

# Hopeless Oceans

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# Epilogos

CHAPTER 99  
**TOXIC EMPATHY**  
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**D**aola, wait.” Astrid begged.

“Why? What are they going to do, kill me?”

“Just think of Mom. That’s all I’m asking.”

“Maybe it’s time *you* thought of her. All this laying low looks good on the page. But you know it’s fucked as well as I do. Mom would rather die than spend her life wondering about what’s happened to us. And Riot’s here, which—”

“Let that go already.” Astrid demanded. “It’s not her fault that Odie’s dead.”

“One: The fuck it’s not. Two: You still aren’t hearing what I’m saying. Rimple’s mom *knows* he’s alive. That’s the only reason I can think of for why she’d be giving away his belongings. Riot copped to thinking that, herself. Meaning we got the shit end of the stick. Mom’s completely in the dark. Doesn’t it bother you, the thought of what Ian might do to her if he catches wind of us being gone?”

“Am I the only one who can’t sleep if people are whispering?” Sixly asked.

The sisters jumped, grabbing one another by the shoulders. From the middle of a moonlit classroom, they could barely make out the intruder’s silhouette within the door which led to the hall.

“Shoes on. Bag packed.” she continued. “Seems someone thinks they’re getting out of here.”

“And you aren’t stopping me either.” Daola said.

“Oh, sis. Why would I want to do that?”

Her tone seemed torn between compassionate and deadly.

“Maybe you’re such a light sleeper because you know you’re the only mortal in this entire fucking school.” the older girl said. “Who even cares if you’re dangerous? Someone gets the drop on you *once*, and it’s over forever.”

"Gotta make sure you get the drop though. Because if I gain the upper hand, you'll soon be telling everyone what the worst way to go really is. Ever thought about how many ways there actually are?"

"Hey." Astrid began. "Can we just *lower* the stakes for once?"

"I was only trying to paint a clearer picture." Sixly countered. "Anyway, where is it we're going?"

"No one's going anywhere."

"Well, *I* need a change of pace. And your sister's only apt to become a bigger headache if we don't get whatever this is out of the way. Still, I need to know what she's getting us into."

"I want to see my mom." Daola said.

"No you don't. I mean, I'm sure you do. But that's not the driving force here. If it were, you wouldn't have tried sneaking it past Astrid."

Sixly stepped into the night's light, and sat at a desk beside the standing siblings.

"Here we are." she continued. "Sisters of the moon. Now let's never again dance in the dark of solo secrecy."

There was a moment of prolonged silence.

"I left something back home that belonged to Odie." Daola said. "I think I've found a way to keep him alive. But first I've gotta know... the rest."

Sixly stood, and stretched before speaking again.

"So you're risking everything for an unread suicide letter?"

"Yes... How did you know that?"

"Context clues are paper thin around here; pun unintended, though still humorous. And the thing's not even addressed to you, otherwise you'd have already read it. Am I right?"

No one spoke, so Sixly went on.

"If we do this, you have to show the letter to Riot once we're back."

"I can't agree to that." Daola said, sounding anxiety-stricken. "You know I can't."

"What I know is that she's our sister too. And the blood we spill beneath the spell of the moon must never be one another's."

Another silent moment passed.

"Are you high right now?" Astrid asked.

Sixly had taken to holding one hand up in the moonlight, and running her fingers along the back of her arm; only to switch hands, and repeat the process.

“No.” she answered. “Just starting to feel connected is all.”

“Connected to what?” Daola inquired.

Sixly withdrew her gun, and dropped the magazine into her free hand. She counted the bullets, then slid the mag back into place, before stowing the Glock once again.

“Everything,” she said.

“Hold up now.” Astrid said, turning to her older sister. “How’s a letter supposed to bring Odie back to life?”

“It’s not. He’s gone. But that won’t stop me from spending the rest of my days writing about what the rest of his could have been.”

The younger girl knowingly threw her arms around her sibling’s frame.

“When you see Mom, make sure she knows we’ll be home as soon as we can be.”

“I will.” Daola assured her.

“You’re not coming with?” Sixly asked her peer.

“No.” Astrid said. “Someone has to keep the rest of them from chasing after you.”

“Now there’s using your head. If we aren’t back in a week... just wait forever.”

On their way out of the room, Daola bumped into one of the desks. A pen hit the ground, shooting thin noise around the class. She picked it up, and paused. It looked just like the one she’d let Odie borrow the first time he’d gotten her high.

She soon sat the pen back on the desk, wondering what his last words would prove to be in that letter. But moving into the hallway, she promptly reminded herself that the note didn’t contain his final words. He had many more of those to come, so long as she had hands with which to write them.

## CHAPTER SOUNDTRACK REFERENCE

99. Happiness – Hobo Johnson