

Riot Confidential

by Tami Canaday

ANNOUNCER

Laurel is dying.

SCENE ONE

At Rise: Sounds of a street riot and a large plate glass window breaking. The glass shatters and falls to the ground for a long time. Silence.

SCENE TWO

Lights up. The present. On the floor slumped against a counter is LAUREL bleeding in the Wizard's Emporium. Next to her is CHRIS holding her hand and frantically talking into his phone. Sounds of a receding riot can be heard in the distance. Occasionally, white and red lights shimmer back and forth across the stage.

CHRIS

I'm here at the—

(Looks up at store sign)

—something called the Wizard's Emporium —No, I'm not sure of the street—someplace near where the riot is happening—come-on! There must be only one Wizard Emporium in Denver.—No? — (incredulous) My name? Chris Fellow—she's bleeding—Shit!

(Drops the phone to put pressure on both her arms. Yells to phone)

Somebody needs to come. Please, man. Oh, God. Oh, God.

(CHRIS looks around.)

CHRIS

Shit.

(From a block away, a bullhorn.)

BULLHORN

A state of emergency has been declared by Mayor Fernandez for Denver. Please immediately leave the area or you will be arrested.

CHRIS

(yelling)

I'm in here! Help! Injured person with me. Help! I have an injured person.

(Waits.)

Help! Help!

(A beat. From several blocks away a bull horn.)

BULLHORN

Mayor Fernandez has called a state of emergency for Denver. Please immediately leave the area or you will be arrested.

CHRIS
(yelling)

I'm in here! Here! In here!
(Waits. Resigned.)

You stupid bastards.

(The bullhorn's words have become indistinct)

LAUREL
(cries out)

Don't leave me. Uncle Price. Uncle Ray. (moans) I can't seem to stop . . . what happened?

(Looks in the distance.)

Uncle Price. Uncle Ray.
(Looks to CHRIS.)

CHRIS

I won't leave you. I'm not leaving you. I just need to take my hands away for a moment—

(Quickly grabs his phone and looks.)

I'm sure, they're tracking us. 911 can do that, right? Track cell phones that die?

(Drops the phone to put pressure back on LAUREL's arms.)

Oh, Jesus. Hold on, baby.

(Stands up and looks around. Grabs a package containing a barmaid's costume. Tears it open.)

Yeah. A barmaid's costume. Who thinks of this shit?

(Uses the white apron to make a tourniquet for LAUREL's right arm. Next, puts pressure with both hands on her left arm.)

Okay, we're gonna stay still for the moment. Or, I'm gonna stay still. You're already still. . . . (A long beat. Tender.) Oh, man. You jumping up and down to see over the crowd—thought what it'd be like to put you on my shoulders. To let you see the whole/

(LAUREL moans.)

LAUREL

Uncle Price. Don't walk//

CHRIS

I'm here. No one has left you—you're here with me. Let's try this other costume on your arm.

(Reaches for another costume. Examines it)

A Dutch Girl.

(Takes a deep breath.)

Ready-set-go.

(Releases his hand from her arm. Starts tearing with both hands its white apron into strips.)

Quickly, Chris. Hold on, baby. Don't want to let you bleed out. Go, go!

(Finishes tearing the strips. Takes the torn strips of the Dutch Girl costume and makes a tourniquet for LAUREL's left arm. Steps back and waits.)

Shit! It's working.

(Takes several more steps back and looks around.)

I'm a fool—man—yeah, yeah — police won't believe I helped you.

(Looks around store)

Girl, who buys this stuff anyway?

(Steps back further.)

Police will not believe I stayed to help.

(Stares at LAUREL.)

Man, do I stay? Do I go? (A long beat.) . . . Maybe, just take out some of the glass.

You're lucky your legs just got nickel-ed by the glass. But your arms. You're wearing this ug-ly vest. Protected you some.

(Stands over LAUREL. Panic laughs.)

You're into some geek chic and shit.

(Kneels next to her. Starts to gently take glass out of LAUREL's hair.)

. . . So, I need to be upfront. My cell died. . . .Not sure if that operator can trace my call.

. . . But, they've got to come along. . . . Just know it.Look at this.

(Pulls out a handful of glass. Lets it fall from his palm.)

Safety glass. Broke into chunks. But damn, some of it didn't.

(As LAUREL speaks the following lines, she's short of breath. She opens her eyes.)

LAUREL
(Softly)

No, you stay.

(He leans in.)

CHRIS

What?

(LAUREL looks directly at CHRIS for a moment)

LAUREL

You're in my life to come.

CHRIS

What?

LAUREL

Stay.

CHRIS

Fuck! Glad you're awake.

LAUREL
(Dreamily)

Uncle Price.

SCENE THREE

A hallucination. Lights shift. LAUREL stands. CHRIS stands next to her. RAY and PRICE burst in.

CHRIS
(surprised)

What the hell?

PRICE
(immediately to LAUREL)

What's wrong with your arms?

Nothing. LAUREL

Why are they wrapped, then? PRICE

You know these guys? CHRIS
(to LAUREL)

Yes. LAUREL

(RAY looks around.)

Like Farmer Brown's pig sty. RAY

(RAY starts to pick store stuff up from the counter and then throws the items to the floor.)

How long have you been living like this? PRICE

Look a dead cat. RAY

(RAY holds up a dead stuffed cat.)

It's a stuffed cat. A joke. LAUREL

Sure. Funny. I thought you liked cats. RAY

I do. LAUREL

(RAY tosses the stuffed cat aside.)

Smells like cow pies. PRICE

RAY

Worse. If there is a worse. (to CHRIS) I'm Uncle Ray. And this—
(Indicates PRICE)

— is Uncle Price.

CHRIS

Burst into our place and then you fucking introduce yourselves? I don't think so.

PRICE

Gotta a mouth, that one.

RAY

Yeah, who woulda guessed?

(Picks up a weathered magician's black cape from the floor and holds it up.)

How old do you think this is?

PRICE

Couple hundred years?

(RAY guffaws.)

LAUREL

It's from a novelty shop.

(RAY drops the cape to the floor.)

CHRIS

You need to get out.

PRICE

Mouthy, so what are you gonna do? Use brute strength? Call the landlord? He's the one who gave us the key.

CHRIS

What? I'm gonna talk to that mother-fucker.

RAY

Yeah? 'bout not paying the rent? I wouldn't. His Stetson was on fire when he gave us the key this morning.

LAUREL

Still illegal to burst in.

RAY

We can dicker 'bout semantics. But right now, you need to grab your things.

LAUREL

Grab my things? I'm not grabbing my things/

PRICE

Don't look like you got much anyway/

RAY

Grab your things and go.

LAUREL

Ida's behind this.

(PRICE pulls out cell phone.)

PRICE

I can call her. I'm sure she'd be thrilled to know we're here with you.

LAUREL

Don't believe you for a second. (to CHRIS) She knows. So, she sent these two.

CHRIS

(to LAUREL)

What? Why would she? You said she agreed you should stay here. Was good 'bout it and everything.

RAY

(to LAUREL)

Not so good.

LAUREL

We're going to have a conversation? A back and forth between us? You're not just gonna bust into my place, huh, and order me around like I'm five years old? Shout like high school bullies that I need to get my things? Yes? No. (a beat) Then you both need to get out now.

RAY

How? You gonna sick your boyfriend on us? Look at him. He's as skinny as a celery stalk—can't protect you like we can.

LAUREL

The sheriff will.

PRICE

The sheriff? He knows what we're doing, and he's okay with it. Said we should of done it sooner.

CHRIS

You might want to rethink calling the sheriff.

RAY

What? You got contraband in here? Drugs?

(Starts kicking the items on the floor. Stops suddenly.)

Is he keeping you here? Is he?

(LAUREL and PRICE exchange looks. PRICE shakes his head and looks at the ground.)

RAY (cont'd)

Well, you've never lived like this before.

(CHRIS laughs.)

RAY (cont'd)

Did I say something funny?

CHRIS

She's got more pressing concerns.

(Light change. PRICE and RAY exit)

SCENE FOUR

The present. LAUREL sits back down to slump against the cabinet. CHRIS resumes same position from Scene Two.

LAUREL

(babbling)

They've musta seen the stuffed cat before. Ray named it. How to forget a cat. I wonder. Uncles?

(sudden to CHRIS)

LAUREL (con't)

(upset)

I'm not still here, am I? Oh, geez, I am. I am, I am, I am.

CHRIS

How are you feeling? You blanked out for a moment.

LAUREL

. . .Lots of pain—coming in waves —what happened?

You're really injured.

CHRIS

Can I sit up, more?

LAUREL

Not sure//

CHRIS

I'd feel better//

LAUREL

Not sure if it's the smartest move//

CHRIS

(continued)