



Mabel, episode 38: Revelation. In which a certain kind of clarity is reached.

[INTRO]

[HILL WARPING SOUNDS]

MABEL: Something's wrong. It's corrupted. It shouldn't - there's no reason -

ANNA: There was - did you hear that? Someone was outside, she said -

MABEL: We have to go, I don't know - this is wrong, it's all wrong, it's -

[QUIETLY] I belong here -

ANNA: Did she say he was her *father*? Does that mean – [DEVASTATING HOWL FROM THE HILL] *Fuck*. Come here, don't let – watch out for your *arm*, Mabel –

MABEL: [PANICKED] She has to be lying.

ANNA: Listen to me, we have to get out *now* -

[BEEP]

[CHAOS, SCREAMING]

[BEEP]

[RUNNING NOISES; CLATTERS; JANET PANTING, SCRABBLING]

JANET: What the *hell!*

Is this –

[FUMBLING WITH RECORDER]

It's still working, at least. [BLOWS ON IT]

Something, like. Snatched this out of my hands and dragged it all the way –

- holy *shit*.

[WHISPERING, AS THOUGH TERRIFIED OR FULL OF WONDER] This room is big, or. It should be. There's one of those triple windows covering a whole wall, you can see – nothing, right now, it's overgrown with all these thorns and vines. The vines are – they've grown into the room, but that's not the weird part. The weird part is, they're – they're all snaked and wound up and twisted into these, like. Patterns. Not...words, exactly, or not letters in any alphabet I'm aware of. But. Symbols that look like they *should* have some kind of meaning. Strange shapes, lines and lines of them. There are all these – are they seed pods? They look like seed pods, maybe, these spiked kind of – hollow rattling things – and – [MUFFLED DRAGGING NOISE] God, this place is creepy. I know that's stupid, it's supposed to be – it just has this, like, aura to it, like I'm breathing it in and out, all this – darkness.

[DRAGGING NOISE DRAWS CLOSER]

What *is* that – ?

Oh my god.

[WHISPERS] *Oh my god*.

[BEEP]

[QUIETER, SOMEPLACE APART FROM EVERYTHING. GIRLS ARE STILL FREAKING OUT]

ANNA: Mabel. *Mabel*. Are you okay? Your arm, is it – let me look at your bandage, I have to check -

MABEL: I'm fine. I'm fine! [STRESS NOISES] Why would - who do you think that woman is? She isn't - she has no relationship with him, I'm sure of that, but she must....*believe* it, down to her soul, because otherwise why would the hill let her dispute your claim?

ANNA: Are you sure? How do you know he isn't her father? He's been here for - what, thousands of years? Wait, would that make *Luna* her mother? That doesn't – stop pulling away, I need to check on you.

MABEL: No, he's - I - I was inside him, inside his history, the depth and breadth of his entire self, I would have been able to see....*something*, some protective urge or small fondness for her, tucked away under so much suffering and rage. His relationship to Luna didn't include anything resembling love or even a *shred* of desire, it was almost....businesslike. She broke her word, so he put her in what amounted to prison....[DISTANTLY] until she let all the ghosts go....

ANNA: Ghosts - I don't. [TAKES A BREATH] How do you know he would have protective urges for a child, or fondness? If his relationship with Luna was all business – what makes you think his relationship to a – *daughter* wouldn't be, too?

MABEL: Because Luna was not his wife, in any capacity. [DRYLY] They didn't sleep together, is what I'm getting at. And his only lit tunnel of hope was - it was -

ANNA: Was what? [MABEL MAKES SOME PAIN NOISE] Sorry. I'm sorry.

MABEL: No need, you're taking care of me. I'm whining. [SIGHS] It was me.

ANNA: Why – *why*? What did he – [PAUSES, TEARS CLOTH] When I – god, a million years ago, when I left you here – I thought he was going to kill you. I thought he was angry, I thought he would – punish you, for trying to leave. Or for letting me in, or for – talking to me, for plotting against it, for any of it. I spent that whole time scared to death for you, thinking you were being – tortured, hunted, that you were in horrific danger. By the time we were actually *together*, I – there were. Other things. To deal with, and talk about,

and – do. What did happen? He didn't try to hurt you, did he? Not then, not – did he ever?

MABEL: [LONG ASS PAUSE]

No. He never tried to hurt me...specifically. I think he is such a product of his containment, it is all he knows. [LESS DREAMILY] He drifted here from where he was trapped. He is still trapped, but I am less sure of how. Or why. I only understand anything in - increments. Increasing levels of disparate pieces but I can't - see the whole, yet.

I'm sorry, I'm not making much sense. I don't know that...I can stitch together the framework of that time in such a comprehensible way. But I wasn't twisting on the rack. It wasn't like that.

ANNA: I thought you were. I thought I was the white knight, saving you. But it wasn't like that either, was it? You weren't - like Luna. At least, not entirely.

MABEL: You are always saving me. But no, I'm - Luna and I weren't anything alike. She strangled herself with her own words. You shouldn't make promises you can't keep.

ANNA: I never apologised. For what I did. [CLOTH RUSTLING] There. Your arm's no worse than it was earlier. I think it's actually starting to heal already. I can't tell if it's because the hill makes things - grow, strangely, or if it's just time being unreal down here. [PAUSE] I am sorry.

MABEL: [A LITTLE BIT ASTONISHED] Anna. What could you possibly be sorry for?

ANNA: I never asked you. Before I - switched our places. It wasn't just my choice.

MABEL: [BREATHES LOUDLY]

I - thank you. No one's - thank you for. Saying that.

ANNA: [SLIGHTLY TAKEN ABACK] You don't have to thank me. I should have apologised sooner. There were always just a million things...you know, kings to topple, thrones to. Usurp, I guess. [LAUGHS, NOT HAPPILY] *Pretender to the throne*, that's always been my goal in life. But still. I should have told you.

MABEL: [IN A WEIRD VOICE] Uh huh!

ANNA: ...Are you okay?

MABEL: [STRANGELY FRENETIC] I don't know? I - It's an odd revelation, that there exists a person who cares about my autonomy. Even stranger that they're willing to admit their failures. [PAUSE] I don't handle human emotions very well, as you can see. There's just hope where my rage should be. [LAUGHS NERVOUSLY] How'd that happen?

ANNA: Human emotions. Inhuman emotions. I don't know that the difference matters much. We're all just -

LUNA: Sweet girls. I see you have found a hole in which to hide from the coming storm. I cannot say that I blame you. She burrowed her teeth into your flesh, *ixodes scapularis*, and now you are - what are you, half-king? Are you leeches? Are you sickening? I find I do not envy you what is to come. This is my farewell.

MABEL: You are aware that you can leave without announcing your departure.

ANNA: [BURST OUT LAUGHING]

[SOUNDS OF LUNA LEAVING]

ANNA: That was dramatic. Wait - *what* doesn't she envy us?

MABEL: We'll figure it out.

[BEEP]

ARTIFICIAL VOICE: Subject 1138, section 4, test 2

[INFANT WAILING]

AURORA SILVER: Really? That's what you expect to affect me?

[SOUND CHANGES SUDDENLY TO LAUGHING, SCREAMING IN DISTORTED VOICE]

UNKNOWN VOICE: *Fiat justitia et ruat caelum.*

[BEEP]

ACONITE: [PANICKING TO HERSELF, PACING] He is – my father, he is, I know this, I know – I was born in – in devastation, I was born to ruin, he is the – the circle of cells around which I – crystalized, chrysalis, chromosomal – I remember, *I remember*, he was – he said to me – [GASPING] I was born into death. I was baptized into entropy. He was there, he was *there*, his black eyes, his open mouth, I knew him even –

[HILL SHIFTS AND GLITCHES]

What? What? What would you say to me? I have a claim, I know – I *know* who I am, I know –

[TO HERSELF] I know who I am. I know who I am. I know who I am.

[BEEP]

MABEL: Sometimes I wonder if we have at all left the boundaries that the house created, if this is only another one of its endless tendrils slithering after us. It's done that to me before, in a way, but - [LONG PAUSE] - to be honest I don't think there's a point in questioning the aspects of our lived reality. I'm just complaining, airing out - fears, doubts, of structure, of Imaginary kingdom, papier mache, glitter, and twine. It would be much simpler. There are no rules in a made-up world except...well, except those which you make up. [SIGHS] If this is just a kind of shared madness, that's all the hill is. A selective, transmuting shared madness, which contains inside it the laws of itself, what it needs to perpetuate. This is...a kind of internal logic. That's how I know what has to be done. How you know, too, if you listen closely to your own cells singing.

ANNA: Dream logic. Or nightmare logic. There are always rules, even if they don't make linear sense.

MABEL: Yes. [PAUSES] We have to - *best* her, somehow. I'm not sure how.

ANNA: Somehow I don't think she'll throw down an acorn and call it her champion.

MABEL: If only. [PAUSES] Why do you think she wants this so badly? That's where our answers lie. Who she is, her motivation.

ANNA: I have no idea. I only caught a glimpse of her, but. She looks....like any of them. She doesn't look like *him*, at all. You really don't think she is his daughter?

MABEL: No, I don't. I'm sure of that. What I'm less sure of is why she thinks she is.

ANNA: Can I ask you something?

MABEL: Of course.

ANNA; Are you - or, maybe, were you - jealous of her?

MABEL: ...I don't know. It would be odd if I were, wouldn't it?

ANNA: Not necessarily. You learned a lot about him in a short space of time. None of his motivations were what we understood them to be; he even. I don't know. He was fond of you. Or something else, a different way of defining that. But - you were precious to him in some way, isn't that true? And you said you *felt* that. Felt everything he did.

MABEL: Yes. [PAUSES] I feel - badly for him. Not sorry, just. Badly. What has any of this been for? All of this, this hierarchy, these lives in tatters, it's - it's all been *done* so badly. If Luna had just come to me and said, *I made a promise, and I changed my mind, and I don't want to keep it* then - I might have helped her, I might have - but it's the *handwringing* I can't stand, the pearl clutching, the pretend-helplessness. *Poor me, what can I do.* We can all clean up our messes. Maybe that's what he was trying to do, in his own way. Everyone's tyrant, everyone's father, picking up after them. Like any parent, he did it poorly. [SIGHS] Here's another mess for us. Now we're the ones responsible for cleaning it.

ANNA: Everyone wanted something from him. Endless new roles for him to play. Me, especially, and Luna, and Sally, I guess, and Veratrine, and - Aurora Silver, whatever the fuck she thinks he is to her. And now - her.

MABEL: No, you - you aren't the same. You stumbled through this with all the information you had. You're not...deceptive, in that way. We are, both of

us, only liars through protective camouflage. [PAUSES] When you are king, you might have to play with many masks, too.

ANNA: I'm good at that. No one sees me clearly but you.

MABEL: [LAUGHS] Come here.

[PAUSES, SOME NOISES OR SMTH]

What's -

ANNA: Hey, don't -

MABEL : What is that? Is it - are you recording us, or - why -

ANNA: No! No, I'm - it not - the house, when you were first hurt, it gave me -

MABEL: What is this?! [PUSHES BUTTON, HEARS SELF]

Oh god. Oh god - oh, no, no no no -

ANNA: I didn't know - I was going to tell you, I just fucking *forgot*, I swear - I wasn't hiding, trying to hide it from you, I just - I don't know what they are, the house -

MABEL: How did they get here, how did - [PAUSES, SIGHS, ATTEMPTS TO COME DOWN] It's - Aurora Silver's recordings. From earlier days when she was - she tried to inflict him on people. The king under the hill. It didn't go so well. I'd forgotten...the feeling...[SLOW BREATHS]

ANNA: I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I didn't know - I - what can I do?

MABEL: Nothing, there's -

[HEARS RECORDING PLAY SOMETHING USEFUL]

Oh. It's. [LAUGHS] It was - trying to help.

ANNA: What do you -

MABEL: It's coming back, like a circle of mushrooms. It's all coming back.

OUTRO:

Mabel is written by Becca De La Rosa and Mabel Martin and produced by Becca De La Rosa; the voice of Mabel Martin is Mabel Martin, and the voice of Anna Limon is Becca De La Rosa. The voice of Janet Kirk is Dorrie Sacks. The voice of Aconite is Alexandra Serova. The voice of Aurora Silver is Meg Dixon.

The music in this episode was by Bob Roberts, Taker 51, and (morse), and all of it is available to download from the Free Music Archive at freemusicarchive.org. For more information about this episode, including a full tracklist and transcript, visit us online at mabelpodcast.com.

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