

FREQUENCY 43

Written and produced by Jerrel McQuen and Marc Rose

An episode of Re-Imagined Radio
Produced and Hosted by John F. Barber

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Re-Imagined Radio
Season 13, Episode 10

Final draft

FREQUENCY 43

Can dreams connect us with the Great Unknown?

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Season 13, Episode 10
Final Draft

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Synopsis

A researcher discovers a parallel universe where the morphing liquidity of dream and nightmare questions the rules of reality. Should we explore this world? This haunting and splintering reality of Frequency 43? Can dreams connect us with the Great Unknown? If so, how much connection would we truly want? Answers are hinted in this radio story by Jerrel McQuen and Marc Rose. From our Guest Producer and Science Fiction series.

Credits

Bobby Bermea as Ben Whitlock
Devin James as Branford Cartier, Austin Caddell, Officer Cadman and the "Narrator"
Jodi Lorimer as Aelinn Guyers (EYE-lin GUY-ERS)
Destinee Love as Nala Kayak (NAH-luh ka-TIE-ya)
Eric Newsome as Major Trent Alarie (uh-LAR-ee)
Lucy Paschal as Dr. Zanders
Kate White as Tarrah Meyers

Written by Jerrel McQuen for Enserne Media
Post production, original music, sound design by Marc Rose
Hosted by John F. Barber

Color Code

Yellow highlighted text = sound effect(s), either pre-recorded or live.

MUSIC = pre-recorded

MUSIC = bespoke, created for this episode

COLD OPEN

TEASER . . . SCENE 01

SFX: OPEN WITH FORMIDABLE POWER
THRUM OF THE RECEPTOR CHAIR.
ESTABLISH.

T . SCENE 02 . INSIDE THE CONTROL
RING.

SFX: THRUM IS MUFFLED, OUTSIDE
CHAMBER IN BACKGROUND.

SYSTEM AI (MECHANICAL VOICE) Project Dream Catcher
ASSIST commencing. Session 7B.

SFX: MONITOR ACTIVATES. STATIC.
TUNING. THE WAH OF THE FREQUENCY
VOID OVER SPEAKER.

SYSTEM AI 10:30 PM. Subject Nala entering the
ASSIST Frequency Void.

BEN WHITLOCK (POINTEDLY, 7A DID NOT GO WELL) Is the
Receptor Chair stable this time?

TARRAH MEYERS (NERVOUS, HESITANT, BLUFFING THROUGH)
Her bio-sign readings are holding
steady. . . She's entering the vocal REM
state. I think we'll be OK.

BEN (CONCERNED) See if you can guide her
past Frequency 43. I know she really
wants to explore that one, but I. . . I
just don't like the sound of it.

TARRAH (WITH ASPERITY) I agree. . . (DISMAYED)
Oh. . . she's heading right for it
again.

SFX: HITS TWO OR THREE CONTROLS,
GETS 'NO ACTION TAKEN' FLAT SINGLE
BEEP.

TARRAH I don't think there's any way to divert.
Should we cancel Session?

BEN (IRRITATED) You know how Nala will react
to that. . . Maybe I'm getting over
sensitive. . . (ADJUSTING CONTROLS)
Let's see what she picks up on this
time.

T · SCENE 03

SFX: HARD CUT BACK TO FULL POWER
THRUM OF CHAIR. IT ECHOES OUT AND
FADES, INTO THE DRONE AMBIENCE OF
THE FREQUENCY VOID. WE'RE WITH
NALA. FREQUENCIES ARISE AND PASS
BY. THE FIRST IS BENIGN.

NALA KAYAK (ECHOING) I'm entering the Frequency
Void, the Zone of the Corridors.
(ANOTHER ONE PASSES, A BIT MORE
DISTURBING) Ben, I think you're right.
These Corridors of Color I'm seeing. . .
I think they are the dreaming
frequencies.

SFX: AND NOW: FREQUENCY 43 COMES
IN. ANGULAR AND JAGGED, IT'S
IMMEDIATELY OFF-PUTTING. WHEN IT
LULLS . . .

NALA (UNSETTLED) That's 43, isn't it. (THE WINDS OF THE HALLS SWEEP IN, SHE REACTS WITH ALARM) Ben, I'm being swept into the Frequency. . .

SFX: WAIL OF WIND

NALA I feel like I'm moving at a fantastic speed.

T · SCENE 04 · IN CONTROL RING.

SFX: SOBBING BANSHEE WAIL, OVER THE SPEAKER.

BEN (REALLY FRIGHTENED, ANGRY) No, that's wrong. Tarrah, Cancel Session.

TARRAH Yes, sir! (HITS CONTROL, NOTHING HAPPENS) (ALARMED) It's not cancelling. System, report!

SYSTEM AI (IN ALTOGETHER TOO POSITIVE A TONE)
ASSIST Cannot comply. Procedure in process.
Subject at risk.

T · SCENE 05 · WITH NALA

SFX: HALL WINDS RUSHING. IT QUIETS,
THEN: ELECTRIC CIRCUIT IGNITING
INTENSE RASPING SOUND OF RADIATION.

NALA (PANICKING) Blue and green light! (THE EFFECT RAMPS) It's shining through me. (NOW COMPLETELY TERRIFIED) It felt like radiation. I feel like it's searching me. . . it's scanning me.

T · SCENE 06 · IN CONTROL RING.

BEN (HITTING CONTROL HARD, SHOUTING) Cancel the session! Override!

SYSTEM AI ASSIST Cannot comply.

SFX: OVER SPEAKER, ONE LAST BANSHEE WAIL. FADE THAT OUT OF SPEAKER MODE, INTO UP CLOSE SOBBING WAIL, AS IF IT'S BRIDGED THE DIMENSIONS AND PASSED INTO OUR OWN.

MUSIC: OUT TO BIOMECHANOID THEME

THEME AND ANNOUNCER

MUSIC: RIR THEME

ANNOUNCER Welcome to Re-Imagined Radio, a program about sound-based storytelling. With each episode we explore how dialogue, sound effects, and music can engage your listening imagination and promote storytelling. Here to tell you about THIS episode is John Barber, producer and host.

HOST OPEN

RIR HOST Hello everyone. Welcome to Re-Imagined Radio. This episode is called "Frequency 43." Written and produced by Jerrel McQuen and Marc Rose, it's part of our Guest Producer and Science Fiction series.

You've heard from McQuen and Rose previously. *Night of the Eclipsoid Man*, Parts 1 and 2, November 2024. *Asezhia*,

October 2023. And *Nirvana & Gehenna*,
August 2021.

Now, just in time for Halloween 2025, a
suitable taste of terror with a side of
science fiction adventure. First
broadcast in 1980 as "Transformer." Now
re-titled. Re-booted. Re-broadcast by
Re-Imagined Radio, this story concerns a
researcher who discovers a parallel
universe where the morphing liquidity of
dream and nightmare questions the rules
of reality. Should we explore this
world? This haunting and splintering
reality of Frequency 43? Can dreams
connect us with the Great Unknown? If
so, how much connection would we truly
want?

Hang on for the new form of radio
storytelling McQuen and Rose are
pioneering. They call it "cinematic
storytelling." We're proud to premiere
it here on Re-Imagined Radio.

For more information, and the episode
script, visit our website,
reimaginedradio dot fm.

Thank you for listening as Re-Imagined
Radio presents "Frequency 43".

MUSIC: BIOMECHANOID THEME

ACT #1

ACT ONE · SCENE 01

SFX: AS IF NARRATOR IS INSIDE THE DESERTED DREAM CATCHER FACILITY. THE NORMAL THRUM OF MACHINERY SYSTEMS IS A DISTURBING WALLAH OF STRANGE FREQUENCIES AND REPEATING DEVICE FX.

NARRATOR Welcome to Xtremity.

SFX: ACTIVATES DEVICE, OFF-PUTTING SINE WAVE OSCILLATES FOR A MOMENT, THEN HE SWITCHES IT BACK OFF.

NARRATOR All energy is expressed in wavelengths. Our very thoughts are electrical currents.

SFX: WALKS ON METALLIC DECK SLOWLY, UNDERNEATH FOLLOWING.

NARRATOR This episode explores the strange phenomenon of dreams. Researchers Nala Kataya and Ben Whitlock are convinced that, in dreams, we may actually be traveling to rarefied realms. Realities that can only be reached at specific frequencies.

SFX: STOPS, ACTIVATES THE RECEPTOR CHAIR, LOW POWERFUL THRUM STARTS UP.

NARRATOR And they have invented a device, the Receptor Chair, that allows Nala, an Esper Sensitive, to not only dream, but to communicate from her dreams.

SFX: ACCESSES ANOTHER ARRAY, AND A HARSH THREE SIGNAL ALARM GOES OFF.

NARRATOR But such forays into the Unknown come at a price. In a universe of Duality, dream can become nightmare in a nanosecond.

**SFX: HITS ANOTHER CONTROL,
ACTIVATING A REPLAY OF FREQUENCY
43.**

NARRATOR Unlocking realities best left in the distant reaches of . . . FREQUENCY 43.

A1 · SCENE 02

**SFX: A HISS AND THE GLASS
SARCOPHAGUS LID OF THE RECEPTOR
CHAIR RISES HEAVILY, PNEUMATICALLY.**

NALA (GROANS, SHIFTS SHARPLY IN DELIRIUM) No! What are you doing? What are you saying?

BEN Nala? Can you hear me? Wake up!

TARRAH (PUNCHING BUTTONS ON A HAND-HELD MEDICAL DEVICE) Her vitals are stabilizing.

NALA (SITS UP SUDDENLY. INSTANTLY AWAKE.) Oh, god. . . I'm back. . . Oh. (AND HER TONE HOLDS BOTH HORROR AND FASCINATION) What did I just hear?

SFX: A SINGLE-TONE ALERT GOES OFF.

SYSTEM AI ASSIST You have an Authorized Visitor.

BEN (IRRITATED) At this hour? It's almost midnight.

NALA (INSTANTLY KNOWING) Aelinn is here.

BEN (CURSES UNDER HIS BREATH) Why did we give her project access?

NALA (IRONICALLY) You know this project wouldn't have happened without her.

SFX: A SIDE PANEL OF THE CHAIR LOWERS, BECOMES STAIR STEPS. NALA SCOOTs OVER, STEPS OUT.

NALA I'm OK . . . (RUEFULLY) Let's go over 7B in the conference room.

SFX: BOTH THEIR STEPS ON METAL FLOOR AS THEY HEAD FOR STAIRS ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE ROOM.

BEN I really don't want Aelinn sitting in on this. If she goes all woogie-woogie and clairvoyant sensitive, I will call her out on it.

NALA Even though her very presence, here in the middle of the night, indicates she knew something was happening to me.

BEN She knows you key in on the frequencies better at night. I'm gonna call that as grifter's luck . . . or coincidence.

NALA But you know it isn't. (HITS CONTROL, DOOR DEPRESSURIZES)

A1 · SCENE 03

MUSIC: BREAK, TO INDICATE TIME PASSED.

SFX: IN CONFERENCE ROOM.

NALA I want to go back in. I'm telling you, I heard voices.

BEN (FRUSTRATED, WORRIED, ANGRY) Which are not showing up on the playback. System, scan again.

**SFX: SEARCH EFFECT OF NALA
ENCOUNTER, IN SPEEDED UP SNIPPETS.**

SYSTEM ASSIST Scan complete. Undefinable sound like
AI wind. Atonal wail. Vocalization, negative.

AELINN GUYERS (CONCERNED) Can you tell us what they were saying? The tone of them?

NALA It's frustrating. I can almost remember the actual words. Multiple voices. Listing something. Complex terms. A scientific language, that's what it felt like. . . C'mon, Ben. Don't tell me you're not intrigued by that.

AELINN Nala, will you indulge me? Hold my hand for a moment.

**SFX: WAY OFF IN THE DISTANCE, THE
ENGINEERS, FOR JUST A MOMENT.**

AELINN (SHE KNOWS THIS IS BEYOND ANY OF THEM)
I. . . I don't think you should go back in. I feel. . . (SHE HESITATES)

BEN (JUMPING IN) Here it comes. She senses some great, threatening danger.

AELINN (SHARPLY) You don't want her to go back in. Don't try to pretend you do.

BEN (HEATEDLY) Don't speak for me! We can set up safeguards, observe from farther away.

AELINN Your machines again. Your empirical science. What you've never accepted is that I don't need machines to tell me what to know. And I know there are things, out there, we are not yet meant to confront!

NALA Look, you two. (WITH HUMOR, TO DEFLECT HER POINTED STATEMENT, SHE CARES ABOUT BOTH OF THEM) I've heard this old and boring debate too many times. . . here's my answer to both of you. The entire point of this research is to find NEW answers.

We're living on a world that is tearing itself apart. Look at the human race. We haven't stopped war. We've booby-trapped the entire planet with toxic time bombs. Hundreds of steel drums filled with radioactive waste, dumped wholesale into the sea in places we don't even have on record. And how many stockpile bunkers of bacteriological weapons?

One earthquake, one flood, one crazy nut job in a soldier suit, and. . . we're gone. We will not survive it. (BEAT) So if I did hear, not only language, but an intelligence that may know more than we do . . . I'm going for it. I will contact them. And both of you know better than to try and stop me. (LOADED BEAT)

AELINN (AGAINST ALL HER BETTER JUDGMENT) Well, Ben. There's not much we can say to that. Is there?

BEN No, there isn't. (BUT HE TOO FEELS LIKE SOMEONE IS WALKING ACROSS HIS GRAVE) (WITH GREAT FOREBODING) I'll go prep Session 7C.

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

A1 · SCENE 04 · IN CONTROL RING.

SFX: LOW THRUM OF RECEPTOR CHAIR, OUTSIDE.

TARRAH (ALSO WITH FOREBODING) So we're. . . targeting Frequency 43 this time.

BEN (RESIGNEDLY) That's the plan. I want the audio receptors at eleven, right? I need to know she's really hearing what she said she's hearing.

TARRAH I don't like this.

BEN I don't either. None of us do.

SFX: AN AFFIRMATIVE SENSOR BEEP GOES OFF.

TARRAH She's settled in the Chair. All bio-signals and receptors reading green.

A1 · SCENE 05 · IN SEALED CHAIR WITH NALA.

SFX: LOUDER THRUM OF POWER WALL. BEN IS OVER MIC.

BEN Nala? Are you ready?

NALA No. I'm scared spitless. Keep your hand on that fail-safe, okay?

BEN You know it. Tell me you're coming back. Swear on the ring.

NALA (LAUGHS OUT LOUD) My empirical fiancée, defaulting to superstition?

BEN We chose fire opal for the best of luck, my Destiny Balancing Libra. If there's something dangerous out there, I want you to stab it with that pointy arrow at the top of your birth sign scales.

NALA I will do just that . . . swear on the ring.

SFX: SENSOR SIGNAL.

BEN Receptor Chair at full . . . Time to fly.

MUSIC: MUSICAL TRANSITION

A1 · SCENE 06

SFX: AELINN'S HOME. OLD STYLE CLOCK TICKING IN BACKGROUND. SHE TURNS ON AN OLD-STYLE LAMP WITH A CHAIN PULL. HER CAT JUMPS UP ON THE DESK, UNSETTLED, WANTING ATTENTION.

AELINN Yes, Hera, I'm home. . . Oh. Almost three. The witching hour. . .

SFX: OPENS DRAWER, TAKES OUT LARGE
CARD SET, RIFFLES THEM.

AELINN

I shouldn't do this. Not a propitious night for the Tarot, Nala, but I read these for you. In case there's anything I can do.

SFX: CHAIR SCRAPES, SHE SITS DOWN,
DEALS THREE CARDS ON THE DESK
BEFORE HER.

AELINN

Please be kind. (KNOWING THEY WON'T BE, FLIPS THEM OVER ONE BY ONE, REACTING WITH INCREASING UNEASE WITH EACH ONE. AFTER LAST CARD, PAUSE, THEN, VOICE BREAKING) Oh, child, child. . . Where will this unholy trinity take you?

A1 · SCENE 07

SFX: IN LAB CONTROL ROOM WITH BEN.
LOG REPORT AS HE MONITORS NALA'S
LATEST EXCURSION.

BEN

(WORRIED, ANGRY) Session 7C. Nala's already contacted Frequency 43. I can't help but feel she's been targeted. If she has contacted thinking, planning. . . intelligence. . . what do they want?

A1 · SCENE 08

SFX: IN FREQUENCY 43 WITH NALA. THE
WALLAH IS DISTURBING, DISSONANT.

NALA

I know you're there . . .

SFX: AND AGAIN, REPLACING FREQUENCY 43, THAT SOUND OF AN ELECTRICAL ENERGY IGNITING. AND THE RADIATION RETURNS, EVEN MORE INTENSE THAN BEFORE. NALA REACTS, IT'S ALMOST PAINFUL THIS TIME.

NALA Yes, go ahead. Scan me. I mean you no harm.

SFX: THE RADIATION BEGINS TO CRACKLE. IT'S ALMOST LIKE FIRE NOW. NALA WON'T STOP OR ASK FOR HELP, BUT THE SENSATION IS LIKE STANDING IN A MICROWAVE. OVER THE PAIN, SHE REACTS WITH ANGER, DEFIANCE.

NALA Talk to me . . . Let me understand you!

SFX: ANOTHER ELECTRICAL IGNITION AND THE RADIATIONS SEVERS. NALA GASPS IN RELIEF. PAUSE. ONLY SOUND IS FREQUENCY 43, AS IF IN THE DISTANCE.

SFX: THEN, SEVERAL ENGINEERS BEGIN CHANTING AT ONCE.

ENGINEERS Chanting.

SFX: ECHOING IN THE VOID, THEIR CHANTS MOUNT LOUDER AND LOUDER, BECOMING A FRIGHTFUL DIN, A SCIENTIFIC DEMONIC INCANTATION. MOUNTS TO A CRESCENDO, AND THEN HARD CUT TO SILENCE. A BEAT. THIN, DISTANT WIND OF THE HALLS SIGNWAVES, THEN CONTINUES UNDER.

ACT #2

ACT TWO · SCENE 01

SFX: DEJA VU. A HISS, GLASS
SARCOPHAGUS LID RISING HEAVILY.
GREAT URGENCY.

BEN NALA!

SFX: SCANNING WITH MEDICAL DEVICE,
BUT READINGS ARE CLEARLY ERRATIC.

TARRAH (ALARMED) She's way under. I'm not getting normal brainwave patterns.

BEN (PUNCHES CONTROL, ARM SLEEVE RETRACTS. HE RUBS HER HAND VIGOROUSLY) Nala, please. (NO RESPONSE, THEY CAN'T HANDLE THIS) (FEARFUL BUT FOCUSED) Call the Institute Med Team. Arrange for transport to LA Medical West. Ask for Dr. Zanders, she's up on our research. Medical Wing SubRosa.

SFX: TARRAH STEPS AWAY, MAKES CALL
IN BACKGROUND.

BEN (NEAR TEARS, VOICE SHAKING) Nala, come back. You swore on the ring.

A2 · SCENE 02

SFX: HOSPITAL ROOM. ERRATIC
READOUTS. NALA IS SPORADICALLY
JERKING, REACTING.

BEN Brainwaves are elevated. She should be conscious! Dr. Zanders, why isn't she responding?

DR. ZANDERS I think she's trapped in some REM cycle that is off the scale. Look at the way she's moving and gesturing. Responding to unseen stimuli.

BEN (ANGRY, BLAMING HIMSELF) In a nightmare she can't wake up from.

DR. ZANDERS I'd say that's exactly it. You say she contacted something you heard?

BEN I didn't want to believe it. But this time, it's on record. Some chorus of voices out of I don't know where. I don't believe in the demonic, but this was so . . . Other . . . it gives me chills just remembering it.

SFX: NALA BEGINS TO THRASH. LIKE SHE'S TRYING TO RUN FROM SOMETHING.

DR. ZANDERS Oh, god, hold her.

SFX: THEY BOTH RESTRAIN HER. SHE'S STRUGGLING, FIGHTING THEM. SHE GASPS, THEN GOES TOTALLY STILL.

BEN Nala, please, wake up!

SFX: BUT HERE WE GO. A HISSING SOUND, LIKE STEAM, THEN A KIND OF VISCOUS BUBBLING.

BEN Oh, god, what's that?

DR. ZANDERS (HORRIFIED) There's a stain under the sheet. Her arm.

SFX: SHEET BEING PULLED DOWN. THE SOUND BECOMES LOUDER. LIKE LIQUID PULSING THICKLY.

DR. ZANDERS (TERRIFIED) What is that? Never seen a skin eruption that fast. (FASCINATED, REPULSED) Plaque covering six inches. Vesicles containing liquid, now hardening. An almost metallic blue.

SFX: NOW IT HISSES ONE MORE TIME. AND THEN THE AFFECTED AREA CRACKLES, LIKE MAGMA COOLING AND HARDENING.

BEN Don't touch it.

DR. ZANDERS Of course not! Hand me that pen on the night stand.

SFX: NOW THE AFFECTED AREA GOES STILL. NO FURTHER SOUND. SHE TAPS THE AREA WITH THE PEN, AND IT SOUNDS LIKE ROCK.

BEN My god. That sounds exo-skeletal.

SFX: THEN, SOUND OF LIQUIDS SHIFTING AGAIN. LOUD CRACKLING. THEN SOFTENS IN VOLUME, BUT CONTINUES SPORADICALLY.

DR. ZANDERS (STUNNED) The plaque just expanded by two inches. In seconds. (NOW SHE'S TERRIFIED) My God, Ben. What did you contact out there?

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

A2 · SCENE 03

SFX: FIVE AM AT AN LA BUS TERMINAL.

NEARLY DESERTED.

AUTO BUS ANNOUNCE Line 106: Montebello to Monterey Park,
departing at 5:25 AM.

**SFX: BUS DOOR CLOSES, BUS TURNS
OUT, DRIVES AWAY. UP CLOSE, TARRAH
PUNCHING IPHONE KEYPAD. RINGING.**

TARRAH Come on, come on!

MAJOR TRENT (BLEARILY, OVER PHONE SPEAKER) Hello?
ALARIE Tarrah?

TARRAH Major Alarie, I'm so sorry to call you
at this hour. . . (NERVOUS, SCARED) It's
happened. They've made contact.

MAJOR ALARIE (INSTANTLY AWAKE) When? How?

TARRAH Frequency 43. I told you. Nala's in a
coma. They've taken her to LA West. Dr.
Zanders is our contact.

MAJOR ALARIE Good work, Tarrah. We'll take it from
here.

A2 · SCENE 04

**SFX: BACK AT LA WEST. A NURSE CREW
IS WHEELING OUT NALA, READING OUT
VITALS TO EACH OTHER IN HUSHED
TONES, COORDINATING. DR. ZANDERS**

AND BEN ARE FOLLOWING, SOMEWHAT
HEATED EXCHANGE IN PROGRESS.

DR. ZANDERS Ben, we're taking her down to Testing,
and I don't know how long we'll be. It's
a Quarantine Zone . . . you won't be
allowed in.

BEN Where's the nearest place I can wait?

DR. ZANDERS You're exhausted. Go home. I will
contact you when I can. I promise.

SFX: ELEVATOR BELL.

ELEVATOR AI Elevator 4 to Testing and Quarantine.
Alerting Testing Teams.

SFX: TEAM WHEELS IN NALA. ELEVATOR
DOOR CLOSES. BELL. BEN FRETS,
PACES, THEN TAKES OUT PHONE,
PUNCHES NUMBERS.

BEN I can't believe I'm doing this.

SFX: RINGS ONCE, AELINN ANSWERS

AELINN Ben, I'm on my way. One minute out from
the hospital.

BEN (TIRED, RESIGNED, WITH DARK REMNANT OF
HUMOR) Of course you are . . . Do I even
need to fill you in?

AELINN I know she breached Frequency 43. Give
me the rest from there.

A2 · SCENE 06

MUSIC: TRANSITION

SFX: CORPORATE BUILDING. ELEVATOR DOOR, BELL, AT SLIGHT DISTANCE. OCCUPANT STEPS OUT AND STRIDES TOWARDS US IN ECHOING HALL, THEN STOPS. CONTROL PUNCHED. SCANNING SOUND.

ELEVATOR AI Identification positive. Major Alarie, Covert Services. Welcome to the PSI Institute. CEO Caddel is ready to see you.

SFX: DOOR SWOOSHES OPEN. CADDELL GREETES HIM FROM ACROSS ROOM.

AUSTIN CADDELL Major Alarie.

SFX: ALARIE STRIDES UP RAPIDLY, THEY SHAKE HANDS. ALARIE SETTLES INTO A GUEST CHAIR.

MAJOR ALARIE Austin. Thanks for arranging this so quickly.

CADDELL I had a funny feeling Project Dream Catcher might go Code Crimson. Have they actually made contact?

MAJOR ALARIE Oh, yes. Some zone they designated as Frequency 43. Thanks to your bright little intern, Tarrah Myers, we have recordings.

CADDELL One question. . . Nala Kataya and Ben Whitlock are currently the Institute's premier fundraisers. They're a

scientific power couple. They're very popular . . .

MAJOR ALARIE We're aware of their profiles. But this is now a matter of National Security. The Dream Catcher Project is now under the purview of Covert Services. Whitlock and Kataya will now work for us.

CADDELL (LISTING CONCERNS) Nala and Ben can be very vocal. Ah, I assume you have the resources to Influence and Deflect on all the social media platforms?

MAJOR ALARIE Austin, we invented Influencing and Deflection. Covert peers in chat rooms. Character sabotage. And if that doesn't work, we disappear them. Looks valid. Then they enter a realm I like to call Nevermore.

MUSIC: TIME LAPSE

A2 · SCENE 07

SFX: INSIDE HOSPITAL PARKING GARAGE. THAT WEIRD SHARP ECHOEY AMBIENCE. WALKING RAPIDLY TO UNDERGROUND ENTRANCE. AS THEY APPROACH . . .

FLOOR AI LA Medical West, Parking Garage Entrance.

SFX: AUTOMATIC DOORS OPEN, THEY ENTER A NARROW HALLWAY, AMBIENCE MUFFLES

BEN (REALLY PUT OUT) An entire day wasted. I know, they had her down in Testing all day . . . (CHECKS HIS WATCH) It's 8 PM. "Beam in" one more time. See where she is now.

AELINN (PAUSE, AS SHE THINKS ABOUT NALA, SEES WHERE SHE IS) We're in luck at last. They're just now taking her back to Room 106. We need to get her out of this facility. Before she's moved to some Covert Quarantine that's completely unbreachable.

BEN And Dr. Zanders knows we made Extraterrestrial contact. She'll have to report it. And when the Feds find out . . .

SFX: ANOTHER SET OF AUTOMATIC DOORS OPEN, THEY ENTER A WIDER SUB-FLOOR CORRIDOR.

FLOOR AI Morgue, Forensics, Pharmacy.

AELINN Count on the Feds already knowing and we're running out of time.

MUSIC: TRANSITION

A2 · SCENE 08

SFX: DOOR OPENING. BEN AND AELINN MOVE INTO ROOM. SEDATE MEDICAL READOUTS.

FLOOR AI Room 106. Nala Kataya. Patient should not be wakened or disturbed.

BEN I thought that Testing Crew would never leave.

AELINN We're lucky they don't post guards in the SubRosa Wing. We'll have about fifteen minutes before the next Vitals and Bed-check.

SFX: SCRAPE OF CHAIR ON FLOOR,
AELINN SITS DOWN NEXT TO NALA.

AELINN Nala? It's Aelinn. Your friend with the curse of Sight.

SFX: TRANSITION. ROOM GOES AWAY, IN
THE VOID WITH NALA. IN BACKGROUND:
ENGINEERS, REVIEWING PROCESS.

AELINN (DEEP DISMAY, DREAD) Ohhhh. Contact indeed. With what I do not know.
(RAISING HER VOICE) Nala. HEAR ME . . .
Follow my voice back home.

A2 · SCENE 09

SFX: OUT IN THE HOSPITAL ROOM. THE
READOUTS GO ERRATIC.

BEN (ALARMED) Nala? Aelinn?

SFX: EFFECT TO INDICATE A RADIATION
OF LIGHT, SHINING OUT FROM BOTH
NALA AND AELINN

BEN (QUIZZICAL, AFRAID) They're both glowing. What is this?

SFX: THE READINGS SETTLE. THE LIGHT EFFECT FADES. AND BEN KNOWS WHAT SHE IS.

BEN You're not just a Psychic. You're. . . Draoi.

SFX: AND THEY BOTH COME OUT OF IT, REACTING LIKE THE DROWNING COMING UP FOR AIR. NALA GASPS, AND SITS UPRIGHT.

AELINN And there she is. You followed me back, thank the Affirmations.

BEN (RELIEF, PAIN) Nala.

SFX: (AELINN MOVES ASIDE AS HE EMBRACES HER AWKWARDLY)

NALA Ben? Aelinn? (takes in the surroundings) Oh, freck. I'm in . . . Medical West, aren't I. Things went way south.

AELINN And now we have to get out of here.

BEN Why didn't you tell me you were Draoi? That I could have accepted.

AELINN (EXASPERATED AND AMUSED) Oh, psychics are bunk but an ancient strain of Irish Empaths and Telekineticists, that's OK. Ben, you're a caution. You'll forgive me if we don't broadcast who we are. Look what happened to Dark Age Healers in the witch-burning days.

BEN I concede the point . . .

FLOOR AI Readings nominal. Vital check in one minute.

BEN Nala, are you strong enough to travel? We brought clothes.

NALA I'm fine. (REALIZING, MYSTIFIED) I'm more than fine, I'm ravenous.

SFX: SHE EXITS THE BED, CRINKLE OF BAG, TAKING OUT CLOTHES, RUSHING TO PUT THEM ON.

AELINN We'll fix that after. Right now, I'm going to fool this stupid AI into thinking you're still here. Then I'll loop all the Monitors long enough to get us out of this hospital, unobserved.

MUSIC: TRANSITION

A2 · SCENE 10

SFX: IN A FAST FOOD DRIVEWAY. BUZZING OF OVERHEAD NEON. BUS DRIVES BY. SIREN IN DISTANCE.

AUTO TELLER (OVER BAD SPEAKER) Thank you for your TACO TIMO'S product order.

A2 · SCENE 11

SFX: IN CAR. LIGHT MUSIC ON THE RADIO. WINDOW ROLLS UP. AELINN SHIFTS GEARS, DRIVING TO END OF LANE. PAPER SACK CRINKLING AS NALA ATTACKS THE PACKAGING, TEARING THE FOIL OFF A BURRITO.

NALA It's scary how good this burrito smells!
(TAKES A HUGE BITE, MOUTH FULL) Why is
this so good?! (CONTINUES TO WOLF DOWN
THE CHOW)

BEN Wow. Slow down a little or you'll choke.

SFX: THEY REACH THE END OF THE
DRIVE, TURN OUT INTO LIGHT TRAFFIC.

AELINN (GETS PING, WITH PAIN AND RESIGNATION)
And here comes the left turn.

SFX: THE SIGNAL NOW SENT TO NALA'S
ENDOCRINE SYSTEM IS SO STRONG, THE
ENGINEERS COME THROUGH ON THE CAR
RADIO, THROUGH STATIC CRACKLE, AT
ALARMING VOLUME. RIGHT AFTER, NALA
REACTS WITH AN AGONY BORDERING ON
SEIZURE.

NALA (THROUGH GRITTED TEETH) My arm. My arm!

SFX: VERY LOUD REPEAT OF THE
VESICLE ERUPTION, WORSE THAN
BEFORE. NALA BREAKS DOWN, CRYING IN
AGONY.

MUSIC: FUSEBOX THEME FOR BREAK

THE FUSEBOX BREAK

RIR HOST You're listening to Re-Imagined Radio.
Our episode is "Frequency 43" by Jerrel
McQuen and Marc Rose. This is John
Barber, and while we change the studio
for the next act of "Frequency 43" let
me tell you about "The Fusebox Show."

Produced by Marc Rose, Milt Kanen, and Jeff Pollard, each episode of "Fusebox" features unique conversation and commentary about the cultural concoction we're all cooking in. Here's a sample.

SFX: THE FUSEBOX SHOW TRAILER.

MUSIC: FUSEBOX THEME, FADE UNDER AND OUT FOR THE FOLLOWING

HOST "The Fusebox Show" is also available as podcasts. Learn more at their website, thefuseboxshow dot com.

ACT #3

ACT THREE · SCENE 01

NARRATOR And now, the third act of "Frequency 43."

SFX: IN CAR AT HIGH SPEED. NALA AND BEN ARE IN THE BACK SEAT.

BEN (ANGRY, TERRIFIED) Nala's passed out. Those, those voices. They came through on the car radio. Do you realize what this means?

AELINN (SHE SENSED IT JUST BEFORE IT HAPPENED, ON THE EDGE OF LOSING IT) Whatever she's contacted . . . they can reach her now without the Receptor Chair.

BEN (EXAMINING NALA) That, that. . . exo-skeletal chiton. . . has spread down the rest of her left arm. It'll encase her hand next.

AELINN (CRYING, ENORMOUS REGRET, UNDER BREATH)
Too late, too late, too late.

BEN (AT EXTREMIS HIMSELF) What did you say?

SFX: BUT NOW NALA REVIVES, REACTING
TO THE MEMORY OF THE PAIN,
RECOVERING, LOOKING AROUND.

NALA Where are we? Take me back to the Lab!

AELINN And let's hope it hasn't been
quarantined off quite yet.

BEN The Lab? Why!?

NALA To find out who those voices are. And
what they're doing to me.

AELINN Even I can't help you on this one. No
one on Earth can.

MUSIC: TRANSITION

A3 · SCENE 02

SFX: CAR PULLING UP, STOPPING WITH
A SCREECH. DOORS OPEN, NALA AND BEN
GET OUT. CAR IDLES.

BEN Aren't you coming with us?

AELINN No, if things take the worst possible
turn, Ben, you'll need someplace to go.
My home is off the grid. Nala, give him
the location before you . . . you re-
engage.

NALA I will. (NOW SOMEHOW SHE KNOWS, TOO, SHE WON'T BE COMING BACK) Aelinn. I'm sorry. Sorry we didn't listen to all your warnings.

AELINN (OVERCOME) Goodbye, child . . . save me a seat on the Other Side?

BEN This is sounding like a eulogy. (ANGRY, DEFIANT) Aelinn. I'm not going to let this be a eulogy.

A3 · SCENE 03

SFX: MEDICAL WEST. ZANDERS IN HALLWAY. TALKING TO COLLEAGUE.

DR. ZANDERS I didn't want her moved back up here at all. Yes, the material didn't show any sign of vectoring, but it's mutating at an insane rate.

SFX: DOOR SWOOSHES OPEN. READOUTS STILL CONTINUING AT NOMINAL. AS ZANDERS WALKS IN . . .

FLOOR AI Room 106. Nala Kataya. Patient should not be wakened or disturbed.

DR. ZANDERS (SHOCKED) She's gone.

SFX: STRIDES OVER TO READ-OUT PANEL.

DR. ZANDERS (CONFUSED, ANGRY) Why are these machines reading the vitals from someone who isn't here?

SFX: HITS INTERCOM, SUBTLE ALARM
GOES OFF.

DR. ZANDERS Code Red. Patient Nala Kataya has broken quarantine.

SFX: UNINTELLIGIBLE MAKING EXCUSES
RESPONSE OVER LINE.

DR. ZANDERS If she's not in the building, we're looking at a city-wide Quarantine Lockdown. Alert Major Alarie and his team immediately!

A3 · SCENE 04

SFX: RECEPTOR CHAIR THRUM. SHIELD
RISING. STEP PANEL GEARING DOWN.
NALA CLIMBS INTO THE CHAIR,
SCRAPING HER ALTERED ARM ON METAL
IN THE PROCESS. REACTS WITH PAIN.

NALA (RUEFULLY) This growth . . . it's almost down to my wrist. . . I had to move my ring to the other hand. This is all getting a little too ironic. Remember what you said to me about the stone?

BEN "Vulcanism and stress can turn even a drop of water into a rainbow. We will weather anything." I still want to go to Querétaro.

NALA Where they mine the opals. I'm coming back, Ben. I promise you, if there's any way . . . we will survive this. We will go there.

BEN (WANTING TO BELIEVE) These voices . . .
you really think you'll be able to
communicate with something so . . .
alien?

NALA They're experimenting on me. Maybe
science will be our common ground.
Besides, I want to ask them about our
College Thesis. Darwin vs. a Divine
Being.

BEN If there's a God, why all the fierce
competition? Why does every living thing
have to live off the energy of some
other living thing?

A3 · SCENE 05

SFX: AN ECHOEY ANTEROOM LEADING TO
THE PIT. MARCHING STEPS. STOP AS
ONE.

MAJOR ALARIE Alright, gentlemen. Let's make this neat
and clean. We are classifying this
Project. And taking Nala Kataya and Ben
Whitlock into custody. Engage BioHazard
shields.

SFX: HORNET BUZZING AS THEY COMPLY.

A3 · SCENE 06

SFX: COMPRESSION DOOR OPENS.
SOLDIERS MARCH IN.

MAJOR ALARIE (RAISING VOICE) Ben Whitlock?
(SURPRISED) And Nala. Thought you'd
already be back in Frequency 43. . .
Cadman. Troy. Flank our researchers.

SFX: BOOTS ON METAL FLOOR. THEY
ACTIVATE DANGEROUS SOUNDING GUNS.
PROBABLY MORE HI-TECH THAN KNOWN
PUBLICLY.

MAJOR ALARIE Whitlock, disengage the Receptor Chair.

SFX: NO POINT IN RESISTING. BEN
PUNCHES CONTROLS, THE THRUM FADES
AWAY.

BEN (POINTEDLY) If I might ask, who am I talking to?

MAJOR ALARIE Major Alarie, Covert Services.

BEN Revelation Protocol, no doubt.

MAJOR ALARIE (SLIGHTLY SURPRISED) Our researchers are informed. Dangerously informed.

NALA It's too late, Major. They won't let you take me . . . I'm in the hands of an intelligence that could use this planet like a Petri dish. You'd better hope they only want me.

MAJOR ALARIE That is precisely what we are here to prevent. Cadman, sedate her.

CADMAN (WITH A LITTLE TOO MUCH ENTHUSIASM) Yes, sir.

SFX: AND THE ENGINEER CHORUS
DELIVERS A SEVERE GENETIC
ALTERATION. BEAT, THEN CADMAN MAKES
SOUND OF DEEP PAIN.

MAJOR ALARIE (ALARMED) Cadman?

**SFX: GROTESQUE RE-CONFORMATION.
CADMAN VOCALIZING. SOUNDS LIKE
SOMETHING SPLITTING. THEN SOUND OF
RELIEF. THIS IS A HARDENED CREW,
BUT ONE OF THEM SAYS . . .**

CADMAN Oh, god.

**SFX: THEN: TRANSPORTATION BEAM
FADES IN.**

CADMAN (WITH ALTERED VOICE) Sorry, sir. They say they want me . . . elsewhere.

**SFX: TRANSPORTATION BEAM DISSOLVES
HIM. VOCALIZATION OF TERROR AS HE
FEELS HIMSELF TRANSFER; FADES,
DISAPPEARS.**

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

A3 · SCENE 07

SFX: UP CLOSE, NALA AND BEN.

BEN (GUT LEVEL FEAR) Was that soldier just taken into Frequency 43?

NALA And I'm next . . . Ben, I'm sorry. Don't try to follow me.

**SFX: SHE STRIDES SWIFTLY TO A SAFE
SPACE AT THE END OF THE RECEPTOR
CHAIR.**

MAJOR ALARIE (ANGRY, BARKING AN ORDER) Nala, stay where you are!

NALA (QUIETLY, TRUTHFULLY) Major. You can't order this away. Your soldier. That's what's going to happen to you and all the rest of your men if you threaten me again. Please don't make any sudden moves. (CRYING NOW, SCARED TO DEATH) Oh, Ben . . . Remember me.

BEN (QUIETLY, HEART BREAKING, KNOWING HE CAN'T DO A THING) Nala, no.

SFX: IGNITION. TRANSPORTER BEAM. SHE'S GONE. PAUSE. THEN, ALARIE APPROACHING, STOPPING RIGHT IN FRONT OF BEN.

MAJOR ALARIE Gone. Just like that. And one of my finest soldiers, too. Troy, cuff him.

SFX: COMPLIES, ROUGHLY

MAJOR ALARIE This lab is quarantined by order of the DOD. Whitlock, you're going to wish they'd taken you too. Welcome to Nevermore.

A3 · SCENE 08

SFX: EERIE WIND OF THE HALLS OF THE BIOMECHANOID. ECHO OF THE BANSHEE WAIL IN FAR DISTANCE.

SFX: A HEAVY RUMBLE OF THUNDER IN STORM CLOUDS AT THE CEILING OF THE CHAMBER, ONE OF A HUNDRED CAVES. ECHOING. MOMENT OF JUST THE AMBIENCE INSIDE THE HALLS, REVERBERATING.

SFX: UP CLOSE, TRANSPORTER EFFECT.
NALA MATERIALIZES. SITS UP, ON
SOMETHING LIKE GRAVEL, BUT IT'S WET
AND STICKY. SHE MAKES A SOUND OF
REVULSION, GETS TO HER FEET. SHE
WALKS FORWARD. THEN STOPS. HEARS
THE MUTATIONS. OFF IN THE FAR
DISTANCE, A FEMALE SCREAMING.
CLOSER, ONE OF THE SHAMBLES,
DRAGGING DOWN A CORRIDOR. IT'S
REPTILIAN, HISSING, CRYING
WOEFULLY.

NALA (IN GREAT FEAR, BUT NOW ANGRY AT THE TOTAL LACK OF CONTROL, SHE SHOUTS UP AT THE STRANGE, ALIEN SKY, THE CAVE CEILING WREATHED IN STORMY CLOUDS) Alright. You've brought me here. For God knows what.

SFX: WIND WAILS BRIEFLY.

NALA But I want something from you. I want you to let Ben know what's happening to me. As if I was still in the Chair.

SFX: HER WORDS ECHO.

NALA (DESPONDENT) Why am I asking them this. Why should they care?

SFX: BUT THERE'S AN IGNITION SOUND.
NOW SHE MOVES FORWARD AGAIN.
ANOTHER CHAMBER. IN THE DISTANCE
SHAMBLE CRIES OUT.

SHAMBLE Take me. Finish me. Pause. Don't leave me like this.

NALA (HORRIFIED, IN A WHISPER) English. How many of us are in this place?

SFX: NOW THERE'S A GROAN FROM VERY NEARBY. NALA RECOGNIZES THE TONE.

NALA Cadman? (WALKS RAPIDLY, FINDS HIM, BONDED TO A WALL, REACTS WITH HORROR)

CADMAN I'm sorry. Make them stop.

SFX: A STRANGE DEVICE WHIRS DOWN. SOUNDS ORGANICALLY ALIEN. IT HAS A HEARTBEAT. IT SPEAKS LIKE A SELENITE, SAYING A PHRASE THAT SOUNDS LIKE A DIAGNOSIS. CADMAN IS INJECTED WITH SOMETHING VISCOUS.

CADMAN Ohhhhh. . . that feels good. (STARTS LAUGHING STRANGELY) Here we go again.

SFX: AND HE MUTATES. NOT A PLEASANT SOUND. THINGS EMERGING. JUST LAUGHS MADLY. NALA REACTS WITH HORROR.

CADMAN (MADLY) Oh, it's alright. . . I've done terrible things. . . I deserve this one here.

NALA I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

SFX: SHE RUNS AWAY FROM HIM, UNABLE TO WATCH. BUT THEN A VOICE CRIES OUT.

BRANFORD CARTIER Who goes there? . . . Who walks upright?

SFX: NALA MOVES TOWARD THE VOICE.

GASPS WHEN SHE SEES WHAT TALKED.

STARTS TO MOVE AWAY.

BRANFORD (QUAVERING) No! (PLAINTIVELY) No, no.
Don't leave me.

SFX: SHE STOPS. HESITANTLY MOVES

BACK TOWARDS HIM. HE MOVES, AND

SOMETHING SCRAPES OVER THE GRAVEL.

BRANFORD (HOPEFULLY) Can you get out? Can you go
. . . home?

SFX: HE'S A GIGER HUMANOID, WITH

STRANGE METALLIC LIMBS MADE OF

INDEFINABLE SUBSTANCES.

NALA (WITH HEARTACHE AND HORROR) What's
happened to you?

BRANFORD The . . . Living Machines. The Light . .
. that burns. The Voices . . . always
the Voices. Demanding I be . . .
something else.

NALA You once were human? How did you get
here?

BRANFORD So . . . long ago. Didn't I . . . didn't
I go to sleep? (BECOMING FRIGHTENED,
HORRIFIED, AS THE MEMORIES DREDGE UP)
Wasn't it just a dream?

NALA What's your name.

BRANFORD Ohhhh. (DOUBTING) uhh . . . Is it still
there? . . . Branford! . . . Branford .
. . Cartiér.

NALA Branford . . . (A TERRIBLE THOUGHT OCCURS TO HER) What year was it? Before.

BRANFORD (HAVING TO REMEMBER THE CONCEPT) Time? (MAKES EFFORT) Ahh. Then. The concept of . . . Then. . . 1867? (REMEMBERING) Oh . . . Paris! (and that brings on the pain) Oh . . . my Paris. (BREAKS DOWN) Why am I here? Is this Hell? Am I in Hell?

NALA (MOVED TO TEARS) Is there anything I can do for you? . . . food, water?

BRANFORD Kindness. I'd forgotten kindness . . . No. (SUDDENLY MISSING THE CONCEPT OF FOOD) I don't require food anymore. Not for a long time . . .

SFX: AND IT WOULD SEEM EVEN THINKING IT SUMMONS THE LIVING MACHINES. ANOTHER ORGANIC DEVICE WHIRS DOWN.

BRANFORD (CONCERNED IT WILL HURT HER) Oh, move away! Move away Quickly. A Replenisher arrives.

SFX: REPLENISHER SPEAKS. VARIOUS MECHANICAL SOUNDS. AN INJECTION, PUMPING SOMETHING VISCOUS INTO BRANFORM. THEN IT WHIRS AWAY AGAIN.

BRANFORD (DESPAIRING, PLAINTIVELY) I don't want to be kept alive like this anymore. To taste something again. Anything. (he brightens suddenly) There . . . there is something you can do for me . . .

NALA (WITHOUT THINKING) Anything.

BRANFORD Will you . . . kill me . . . Please . .
. (BEAT, ASHAMED) I'm sorry to ask . . .

NALA (SHE ACTUALLY WOULD, BUT PHYSICALLY
CAN'T) (IN TEARS) I don't think I can. .
. Parts of you are metal. Parts of you
are stone.

BRANFORD (HE THOUGHT AS MUCH) Ah. . . Of course.
. . Oh. (REALIZING) I see your arm. . .
They're taking you, too. (WITH
CONDEMNATION) Changing you.

**SFX: AND SUDDENLY, THAT ELECTRICAL
IGNITION, VERY CLOSE, AND HE'S
SCANNED.**

ENGINEER VOICES Aa kana d·ren F·taal.

NALA (ALARMED, SOUNDS FINAL, LIKE AN
EXECUTION SENTENCE) What did they just
say?

BRANFORD (JOYFUL, FINALLY, REPRIEVE, AFTER
CENTURIES, TEARS OF JOY) OH! . . . At
last. I am L'avortement (laVORTamohr).
They cannot make me what they want.

**SFX: THE ORGANIC SURFACE AROUND
BRANFORD BEGINS TO BUBBLE AND SWELL
GROTESQUELY.**

BRANFORD My body will become food for the others
. . . Sweet Lord . . . take me home . .
. take me home.

**SFX: AND THE SURFACE CLAIMS HIM
ENTIRELY, CLOSING OVER HIM. A FEW**

SECONDS OF JUST THE AMBIENCE OF THE HALLS.

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

THE RIR BREAK

MUSIC: RIR THEME. ESTABLISH, THEN FADE OUT UNDER THE FOLLOWING.

RIR HOST This is Re-Imagined Radio, a program about sound-based storytelling. Each episode explores how Voice, Music, and Sound Effects can engage your listening imagination and promote storytelling.

SFX: RE-IMAGINED RADIO AUDIO TRAILER.

RIR HOST More information is available at our website--reimaginedradio DOT fm.

MUSIC: RIR THEME, ESTABLISH, THEN DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING

ACT #4

ACT FOUR · SCENE 01

SFX: INTERROGATION ROOM. BLACK. ONE LIGHT, ON BEN. ALARIE CIRCLING HIM, BOOTS ON METAL.

SYSTEM AI Interrogation 357. Subject failing to supply appropriate responses.

MAJOR ALARIE Time for another dose, then.

SFX: AUTOMATED GEAR, SYRINGE
PLUNGING.

BEN (GRIMACES, LAUGHS.)

MAJOR ALARIE We put one of our operatives in the Receptor Chair. Nothing happened.

BEN (LAUGHS AGAIN.)

SFX: THE TRUTH SERUM THEY'VE PUMPED
HIM FULL OF IS LOOPING HIM OUT,
HE'S TRIPPING, SCHIZO.

BEN (GIGGLING) Oh, smart. Poke the BEM!
(ALMOST SNARLING) They're not Nala.

MAJOR ALARIE Explain!

BEN The Chair is designed to the frequency, Kenneth. . . of her psi abilities. (BEN SAYS THIS TO PISS ALARIE OFF) And she's gone. . . (THAT CYCLES TO GRIEF? RELIEF? ARE THE ALIENS BETTER OR WORSE THAN THIS HUMAN?) Where you can't reach her.

SFX: THAT GETS HIM. ALARIE SLAMS
HIS HAND INTO THE HEADREST NEXT TO
BEN'S HEAD, IN TOTAL RAGE.

MAJOR ALARIE (SHOUTIING) We could be talking about the extinction of the entire planet!

BEN (WITH ALMOST A GLEE, SPITTING IT OUT IN ABSOLUTE AND BITTER CONTEMPT) Better than you covert maggots. Eating out the belly of mankind from underneath.

A4 · SCENE 02

SFX: IGNITION EFFECT, LOUD. THE HALL AMBIENCE.

BEN (GASPS) Mother of Frequency 43.

SFX: AND NOW BEN CATCHES UP ON EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED TO NALA. MONTAGE OF INFORMATION, AT A SLIGHT REMOVE, STARTING WITH . . .

NALA Alright. You've brought me here. For God knows what. But I want something from you. I want you to let Ben know what's happening to me. As if I was still in the Chair.

SFX: HALL WINDS WAIL UP, FADE INTO . . .

SFX: CADMAN IS INJECTED WITH SOMETHING VISCOUS.

CADMAN Ohhhhh . . . ohhh, that feels good. Oh . . . (STARTS LAUGHING STRANGELY). Oh, here we go again. Oh . . .

SFX: HERE WE GO AGAIN. AND HE MUTATES. NOT A PLEASANT SOUND. THINGS EMERGING. JUST LAUGHS MADLY. HALL WINDS RISE LIKE STORM AGAIN, FADE OUT INTO . . .

CADMAN Oh. They're taking you, too. Changing you.

SFX: FADE INTO HALL AMBIENCE, THEN . . .

BEN (HORROR AT WHAT HE'S SEEING) Oh, Nala.
Where have they taken you?

A4 · SCENE 03

SFX: TRANSITION BACK INTO THE
INTERROGATION ROOM. ALARIE'S PACING
THE FLOOR.

BEN (IN SHOCK, CRYING) Oh, Nala. . . What
are they doing to you?

MAJOR ALARIE (STOPS, LEANS INTO BEN'S FACE, THINKS
HE'S MESSING WITH HIM) I can kill you
with this serum. Overdose you (SNARLING)
right into the beyond.

BEN (IN PAIN) Nothing you can do is worse
than where Nala is right now.

SFX: ALARIE HITS BEN, HARD. AND
THAT TRIGGERS BEN'S ANGER.

BEN You ape. Go ahead! Throw that bone in
the air. Pound your chest. Do you know
why you're so angry? Because you're
still afraid. Not just aliens. Afraid if
you don't confront everything, someone's
going to have a bigger pot to piss in.
So kill all of them before they kill
you. (LAUGHS) You are why mankind will
poison and bomb itself into perdition.
You are the self-fulfilling prophecy! I
spit on you! (AND HE DOES, AND WITH
THAT, HE SAGS BACK INTO THE CHAIR,
EXHAUSTED RAGE SPENT) (LONG BEAT OF
TOTAL SILENCE) Alarie? . . . Major? . .
. What the hell . . . He's frozen like a
statue.

SFX: THE RESTRAINTS HOLDING BEN
RETRACT. A DOOR SWOOSHES OPEN.

BEN (REALIZING WHY THIS IS HAPPENING,
SHOUTING UP AT THE CEILING) Nala? (HE
GETS UNSTEADILY TO HIS FEET, CLUTCHING
ON TO THE CHAIR FOR SUPPORT) I saw where
you are.

NALA (AS IF FROM A GREAT DISTANCE, HER VOICE
FILTERED THROUGH THE HALL WINDS) Go to
Aelinn now . . . I will deal with
Alarie.

SFX: AND BEN STUMBLES OVER TO
ALARIE, FACE TO FACE.

BEN Gotta go. I'd almost like to stay and
see what Nala and the Engineers do to
you. (HE SPINS, STUMBLES TOWARDS THE
DOOR. OVER HIS SHOULDER, HALF SINGING,
HALF CHANTING) I'm off to see the
Aelinn. The wonderful Aelinn of Oz.

SFX: DOOR SWOOSHES SHUT. BEAT. AND
THEN THE FROZEN ALARIE IS ENGINEER
TRANSPORTED.

A4 · SCENE 04

SFX: IN THE PIT. THE RECEPTOR CHAIR
POWER WALL IS THRUMMING. THE
BACKDROP OF MACHINERY RUNNING
SMOOTHLY. TRANSPORT EFFECT, AND
ALARIE APPEARS.

MAJOR ALARIE (STARTLED, REALIZES WHERE HE IS.) AHhh.
. . (LOOKS WILDLY AROUND THE ROOM,
THERE'S NO ONE OBVIOUS) (SHOUTS) Don't

play with me, Nala! (BUT HIS VOICE CRACKS NOW, THE FEAR STARTS TO SHOW THROUGH) I know you're there! I know you want me to cower and grovel. (BEATS OF SILENCE) You're going to betray us all, aren't you. You're gonna give us over to them, some mutating alien race of god knows what!

SFX: NALA'S VOICE ECHOES AND SWIRLS LOUDLY THROUGH THE FACILITY. IT'S ALTERED. GRINDING. PURE. YET ALTERED DARKLY.

NALA The irony. . . the hypocrisy. (WITH HORROR) What I see now in your memories. The soldiers you've corrupted. The people you've tortured. . .

MAJOR ALARIE (NOW HE'S TERRIFIED, HIS SECRETS LAID BARE, VERGING ON HYSTERIA) You have no right to read my mind!

NALA (CHIDINGLY) Oh, Major. Seriously? You who have stripped the rights of so many. Buried people in holes. Deported them or left them to die in tiny iron hells. (ICILY) The long slow death you had planned for Ben.

MAJOR ALARIE JUST KILL ME! JUST FELKIN' kill me!

NALA No. . . I know what you would have done with our Dream Catcher technology . . . Erasing minds. Breaking spirits. . .

SFX: AND THE POWER WALL SHORTS OUT.
THE FIELD DISTORTS, GOES TERRIBLY
DISSONANT, THEN FAILS.

NALA Watch that plan . . . die.

SFX: A SECTION OF THE CONTROL WALL
EXPLODES AND CATCHES FIRE.

ALARIE (RAGING) NO! We need this technology!

SFX: MORE OF THE WALL SHORTS OUT, A
GOUT OF FLAME BILLOWS UP TO THE
CEILING.

NALA All records of Project Dream Catcher are now erased.

SFX: GROAN OF DESPAIR FROM ALARIE.
A BEAM FALLS FROM THE CEILING AND
CRASHES INTO THE GLASS LID OF THE
RECEPTOR CHAIR. ALARIE IS COUGHING
NOW, UNABLE TO BREATHE. HE RUNS TO
A DOOR AND BEATS ON IT.

NALA All the doors are sealed. This will be your tomb.

MAJOR ALARIE It's not just me you condemn. It's the entire human race!

NALA I think it's time for ME to save the human race . . . from all the people who think they're saving the human race.

SFX: ANOTHER EXPLOSION, THE CEILING
CAVES IN)

NALA (EULOGY) Goodbye, Major.

SFX: ENGINEER TRANSPORTATION
EFFECT.

A4 · SCENE 05

SFX: AELINN'S HOME. RAPID KNOCKING
ON DOOR. DOOR OPENS.

AELINN Thank god you're here.

SFX: HE ENTERS, SHE CLOSES AND
LOCKS THE DOOR, THEN PUTS AN ARM
AROUND HIM AND GUIDES HIM IN.

AELINN Sit down. No one has followed.

BEN (COLLAPSING ON THE COUCH) I don't know how I got here. They had me so drugged up.

AELINN (POURS SOMETHING INTO A GLASS) Drink this. It will help clear the effects.

BEN (HE GULPS IT DOWN, ALMOST COUGHS) Tastes awful. Must be good for me.

AELINN (AMAZED, A LITTLE AFRAID) You've been in touch with Nala.

BEN She'll be here soon. I heard her say it. (IRONICALLY) As if in a dream.

SFX: AND FREQUENCY 43 SWEEPS IN.
NALA MATERIALIZES. SPEECH IS NOW
DIFFICULT.

NALA (SHE SPEAKS HALTINGLY.) Ben. . . Aelinn.
. . .

BEN (NUMB, HE KNOWS) You're still beautiful.
Your new skin is chromatic.

AELINN How long?

NALA Before I am. . . totally transformed?
Mission one . . . accomplished . . . one
more . . . message.

AELINN I will give you privacy.

SFX: SHE EXITS THE ROOM.

BEN I know what this is. What you will
become . . . Can you take me with you?

NALA (SHE TRIES TO LAUGH, BUT IT DISTORTS) I
love you . . . so much . . . remember
that.

BEN I guess the fire opal wasn't enough . .
. (WITH PAIN) No Querétaro.

NALA I . . . still have . . . the ring. I
made it . . . a permanent part of me. .
. You will see it. . . When the time . .
. arrives. . .

SFX: FLARE OF FREQUENCY.

NALA I must go.

BEN (ANGUISHED, BUT FEELS AN ODD
PREMONITION) I will wait for you.

**SFX: THE FREQUENCY RAMPS. TRANSPORT
EFFECT AND SHE'S GONE.**

A4 · SCENE 06

**MUSIC: TO INDICATE PASSING OF TIME.
OUR ONLY SCENE IN DAYLIGHT. THOUGH
THE SUN IS SETTING.**

**SFX: IT'S JUST AFTER SIX. NEWSCAST
ON A FLATSCREEN, ON A DECK WALL. UP
CLOSE, BEN TURNS A RIB, IT SIZZLES
LOUDLY ON THE GRILL.**

BEN (RAISING VOICE) BBQ's almost done.

**SFX: SLIDING SCREEN DOOR OPENS.
AELINN COMES OUT, HUMMING. HERA
JUMPS UP ON A CHAIR, STARTS TO
PURR.**

AELINN Hera, no hot sauce. Here, I saved some pork, sans Mexicali Inferno.

**SFX: AELINN PUTS A BOWL ON THE
DECK. HERA MEOWS IMPERATIVELY,
JUMPS DOWN, BEELINES FOR BOWL.**

BEN Aelinn, thank you. I don't know how I would have survived the last three months without your company. (TO CAT) And Hera's.

AELINN I miss her so much too.

**SFX: HISSING ON THE GRILL AS BEN
TURNS RIBS**

BEN I know. (DEFLECTING) Hey, aren't all you "sensitives" supposed to be card-carrying Vegan hippy Wiccan chicks?

AELINN I know. So untrope. Blame it on my Irish Peasant genetic stock. (BEAT) (SUDDENLY EXASPERATED) Oh, crap, really?

SFX: CIVIL DEFENSE TONE SOUNDS ON THE TV.

BEN Ever tapped that sixth sense for the Lottery?

ANNOUNCER This is a National Alert. I give you the President of the United States.

PRESIDENT Citizens, patriots. We have an unprecedented event, something we cannot begin to interpret . . . an occurrence of such magnitude I can only ask you to turn to whatever higher power you believe in and, call for understanding. Over the last three hours, several telescopes around the world have witnessed an . . . inexplicable anomaly. In the constellation of Libra . . . the night sky is changing. And NASA has confirmed: It's moving towards us. We estimate arrival in two weeks. Know that we are doing whatever we can to prepare. So keep calm. And cooperate with your local authorities. Now, over to NASA officials.

SFX: FEED SWITCHES. BUT IT'S ALL ON THE FLY. NASA IS SCRAMBLING TO GET THEIR SPOKESPERSON ON. IMPROVISE CHAOS.

BEN (AWED) It's her, isn't it. That chromatic outer shell, it was a . . . chrysalis.

AELINN But seeds whither and die without a Mother Earth.

BEN (PUTTING DOWN HER PLATE) Eat up. You're going to have to live without BBQ.

AELINN (LAUGHS, INTUITS THE ANSWER) Because when she's done redesigning the universe . . .

BEN No living thing will need to live off the energy of any other living thing.

AELINN (PAUSE, THOUGHTFULLY, MAYBE A HINT OF FEAR) Do you think it will be better?

BEN (HE LOOKS UP AT THE SKY) I don't know if the sky will be blue anymore. But I know my Nala . . . It will be better than it ever was.

A4 · SCENE 07

MUSIC: UNDER THE FOLLOWING

NARRATOR How many cycles of existence over the incomprehensible time span of a universe? In the next two weeks, the world will see riots, chaos, upheaval, as the changing skies move ever closer. Christians will gather for the Rapture. Islams for Judgment Day. Maybe both are wrong. Maybe both are right. But without the battle for food or resources, or competition for territory, all the contentious ideologies they engender will collapse. No more reason for greed, war or want. But will even that tame the wild and unpredictable heart of

Humanity? Whatever the fallout, the new night sky will shimmer with nebulae all the colors of a fire opal, glowing with inner light.

MUSIC: OUT

HOST CREDITS

HOST

You've just listened to "Frequency 43," an episode of Re-Imagined Radio, written by Jerrel McQuen. Post production, original music, and sound design by Marc Rose.

The cast included

Bobby Bermea (Ber-MY-ah) as Ben Whitlock

Devin James as Branford Cartier, Austin Caddell, Officer Cadman, "Narrator"

Jodi Lorimer as Aelinn Guyers (EYELin GUYERS)

Destinee Love as Nala Kayak (NAH-lah ka-TIE-ya)

Eric Newsome as Major Trent Alarie (ah-LAR-ee)

Lucy Paschal as Dr. Zanders

Kate White as Tarrah Meyers

MUSIC: FADE UP RIR THEME. DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING.

Re-Imagined Radio is produced in collaboration with The Electronic Literature Lab at Washington State University Vancouver.

Our programs are broadcast and streamed by partner radio stations KXRW-FM (Vancouver, Washington), KXRY-FM (Portland, Oregon), and KNOM-AM (Nome, Alaska).

Re-Imagined Radio podcasts are available from many distribution platforms. Subscribe and never miss an episode.

Visit our website, reimaginedradio DOT FM, where we keep information about all our episodes, as well as lots of interesting EXTRA information about radio storytelling.

Original music composition, sound design, and post-production by Marc Rose.

Graphic design by Holly Slocum and Evan Leyden.

Announcing and YouTube management by Rylan Eisenhauer.

Social Media Management by Caitlyn Kruger. Follow Re-Imagined Radio on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, X, Blue Sky, LinkedIn -- and especially our YouTube channel . . . [at sign] reimaginedradio.

Re-Imagined Radio acknowledges the debt we owe to previous and contemporary radio artists and hope our curation and stewardship of their artifacts and efforts demonstrates our sincerity.

This is John Barber, producer and host. Thank you for listening.

MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, THEN DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING

ANNOUNCER CLOSE

ANNOUNCER

This is a production of Re-Imagined Radio. To learn more, visit our website, reimagedradio (all one word, no punctuation) DOT fm.

Please join us for another episode of Re-Imagined Radio as we continue our exploration of sound-based storytelling.

MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, AND TO END.