

Once Upon a Wasteland
Season One
Part One: The Book of Odessa

Episode 3:
"Checks and Limitations"

by

D.K. Trueno

Based on Fallout 76

by

Bethesda Softworks

EPISODE 3:
"CHECKS AND LIMITATIONS"

INTRODUCTION/OPENING THEME

"Charon" by Mike Eastwood

NARRATOR

(over music)

1	Once upon a time, 27 years after the bombs fell, there were two people - a Vault Dweller, and a California girl. They met, and sparks flew. That's when things got interesting.	1
2	(beat) This is their story.	2

ACT ONE

INT. BETH'S HOUSE, MORNING

BETH is making breakfast, clanking pans and dishes.

AMANDA enters, groggy.

3 AMANDA 3
Ugh.

4 BETH 4
Oh, did I wake you? I'm sorry! I guess I was kind of in my own little world... trying to forget about last night. I guess I always default to cooking...

5 AMANDA 5
It's OK, Princess. I'm glad you got some sleep; you turned into a corpse the second your head hit the pillow. I just need to... get my bearings. I'm not used to being up this early.

6 BETH 6
I know. I really am sorry. At least I managed to get up without disturbing you. You slept on my arm, by the way. It seems to have been faster asleep than the rest of me, which is saying something. Took a good five minutes to get the feeling back below my elbow.

AMANDA laughs.

A kettle begins to whistle.

7 BETH (CONT'D) 7
Would you like some tea?

8 AMANDA 8
I still can't believe you don't keep coffee at your place. That's... unamerican.

9 BETH 9
Well, there hasn't really been an America since before I was born, so I think I'm safe.

23 BETH 23
Amanda! You didn't ask my mother
the German word for "rope bunny,"
did you?!

24 AMANDA 24
I guess you'll find out when you
pick up your... uh... cummer...

25 BETH 25
Kummerspeck!

Beth laughs and sighs happily.

26 BETH (CONT'D) 26
How do you always know how to make
me feel better?

27 AMANDA 27
I'm just returning the favor.
(beat)

28 AMANDA 28
For the tea, I mean - it's exactly
what I needed this morning.

29 BETH 29
I think I need the rest of that
bottle in mine. I'm still...
processing what you found on that
holotape.

30 AMANDA 30
Full disclosure, I did read the
first paragraph of so of the...
um... compartmentalized stuff, but
I stopped as soon as I realized
what was going to be in there. You
told me enough about what they did
to you to know that I don't want to
know any more.

31 BETH 31
I just... seeing that on the
screen... I'd hoped that all of
that was going to be sealed up in
Vault 76 and the more distance I
got from it, the more I'd be able
to...

32 AMANDA 32
Make peace with it?

33 BETH 33
I'm never going to be at peace with
it.

(MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)

It's been two years since I left that Vault behind and I still have nightmares.

AMANDA

34 I considered skimming through it to see if I could find any names. See if any of them were still alive. Make sure they'd... lack the necessary equipment to hurt anyone else. 34

BETH

35 Some things are better left at rest. 35

AMANDA

36 Somebody disagrees. 36

BETH

37 And we need to find out who. 37

AMANDA

38 We? 38

BETH

39 I need your help, Amanda. And Charles', and my parents'... 39

AMANDA

40 And Odessa's. 40

BETH

41 Yeah. I have no idea what I'm going to walk into when I go to see her later. 41

AMANDA

42 She was pretty upset. And I can't blame her. 42

BETH

43 It would be so much easier if she'd acted unreasonably. 43

AMANDA

44 I have an idea! 44

BETH

45 Uh-oh. 45

AMANDA laughs.

46 AMANDA Hey! 46

47 BETH Alright, what's your idea? 47

48 AMANDA You should bring her a present. 48

49 BETH A present? 49

50 AMANDA Yeah, a present. When you were rambling last night before we went to bed, you mentioned that she seemed really happy when you brought those pastries your dad made. 50

51 BETH I'll take your word for it. Last night is still a little... foggy. 51

52 AMANDA So, maybe if you brought her something, it would start the conversation off on a positive note. 52

53 (beat) What? 53

54 BETH You seem very keen on helping me smooth over last night's... debacle. 54

55 AMANDA It's like I said, you need her if you're going to figure out what the hell is going on. The Brotherhood has resources we don't. 55

56 (beat) And I don't like seeing you like I saw you last night. I saw enough of that when we were together, but I was... we were just so deep into it... 56

57 BETH Yeah. We... both made a lot of mistakes. 57

(beat)

(MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)

58 And I don't want to make the same mistakes with her. Or different ones, for that matter. 58

AMANDA

59 Did you really not tell her who you were giving the holotape to? 59

BETH

60 I told her I was giving it to a friend. 60

AMANDA

61 Come on, Beth. 61

BETH

62 What? Are we not friends? 62

AMANDA

63 You left out a *lot* of context. No wonder she was pissed off. She's not stupid. 63

BETH

64 What was I supposed to do? Tell her that I wanted to give the tape to my ex-girlfriend, who's a *Raider*, and oh by the way we still have sex now and again? 64

AMANDA

65 My point is that you were treating her like... I don't know, an intelligence asset or something. 65

BETH

66 That's what she *was* at that point. 66

AMANDA

67 Bullshit. Now you're starting to piss *me* off. You know good and goddamn well you didn't set up that little encounter to get a new... asset. 67

BETH groans.

BETH

68 Fine. Yes. I did it because I wanted to meet her. Because I wanted to see what all the fuss was about. 68

69 AMANDA And? 69

70 BETH And no one's knocked me on my back 70
foot since... gosh, I don't even
know.

AMANDA clears her throat.

BETH laughs.

71 AMANDA I can't decide if you're trying to 71
get a rise out of me or not.

72 BETH You didn't so much knock me on my 72
back foot as tie me up and throw me
into a pit.

AMANDA laughs.

73 AMANDA That's a fair assessment. 73

74 BETH But seriously, Amanda, I felt so... 74
drawn to her. I mean, I barely know
her, I get that, but she's just...

75 (beat) I mean, when we were chatting, I 75
got lost just... looking at her and
listening to her voice.

76 AMANDA She *does* have a nice voice. 76

77 BETH You should hear it when she's not 77
furious.

78 AMANDA I'm sure I will at some point 78
between now and the wedding.

79 BETH (playfully) Stop teasing me! 79

80 AMANDA Look, Princess, let me give you 5 80
caps worth of free advice. You *just*
met her.

(MORE)

AMANDA (CONT'D)

There's obviously a hell of a strong attraction there, given that you two were about to go at it on the kitchen table when I came in last night, but you said it yourself - you barely know each other. I was joking about the wedding thing, but it kind of feels like you're ready to pick out dresses.

(beat)

81 Just... let it breathe. 81

(beat)

82 Why are you looking at me like that? 82

BETH

83 When did you become such a... relationship expert? 83

AMANDA

84 I guess I've done some growing up since... us. 84

BETH

85 And now it's my turn, it seems. 85

AMANDA

86 So... after breakfast, how about you take a shower and then we'll pick out something nice for you to wear. Then we'll go through your tech stash to pick out that gift. 86

BETH

87 I'll stop to see my dad on the way to Atlas as well. If he's found anything out, that would be the best present of all. 87

MUSICAL TRANSITION

INT. FORT ATLAS, MORNING

VALDEZ is typing at her keyboard.

ALAN BANKS knocks tentatively, then enters.

BANKS

88 Valdez? 88

(pause)

89 Valdez? You okay in here? 89

VALDEZ sighs.

90 VALDEZ
(sarcastic)
Never better. 90

91 BANKS
Uh... okay. Hey, I brought you some
coffee. You had a late night, I
figured maybe that's why you were
so... grumpy? 91

92 VALDEZ
(mildly irritated)
How do you know I had a late night? 92

93 BANKS
Erika isn't feeling well and I saw
you come in when I was getting her
some soup and crackers from the
mess. 93

94 (beat)
Talk to me, Valdez. What's wrong?
That doctor turn out to be a wild
goose chase or something? 94

95 VALDEZ
No, actually. Quite the contrary,
in fact. We had a very productive
conversation, and he gave me his
personal journals and notes. That's
what I've been going through this
morning. 95

96 BANKS
That was a lucky break, huh? 96

97 VALDEZ
Yeah, it was. He said that Vault-
Tec had come by and taken all of
his equipment and formal research,
but it was obviously *not* Vault-Tec.
He did say, though, that they had
Vault-Tec credentials and he
recognized them from the program,
so that may give us some insight
into who's behind this. 97

98 (beat)
How did you know that I went to see
him? I didn't see you here all day,
or the day before, for that matter. 98

BANKS chuckles.

109 VALDEZ 109
It doesn't. But it's not like I
have any experience with black
markets, or access to the one
that's operating here, so I'm
really just speculating.

110 BANKS 110
And you don't... know anybody who
might have that kind of access?

VALDEZ sighs.

111 VALDEZ 111
I asked her to come by this
afternoon. We have a lot to
discuss.

112 BANKS 112
Why do I get the feeling that
there's more to that "discussion"
than black markets and brain
scanners?

VALDEZ sighs.

113 VALDEZ 113
Because there is.

114 BANKS 114
And I take it you don't want to
talk about it?

115 VALDEZ 115
Not really. I just... I guess I
made some assumptions that I
shouldn't have.

116 BANKS 116
Assumptions? That's really not like
you, Valdez. You have your head
screwed on straighter than anybody
in this place, Rahmani included.
And there's nobody here with better
instincts.

117 VALDEZ 117
I mean, I'm a scientist. I'm
supposed to deal with facts, not
feelings.

118 BANKS 118
Well...

119 VALDEZ Well what? 119

120 BANKS You're a person, too, you know; you're more than just your job. I gotta be honest, sometimes I feel like you forget that. I see you open up sometimes, and it's really great to see that side of you. I just wish I saw it more, you know? 120

121 VALDEZ Thanks, Alan. Look, I just... back in California, my life seemed pretty straightforward. I was *happy*. And then everything got turned upside down right before the expedition left, and everything that I thought was going to be a constant fell apart. 121

122 (beat) I'd mostly managed to compartmentalize everything, and a big part of that was focusing on my work. And there's been a *lot* of work to do, so that made it easier. 122

123 BANKS And then all that changed a few days ago. 123

124 VALDEZ Yeah. Between this new threat... 124

125 BANKS (interrupting) What makes you so sure it's a threat? 125

126 VALDEZ Well... I'm not *sure*, but I think it's smart to treat it as one until we find out otherwise. Maybe we should talk to Paladin Rahmani, she's probably the best risk assessor we have and she might give us a little clarity there. 126

127 BANKS Hmm... no, not yet. She's got enough on her mind, and you're right, this thing is too weird to evaluate in a normal way. 127

- 128 VALDEZ Dr. Flagler's notes are hard to evaluate, too... in a normal way or otherwise. 128
- 129 BANKS What do you mean? 129
- 130 VALDEZ They're all over the place. Some of them are completely lucid, sober, matter-of-fact. The kind of thing I would write myself, you know? 130
(beat)
- 131 But others... it's like they're written in code, but it's more like... shorthand, I guess. But the shorthand is almost incomprehensible. I can practically see his mental decline playing out over the course of his journals, and frankly, it's heartbreaking. 131
- 132 BANKS It sounds like you need a break. 132
- 133 VALDEZ I do, but I can't afford to take one right now. There's one common term he uses that keeps popping up, and I'm trying to get a handle on what he means. 133
- 134 BANKS Maybe I can help you think through it. Hit me. 134
- 135 VALDEZ It's "North Star." 135
- 136 BANKS Hmm. Well, uh... the North Star is the brightest star in the sky, that much I know. People have used it for navigation for, what, millennia? 136
- 137 VALDEZ Yeah. And people have used it as a metaphor for just as long. 137
- 138 BANKS So he's probably using it as a metaphor. But a metaphor for what? 138

139 VALDEZ I don't know. I think that it would be obvious if he was... of sound mind, but he's not. Not close to it, either. It's tragic. He's clearly got a brilliant mind locked inside there somewhere, he just can't seem to get at it. 139

(beat)

140 He didn't start to use it until his decline was really apparent. Maybe that's a clue. 140

BANKS

141 You could always go back and ask. You might catch him on a good day, when he's more lucid. 141

VALDEZ

142 I don't even know if he has good days, Alan. This wasn't caused by a disease, it was caused by him going in and tinkering with his mind. I have no idea how it works. And all I can really tell about that from his notes is that it's really, really bad. 142

BANKS

143 Might be worth a shot, though. 143

VALDEZ

144 I think it might be. But... 144

BANKS

145 But what? 145

VALDEZ

146 I don't think I can go over there by myself. He seemed pretty agitated, almost hostile when we weren't the delivery person he expected. He might remember me, but he might not. 146

(beat)

147 I'd need to take Beth with me. They've known each other since she was a child, and I think that connection was the only thing that allowed him to focus as much as he did. 147

185 BETH I mean "full." 185

186 ANDREW Even the compartmentalized files? 186

187 BETH Yes. It had things even I didn't know had been recorded. School records, who my friends were, romantic relationships, very specific and very secret aspects of my training... it was very thorough. 187

188 CHARLES That's troubling. All of that information should've stayed locked up in Vault 76. Even the Overseer didn't have access to some of the more sensitive compartmentalized information. 188

189 ANDREW What's more troubling is that it was clearly put there by someone who knew that you'd be there when it was found. 189

190 BETH I just realized... it's worse than that. 190

191 CHARLES How do you mean? 191

192 BETH Whoever put it there thought I'd be the one to find it. Remember, I specifically waited to go to that location until the Brotherhood sent Odessa. If I hadn't wanted to set up a situation where I could meet her, I would've gone in and found it myself before they'd even got wind of it. 192

193 ANDREW And now they've been drawn into something that whoever's behind this intends to be personal. 193

- 194 CHARLES 194
This can't be just about her, can it? I mean, no offense, Elizabeth, but this is a hell of a lot of effort just to... upset you, I suppose?
- 195 BETH 195
No offense taken, Charles, you're right. This isn't about me, as such, but someone wants me to know about it. But why? I wasn't involved in this project at all; I didn't even know about it until everyone started chasing the tech.
- 196 ANDREW 196
I don't know why. And I'm afraid the information we've gathered doesn't really shed any light on that side of things.
- 197 BETH 197
I guess we'll just have to hope that whoever's doing this shows his cards at some point. Until then I'm going to have to be exceptionally careful.
- 198 CHARLES 198
Please do. This is a radically different situation from what we thought it was.
- 199 ANDREW 199
I'm afraid, though, that you're going to have to put that new level of care into practice right away.
- 200 CHARLES 200
The third lab was broken into and looted several years ago, so the technology and research contained there has escaped our adversary thusfar.
- 201 ANDREW 201
But, based upon some conversations with contacts, along with some chatter Amanda has picked up from patrons at The Spider's Web, we're fairly confident that we may know where it is.

202 BETH 202
I take it that it's not in the
middle of Charleston with a bow on
it?

203 CHARLES 203
It is not.

204 ANDREW 204
Have you ever heard the name Craig
MacAllen?

205 BETH 205
I have. Amanda's mentioned him
several times. Big underworld boss
from Pennsylvania, right?

206 CHARLES 206
Right. He and his sister Davina
took over the family business after
their parents died. They recently
expanded their operation here.

207 BETH 207
Makes sense. Lots of people to take
advantage of now.

208 CHARLES 208
Craig and Davina run a bit of a one-
stop shop in the Savage Divide.
Drugs, prostitution, weapons, that
sort of thing. The difference
between them and ordinary Raiders
or traders, though, is that they
cater specifically to high-end
clienteles.

209 ANDREW 209
They offer... specialized services,
shall we say. Whatever a client's
desires, no matter how depraved,
they generally find a way to
fulfill them. Bespoke weapons, high-
end drugs, um... exotic sexual
partners...

210 BETH 210
 (agitated)
I hate them already.

211 ANDREW 211
Lily, I need you to stay focused.
 (beat)
 (MORE)

ANDREW (CONT'D)

212 At any rate, they recently began 212
offering a new service, but they're
keeping it very, very quiet. That's
why we're one step ahead, for now.
They've begun trafficking in
experiences.

BETH

213 It sounds like they already do 213
that.

ANDREW

214 Not like this. They're using 214
technology that allows people to
directly relive the experiences of
others, via memories that had been
recorded on some sort of high-
capacity holotapes.

BETH

215 That definitely sounds like the 215
sort of thing Project Mind's Eye
could be used for.

CHARLES

216 We're not making any assumptions, 216
but that certainly seems like the
most likely possibility. Another,
though, is that they simply heard
about the technology and are luring
people in with the intention of
cheating them out of their caps.

BETH

217 An underworld boss certainly 217
wouldn't be above that sort of
thing.

CHARLES

218 But there's only one way, by our 218
reckoning, to find out. You need to
go undercover and find out what's
going on.

BETH

219 That should be fun. What am I up 219
against?

CHARLES

220 Well, it's a much more 220
sophisticated operation than your
typical Raider outfit. So you'll
need to be on your toes more than
usual.

241 CHARLES 241
Their new endeavor seems to be mostly centered around sex, so steer the conversation in that direction. They'll likely try to get you to try a... romp with one of their metahumans or something like that, but try to get them to volunteer the existence of the "experience" we're looking for.

242 ANDREW 242
You'll have to be subtle about it, of course.

243 BETH 243
Of course.

244 ANDREW 244
That's as much as I can help with, I'm afraid. None of the people we spoke with had even been near the door to that area, so they were no help in terms of what it looks like, what kind of security is in place, none of it.

245 BETH 245
We'll have to be nimble, and one of us has never done anything like this before.

246 ANDREW 246
You're making me wish I was forty years younger. This would be brilliant to watch play out.

247 BETH 247
I have to be honest, I'm not comfortable putting her in harm's way like this.

248 ANDREW 248
I understand. But I have every confidence that you'll be an outstanding teacher.

249 BETH 249
After all, mine was pretty good. In fact... dad, can you take the lead on getting her ready? I'll help, of course.

ANDREW

250 I'd be happy to, dear, and it will be very nice to finally meet her. I promise not to embarrass you *too* much. 250

(beat)

251 Now, Charles has prepared some documentation for you two to review. That may help. 251

BETH

252 I think it will. Thank you, gentlemen. I guess I'm off to Fort Atlas. Wish me luck! I'm going to need it... 252

ANDREW

253 Good luck, Lily. 253

CHARLES

254 Good luck! 254

MUSICAL TRANSITION

INT. FORT ATLAS, DAY

BETH tentatively knocks on VALDEZ's door.

BETH

255 Um, Odessa? May I come in? 255

VALDEZ

256 Of course. Can you close the door? We need to talk. 256

BETH

257 Yeah. I suppose we do. 257

BETH closes the door.

VALDEZ

258 About last night... 258

BETH

259 Yeah. I'm sorry about... all of it. I never should've kept anything from you. It was unfair. 259

VALDEZ

260 It was. And... it hurt. 260

BETH

261 The thing is, for nearly my entire life, it's been "Semper Occultus." 261

262 VALDEZ "Always Secret." 262

263 BETH Exactly. One of the most important tenets of my training was to be very careful about what information we revealed, lest it compromise an operation. 263

264 VALDEZ And is that what this is? An operation? 264

265 BETH No! And that's why I'm gutted about how I've handled everything. That ends now. It will be "Semper Veritas" between us from here on out. 265

266 VALDEZ I... hope that's true. But I hope you understand that I can't just take that at face value. 266

267 BETH I do. And... I'm relieved that you're even willing to talk about this. I thought you might just... have an Initiate at the entrance to tell me that you never wanted to see me again. 267

268 VALDEZ I considered it. Well, not exactly. I felt you deserved to hear it directly from me and not an Initiate. 268

269 (beat) But I need you to understand, that's still on the table. 269

270 BETH I understand. And I'm glad you changed your mind. 270

271 VALDEZ I guess I'll find out if I am, too. 271

272 (beat) I... um... wanted to talk to you about... dessert. 272

BETH
(cautious)
273 What about it? 273

VALDEZ
274 What we were about to do... that 274
isn't normally the kind of thing I
rush into. I guess I should be glad
your friend interrupted.

BETH sighs.

BETH
275 I don't want anything to happen 275
between us that you're not
completely comfortable with. And if
Amanda's interruption stopped you
from doing something you feel you
would've regretted, then I should
be glad, too.

VALDEZ
276 That's just it. I don't know if I 276
would've regretted it. In the
moment, I wasn't conflicted about
it at all. I wanted it. A lot.

BETH
277 You certainly didn't seem 277
conflicted.

VALDEZ
278 I felt... free, I guess? Freer than 278
I have at any point since I left
California. The whole thing just
felt *right*.

BETH
279 And then, suddenly, it wasn't. 279

VALDEZ
280 Yeah. Very not right. 280

BETH
281 I want to make sure any lingering 281
questions get answered so we can
have a... bit of a fresh start, I
suppose.

VALDEZ
282 Who is Amanda to you? 282

283 BETH 283
I thought that would come up. I met
Amanda not long after I left the
Vault. We became involved fairly
quickly, but the relationship
was... toxic. We were not built to
be together in that way.

284 (beat) 284
So, after about six months of non-
stop fighting and making up, I
finally stormed out, vowed never to
speak to her again.

285 VALDEZ 285
 (suspicious)
But that clearly didn't last.

286 BETH 286
A few months after that happened, I
got a freelance gig to track down a
missing Enclave lieutenant. When
Colonel Valeria gave me the
details, I got this sinking feeling
in the pit of my stomach. But, a
job is a job, so I went to Amanda's
bar to see if this missing
lieutenant was there.

287 VALDEZ 287
And?

288 BETH 288
She was. I collected her and sent
her back to the Enclave, and Amanda
and I began a reconciliation.

289 VALDEZ 289
I see. And I take it that you've
been back together since then?

290 BETH 290
Oh! Heavens no. We've never gotten
back together romantically. We've
managed to concentrate on the
aspects of our relationship that
did work. We're brilliant as
friends, but we understand that
we're terrible as a couple.

291 (beat) 291
But, in the interest of full
disclosure, we do sometimes serve
as a... bit of a relief valve for
each other.

292 VALDEZ I'm a big girl, you don't need to speak in euphemisms. 292

293 BETH We still have sex. 293

294 VALDEZ Hrm. And, um... have... 294

295 BETH (interrupting) That has not happened since you and I met. Including last night. She did stay with me, but just to make sure I was alright. 295

296 VALDEZ She sounds like a really good friend. 296

297 BETH She is. 297

298 VALDEZ Thank you for telling me the truth. 298

299 BETH You deserve it. 299

300 (beat) I... um... brought you a present. 300

301 VALDEZ A present? Why would you bring me a present? 301

302 BETH It was Amanda's idea. Something to try to make up for how I'd behaved. 302

303 VALDEZ Really, honesty is the only present I need from you right now. 303

304 BETH Oh... 304

305 VALDEZ Um... what was it? 305

306 BETH It was a specially engineered high-capacity fusion core. 306

(MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)

It holds roughly 175% of the charge a normal one holds. I thought you might be interested in reverse engineering it so the Brotherhood could have longer stretches in their power armor without swapping cores. Might save some lives.

VALDEZ

307 That's... wow, that's really thoughtful. Thank you, Beth. 307

BETH

308 It's my pleasure. And now I have really good news. My father got a lead on where some of this brain tech is, and whoever's chasing it doesn't know about it yet. 308

VALDEZ

309 That's fantastic news! I can ask Alan to get a team together and we can go there right now, before we get beaten to it again! 309

BETH

310 No, let's *not* do that. There are a couple of factors at play. First, we believe there's a mole in the Brotherhood. We don't have any information on who it might be, but some information has gotten out there that only you guys had access to. I think that's one reason this group has stayed one step ahead of us. 310

VALDEZ

311 That can't be true! I need to tell Paladin Rahmani... 311

BETH

312 No, this is something we need to keep under wraps for now. The smart play is to wait it out and hope they make a mistake and reveal themselves. But until then, we have to be very careful about whom we share information with. 312

VALDEZ

313 (ruefully)
"Semper Occultus." 313

314 BETH 314
In some cases, that approach is
still justified.

315 VALDEZ 315
Alright, I'll go along with it, at
least for now. But at some point
we've at least got to loop Rahmani
in.

316 BETH 316
When we get a bit more clarity, I
agree.

317 (beat) 317
The other thing is that because of
the nature of who's holding the
tech, going in undercover will be
the best way to get our hands on
it. If we go in guns blazing, the
most likely outcome is that it will
either be rushed away to safety or
blown up in a firefight. Either
way, we lose access, and this is
the best shot we've had so far.

318 VALDEZ 318
That makes sense. So when are you
going undercover?

319 BETH 319
Um... I'm not going undercover.
We're going undercover.

320 VALDEZ 320
What?! Beth! I'm not an operative!
I'm not even a Field Scribe! How on
earth am I going to go undercover
without getting myself or both of
us killed?

321 BETH 321
You're not an operative, that's
true. But we need somebody who's
smart enough to know both what
we're looking for and what we're
looking at. And I need somebody I
can trust. There's only one person
who ticks all of those boxes.

322 (beat) 322
It's still early, so we have
several hours before we need to be
there. We'll stop by my father's
house and give you a crash course;
(MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)

he's the best teacher on the planet.

- 323 VALDEZ He'd better be... 323
- 324 BETH And then we'll go to my place so we can pick out something to wear and get your hair and makeup sorted. This is a high-end establishment, and we're both going to need to look the part if we're going to have any success at pulling this off. 324
- 325 VALDEZ Well... this is going to be exciting, if nothing else. 325
- 326 BETH You're going to be brilliant, Odessa! Dad's provided some briefing materials that you can review on the way. 326
- 327 VALDEZ So we're really doing this, aren't we? 327
- 328 BETH We are. And we're going to make a brilliant team, you'll see. 328
- 329 VALDEZ I guess we'd better get going. I hope your father has a lot of patience. 329
- 330 BETH I'm his daughter. What do you think? 330

MUSICAL TRANSITION

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. BETH'S HOUSE, LATE AFTERNOON

331 VALDEZ 331
Your father is a great teacher. I
actually feel like we might be able
to pull this off.

332 BETH 332
He's the best, he really is.

333 VALDEZ 333
And your mom is adorable.

BETH giggles.

334 BETH 334
Alright, let's find something in
this wardrobe for you.. I'm
thinking... something black.

335 VALDEZ 335
You're the expert. I've been
wearing Brotherhood uniforms almost
exclusively for so long... I
haven't picked out something
because it looks nice since...
well, since California.

336 BETH 336
You look fantastic no matter what
you wear, so this will be easy. Oh,
and I'll set out a bra and knickers
for you as well. I'm guessing that
Brotherhood underwear is...
functional, but not stylish. Just
let me know if I've guessed wrong
on any sizes.

BETH enters the wardrobe closet.

SFX: PAN BETH HARD LEFT

337 VALDEZ 337
You did a good job with that when
we visited Dr. Flagler. And it was
nice; it made me feel like... more
than just a Scribe, for once.

338 BETH 338
Oooh, this will work...

VALDEZ

339 I mean, don't get me wrong, I love being a Scribe and I'm proud of it. 339
I just... I don't know. I haven't
felt like a whole person since we
left for Appalachia, and I want
that back. Maybe that's part of
why... dessert almost happened.

BETH re-enters.

SFX: PAN BETH BACK TO NORMAL

BETH

340 Well, if it helps, I've seen a lot more than "just a Scribe" since we 340
met. You're... well, you're quite
something, Odessa Valdez.

(beat)

341 I've put out the dress, and the rest. I do hope you like it; if you 341
don't, please just say the word and
I'll pick something else... or we
could even pick something together,
if you'd like...

VALDEZ

342 I'm sure it's lovely. 342

VALDEZ enters the wardrobe closet.

SFX: PAN VALDEZ HARD RIGHT

VALDEZ changes her clothes.

BETH

343 Was there anything about tonight that you want to go over? I have 343
the briefing materials here with
me, so we can talk anything through
that you'd like.

VALDEZ

344 I think I'm pretty clear on everything, actually. I guess it's 344
all going to come down to... how I
react in the moment.

(beat)

345 Uh, Beth? 345

BETH

346 What is it? Do you hate it? 346

347 VALDEZ Um... no... it's lovely. It's one of the most... flattering things I think I've ever worn. 347

348 (beat) But I have a question. 348

349 BETH Of course, what's up? 349

350 VALDEZ Where's the rest of it? 350

BETH laughs.

VALDEZ leaves the wardrobe closet.

SFX: PAN VALDEZ BACK TO NORMAL

351 BETH Oh my god... 351

352 VALDEZ (mortified) I know, I know! I'm sure you have something a little more... I don't know... maybe a sack? 352

353 (beat) Beth? 353

354 BETH I'm sorry, you... you took my breath away. 354

355 (beat, gathering herself) If you're uncomfortable, I have a shrug you can wear over the dress. Or we can pick something else out entirely. But you look... amazing if that's your concern. 355

356 VALDEZ (still embarrassed) I... trust you, Beth. This is just... a lot. Based on what your dad and Charles said, this really does seem like the best way to finally get to something first. We've been playing from behind until now, and I want to do whatever I can to change that. 356

357 BETH 357
It is the best way, Odessa. I
wouldn't put you in a position like
this if I wasn't utterly convinced
that was the case.

358 VALDEZ 358
Yeah... I believe you.
(beat)

359 359
Is it always like this? Knowing
you?

360 BETH 360
What do you mean?

361 VALDEZ 361
We've known each other for what,
less than a week? But it feels like
I've... *lived* more since I met you
than I have in months. Maybe years.

362 BETH 362
I guess I'm a bit of an...
experience sometimes. But I
promise, it's not always this much
of a... whirlwind, I guess.

363 VALDEZ 363
(chuckling)
That's comforting.

364 BETH 364
So, would you like that shrug? Or a
jacket? Or another dress entirely?

365 VALDEZ 365
You know what? I'm good.
(beat)

366 366
What are you going to wear?

367 BETH 367
Well, since you're wearing black, I
thought red would be a nice
compliment.

368 VALDEZ 368
You're the fashion expert...

369 BETH 369
(interrupting)
I am definitely *not* a fashion
expert. But I do think I have a
good eye.

VALDEZ

370 Well, regardless, I think whatever 370
you pick is going to look great.

(beat)

371 This dress is kind of growing on 371
me. It has a lot of "oomph."

BETH

372 Any "oomph" is all you, Odessa. 372

VALDEZ

373 You'd better get changed. We still 373
need to do hair and makeup, and
your father said that we had to be
there at 20 hundred hours sharp.

BETH

374 Yeah, this group is very big on 374
respect, and being late is
something they would consider very
disrespectful.

VALDEZ

(playfully)

375 Come on. I want to see this red 375
dress.

BETH

(playfully)

376 Yes, ma'am. 376

MUSICAL TRANSITION

EXT. ABANDONED BANK, NIGHT

NOTE: BETH SWITCHES BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN AN AMERICAN ACCENT
AND HER NATURAL ONE IN THIS SCENE, AS NOTED

VALDEZ

377 This is it. Fascinating use for an 377
old bank, isn't it?

BETH

378 It is. I'll be interested to see 378
what they've done with the place.
Dad said that it's supposed to be
nothing like the Raider brothels
and gambling dens.

(beat)

379 Are you ready? 379

VALDEZ

380 No. But your dad got me as ready as 380
I'm ever going to be, so let's go.

381 BETH 381
You look great, and you're going to
do so well.

BETH and VALDEZ approach the bouncer.

382 BOUNCER 382
Yes?

383 BETH 383
 (switches to American
 accent)
I'm Alice Halstead and this is
Courtney Fonseca. We're expected.

The BOUNCER checks the list.

384 BOUNCER 384
Hmm... let's see...
 (beat)

385 BOUNCER 385
Yes, you are. I take it these two
guys are carrying your cover
charge?

386 BETH 386
Yes, they are. Boys?

The two RAIDERS give sacks of caps to the BOUNCER.

387 BOUNCER 387
I assume I don't have to count
them?

BETH laughs.

388 BETH 388
It's entirely up to you.

389 BOUNCER 389
This club is all about trust. So
I'm going to trust you. But
violating that trust is a very,
very bad idea. Do you understand?

390 BETH 390
We understand.

391 BOUNCER 391
Very good. Since you two are new to
the club and you're VIPs, Mr.
MacAllen is going to meet you
inside. Go to the bar and wait
there. I'll send word that you're
here.

(MORE)

BOUNCER (CONT'D)

(beat)

392 Being on-time is a good start. He hates it when people are late. 392

VALDEZ

393 Thank you. 393

BETH and VALDEZ enter the club.

INT. CLUB, NIGHT

There is a lot of noise and happy chatting. Music plays in the background.

VALDEZ

394 That guy at the door wasn't like any Raider I've ever met. 394

BETH

(reverting to natural accent)

395 These guys are different. My dad told me stories about the pre-war mob. They were every bit as brutal as Raiders are today, but they had a rigid internal moral code that they held fast to, and woe betide anyone who violated it. 395

VALDEZ

396 Moral? I thought they were criminals? 396

BETH

397 They were, and awful ones at that. Murder, drug dealing, prostitution, rigged gambling... you name it, they were into it. 397

VALDEZ

398 That doesn't really help me understand this "moral code." 398

BETH

399 It was really just a way to keep everyone within the various organizations in line. For everyone to continue to operate with some measure of impunity they had to do so... well, if not cooperatively, at least in a way that kept them out of each other's way. 399

400 VALDEZ I see. I'll keep that in mind tonight. And I'll try to keep quiet; I'll stick to the science once we get to that part. You can handle the spy work. 400

401 BETH There's not an eye in this place that's not on us right now. Especially you. 401

402 VALDEZ I thought undercover work was about blending in? 402

403 BETH It's more about *fitting* in. When someone who looks like you comes to a place like this, it would seem off if you didn't flaunt your looks. So the smart play is to go completely in the opposite direction and... show off. (switches to American accent) Here comes the bartender. It's showtime. 403

A BARTENDER comes over.

404 BARTENDER What can I get you ladies? Mr. MacAllen said that everything will be on the house. 404

405 VALDEZ Something strong, please. 405

406 BARTENDER Yes, ma'am, I think I know just the thing. And for you? 406

407 BETH Make it two. 407

408 BARTENDER I'll be right back. 408

409 VALDEZ I thought something to calm the nerves would be a good idea. 409

410 BETH See? Already thinking on your feet. 410
You're a natural.

411 BARTENDER There you are, ladies. 411

The BARTENDER puts two glasses on the bar.

412 BARTENDER (CONT'D) If they're not to your liking I'm 412
happy to make something else. I'll
check in with you in a bit. Mr.
MacAllen will be here momentarily.

BETH and VALDEZ take a drink.

413 VALDEZ This is... good. I don't drink 413
cocktails very much, and it's
mostly because they taste like
paint thinner smells.

414 BETH That's not surprising. Liquor has 414
also been one of the mafia's
specialties, going all the way back
to when the American government
tried to ban it.

CRAIG MACALLEN enters.

415 CRAIG "Mafia" is such an old-world term. 415
And a loaded one, at that.

416 BETH I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend. 416

417 CRAIG It's alright. Times have changed, 417
and so has my family's business. It
will take time for people to
understand that.

418 (beat) Craig MacAllen. It's a pleasure to 418
meet you both. I take it... you're
Alice and... you're Courtney?

419 VALDEZ That's right. It's a pleasure to 419
meet you.

420 CRAIG 420
If I may say, you make an
absolutely stunning couple.

421 VALDEZ 421
How did you know we were a couple?

CRAIG chuckles.

422 CRAIG 422
I did my homework on you. And I
don't want to give away any trade
secrets, but... the way you leaned
back against her the second you
felt her behind you sealed it. You
can't fake that.

423 VALDEZ 423
Huh. I guess you're good at reading
people, then?

424 CRAIG 424
Comes with the job. If you can't do
that, you're dead.

425 VALDEZ 425
That makes sense. The world is
dangerous.

426 CRAIG 426
It is. So we try to provide a
little respite from all that.

427 VALDEZ 427
Can I ask you something that I've
been wondering since we got here?

428 CRAIG 428
Of course, Miss Fonseca.

429 VALDEZ 429
Please. Call me Courtney.

430 (beat) 430
Did everyone here pay 15,000 caps
to get in?

431 CRAIG 431
Oh, of course not. Most of them
paid 1,000.

432 VALDEZ 432
Why did we pay so much?

433 CRAIG I needed to know that you were legit, and that you're serious. You're clearly both of those things. And those caps get you full, priority access to everything we have to offer. All you have to do is ask. You're going to need that so you can make an informed decision. 433

(beat)

434 Look, bottom line, if my sister and I are going to get this operation off the ground the way we want to, we need a partner. A partner who knows Appalachia, and who has resources. 434

435 BETH We check off both of those boxes. 435

436 CRAIG I know. You have a sterling reputation back in Pennsylvania, too. 436

(beat)

437 I heard you were regular customers at Columbo's. Do they still make that veal, the old family recipe? 437

438 BETH Columbo's? 438

439 CRAIG Yeah. Columbo's. 439

440 BETH I think you mean Colarusso's. And yes, their veal is excellent. A bit different from how it was pre-war, from what I'm told, but I can only speak to the current version. 440

441 CRAIG Ah, right. Colarusso's. How's Mama Angelina? 441

442 BETH You mean Mama Angelica? She passed, I'm afraid. Anthony's running the business, at least he was when we came here. 442

443 CRAIG Anthony's a good egg. I'm glad he was able to keep things going. 443

(beat)
444 I need to talk to Davina for a moment, but I'll be right back. 444
Then we'll chat.

(beat)
445 Jack, freshen the ladies' drinks, and make sure they don't see the bottom of a glass while they're here. Okay? 445

BARTENDER
446 You got it, boss. 446

CRAIG leaves.

VALDEZ
(sotto)
447 He was not what I was expecting. He was... charming. And I'm glad those identities checked out. 447

BETH
(sotto)
448 Charles is great at that. I've never had a backstopped identity fall through. 448
(beat)
449 And I'm so proud of you! You really took charge of that conversation and you were brilliant. 449

VALDEZ
(sotto)
450 Thanks. I just sort of... rolled with it. 450

BARTENDER
451 Fresh drinks, ladies. 451

VALDEZ
452 Thank you, Jack. 452

CRAIG returns.

CRAIG
453 Let's go to my office and talk. 453

CRAIG, BETH, and VALDEZ walk down a flight of stairs and into an office.

CRAIG closes the door.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

454 So, here we are. 454
(beat)

455 I'll get right to it. People have 455
needs. You have them, I have them,
everybody has one. And we want to
fulfill them.

BETH

456 What kind of needs are we talking 456
about here?

CRAIG

457 We leave the basics to others. 457
Food, water, shelter, not
interested. We specialize in
alcohol, chems, gambling, and, of
course, sex.

BETH

458 Of course. 458

CRAIG

459 None of those things are in short 459
supply, but we provide a more...
premium experience.

VALDEZ

460 Premium how? 460

CRAIG

461 You've already tried the alcohol. 461
The chems are just as good. And the
sex... well, let's just say we
provide the kind of experience you
can't generally get out there in
the Wasteland. Your choice of
partners, anything you want all
along the gender and sexuality
spectrum. And when someone wants
something more... exotic, we can
provide that, too.

BETH

462 Exotic? 462

CRAIG

463 Well, for example, you'd be 463
surprised how many people have a
certain... fascination with Super
Mutants. Or the Sheepsquatch.

VALDEZ
(shocked)
464 Oh... oh, my. 464

CRAIG
465 I'm sorry, I didn't mean to shock you. 465

BETH
466 It's alright. It's like you said, people have needs, and we're certainly in no position to judge. 466

CRAIG
467 You can sample anything you'd like, on the house. You won't be disappointed, I assure you. 467

BETH
468 Perhaps another time. 468

CRAIG
469 All business. I like that. There's one other thing, and I wasn't going to say a word about it unless you checked out. We're still in the process of getting a lot of moving pieces into place, and that's where you come in. 469

VALDEZ
470 What is it? 470

CRAIG
471 When we moved here, we found a whole trove of... stuff. I read through the notes they left, and called in a couple of experts to help me figure out if it had the kind of potential it seemed like it did. Then we tracked down someone who knew a little bit about it. Turns out, we struck gold - it's going to be an experience like nobody's ever seen before. 471

BETH
472 Go on. 472

CRAIG
473 How would you like to be able to experience something through someone else's eyes?
(MORE) 473

CRAIG (CONT'D)

You can, like, ride a horse through a field, pre-war. Jump out of an airplane. Ever wondered what it's like to have sex as a man? You can do that, too.

BETH

474 I don't understand. 474

CRAIG

475 The stuff we found lets people relive experiences other people recorded onto holotapes. Brain to brain. And there's a lot of it, including a ton of sex. We haven't even cataloged a quarter of it. We need to do that, and we need to... smooth out the kinks. No pun intended. 475

VALDEZ

476 What kind of kinks need to be smoothed out? 476

CRAIG

477 Let's just say that the process occasionally runs into issues. We've had some... volunteers testing it out, and sometimes bad things happen. Really bad. I've had a couple go insane, a few have gone catatonic, and some straight-up just didn't make it. 477

VALDEZ

478 My god... 478

CRAIG

479 The two specialists we brought in are working on it, and they're getting there. They've developed a chem that seems to prevent problems most of the time. But we're still working on it. I don't mean to sound hard-hearted, but we want repeat customers. 479

(beat)

480 If you two want in on this, we'll make you full partners for the low price of one and a half million caps. I know you have that kind of money, so it's down to whether you have the stones to join us on this. 480

481 VALDEZ That's... a lot of money. 481

482 BETH And a big decision. 482

483 CRAIG You're right. Both of you are. And that's why I'm leaving this offer open until this time next month. You're the first people I've approached with this, and I'm not going to say a word about it to anyone else unless that deadline passes or you say no. 483

484 BETH That sounds fair. 484

485 CRAIG I think it is. You're clearly people who deserve respect, and you've provided me with respect as well. That's very important to me. 485

486 (beat) And until then, you have the full run of the club. Your 30,000 caps bought that, whether we end up as partners or not. The only demand I have - and let me be clear, it is a demand, not a request - is that you not speak of this, regardless whether we come to an agreement or not. 486

487 BETH You have our word. 487

488 CRAIG Good. 488

The BOUNCER knocks on the door and opens it.

489 BOUNCER Boss? Your sister said she wants to talk to you. 489

490 CRAIG If you'll excuse me, ladies. Look, you've heard my spiel. You get in on this, you're going to be Appalachia's number one power couple. 490

491 VALDEZ Who says we're not already? 491

CRAIG laughs.

492 CRAIG Yeah, You may have a point. Either 492
way, I hope I'll see you again,
soon. And as I said, you want to
sample anything, just ask.

CRAIG leaves.

The BOUNCER enters the room and closes the door.

493 BOUNCER Alright, great job. 493

494 BETH What? 494

495 BOUNCER You two were perfect. We only have 495
a few minutes. His master terminal
is on his desk. None of the
hardcore data is on there, but
there's quite a bit of overview
that might help. He probably left
it unlocked, but if he didn't, you
shouldn't have a problem hacking
it. Copy what you can onto this
holotape. Just keep it in your bag,
nobody's going to check it. I've
made sure of that.

496 BETH (feigning shock) 496
What are you talking about?

497 BOUNCER Your father sends his regards. 497

498 BETH I don't know what you're playing 498
at, but we're here to discuss
business with Mr. MacAllen. We're
not going to copy any data onto any
holotapes.

499 BOUNCER He also wanted me to ask you - what 499
did the evil chicken lay?

BETH groans, then sighs.

BETH
(reverting to natural
accent)

500 Deviled eggs. 500

VALDEZ laughs.

VALDEZ

501 I have to say, your dad using a dad
joke as a code phrase is a nice
touch. 501

VALDEZ pops the holotape into the terminal and begins copying
data.

BOUNCER

502 I'll hang out outside the door and
redirect him if he comes back. Once
you finish copying the data, go to
the bar and have a few more drinks.
Then leave. Don't rush out, it'll
look suspicious. 502

VALDEZ

503 Understood. And thank you. 503

BOUNCER

504 Don't mention it. Seriously, don't
mention it. It took me a while to
get into his good graces. 504

The BOUNCER leaves and closes the door.

BETH

505 How long will it take to copy the
data? 505

VALDEZ

506 Not long. And I'm glad he said to
have a drink, I think I need one.
My hands are shaking. 506

(beat)

507 How do you do this all the time? 507

BETH

508 Sometimes I wonder myself. But
really, you've been brilliant. I'm
in awe. Even more awe than I'm
usually in around you. 508

VALDEZ

509 This was... fun. Terrifying, but
fun. 509

(MORE)

VALDEZ (CONT'D)

I'm not even sure if it would've been better or worse if he'd actually brought up the technical details like we expected him to.

BETH

510 Um, Odessa... 510

VALDEZ

511 Yes? 511

BETH

512 Will you stay the night? At my place? It's really late, and we have to go there so you can change regardless. I think walking into Atlas dressed like that would lead to... questions. 512

VALDEZ

513 Beth... I really don't know if that's a good idea. 513

BETH

514 It's purely a practical matter. I'm not trying to manufacture an excuse to... serve you dessert. I have a guest room, and it's yours. 514

(beat)

515 I promise, I'll be a perfect gentleman. 515

VALDEZ laughs.

VALDEZ

516 Well, since you put it that way... 516

BETH

517 We can go to Fort Atlas first thing in the morning. I mean, if you'll have me. Otherwise, we'll just gather up everything you need and you can head back yourself. 517

VALDEZ

518 I think it would be best if we work on this together. At Atlas, in the morning. 518

The terminal beeps.

VALDEZ (CONT'D)

519 The data transfer is done! 519

520 BETH 520
That's brilliant!
 (beat)
521 BETH 521
Would you care to have a drink with
me, Courtney?

522 VALDEZ 522
I would love that, Alice.

523 BETH 523
I'll walk you to the bar.

BETH and VALDEZ leave the office and close the door behind them.

END OF ACT THREE

CREDITS

NARRATOR

"Once Upon a Wasteland" Episode 3,
"Checks and Limitations," was
produced and directed by Brad
Williams and written by D.K.
Trueno.

Starring Letitia Lemon as Elizabeth
Kirby and Vitriol Plays as Odessa
Valdez.

Also starring Lucy Middelthon as
Amanda Otis, Penal Pineapple as
Andrew Kirby, John Lauri as Alan
Banks, and Jay Chadwick as Charles
Watkins.

Featuring XXX as Craig MacAllen,
XXX as the bouncer, and XXX as the
bartender.

And I'm your narrator, Ashley
Sekhon.

Please join us for our next
episode, Episode 4: "Fraternal
Sympathies and Affections."