

JRATW 3.5 EP 3 - Austen and Bronte have been Listening
by Iri Alexander

Scene 1 - On Audio Channels

1 SOUND: A RADIO WAVE COMES IN, REPEATING A CODE IN MORSE. "--../
...-- -... --..-- / -..... / ---. -...- ----. -... " THE CODE REPEATS 3 TIMES
BEFORE PHASING BYRON IN.

2

BYRON:

Are you still listening? How is it out there? I don't think I've seen the sky in a couple years. I wonder if it's changed. I wonder if it will change. I'd hate to go out on a clear night and see nothing. Just a dark sky, the stars pulled down, and the moon no-where. I'd rather have all the stars watching me back when I can see the sky again.

3

SOUND: SHELLEY COMES INTO THE TRANSMISSION.

4

____SHELLEY: (Distracted)
One moment

5

SOUND: THE SCRATCHING OF A PEN CAN BE HEARD, SHELLEY DOES NOT TALK FOR A WHILE, LEAVING THE TRANSMISSION EMPTY AND AWKWARD.

6

BYRON: (Confused)
Shelley?

7

SOUND: THE SCRATCHING ENDS, AND SHELLEY PUTS DOWN HIS PEN. THE SHUFFLING OF PAPERS CAN BE HEARD.

8

SHELLEY:
Forgive me, I had to finish something.

9

BYRON:
What something? You don't have paperwork.

10

SHELLEY: (Questioning whether he should say anything)
Well-

11

SOUND: NEXT LINE INTERRUPTS THE LAST

12

BYRON: (Impatient)
Just tell me. What could I do about it anyway?

13

SHELLEY:
Well... Austen and Bronte have been listening
14 occasionally.

15 SOUND: NEXT LINE UNDER THE END OF THE LAST

BYRON:
16 Mmmhm

SHELLEY:
They wanted to know what your codes have been, so I've
been trying to decipher them. I'm... not quite understanding
17 them unfortunately. Maybe our sisters will do better.

18 SOUND: BEAT

BYRON:
19 Shelley, why are you playing this game with me?

SHELLEY: (Takes a moment to realize what Byron's talking
about)
20 The chess game? Because you asked me.

BYRON: (unbelieving)
Not because you need to prove me wrong? Or because you
21 need to make me better? You want to stop me.

SHELLEY: (Apologetic)
I cannot lie to you, Byron. Your state concerns me. I
can't come to the logic in your position. I don't know how
these plans got in your mind, but I find myself joining
your transmissions to hear your voice. Maybe to remind
myself that there must be something behind your
convictions. I don't know if I'll ever see things from
22 your perspective, but I want to be there for you. I'm not
here to fight you.

BYRON: (resigned)
23 But you're not here to help me.

SHELLEY:
24 I ... I don't think I can. Not with what you want me to
assist you with. So I'll listen.

BYRON:
25 Something feels wrong. It's felt wrong for so long. Why
don't you feel it? Like mistakes are being made.

26 SHELLEY:
We are not the biggest fish in the pond. I can't even
fathom why some things happen as they happen.

27 BYRON:
Like Frey?

 SHELLEY:
Among other things. Something wants her alive. I don't
even know that something is someone. But I feel like we
play a game of our own, and have been for quite a while
now. When I go to gather her, she's not there, and her
28 name disappears. And she's the only one. We saw her
vaporized to atoms. And I have no answers.

 BYRON:
29 You don't try to change anything?

 SHELLEY:
Something makes me think that I can't. Perhaps it's the
30 same thing driving you in the opposite direction.

 BYRON: (Growing tired with this circular discussion)
31 We were speaking of Kinghorn last time.

SOUND: UNDER HIS LAST LINE BYRON TAPS HIS CHESS BOARD THREE
32 TIMES.

 SHELLEY:
33 You said he had moved before on the board?

 BYRON:
34 Remember Beexton, with the vampires?

 SHELLEY:
35 So he moved that far back? Before our game even started?

 BYRON:
36 You never questioned the setup of the board before.

 SHELLEY: (Lightly, as if it wasn't worth mentioning)
37 How often do these boards start in the classic position?

 BYRON:
38 Right, from what I gathered he was thrown out after an
altercation with Tango.

39 SHELLEY:
An altercation?

 BYRON:
40 Apparently Tango smelled delicious to him. And he wasn't
the kind of vampire to keep his stuff together.

SOUND: THE CHESS PIECES MOVE, HOWEVER THIS TIME THEY MOVE BACK
TO A PREVIOUS ARRANGEMENT, SO MAYBE REVERSING THE CHESS PIECE
SOUND EFFECTS, AND ADDING SOME KIND OF MAGIC SOUND. BUT NOT
41 LIKE WIZARDS OF THE COAST, MUCH MUCH MORE SUBTLE.

 BYRON:
The Wanderers ran across him in the Dark City, a vampire
friendly city set up in the desert. This was before their
first visit to Good Lucky. They find him in a casino
42 there. And he chases them out.

 SHELLEY:
43 So how does he factor into all this?

 BYRON:
He was working with the bandits, the ones that captured
Sheriff Darcy. And he was working directly with their
boss, The Fig Wasp King. But he was chasing the Wanderers
44 for their previous slight.

 SHELLEY:
45 Something convinced him to change his tune in the end.

 BYRON:
Yeah, we weren't watching him. He must have run into
something. Can't imagine him agreeing to work with Charlie
46 otherwise.

 SHELLEY:
47 This was while everyone was running around in The Fig Wasp
King's cave systems?

 BYRON:
Right. Darcy managed to get away from the raiders who
kidnapped him, Charlie was separated and ran into
Kinghorn. The rest of the team figured out that Jim had a
safe functioning distance, and everyone was avoiding The
Fig Wasp King's children. Pity that Kinghorn was caught in
48 the blast that killed the King.

49 SHELLEY:
He's intact. He managed to escape the cave-in.

50 BYRON: (Surprised)
What? Did he show up in your books ever?

51 SHELLEY:
No.

52 BYRON:
That's stupid lucky. And The Fig Wasp King?

53 SHELLEY:
Not so fortunate. I sent Bronte for that one.

54 SOUND: AWKWARD SILENCE

55 SHELLEY: (softly, aware that he's bringing up something
unpleasant)
Charlie left after everything was said and done, didn't
she?

56 BYRON:
It was still my fault. I, Like I said, I kept sending her
those dreams. Reminding her of Chicago, making them
darker.

57 SHELLEY:
Why?

58 BYRON:
To try to change things. Maybe with her gone things would
be safer.

59 SHELLEY:
And did it?

60 BYRON: (Agitated, more with the circumstance than with
Shelley)
She was the wrong piece of the game, or I tried to change
things too soon.

61 SHELLEY:
Perhaps it has to happen this way?

62 BYRON: (Continuing to be agitated, maybe a little
confused)
63 Like fate? Like we have little strings attached to us,
that drag us where we go? You think that choice is just an
illusion?

SOUND: YET ANOTHER AWKWARD PAUSE.

SHELLEY:
Well...No. Not Exactly. Something more akin to predictable
behavior. This may not be the most sensitive example, but
64 your brothers and I haven't been able to convince you
differently than what you think now. We can't make you
veer off of your course. Perhaps it's like that, my book
knows that whatever the case may be stubbornness will
override their safety.

65 BYRON:
Isn't that fate, some predestined mumbo jumbo? What is the
purpose of giving them choice over their actions if
there's no difference in the end?

66 SHELLEY:
There are many times where no matter what the choice, the
67 outcome is misfortune.

68 BYRON:
I think the point is moot. Let's move on to something
else.

69 SOUND: SHELLEY'S PEN TAPS A FEW TIMES BEFORE HE BEGINS
SCRIBBLING WITH IT.

70 BYRON:
Do you need to go do something?

71 SHELLEY:
Eh, no, just scribbling, thinking. Why do you blame
yourself for Charlie leaving?

72 BYRON:
Because I sent her those nightmares, Shelley.

73 SHELLEY:
But that was you attempting to solve this dilemma of
yours.

74 BYRON:
It didn't work.

75 SHELLEY:
True, but it was an attempt to rectify something important
76 to you, you'd do it again.

BYRON:
If I thought it would work... yes, but-

77 SOUND: THE NEXT LINE INTERRUPTS THE PREVIOUS

SHELLEY:
78 Byron, I don't understand what you're doing. But I can see
you're dwelling on a decision you made out of an attempt
at good. Whatever the outcome.

79 BYRON:
But the outcome matters.

SHELLEY:
80 Yes, but remember that what you did you did for a reason.
In this case intent matters too.

BYRON: (Unsure if Byron's speech will make a difference,
but seeing to reassure him nonetheless)
81 I'll try to keep that in mind (Beat) I'll speak to you
later Shelley, I need some time.

82 SHELLEY:
Look, Byron, don't be mad at yourself, or me for that
matter. I'll speak to you next time.

83 SOUND: SHELLY DISCONNECTS FROM THE TRANSMISSION

84 BYRON:
Shelley tries. He's trying to be a good brother. I just
hope he's not right.

SOUND: BYRON'S TRANSMISSION FADES OUT LEAVING THE CODE "..----
-....- ..--- -.... --.--- / ...---" TO REPEAT THREE TIMES BEFORE FADING OUT.

LAURA:
Jim Robbie and the Wanderers was created by Iri Alexander.
"If I Sleep I Dream of Chicago" was written by Iri
Alexander, Directed by Zoe Embler, Project Management by
Laurel Moore. Music by Rosemary Derocher, Editing by Laura

Bramlette. Byron was played by Michael Beard of Old School RPG Studios on twitter @auspiciousbeard and Shelley was played by Joseph Warner. Visit our website at jimrobbieandthewanderers.com, check out our merch at crossroadstations.com, and our patreon at patreon.com/jimrobbieandthewanderers.