

The Silver Age
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Written by

Trevor Van Winkle

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

A clock ticks quietly. A news program plays on the TV, almost inaudible. Out the window, the sound of evening traffic.

A key rattles in the lock outside, then drops loudly.

LERA LYNN
(through wall, muffled)
Goddamn it.

She picks it up and unlocks the door, letting it swing into the wall. She walks in heavily.

LERA LYNN (CONT'D)
(tired)
Honey, I'm home.

She closes the door behind her a little too loudly.

LERA LYNN (CONT'D)
Alan put me on a new assignment
today. Want to guess who I get to
investigate?

No answer. Lera takes off her coat and walks into the apartment.

LERA LYNN (CONT'D)
Come on, guess. You're going to
love this one.

She stops. The TV plays in the background.

NEWSCASTER
(on TV)
...and on a more positive note, New
York's resident hero Silverman was
spotted in central park this
afternoon, apparently rescuing a
kitten from a tree, as this amazing
amateur video shows...

Lera switches the TV off.

LERA LYNN
Honey? Where are...

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
(flat)
Your home late.

LERA LYNN
Ahh!

Lera jumps, turning around. Ada is crossing the room behind her, her tone pointedly disinterested.

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
Almost ate your half of the roast.
What took you so long?

LERA LYNN
Je-sus Christ, Ada, you know I hate
it when you sneak around like that.

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
(masked anger)
Yes, I do.

Ada reaches the kitchen, turns on the sink, and throws a plate into the sink violently.

LERA LYNN
I'm sorry, okay? I said I was
sorry.

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
No, you didn't.

LERA LYNN
What?

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
You didn't say you were sorry.

Ada throws another dish into the sink, louder this time.

LERA LYNN
Look, I know you hate cleaning the
dishes as much as I hate you
sneaking around, so what's going
on?

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
(getting angry)
Stop psychoanalyzing, Lera, that's
my job.

LERA LYNN
Seems like it's going to be my job
too for the next few months.

Ada stops, then sets the dishes down.

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
(*'this better be good'*)
Explain.

LERA LYNN

Alan's put me on another story. Big expose. You'll never guess who on.

ADA LYNN-JACOBS

(impatiently)

I won't, if you don't give me anything to go on.

LERA LYNN

Silverman.

ADA LYNN-JACOBS

What!?

LERA LYNN

(complaining about work)

I know. As if I'm going to dig up anything on...

ADA LYNN-JACOBS

(angry confusion)

Hold on, back up.

(turns off tap, turns fully to Lera)

You get put on what might be the biggest story in modern history, and you're unhappy about it?

LERA LYNN

I'm *unhappy* that Alan's wasting my time with this.

ADA LYNN-JACOBS

(disbelieving)

Wasting your time?

LERA LYNN

(confused)

Well isn't he?

ADA LYNN-JACOBS

You don't think he's hiding anything under all that bravado?

LERA LYNN

No! Of course he isn't. He's... why are you looking at me like that?

ADA LYNN-JACOBS

Because I'm not quite sure who's standing in my kitchen. I'm fairly confident I married a reporter.

LERA LYNN
Investigative journalist, please.

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
 Same difference. You're telling me
 you've bought the hype?

LERA LYNN
 Hype? He's saved hundreds of
 people...

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
 And that means he doesn't have any
 skeletons in his closet?

LERA LYNN
 Don't you think he's allowed a few?

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
 I don't know -- do you think a nuke
 should be allowed a few loose
 wires?

LERA LYNN
 Oh, come on Ada...

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
 He could level DC before the
 president had a chance to tweet
 about it.

LERA LYNN
 Not sure if anyone would miss it,
 honestly...

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
 He needs to be held to a higher
 standard. And whether you like it,
 that's your job, Mrs. Lera Lynn-
 Jacobs.

A moment of silence as that sinks in.

LERA LYNN
 (defeated)
 You're... probably right.

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
 (slightly offended)
 Probably?

LERA LYNN
 (giving up)
 I... really don't want to fight,
 Ada.

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
 (disappointed)
 Really?

LERA LYNN
 (tired)
 Yeah. Really.

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
 (genuinely disappointed)
 Shame. That one was shaping up to
 be a doozy.

LERA LYNN
 (CHUCKLING)
 That it was.

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
 What do you want to do, then?

LERA LYNN
 I want to take that leftover roast,
 microwave it on high for 30
 seconds, and eat it in front of the
 TV like a normal human being for
 once.

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
 Sounds exciting. Mind if I join
 you?

LERA LYNN
 Only if you'll change over to
 something other than the news.

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
 (joking)
Oh, the things I do for love.

LERA LYNN
 (CHUCKLING)
 My hero.

Lera kisses Ada. The dishes in the sink rattle and shake.

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
 What the hell...?

The shaking grows. The entire building begins to rumble.

LERA LYNN
Holy shit...

Sheetrock tears and wood splinters as the roof comes around them.

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
Lera! Quick, get in the doorway,
get in the... LOOK OUT!

The entire apartment collapses. Rumbling, shaking, tearing,
crashing.

EXT. APARTMMENT - CONTINUOUS

The walls fall away around them.

LERA LYNN
Ahh -- Ooof!

SILVER
Whoops -- sorry for the rough
catch, miss.

LERA LYNN
(disoriented)
What... who...
(beat)
Silverman?

SILVER
Stay calm: Just hold on while I set
you down here...

Silver's boots crunch on the gravel. Small fires burn nearby.

SILVER (CONT'D)
There you are.

LERA LYNN
(confused)
I... You...

SILVER
Sorry -- Hope you'll forgive me if
I make a quick exit.

LERA LYNN
Where...

Silver takes off like a gunshot, breaking the sound barrier.

LERA LYNN (CONT'D)
 (horrified realization)
 Ada.

Lera turns, running into the rubble. The fires grow louder.

LERA LYNN (CONT'D)
 (COUGHING UP DUST)
 Ada? Ada, where are you?

A weak COUGH from nearby... Ada.

LERA LYNN (CONT'D)
 Ada! Hold on, I'm coming, I'm...
 (sees Ada)
 Oh shit.

ADA GIVES A WEAK COUGH.

LERA LYNN (CONT'D)
 HELP! Somebody HELP!

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
 (weakly)
 Lera...

LERA LYNN
 HELP ME!!

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
 (weak, but happy)
 Lera... You're okay...

LERA LYNN
 Don't talk Ada, please don't
 talk...

ADA LYNN-JACOBS
 (CHUCKLING PAINFULLY)
 I never could... get the last word
 with you...

LERA LYNN
 (in tears)
 Please, just... Try to hold on...
 Silverman's here, we just need to
 wait for... Ada?
 (beat, whispered)
 Ada?

There's no reply.

MAIN THEME

INT. ABANDONED OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

Far below, the muffled sound of traffic. Someone taps out a text message, then hits send. An electric whoosh.

LERA LYNN
(to herself)
Here we are.

A rustle of fabric, and booted feet land beside her.

SILVER
Ah, there you are -- I worried I might be late. Miss Lynn, right?

LERA LYNN
Please, just -- Lera. Pleasure to meet you at last, Silverman.

SILVER
(a little awkward)
Just Silver, if you don't mind.
(beat)
I wasn't, I hope?

LERA LYNN
Wasn't what?

SILVER
Late. I've had a hard time keeping track of appointments these days -- completely forgot about our interview until just now.

LERA LYNN
(sarcastic)
Lucky you can fly, then.

SILVER
Helps beat the traffic, anyway.
Ready to go?

LERA LYNN
Of course. This way.

Lera leads Silver into the room. A small clock ticks on the wall. Their footsteps echo in the bare office.

SILVER
Huh. Odd choice.

LERA LYNN
Is it?

SILVER

Well -- I don't know how this normally goes, but I thought reporters liked things a little more... upscale.

LERA LYNN

You're thinking of the wrong type of journalist. I'm not interested in appearances... just the truth.

SILVER

Sorry if I'm wrong, but... I get the feeling you don't like me very much.

LERA LYNN

(blunt)

I'm my job not to.

SILVER

No, it's more than that... You genuinely don't like me, don't you? Personally, I mean.

LERA LYNN

(SIGHS HEAVILY)

No. I genuinely don't. You got me.

SILVER

Why?

LERA LYNN

It's -- well, it's a long, messed up story, and I don't want to get into it now.

SILVER

There a short version?

LERA LYNN

Let's just say that... I'm one of the people you couldn't save.

SILVER

Hmm.

LERA LYNN

(offering an escape)

You still want to go through with the interview?

SILVER

Of course.

Silver pulls back a chair and sits. Lera's phone buzzes.

LERA LYNN
Oh, sorry... one second.

Lera answers the call.

LERA LYNN (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hello?

CONTROLLER
(through phone)
We need to talk.

LERA LYNN
(into phone)
You couldn't text?

CONTROLLER
(irritated)
No, I couldn't.

LERA LYNN
I'm in the middle of an interview --
I'll call you back.

CONTROLLER
Lynn...

Lera hangs up.

SILVER
Who was that?

LERA LYNN
(surprised)
I thought you could hear
everything.

SILVER
(slightly embarrassed)
Most everything. I'm a little deaf
in my left ear, actually... at
least close up.

LERA LYNN
Huh. When did that happen?

SILVER
Are we starting the interview?

LERA LYNN
I suppose we are.

She pulls out a small device and switches it on.

SILVER
What's that?

LERA LYNN
(casually)
Recorder. Hell of a lot easier than
writing things down longhand. So --
you're deaf in one ear?

SILVER
My left. Ever since I was a kid.

LERA LYNN
But only at close distances.

SILVER
That's right. If you were ten
blocks away, I could hear you clear
as a bell.

LERA LYNN
You don't think there's a problem
with that?

SILVER
Huh?

LERA LYNN
You don't think that's an invasion
of privacy, listening in like that.

SILVER
(defensive)
Well I can't hear everyone...

LERA LYNN
(pressing the question)
But you could hear anyone, right?
If you wanted to.

SILVER
(defensive)
If you're accusing me of something
dirty, then...

LERA LYNN
This is an investigative report,
Silver: I'm not accusing you of
anything so lurid.

SILVER
Oh. That's a relief.

LERA LYNN

What I want to know is this: If you were floating outside a building, could you clearly hear whatever was going on inside?

SILVER

(more relaxed)

Of course I could. I could hear it across town, if I needed to.

LERA LYNN

(pressing for details)

If you *needed* to?

SILVER

(growing cautious)

Well -- if someone called for help, or if there was a fire burning and I had to figure out if anyone was inside, then...

LERA LYNN

What if you heard someone say they were going to kill someone else. What would you do then?

SILVER

(uncomfortable)

Well, it... Depends.

LERA LYNN

Depends. So it's happened before.

SILVER

I... Yes, it's happened before.

LERA LYNN

Often?

SILVER

(wearily)

More often than you'd think.

LERA LYNN

(getting back)

What does it depend on? Your response.

SILVER

Mostly tone of voice, honestly. You can kind of tell after a while.

(MORE)

SILVER (CONT'D)

If their voice is loud and shaky,
then they're probably not going to
do it -- they still care enough
about the other person to be mad.
If it's level, or quiet, though...

LERA LYNN

(cold menace)
I'm going to kill you.

SILVER

(alarmed)
What?

LERA LYNN

(back to normal)
Is that the kind of voice that
makes you worry?

SILVER

(unnerved)
Um... Yes. Exactly like that.

LERA LYNN

And that's enough for you to smash
someone's door down?

SILVER

Well -- yes. Wouldn't you?

LERA LYNN

(dismissive)
I can't hear people talking across
the county.

SILVER

But if you could?

LERA LYNN

It's not a matter of if I could or
would: it's a question of if I
should. Or if I should be able to
listen in on them in the first
place.

SILVER

(defensive)
I didn't ask to hear them.

LERA LYNN

(turning it back on him)

You could also say the CIA never asked for a global communications network to hack -- And yet they do, and we're still not sure if and when that's okay.

SILVER

I'm not the CIA. I'm just trying to help people.

LERA LYNN

And I'm sure everyone at Langley tells themselves the same thing before they go to bed.

SILVER

(uncomfortable)

Is this still an interview, Miss Lynn? I feel like you're accusing me of something.

LERA LYNN

(slight anger)

Lera. I just want you to explain yourself, in your own words.

SILVER

Explain myself.

LERA LYNN

A lot of investigative reporters don't interview their subjects directly. There's no need -- the facts speak for themselves. But you have a... Well, a rather unique perspective. "What does someone with powers think of those powers?" Call it the superhuman angle.

SILVER

(winces)

Please don't use that word.

LERA LYNN

What, superhuman? Why not?

SILVER

(uncomfortable)

It makes me feel... Disconnected. I mean, I'm still human, just...

LERA LYNN

Better?

SILVER

No, no, not better, just...
Different.

Lera opens her briefcase and pulls out a file, flipping through it.

LERA LYNN

(reading)

Physicists at MIT estimate that you could dead lift a Panzer super-heavy tank and throw it a quarter mile. You can fly at mach-2.1 with virtually unlimited range, and you can see through walls and hear conversations from nearly 100 miles away. I'd say that's a pretty serious difference between you and I.

SILVER

(disbelieving)

Is that a... file on me?

LERA LYNN

(dismissive)

Just my research notes.

SILVER

What else is in there?

LERA LYNN

(deflecting)

I wouldn't be worried about my file, Silver. I hear the FBI has an entire division solely focused on you now.

SILVER

(utterly lost)

Why would they need that?

LERA LYNN

(rolling her eyes)

Oh come on.

SILVER

What?

LERA LYNN

You're more powerful than most of the US military put together, but you fly around this city acting like some kind of one-man neighborhood watch. *Just trying to help?* Are you really that naive?

SILVER

(angrily)

Maybe I am. You considered that?

LERA LYNN

I have. And that scares me more than the alternative.

SILVER

What's the alternative?

LERA LYNN

You tell me.

They both fall silent for the first time in a while.

SILVER

(disbelieving)

Christ, what kind of person do you think I am?

LERA LYNN

I don't know yet. That's what this report is for.

SILVER

(mostly to himself)

In my own words.

LERA LYNN

Sorry?

SILVER

(answering her)

You wanted me to explain myself. In my own words.

LERA LYNN

(opening up a little)

Well... yes. A little context would definitely help.

SILVER

(EXHALES LOUDLY)

Do you have anything to drink in here? I'm a little parched.

LERA LYNN
 (surprised by this)
 There's... Some water in that
 fridge over there.

SILVER
 Thanks.

Silver stands and pads over the fridge, pulls out a bottle of
 water, and returns. He pulls off the cap and gulps loudly.

SILVER (CONT'D)
 Ahhh... Much better.

LERA LYNN
 (a little uncertain)
 Flying, uh... Take it out of you?

SILVER
 Well... That and other things. So
 where do I start?
 (beat)
 Guess I'll start with a story. It
 was a few years ago: just after I
 got started -- well, doing this.

LERA LYNN
 (acting innocent)
 Before the earthquakes, or after?

SILVER
 Oh, at least a few months before.
 It was around New Year's, at any
 rate. The city was packed. I was
 working around the clock already,
 trying to keep drunk tourists from
 running over pedestrians.

LERA LYNN
 Glamorous work.

SILVER
 Not if you're an insurance
 adjuster. Anyway, I'd barely gotten
 any sleep in three days, and I was
 just about to throw in the towel
 when...

LERA LYNN
 (surprised)
 Throw in the towel? Not a very
 heroic sentiment.

SILVER

Hey, I was exhausted, alright? And New York's made it through plenty of New Year's without my help. But then I heard someone calling for help outside the city, so I flew over to check it out. The voice was coming out of an abandoned warehouse just outside of Morristown, but it was begging for help, so I rushed in. Soon as I was inside, I realized the voice was coming out of a little speaker in the middle of the room. Then the voice changed. It was someone calling themselves the Controller. Said they'd planted bombs all over the city, and that I'd tripped a motion sensor when I came in. If I tried to leave, all of them would go off before I could reach Manhattan.

LERA LYNN

So what did you do?

SILVER

(sarcastically)

Remind me -- Is the city still here, or is it a crater?

(beat)

The Controller told me I had to surrender if I wanted to save the city. Of course I agreed -- I didn't have any other choice. The room was full of all kinds of medical equipment. One of the machines looked like an MRI, and he told me to strap myself into it. As soon as I did, I felt a needle prick on my neck... And then the next thing I knew, a police officer was shaking me awake, three days later.

LERA LYNN

I think you skipped a step in there **soewhere.**

SILVER

(CHUCKLES)

One thing the Controller didn't count on was me asking for help.

(MORE)

SILVER (CONT'D)

I sent a message to a contact of mine in the NYPD. He sent out the bomb squad while the Controller was doing... Whatever it was he was doing to me. I kept him busy while they disarmed the bombs and traced my phone. *They* saved the city -- I was just the big, shinny distraction that let them do their jobs. And the best part?

Silver leans in, almost whispering.

SILVER (CONT'D)

(whispering)

The press didn't know anything about it.

LERA LYNN

(a little angry)

And why do you think that's a good thing?

SILVER

Because if I were doing this -- any of this -- to prove something to other people, then I shouldn't be doing it at all. People think I'm a hero, but I'm just the same as anyone else.

LERA LYNN

Anyone?

SILVER

(backtracking slightly)

Well, most people. Decent people. I mean, if you were walking down the street and saw a car crash and catch fire, wouldn't you rush over and pull the driver out?

LERA LYNN

That's a little over-simplistic, Mister Silver.

SILVER

Is it?

LERA LYNN

Flying into the middle of a war-zone to defuse an international crisis is a little more significant than pulling someone out of a burning car.

SILVER

And it takes a little more than gasoline to burn me. My dad taught me that the more power someone has, the more chances that person has to help or hurt others. If I refuse to help wherever I can, then it's the same as hurting.

LERA LYNN

(slightly confused, but masking it)

So, if you really have nothing to prove to anyone... then why did you take this interview?

SILVER

(uncertain)

Well -- Like I said, I really don't like the press most of the time...

LERA LYNN

(sarcastic)

Oh thanks.

SILVER

...But I do trust them to do the right thing when they know the truth.

A moment of awkward silence. Silver stretches himself out.

SILVER (CONT'D)

(YAWNING)

Oh, man, it's been a day. Hope you don't mind if I pop out for a smoke?

LERA LYNN

(confused)

A what?

SILVER

A smoke. Will that be a problem?

LERA LYNN

No, it's... I just wouldn't have pegged you for the type.

SILVER

Well, we've all got our vices, Miss... Sorry. Lera. And none of us get out of this life alive, so -- what the hell?

Silver stands up, walks onto the balcony, and starts to light up.

LERA LYNN

Could you... Um... Go a little further off? Sorry, I can't stand the smell.

SILVER

Oh, sorry. Yeah. Be back in a minute.

Silver takes off with a whoosh. After a moment, Lera pulls out her phone and dials.

LERA LYNN

(angry whisper)

The hell are you trying to pull, calling me like that?

CONTROLLER

(terse)

Don't take that tone of voice with me, Miss Lynn.

LERA LYNN

Silver was sitting across the table from me when you called. You could've blown the whole thing right then.

CONTROLLER

(panic)

He was WHAT? Did... Does he know? Did he recognize my voice?

LERA LYNN

He said he couldn't hear. Something about being deaf in one ear.

CONTROLLER

This is very concerning, Miss Lynn.

LERA LYNN

Is it true?

CONTROLLER

I don't know -- I'll have to check those medical scans again. I think there was a small abnormality in his eardrum, but...

LERA LYNN

Which one?

CONTROLLER

His left, I believe... Wait. He's not still in the room, is he?

LERA LYNN

No. He's outside, having a smoke. If your sonic shielding works...

CONTROLLER

It does.

LERA LYNN

Then there's nothing to worry about, he can't hear a thing.

CONTROLLER

Did you say he's having a smoke?

LERA LYNN

That's what he said, at least.

CONTROLLER

That's not like him at all.

(changing subject)

Is the Atros generator still active?

LERA LYNN

Been running for about 10 minutes now. I told him it was my recorder.

CONTROLLER

(gloating)

Never was the brightest star, that one. Well, just keep him talking: my readings say his body is nearing saturation point. A few more rads, and he should be weak enough to do it.

LERA LYNN
 (hesitant)
 Yes... about that...

CONTROLLER
 No second thoughts, I hope?

LERA LYNN
 Not -- second thoughts, as such...

CONTROLLER
 (threatening)
 It's too late for doubt now, Lynn.
 Or have you forgotten who's
 responsible for your wife's death?

LERA LYNN
 (resolute)
 No. I haven't.

CONTROLLER
 Then finish the job. You won't get
 another chance.

The controller hangs up. LERA BREATHES to steady herself.

Silver's cape flutters as he lands.

SILVER
 (apropos of nothing)
 So why did you take this interview?

LERA LYNN
 (off balance)
 Wha -- What?

SILVER
 (too casually)
 Well, I just had a thought when I
 was up there. You don't like me
 very much, right?

LERA LYNN
 (defensive)
 I don't have to like you to do my
 job.

SILVER
 (suspiciously)
 See, that... I think you're
 bullshitting me. You're pretty high
 up, aren't you? I mean -- not
 desperate for work, right?

LERA LYNN
 (sarcastic)
 Everyone in my field's desperate
 right now. Truth doesn't pay these
 days.

SILVER
 But you could turn this assignment
 down if you wanted -- I mean, if
 you can't be objective, that would
 look pretty bad on your resume,
 right?

LERA LYNN
 (hesitant)
 Well... Not wrong.

SILVER
 So if you wanted to -- If you
 really thought this was a bad idea,
 or you really didn't want to be
 around me -- You could've declined
 the interview. Yes or no?

LERA LYNN
 I couldn't...
 (beat)
 Yes. Yes.

SILVER
 (offering a chance for
 honesty)
 So...?

LERA LYNN
 (finishing his sentence)
 Why did I take it? Why are we here?

SILVER
 Uh huh.

Lera pauses, then SIGHS LOUDLY.

LERA LYNN
 (weakly)
 My wife.

SILVER
 Your...

LERA LYNN
 Wife, yes. Ada. Ada Lynn.

SILVER

Oh.

LERA LYNN

Yeah. Lynn-Jacobs, after she agreed to marry me for some reason. I took her name when I started working. Had a nice ring to it, even if I had to fight her tooth and nail for it. Hell, I had to do that for most things anyway.

SILVER

(realizing what she's saying)

Had to?

LERA LYNN

Yeah. *Had to.*

(beat)

You really don't recognize me, do you?

Silver doesn't answer. LERA SIGHS AGAIN.

LERA LYNN (CONT'D)

(fond remembrance)

She was a pain in the ass. That's half the reason I loved her. We met on the debate team at NYU when I was a junior. There I was, taking a stand on the floor with this funky little psych major sitting across the auditorium, glaring daggers at me.

(beat, smiling)

How on earth was I supposed to resist?

SILVER

(confused)

Psych major?

LERA LYNN

(CHUCKLES)

Yeah. That was about my reaction too. I told her she should switch to journalism when she finally agreed to go out with me: she had a knack for seeing through people. I only told her that once.

(MORE)

LERA LYNN (CONT'D)

You only ever told Ada something she didn't want to hear once: she'd rip your argument apart so fast it made your eyes water.

(beat)

First date was an unmitigated disaster. I couldn't keep up with her to save my life. Could've sworn we were done when I walked her back to her dorm, but then she invited me up, and... Well, the rest is history.

(SCOFFS)

What the hell am I doing -- I'm supposed to be interviewing you, not the other way around.

SILVER

(mortified)

I'm sorry if I overstepped...

LERA LYNN

(angrily)

You really did.

SILVER

(backtracking)

I'm sorry I...

LERA LYNN

(bitter)

Did I ask for an apology?

SILVER

No, but -- I think you need one.

LERA LYNN

Can we just move on, please?

SILVER

(putting the ball in her court)

You tell me.

A long pause between them. Lera's phone begins to buzz. She answers it.

LERA LYNN

(to Silver)

Hope you don't mind if I take this.

(into phone)

Yes?

CONTROLLER
 (commanding)
 Saturation point reached. Do it.

LERA LYNN
 Now?

CONTROLLER
 The generator's running out of
 power. He'll be bulletproof again
 in five minutes. It's now or never,
 understood?

LERA LYNN
 (hesitant)
 I... I understand.

CONTROLLER
 (threatening)
 Don't disappoint me.

The controller hangs up. Lera is silent for a moment.

LERA LYNN
 (quietly)
 Have you ever killed anyone?

SILVER
 I... what?

LERA LYNN
 (more daring)
 Have you ever killed anyone? While
 you were "helping people."

SILVER
 (horrified she would think
 that)
 What? No!

LERA LYNN
 No one?

SILVER
 God, of course I haven't killed
 anyone. I never would!

LERA LYNN
 Yet people die on your watch every
 day. One might say that you're
 responsible for their deaths.

SILVER

(trying to turn this
around)

I thought you didn't like the idea
of me watching over people.

LERA LYNN

I might like it a little better if
I actually felt safe.

SILVER

(desperately explaining)

Lera, look: I try. Okay? I do the
best I can, but I can't be
everywhere at once!

LERA LYNN

(anger boiling over)

Really? Seems to me almost like you
could -- you and your powers and
your god complex, jumping into the
fire to save us puny little humans
from ourselves. You make us trust
you -- you make us hopeful.
Dependant. Weak. And then, the
moment we really need you, you're
gone. And people die alone and
afraid because of you!

SILVER

(blurting out)

She wasn't alone!

Lera falls silent.

SILVER (CONT'D)

(realizing his mistake)

Oh shit.

LERA LYNN

(cold anger)

So. You do remember me, then.

SILVER

I... yes. Of course I do.

LERA LYNN

And you...

SILVER

Yes. I saw Ada.

LERA LYNN

(daring him to answer)

So what, you picked me over her?
Decided I was worth saving and she
wasn't?

SILVER

(deflated)

I tried to get to her in time. I
swear to you, I tried. But I was
too late. You had a chance. She
didn't.

LERA LYNN

(angry outburst)

That's bullshit and you know it!

SILVER

(stating facts, almost
numb)

There were a hundred other people
in that building, and even more all
across the city -- all of them
screaming out for me to save them.

LERA LYNN

And what about them? Why did you
save me and not them!?

SILVER

I saved as many as I could. And if
I hadn't been there, then you
wouldn't be sitting here accusing
me of murder.

LERA LYNN

(flat)

Well maybe it would've been better
that way.

Silver doesn't reply.

LERA LYNN (CONT'D)

(violently sarcastic)

What, nothing to say for yourself?
No easy answers?

SILVER

(weakly)

How would you explain yourself?

LERA LYNN

(thrown off)

What?

SILVER
 (turning her words on her)
 I just want to know -- how would
 you explain yourself? In your own
 words?

Lera is silent for a moment.

LERA LYNN
 (letting it all out)
 Ha. You know what? Fine. You want
 to know who I am? Really know? I'm
 the person who believed in you
 since the moment you showed up in
 the sky, saying you'd come to save
 us. I'm the person who turned down
 this interview at first, because I
 didn't think I could find any fault
 with you. And I'm the wife of the
 woman whose blood is on your hands.

SILVER
 (growing desperate)
 Lera, please...

LERA LYNN
 (cold and level)
 You want to know who I am? I'm the
 person who saves us all from people
 like you.

Lera pulls a pistol from her purse and fires. Silver grunts
 and falls out of his chair.

The shot echoes in the empty space. SILVER COUGHS. Lera drops
 the pistol.

LERA LYNN (CONT'D)
 (horrified)
 Oh god.

Lera runs to his side.

LERA LYNN (CONT'D)
 (in shock)
 Oh god oh god oh god...

SILVER
 (pained amusement)
 Heh. Not a bad shot. At least it
 wasn't in the gut...

SILVER GRUNTS IN PAIN.

LERA LYNN

(desperate)

Hold on, hold on, I'm going to call
an ambulance. God, what have I
done...

SILVER

Lera, please... Don't.

LERA LYNN

Please -- don't talk.

SILVER

(firm)

No ambulance. No help. Please. I
knew what I was walking into.

LERA LYNN

(stunned)

You -- you knew?

SILVER

(COUGHS)

I'm not an idiot. Interview in an
abandoned building two blocks from
where your wife died? Kind of
obvious.

LERA LYNN

(putting the pieces
together)

Then -- Why did you...

SILVER

Because -- I thought I could save
you. Pull you out of the fire.

LERA LYNN

(in shock)

You are an idiot.

SILVER

(amused)

Heh. If you say so. Hard to get a
word in edge-wise with you, isn't
it?

(beat)

Better this way than the other.
It's better this way...

SILVER COUGHS ONCE, BREATHING RAGGED -- then falls silent.
It's a silence that hangs in the air a long moment.

Lera's phone buzzes. She answers, but doesn't speak.

CONTROLLER
 (through phone)
 The generator's gone out. Is it
 done?

Lera doesn't answer.

CONTROLLER (CONT'D)
 Lynn? Hello? Did you do it? Is he
 dead?

Lera drops the phone. It clatters on the concrete floor. She slowly stands and walks out of the room.

CONTROLLER (CONT'D)
 (angrily)
 Lynn? Damn it, answer me! What's
 going on in there? Hello? Hello?

MUSIC AND FADE
 TO:

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - HALLWAY - NIGHT

A noisy, squalid apartment block. Kids cry behind the doors. Muffled arguments.

Footsteps move closer, then stop. Someone knocks on a thin wooden door. Someone pulls a chain and opens it.

ANDREW PAYNE
 (guarded)
 Can I... Help you, ma'am?

LERA LYNN
 (hesitant)
 Sorry to bother you, but... Are you
 Andrew Payne?

ANDREW PAYNE
 I'm sorry Miss, this really isn't a
 good time...

LERA LYNN
 (blurting it out)
 It's about your son.

Payne considers for a moment, then opens the door wider.

ANDREW PAYNE
 (reluctantly)
 Come in.

Lera walks in and shuts it behind her.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - PAYNE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The radiator ticks and creaks. An old refrigerator hums. The evening news drones on the TV.

NEWSCASTER

...New York, and indeed the whole world, continues to mourn the tragic loss of Silver; our city's finest defender and the one strand that seemed to connect all our many lives...

Andrew switches the TV off.

ANDREW PAYNE

Sorry, I... I just can't help listening to that.

LERA LYNN

I understand.

ANDREW PAYNE

You said this was about Paul?

LERA LYNN

(hesitant)
It's... yeah. About him. And, well...

ANDREW PAYNE

Silver.

LERA LYNN

Oh. So... You knew.

ANDREW PAYNE

(deflecting)
We lived in this apartment for ten years. It look big enough for secrets?

LERA LYNN

(not sure what to say)
I see.

ANDREW PAYNE

(trying to get this over with)
Well? You got something to say, you'd best out and say it.

LERA LYNN
(trying to tell the truth)
I -- I was with your son. When he died.

ANDREW PAYNE
(intrigued)
Were you now. Girlfriend?

LERA LYNN
(thrown off)
What? Oh, no, I wasn't his -- no.

ANDREW PAYNE
(amused)
Huh. Didn't think so.

LERA LYNN
I'm a reporter. I was writing a piece on your son... At least, I was supposed to be.

ANDREW PAYNE
(worried)
Christ, he didn't tell you his name, did he?

LERA LYNN
No, I figured that out on my own.

ANDREW PAYNE
(TUTTING)
Told that boy he should've covered his face. Didn't want to scare anybody, though.
(beat)
Guess it don't matter now.

LERA LYNN
He... He said something to me I can't get my head around. As he was...
(unable to say it)
He said it was 'Better this way than the other.' Do you know what he meant?

ANDREW PAYNE
Hmm. He tell you about his ear?

LERA LYNN
Yes.

ANDREW PAYNE

Lost hearing in it when he was about twelve. Same day he got his powers. Heh. 'Lord Giveth, and He taketh away...'

LERA LYNN

How did it happen?

ANDREW PAYNE

There was a railway accident outside our hometown. He and a couple of friends were playing cowboys by the tracks when it happened. Terrible thing. Train was carrying waste from a chemical plant up north. One of the boys died right away. Two more got sick and died a week later. Paul barely pulled through. When he woke up, he couldn't hear out his left ear -- But other than that he was alright. Well... different. But okay.

LERA LYNN

So you think the chemicals gave him his powers?

ANDREW PAYNE

He always said so. Said they were still in him, too: like fuel, he said. So when we got the diagnosis, he wasn't surprised a bit.

LERA LYNN

What diagnosis?

ANDREW PAYNE

Brain tumor on the frontal lobe. Bad. Docs gave him six months, three years ago. He was a fighter, that boy. Chemo helped, but... we both knew he didn't have long. That's when he decided to put on the cape.

LERA LYNN

Did... Did he talk to you about my interview?

ANDREW PAYNE

(unsure)
Hmm. Think he mentioned it. Can't quite remember. Why?

LERA LYNN
 (trying to keep it
 together)
 He... Did he say goodbye to you
 before he left that day?

ANDREW PAYNE
 We always said goodbye before we
 left. Bit of a Payne family
 tradition, that one.

LERA LYNN
 What do you mean?

ANDREW PAYNE
 (hesitant)
 Let's just say... Coming home's
 never a guarantee in this family.
 My pop killed himself when I was
 ten. His dad did the same when he
 was four. My wife -- Paul's ma,
 she... Soon after the accident.
 Paul never really got over it. But
 he was the one bright spot, that
 boy. In spite of everything. He
 made me hope.
 (beat)
 He still does.

They're both silent for a moment. Then, Lera stands up.

ANDREW PAYNE (CONT'D)
 (a little disappointed)
 Got somewhere to be?

LERA LYNN
 I -- Yes. I do.
 (beat)
 You're probably going to hear
 some... strange things. In the next
 couple of days. Please. Don't let
 it change how you think of Paul.
 Promise me that.

ANDREW PAYNE
 Why would it?

LERA LYNN
 (desperate)
Promise me.

ANDREW PAYNE
 (SCOFFS)
 I've known Paulie his entire life.
 (MORE)

ANDREW PAYNE (CONT'D)

Nothing anyone says could change my
mind about him. Nothing.

LERA LYNN

(relieved)

Thank you.

Lera grabs her bags, opens the door, and walks out.

MUSIC AND FADE
TO:

INT. PRISON - VISITATION - DAY

A loud, ugly buzzer, and a heavy door unlocks. Two sets of
footsteps enter a room lit by noisy florescent tubes.

ALAN BLANC

(sarcastic)

Cozy, this place.

GUARD

Well we try our best, Mister Blanc.

ALAN BLANC

(spitballing)

You know, I should give you the
number of the interior decorator at
the Globe. Now that place just
screams Feng...

Another ugly buzzer, and another door opens. Someone shuffles
in, chains clattering.

GUARD

(brusque)

You have ten minutes.

ALAN BLANC

Much appreciated.

GUARD

(buddy-buddy)

Oh, and could I get that number
from you by the way? I'm
redecorating my house and wanted
to...

ALAN BLANC

Have my ten minutes started?

GUARD

Oh. Right.

The guard leaves, closing the door behind him. Blanc steps forward, as does the chained figure.

LERA LYNN
 (smiling fondly)
 Good to see you again, Alan.

ALAN BLANC
 (letting it all out)
 What in the *hell* did you think you were doing, Lera? Going behind my back on an assignment? Working with a wanted felon? *Assassinating* a subject? And Silverman, of all people? What am I supposed to do with this -- say I had no idea what my own staff was doing? And don't get me *started* on the damage you've done to our reputation. As if people didn't distrust the news enough already!? I... I...

Alan stops, TRYING TO CATCH HIS BREATH.

LERA LYNN
 That all?

ALAN BLANC
 (giving up)
 Yeah. Thought I'd have more to say, but that's about it.
 (beat)
 How's the food?

LERA LYNN
 (rolling her eyes)
 Jesus Christ, Alan...

ALAN BLANC
 That bad, huh?

LERA LYNN
 (old friends joking)
 Ha. Yeah. That bad.

Alan reaches into his pocket for a crinkly bag.

ALAN BLANC
 Here: only thing in the vending machine that looked halfway decent.

Lera grabs the bag, her chains rattling.

LERA LYNN
(sarcastic)
Sure they won't arrest you for
smuggling contraband?

ALAN BLANC
A little act of defiance, for an
old friend.
(beat)
Even if I feel like I don't know
them anymore.

LERA LYNN
(regretful)
Alan...

ALAN BLANC
I mean, most of it I get... Don't
agree with it, but I get it. That
morning after the earthquake? I've
never seen anyone that mad. I mean,
call it grief, call it temporary
insanity or projecting or whatever,
but... Leaving your phone at the
crime scene? What was going through
your head to make you do that?

LERA LYNN
(quiet)
Nothing.

ALAN BLANC
(SCOFFS)
Nothing? I doubt that very much.

LERA LYNN
Static. White noise. It was like...
I'd been sleepwalking, and I just
woke up.

ALAN BLANC
(disbelieving)
People don't murder superheroes in
their sleep, Lera.

LERA LYNN
(distracted)
I know that. But -- I don't know,
it felt like that. Like everything
I'd done was some kind of bad dream
I was waking up from. Only what I
was waking up to was even worse.

ALAN BLANC
(trying to comfort)
It wasn't your fault. The
Controller found you when you were
vulnerable and grieving, and he...

LERA LYNN
(SCOFFS)
Do you really think that's how it
went? *I found him*. It was my idea.

ALAN BLANC
(taken aback)
Oh. I see.

LERA LYNN
Have they found him yet?

ALAN BLANC
(grateful for the change
of subject)
No, they're still looking. They
tried using your phone to track his
calls, but by the time they found
his lab he'd disappeared.

LERA LYNN
Damn.

ALAN BLANC
(trying to be optimistic
for her)
Still, they found a lot of forensic
evidence. Maybe you gave them a
chance by dropping that phone.

LERA LYNN
God, I hope so.

A moment of silence.

ALAN BLANC
So... Why now?

LERA LYNN
What?

ALAN BLANC
Why call me now? It's been three
months since your sentencing. Why
not before?

LERA LYNN
I -- I finished the story.

ALAN BLANC
 (disbelieving)
 You finished -- Lera, I'm sorry,
 but it's a little past due...

LERA LYNN
 Please, Alan. I gave it to the
 warden. He promised that he'd let
 you take it if you asked.

ALAN BLANC
 ('I can't')
 Lera...

LERA LYNN
 It's all there. All of it. My story
 and his. My confession, and my
 apology. You asked me what you're
 going to do with this mess, and I'm
 telling you: Run the story. Please.

ALAN BLANC
 (reluctant)
 I'll be kicking another hornet's
 nest if I do, Lera...

LERA LYNN
 Please. For an old friend. One last
 favor.

Alan thinks about it for a moment.

ALAN BLANC
 (mostly joking)
 Do I get the chips back if I say
 yes?

LERA LYNN
 (dead serious)
 Definitely not.

ALAN BLANC
 (CHUCKLES)
 Didn't think so.

Alan stands, and walks to the door.

LERA LYNN
 (desperate)
 Is that a yes?

Alan knocks on the door.

ALAN BLANC
 (SIGHS)
 It's a definite maybe.

LERA LYNN
 Thank you.

The buzzer goes off, and the door creaks open.

ALAN BLANC
 We're all done here.

GUARD
 Alrighty then.

ALAN BLANC
 Say, is there any chance we could
 stop by the Warden's office on the
 way out...?

The door slams shut behind them. Lera leans back in her chair
 and SIGHS SHAKILY, her heart pounding.

LERA LYNN (V.O.)
 Where do I begin?

FADE TO MUSIC

LERA LYNN (V.O.)
 Last year, I had the opportunity to
 interview the man known as Silver --
 sometimes Silverman, sometimes the
 Silver Streak, and sometimes other
 names too stupid to put in print.
 He preferred Silver.

(beat)
 To most people, he was an icon: a
 beacon of hope in a hopeless world.
 Few people knew how true that
 really was. His origin, his life,
 and his death were all steeped in
 tragedy. He lost friends, family,
 and ultimately his own life to an
 ever-present darkness that struck
 without warning or purpose. It's a
 darkness many of us know all too
 well: a darkness I chose to
 embrace.

(beat)
 And yet, for all the reasons he had
 to lose hope and give in, he chose
 the light instead.

(MORE)

LERA LYNN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Not out of foolishness or a naive sense of optimism: He knew better than anyone how terrifying and meaningless the world we made truly is. All day, every day, he heard people crying out for help: sometimes people he could save, and more often those he could not. But it was the ones who didn't cry out who needed his help the most. I know. I was one of them.

(beat)

For a long time, I blamed Silver for my loss and suffering, believing that if I could kill him, my life would finally make sense again. But he knew the truth: that life is pain and loss and heartbreak from the day we're born to the day we die. But it's also hope. So long as we're alive, there's still a chance to change, to choose a different path, to help others and make life a little less terrible.

(beat)

I will never be forgiven for what I've done. I know that. I've accepted that. But I am alive. And I have a choice: wallow in the dark, or work to prove myself wrong. To prove that the light is really stronger than the darkness. It isn't easy -- it never was. But it's only a choice. And while we're alive, we can always chose.

(beat)

The golden age of hope is gone. We can't bring it back to life by clinging to the past. But there's a new age dawning: an age of heroic defiance and hopeful resistance in the face of despair. A Silver Age that will shine all the brighter for the dark surrounding it. I may not live to see that day, but once we've all had a chance to mourn and grow and move on... I believe that we'll chose hope, and work to make it real.

END THEME AND
CREDITS