly get a job at Starbucks. Me? A cash register? Please.

OLIVIA: You don't know what you can do, because you've never tried. There's a temp thing opening up in my office. And we're dealing a lot more with rural properties. You'd be great.

DANA: So you're the one helping the rich buy up the whole state. Good to know.

OLIVIA: Says the girl who allied herself with Wheyface--

DANA: Say what you will about Andy Wheyface, the only state he'd ever buy is Rhode Island.

OLIVIA: So he can try to separate it from the mainland?

DANA: The man loves truth in advertising. [Andy impression] Have you wanted your own private road? How about your own private island? On Wheyface's newest venture, Rhode Island--

OLIVIA: *Anyway.*

DANA: Anyway. What then?

OLIVIA: Say you take the job at my office--

DANA: Which we all know I won't.

OLIVIA: You get your feet under you. We hang out. Oh! And there are open mics! All over!

DANA: I'd get laughed off the stage.

OLIVIA: Hell no. You're good. You'd have fans. Maybe lots of them. You're good, Dana. You're good! [beat] Up on the bluff... before you left for school... what was that song? The fire song?

DANA: "Watch the Fire"?

OLIVIA: I heard it, and... God, I wanted you to stay so badly. I wanted to freeze time... but I heard that song, and I thought... oh. Yeah. She can't stay here. She's gotta go do anything else.

DANA: And then I stayed. You left. *You* left. [beat] Look, I really need both hands to get ready--

OLIVIA: So what's it gonna be? Am I driving up there? [beat, keys jingling] Got my keys right here. Between 5-hour Energy and a 12-pack of Tab, I could be there by 4 a.m. [keys jingle] You there? Shit-- Dana, please say something. [beat, spontaneous] I'm really enjoying talking to you. [beat] I get it now, you know? Losing your dad? Feeling like there's no bottom any more?

[During her speech the tide of the conversation has changed without Olivia realizing it. Danger.]

DANA: I'm a little unclear on something.

OLIVIA: [just wanting to keep her on the line] Go ahead.

DANA: So earlier you said something about how moments in time can't be vacuum sealed. And just now you said you used to want to freeze time. What changed?

OLIVIA: God. So. It's complicated. Everything? Nothing? [beat] It can be both, Dana. You can want to freeze time forever, and you can be glad you didn't get trapped there at the same time.

DANA: And with our wedding--

OLIVIA: Haven't we been over this?

DANA: No. We haven't. [beat] For years after you left, my mom kept pictures of us hanging up in her living room. Like if she left it hanging up she could summon you or something.

OLIVIA: [spooky voice] And then it *worked*.

DANA: Shut up. Listen. It's important. For years, that wedding portrait hung over the fireplace. If I asked, she would say it was a great picture of me, and it *was*. But the more I looked at *you*, the more I could see you -- real you, Liv you -- peeking out. And she was happy. So happy.

OLIVIA: Oh bullshit.

DANA: Mom took it down eventually, but there's another picture of us hanging up, in my dad's old office. Honestly, she might have forgotten it's still hanging there. It's at our dance. At the VFW? The room is dark, and there are these little flashes of light, and there we are, caught in them forever. You've got the flower girl up in your arms, and I just... I don't look sad. I don't.

OLIVIA: Sounds like a nice picture. Wish I could see it. Even with... well... the other guy there.

DANA: We're not dancing together. Our backs are to each other, but we're still... we're still *together*, Liv. It was the happiest I had ever been and the happiest I ever saw you. I even remember the song. "Hey Ya"? By Outkast?

OLIVIA: No wedding dance is complete without it.

DANA: And if you look in the background, there are all these people we loved dancing too. My mom and your dad. Our friends. [beat] That's why I wanted you to have the wedding pictures. I should have put a note in there or something. I wasn't trying to hurt you. Honestly.. But I wanted you to remember that we once made each other happy. We made each other *really happy*.

OLIVIA: Dana, no. I was sad. Always. I was lost, and I didn't know how to ask to be found.

DANA: That's *bullshit*. I can see your face in that picture. You are *happy*, Olivia. *Happy*.

OLIVIA: I don't know what this matters, but-- [beat] You realize "Hey Ya" is a sad song, right?

DANA: No, it's not. Just because some white people with guitars made it *sound* sad-- by the way, a subject I am incredibly qualified to speak on--

OLIVIA: There's a line in it, uh... let's see... something like... "if they say nothing lasts forever, then what makes love the exception?" [beat] It's a song about a breakup, Dana. The singer was in love, and he's not any more. It sounds happy, because it's so sad. It can *be* both.

DANA: [starting to prickle] Right. I got it. I think you need to work on your catchphrase.

OLIVIA: [laughs] Look, this is a thing that happens on HRT--

DANA: Oh, here comes Trans 101. God, I haven't missed this.

OLIVIA: No, just listen. When you start hormones, it's like all these things unlock in your brain. All the places you were too scared or too unwilling to go before, and they remember everything *differently*. The events might be the same, but the emotional context... it's just different.

DANA: So you get to just rewrite history? *My* history? Is that it?

OLIVIA: No! Everything I thought I felt was sealed behind glass. But what I was really feeling was something else entirely. [beat] I wanted to freeze time back then because I *knew* who I was. I thought if I kept things a certain way, I could prop up the guy I was trying so hard to be. And I knew one thing. I knew I loved you. I had to hold on to that. If I didn't, I thought I might crumble.

DANA: So you turned me into your structural support?

OLIVIA: Yes. Exactly. And I was worried if I--

DANA: That's super fucked up, Liv.

OLIVIA: Well, I was right to be worried, as it turned out. As we're no longer married.

DANA: Yes, yes, yes, and I cheated on you, and I outed you to your father before you were ready, and I screwed everything up. But I didn't know what to do! Go on. Yell at me about it.

OLIVIA: No. I'm not calling to yell at you about--

DANA: You're acting like there's only one version of events here. The Olivia version. And that erases all of the other versions. But you don't get to rewrite my story just because you're

rewriting your own. [beat, ragged breath] I was lost, too. You have to understand that. And for one night -- *one night* -- when I married the boy I loved, I felt like I'd been found.

OLIVIA: If you wouldn't call me a--

DANA: Yeah, yeah, yeah. You weren't a boy. You were never a boy. Got it. [beat] But you don't get to take one of my *best* memories, one of my *only good* memories, and *erase* it.

OLIVIA: I'm not telling you how to feel about it. If it makes you happy, great. I'm glad. But--

DANA: How fucking generous of you. Of course it makes me happy! *You* made me happy! And then you left me. For *years*. Even before you physically left, you went away for so long. You abandoned me in a story we were supposed to be writing together. But then you came back, and I thought... I don't know what I thought, but I got to be happy again. For one night only. And then you left again. You left me here to die.

OLIVIA: My *dad* died. Sorry I didn't want to rekindle a disaster romance during funeral prep.

DANA: I'm not a person to you. I'm part of a struggle. I'm something to overcome.

OLIVIA: You know that's not true! [beat] I care about you, Dana. You have to know that by now.

DANA: Did I make you happy? [a long pause, too long.] *Ever*. Did I ever make you--

OLIVIA: Sometimes! Yes. Sometimes. [beat] I *thought* I was happy. Does that count?

DANA: No.

OLIVIA: We really don't have to relitigate this--

DANA: Then hang up. Just hang up and stop talking to me. [beat, too casual] I'm fine, Liv! I'm great. I'm going to have Easter dinner with my uncle and my mom, and you don't have to worry about me. Ever again. You did it! I'm fixed. I'm cured. You saved the day.

OLIVIA: [pause] I'm not going to let you hurt yourself.

DANA: [a long, cackling laugh] *Fuck*. Don't play the fucking saint here. You wanna talk about this, then let's *fucking talk about it*. C'mon. Tell me you hated me. I can take it.

OLIVIA: I didn't hate you. [pause] When you outed me to my dad, maybe I hated you then.

DANA: Hell yeah. Let's do this. [beat] Yeah, I fucked up. But did it matter? He was just fine with it. He was, like, "Finally, my precious daughter! Here at last!"

OLIVIA: He came to me in the hospital after I'd had my stomach pumped and told me he never wanted to see me again. He gave me \$500, and that was when I left.

DANA: You didn't tell me that.

OLIVIA: We weren't talking! Because *you betrayed me*. You broke everything.

DANA: Well you *lied* to me.

OLIVIA: I lied to *myself*.

DANA: When you're married, it's the same fucking thing.

OLIVIA: Okay, fine, maybe I overcorrect my memory. Maybe I remember things badly so I'm never tempted to move back there to that fucking ranch, so I can turn poisonous like you. [beat] But you overcorrect, too. You only remember things as you wish they were.

DANA: Yeah, I wish you were my husband.

OLIVIA: God fucking-- [beat] You know what else is-- [beat] I shouldn't. I really shouldn't. I--

DANA: Fucking *do it*.

OLIVIA: Your dad wasn't the way you remember him.

DANA: Oh blah, blah blah. He was reckless drunk who got in fights, especially with his sociopath brother. Yeah, not exactly a gem. But he was my dad. I loved him. Fucking sue me.

OLIVIA: [quiet, very calm] No, I mean your dad wasn't the way you remember him *to you*.

DANA: The fuck does that mean?

OLIVIA: He was abusive. [beat] He was an abusive asshole.

DANA: He never laid a finger on me or my mom, and you know it.

OLIVIA: Trudy? I wouldn't be so sure. But you? He didn't have to. He built you from the ground up to worship him.

DANA: That's not abusive. [beat] And it's also completely inaccurate, so--

OLIVIA: Then why are you still there. Why are you still there trying to avenge him?

DANA: Because he shouldn't have fucking died! I don't know what to tell you.

OLIVIA: He didn't have to hit you to abuse you. [beat] You were scared of him.

DANA: I loved him.

OLIVIA: That night on the bluff, you said that he scared you.

DANA: I also said I loved him.

OLIVIA: It can be both! [beat] He made everybody around him cower, in case he got angry.. He made you drive him around because he was too drunk *when you were 9*. He was so mad you went off to college he wouldn't stop demanding you come back. When we were dating, he'd get out his shotgun and act like it was funny. When you were 11, he ran over--

DANA: Oh, good, the bike story, yeah, not his finest hour.

OLIVIA: He ran over your bike because you left it in the yard.

DANA: It was an accident! I was a little piece of shit, you know.

OLIVIA: You were a kid. You didn't deserve it. You didn't deserve any of it. Love doesn't come candy-coated in fear. It just shouldn't. It should be unconditional.

DANA: You're one to fucking talk. [beat] I loved him. He loved me. More than anyone. Ever.

OLIVIA: He was incapable of love.

DANA: Fuck you.

OLIVIA: He was incapable of *being* loved. He didn't *want* to be loved. He wanted to be *orbited*.

DANA: *Fuck you.*

OLIVIA: You want to tell me I'm remembering our wedding wrong? Fine. But I'm not remembering Dan wrong. Being back on that ranch-- maybe his ghost isn't there, but *he* sure as shit is. [beat] He was a monster. He lived in your house. But he's gone. He's gone, Dana. You don't have to be in *thrall* to him anymore.

DANA: [sarcastic] Oh! Wonder of wonders! I'm *free*. At last! So I should be happy he died?

OLIVIA: Yes. Be glad he's dead and you're not! Don't follow him into the fucking grave like you've been trying to since you were 4! [beat, trying to take it back] I mean, not happy he *died*--

DANA: Finally. Your true colors.

OLIVIA: I'm sorry, Dana. But I am so tired of having this fucking fight about your fucking dad. At least if you *die* I don't have to spend the rest of my life trying to keep you alive.

DANA: I knew it. I knew you didn't give a shit. I can see right through you. You think you've got everybody fooled. But I *know* you. And I know you're pretending. You're a costume, Lars. Poor Lars. Poor little Lars. Taking care of Dan's daughter. He's so brave.

OLIVIA: [shuddering breath] I'm calling your mom and telling her you're a danger to yourself--

DANA: Do it, Lars. Hang up. Call her. Like the fucking coward you-- [knock at the trailer door]

OLIVIA: You're such a fucking cunt.

DANA: Yeah, well, some things never change. Talk to you-- [the door opens to reveal--]

TRUDY: Oh, sorry, sweetheart. I didn't know you were on the phone. I can leave you alone.

DANA: No. Stay. It's just Olivia. She has something to say to you. I'll put her on speaker.

TRUDY: No need. I'll just-- [the phone being picked up] Olivia! Hello! [she's... maybe drunk?]

OLIVIA: Hi, Mrs. Hamill, I--

TRUDY: It smells like gas in here.

DANA: My propane valve was being weird. It's fine. I fixed it.

TRUDY: Let me open some windows-- I swear, Liv, it's too bad you left. My Dana needs someone taking care of her. You were always so good at that.

OLIVIA: I don't know about that. Listen, I need to tell you--

TRUDY: Oh my God, this place is filthy, Dana. You must have 15 propane canisters in here.

DANA: [sharply] Yeah! [calming] Most of them are empties. I know I should return them, but--

TRUDY: You know we get charged by the canister. At least refill.

DANA: Got it.

TRUDY: [ok, yeah, drunk] You know, Liv, you girls-- actually, I *am* gonna put you on speaker-- [the sound of that happening] Can you still hear me?

OLIVIA: Yeah. If I could just tell you--

TRUDY: So I don't know if Dana ever told you this, but I was a bit of a hippie before I met Dan.

OLIVIA: You wear flowers in your hair?

TRUDY: [maybe just high?] And beads around my neck. But it wasn't the '60s any more. It was some shadow of a shadow. Everybody was either on drugs or getting old. So I hitchhiked. Meant to end up back home in Chicago and ended up here instead.

DANA: Mom--

TRUDY: Now let me tell this story right. [beat] Things were different then. Elsinore still felt like a place. Even had a movie theater, which was directly responsible for you being here, Dana--

DANA: Oh my God.

TRUDY: You have to have known we did that at *some* point.

DANA: I was hoping pods spit out of your back or--

TRUDY: [laughs] So the trucker who brings me to Elsinore is this old lady. Roberta. It's a long haul from Boise to here, so naturally, we talk. And talk and talk. Turns out she's a bit of a hippie, too. Anyway, she gets to telling me about her wife--

DANA: Mom, you didn't meet a lesbian truck driver in 1985 or whatever.

OLIVIA: That's really cool, Mrs. Hamill, but--

TRUDY: Her wife died in Vietnam. She was a nurse, and-- anyway. Roberta was looking for her. She picked up hitchhikers on the theory that one of them would be that poor girl reborn. Reincarnated. And she would feel it somehow. Would know she was going to be OK. [beat] Anyway, I wasn't her. [laughs]

DANA: Great story, mom.

TRUDY: My point is... she thought we keep finding each other. You girls found each other. Maybe you were a little mixed around, but... you *did*. Find each other. Out of all the people alive. And you'll find each other again. And again. And maybe sometime it'll be right. That's all.

DANA: I really should get back to cooking--

TRUDY: [no, she's not drunk or high, just herself] You're *sure* you don't want help?

DANA: No. I want it to be a surprise. [a meaningful beat only Liv notices] A big surprise.

TRUDY: Well, fine. But I'm bringing hot cross buns.

DANA: Fine. Bye now.

TRUDY: [on her way out] Bye, Olivia!

OLIVIA: Bye, Mrs. Hamill!

[the door slams... a long pause... and then they both start to laugh]

OLIVIA: What the *fuck* was that?

DANA: I really have no idea. [beat] I'm sorry.

OLIVIA: Don't *ever* do that again. That name? Not ever.

DANA: I... I shouldn't have. [beat] Sometimes I try to chase you away, you know?

OLIVIA: Then tell me to go.

DANA: Like you'd listen!

OLIVIA: Fair. [beat] But that was beyond-- You weren't always that cruel.

DANA: You don't really know me any more.

OLIVIA: Yes. I do. [beat] From 15 previous lifetimes, also. [they crack up again]

DANA: God damn. [beat] I am a mess.

OLIVIA: I think sometimes I forget... at least I had my dad. Even after he kicked me out, it took him about six weeks to come around. He was a good guy. I think. [beat] And you had...

DANA: Uh huh.

OLIVIA: Uh huh. [beat] And maybe I should thank you. It felt good to just... to yell at someone. To really get mad and let it rip. [beat] I mean, no thanks for the dead naming, but--

DANA: You don't get angry. Do you? Not even when you should.

OLIVIA: I *can't*. [beat] I mean, there are all the years I spent trying not to topple myself over, letting everybody else set my boundaries for me. And now that I finally know who I am... if I get mad, too many people will laugh and point at the angry trans lady. Just a guy in a dress. [beat] It's bullshit, but... you can only change so much at a time. [beat] So thank you for bringing an entire collection of *journalists* to document my potential meltdown to town.

DANA: You can always, always yell at me. My solemn oath.

OLIVIA: The propane tanks aren't empty, are they?

DANA: No. They're not.

OLIVIA: You're going to blow yourself up, aren't you? After dinner.

DANA: Yes. I am.

OLIVIA: Fuck, Dana. [beat] Then who am I gonna yell at? I need someone to yell at.

DANA: Okay. I won't. On one condition. [beat] Marry me.

OLIVIA: Oh Jesus not this again--

DANA: I still love you.

OLIVIA: No you don't.

DANA: I do. I do, I do, I do.

OLIVIA: If you loved me, you wouldn't try to turn *me* into your structural support. [beat] You, of all people, should know how horrible that can be.

DANA: I'll leave. I'll come to Denver, and we'll just... it will be like it should have been. Promise.

OLIVIA: No, it won't. You know it won't.

DANA: Then... I guess... that's it. Goodbye.

OLIVIA: What do you want me to say? "I would cry over you every day"?

DANA: I want you to say yes.

OLIVIA: [pause] I think the world is better with you in it. And I've liked getting to know you as you. With me as me. Let them sell, yes. Leave it behind, yes. Crash on my couch as long as you want, yes. But what you're asking... I just can't... I just. Can't. And not just for me.

DANA: Yeah, well...

OLIVIA: You never called. All those years, and you never called. And then, out of the blue--

DANA: You're back. And it's almost like it was. But--

OLIVIA: But.

DANA: I tried to call once. You know? [beat] Something had gone rotten in Elsinore, and-- [swallows] I tried to leave. In 2014. Without dad and without you... not much keeping me here.

OLIVIA: Where did you go?

DANA: Minneapolis. [beat... she's embarrassed] I auditioned for American Idol.

OLIVIA: *You--* [calms] Sorry. You... auditioned for American Idol?

DANA: I mean, next to last season, who even remembers who won, right?

OLIVIA: Did you meet Simon?

DANA: He had left the show by then, and you only meet the judges if they think you might be on the show. Either because you're incredibly bad or incredibly good. Basically if you're entertaining. I didn't tell anybody I was going. Not Mom or Clyde. I just took my beater pickup and drove. And I had the dates wrong, so I got there three days early. I got a room at the hotel where they held the auditions, and I shut the curtains, and I blasted the AC, and I practiced. I practiced, and I practiced, and I practiced. By audition day, I was as good as I've ever been.

OLIVIA: What did you sing?

DANA: I'd been thinking about you. About that night up on the bluff before I left for school and the flower and how badly I'd soaked everything we were in gasoline before lighting the match.

OLIVIA: We were born soaked in gasoline. [beat] What did you sing?

DANA: "Watch the Fire."

OLIVIA: The song you wrote that night up on the bluff.

DANA: The song *we* wrote.

OLIVIA: "This world is tough/this world is mean" isn't a significant contribution, but thank you.

DANA: It was everything. It was what it needed. What I needed. [beat] I imagined you seeing me on TV. Hearing the song, and maybe... God, I don't even know what I wanted. I wanted somebody who remembered. Who had been there. Who could smell the gas. Feel the flames.

OLIVIA: You wanted me back?

DANA: I wanted you as you were. [beat, before Olivia can cut in] Still you. Still Liv. But like that night on the bluff. When nothing had hurt you yet. [beat] When I hadn't hurt you yet. [beat] So long story short, I go up and I play my song for the producers, and I'm great. I'm fucking *great*, Liv. And they're smiling, and it's like, for one moment, I can see everything. Can reach out and feel you and my dad and everyone, and it's all aligned. It all finally makes sense.

OLIVIA: It sounds amazing.

DANA: It was, but--

OLIVIA: Oh no. Oh Dana.

DANA: The producers said it was good, but not what they were looking for. Imagine that. The best you can possibly manage, and it's not good enough. Or even *bad* enough. It's just... okay.

OLIVIA: It just wasn't what they were looking for. It doesn't mean--

DANA: No. I went outside, and looked at this whole sea of people, and I realized that's all most of them were. Just okay. They had this giant dream, bigger than any of them, and it almost didn't matter. Having the dream wasn't a guarantee of living the dream. It was almost a guarantee of *not* living the dream. Of always having it and never getting it. [beat] I went back up to my room, and I cried for a few hours straight, and then I realized I hadn't eaten in days, so I ordered a couple hundred dollars of room service, and then I saw my mom was trying to call me, so I answered, and she told me to come home, so I did. [a long pause] I feel like I'm trapped by this thing inside of me that says there's some other thing I'm supposed to be, then never bothers to say what. I'm always stuck inside myself, Liv, and I'm tired of it. I'm so fucking tired of it. [beat] That's what I realized, barreling back home across North Dakota. I didn't want you as my wife or even my friend. I wanted to talk to you about how it felt. To not fit inside your own skin. I knew you would understand. I tried to call, but--

OLIVIA: Yeah. I changed my number.

DANA: I really wish you hadn't. [beat] But you did.

OLIVIA: I couldn't risk... if you had called me... [beat] I know I would have come back.

DANA: I guess I don't blame you. You're the spark. I'm the flame.

OLIVIA: Don't do it, Dana. Please don't.

DANA: Gotta. It's how this whole thing has to end. [beat] You gonna try to stop me?

OLIVIA: How? Even if I *could*... you always do what you want. [beat] God. You didn't want me to talk you out of killing yourself, did you? You just wanted company as you prepared?

DANA: It can be both.

OLIVIA: Fuuuuuuuuuuck you.

DANA: See how annoying that is? [beat] Look, I gotta go. Got a dinner to set up.

[then the sound of something... a hiss...]

OLIVIA: What's that noise?

DANA: I don't hear any noise. Probably just static.

OLIVIA: There's definitely-- [beat... beat... beat] Did you open one of those propane tanks?

DANA: Nothing has gone right for me in ten years. It does things to you. [beat] They're coming. Probably to help me carry all of this stuff up to the house.

OLIVIA: Wait wait wait.

DANA: I do love you, Olivia. I'm sorry I called you that other name. Sometimes it feels good to be hated. [beat] That's what he taught me.

OLIVIA: Dana! [tries singing] "This world is tough... this world is mean..."

DANA: Maybe our paths got tangled that summer. If I stayed. If you left. You wouldn't have a stone tied around your foot, and I... well, maybe he'd still be alive. Maybe he'd be coming over for dinner. Maybe he'd get to hear me sing. All my friends around me for once. Nobody coming or going or... anything. [beat] But I left. And it all unraveled. And I've gotta own that.

[a knock at the trailer door]

DANA: They're here.

OLIVIA: Dana-- Come to Den--

DANA: I hope we're better to each other in the next life. [she hangs up]

OLIVIA: [full body sob] No no no no. Fuck. [a phone rings--] C'mon, c'mon. Pick up.

[and another knock at the door... we're in Dana's trailer]

DANA: I'm coming! Hope everybody's hungry! [a door opens]

ROSALIND: Heya, Dana.

DANA: Ros--

ROSALIND: Are you doing okay there?

DANA: I'm... I'm fine. I--

ROSALIND: Cuz Olivia called me. She said you were doing really poorly, and she wanted somebody to make sure you were okay. Somebody she trusted. *Not* your mom.

DANA: I have to carry all of this up to the house. C'mon, help me carry this ham.

ROSALIND: Not really a ham eater, as such, but I'll make an exception. Can't we eat here?

DANA: There's not enough room. It's--

TRUDY: [sing-song from the door] Who wants hot cross buns? I made too many for myself, so--

DANA: Mama? Where's Clyde?

TRUDY: Didn't want to come. Couldn't stand seeing your dad. Imagine that.

DANA: [laughs slightly] Those two will be fighting after they're dead.

TRUDY: Guess so. Where should I set the buns?

ROSALIND: Over here on the table, Mrs. Hamill.

DANA: Wait. [all noise stops] Wait wait.

ROSALIND: Something the matter?

DANA: Rosalind, you know how to play the drums, right?

ROSALIND: Do I seem like someone who *doesn't* know how to play the drums?

DANA: Great. Kit's over there. [a drum fill] Mom, can you take keys? Just like when I was little?

TRUDY: I'd love to. The same old song?

DANA: The same old song.

PAUL: We gettin' the band back together, darlin'?

DANA: [her voice cracks] Paul. You old bear. [beat] I was just on the phone with--

PAUL: [voice warm with love] I know. [beat] I could take bass. Thankless task, but--

DANA: I'd love it. I'll take guitar, of course, and I just need--

OLIVIA: A backup singer?

DANA: [so much love in her voice] You came.

OLIVIA: Of course I did. And look. I brought the audience.

MALE VOICE: So I finally get to hear this song everybody's going on about?

DANA: [you can hear her smile] Daddy. Yes. [a pause... the stray sounds of instruments] A-one, two... one, two, three, four--

[and the music slams on. For the next section, column 1 is Dana and her band of the damned playing "Watch the Fire," while column two is overlap of Olivia]

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>DANA: I was stuck in place I was burning low Cut off from the future I predicted long ago My closest friend You looked my way and suddenly I realized That you're the only one for me If people talk about us Let 'em talk</p> <p>They hardly looked They didn't see It's the same thing That blazes in both you and me</p> <p>Cause you're the spark And I'm the flame We lit the match We took our aim We feel the heat As the smoke goes higher Take my hand Let's go watch the fire Let's go watch the fire Let's go watch the fire Take my hand Let's go watch the fire</p> <p>Since we were young You faced my fear with me</p> | <p>[sound of phone ringing] OLIVIA: Pick up, Dana. Pick up. For fuck's sake. Just-- DANA: [VO] This is Dana. Leave -- [Olivia hangs up] OLIVIA: Goddammit, fine! I'll call Trudy.</p> <p>[phone rings] TRUDY: Hello? OLIVIA: Trudy! Is Dana there? How is-- TRUDY: Olivia! You should see the beautiful spread Dana made! I'll be sure to let her know you called. OLIVIA: Does she seem... okay? TRUDY: Better than. DANA: (in distance) Mom! I need your help! TRUDY: I gotta go. Happy Easter, Liv. OLIVIA: Please don't-- [hang up]</p> |
|--|---|

There has never been
A time when you weren't here with me
So people think
We moved too fast
The joke's on them
This love of ours is gonna last
If people want to judge us
Let 'em judge

So when they look
Who cares what they see
It's the same thing
That blazes in both you and me

Cause you're the spark
And I'm the flame
We lit the match
We took our aim
We feel the heat
As the smoke goes higher
Take my hand
Let's go watch the fire
Let's go watch the fire
Let's go watch the fire
Take my hand
Let's go watch the fire

And from the ashes we will rise
It took some growing up
For me to realize
This world is tough
This world is mean
This fire's the most beautiful thing
I've ever seen...

Cause you're the spark
And I'm the flame
We lit the match
We took our aim
We feel the heat
As the smoke goes higher
Take my hand

OLIVIA: Yes. Hello? Sheriff Jake? Yes, it's Olivia Breckenridge.

JAKE Olivia! Hey! Is something the matter?

OLIVIA: I'm fine, I'm fine. It's Dana. I think she's gonna do something stupid.

JAKE: [sigh] God, do I really need to head out there? I'm all the way over in Hatchet Falls. I guess I could send one of the guys. She's threatening to harm herself?

OLIVIA: I don't know. Not precisely.

JAKE: Is she, or isn't she?

OLIVIA: Kind of?

JAKE: Look, it's on my way back from Hatchet Falls. I can swing by the ranch. Check in on her. Would that be okay?

OLIVIA: I-- OK. thanks. Happy Easter.

JAKE: No problem. Happy Easter.

[phone goes dead]

| | |
|---|--|
| Let's go watch the fire Let's go watch the fire Let's go watch the fire Take my hand Let's go watch-- | |
|---|--|

[the music cuts out abruptly... and the knock on the door... and the door opening]

DANA: Hi, guys! Who's hungry?

TRUDY: I am!

CLYDE: Boy, me too. Could eat that whole ham!

TRUDY: Maybe carry it back to the house before you *eat* it, sweetheart.

CLYDE: If I can't help myself, you'll forgive me, Dana, I hope.

DANA: [wrestling] Of course.

TRUDY: You all right, Dana? You went away. [beat] I know talking to Olivia can get you down.

DANA: Just... thinking. About how things could be.

TRUDY: Well. Here we are. And it's a nice night.

DANA: Yeah. It is.

[the door shuts, and they begin the long walk to the house]

[we're back inside Olivia's house]

BRAD: Liv? You all right? You were gone for hours.

OLIVIA: I know. [beat] I called her. Dana. I shouldn't have, but--

BRAD: Yeah. [beat] Sit down. I'll heat up something for you. [beat, Olivia sits] I don't know quite what I expected. Given your Dana-sized blind spot--

OLIVIA: I don't have a blind-- Fine. I do. I don't want to fucking fight about this again. [beat] I'm worried she's about to do something stupid.

BRAD: Her entire life is doing something stupid. You have to admit.

OLIVIA: It's not her. It's everything that made her.

BRAD: Still. That whole month you were back there, I got used to it. You'd say you were coming home, and then she'd need something, and then it would end up being 10 times worse. So that's what I learned about her: Whatever you're worried about, it'll be 10 times worse.

[a long pause, and then Olivia stands up abruptly]

OLIVIA: I'm sorry.

BRAD: Hon? What are you--

OLIVIA: I gotta go back. I gotta get back to Elsinore, and--

BRAD: [sighs] What did she do?

OLIVIA: I don't know yet. But... But someone's gonna die.

[she exits before he can say anything else; a car being unlocked, a phone dials one last time]

ROSALIND: Olivia? Why are you calling-- Shit. Is everything ok?

OLIVIA: The ranch. You have to get to the ranch. Something's wrong.

ROSALIND: I can't get to the ranch. I'm in Los Angeles. Bea and Brenda are still there, but they're headed back-- [beat] What happened to Dana?

OLIVIA: She's going to do something-- [beat, she realizes] Fuck. Los Angeles? She wanted both of us gone. She wanted us far away. [beat] *Fuck*. I think she's going to kill them.

ROSALIND: Kill who?

OLIVIA: Everyone.

[she hangs up, and a car drives away]

[credits play over the "Watch the Fire" theme]

[and then, in the distance, sirens]