

The Observers

by

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Cast of CharactersMILTON:

58

CHEYENNE:

24

Place

Undisclosed location

Time

Evening

2.

Setting: A concrete office with a single desk and two chairs surrounding it. No carpeting, pictures or anything that gives off warmth. Everything is a combination of steel, iron and metal.

At Rise: Cheyenne sits across from Milton's desk as the lights rise.

MILTON: Do you know why I have sent for you? I wanted to get one last look at you Cheyenne...I'm sending you away.

CHEYENNE: ...I'm not ready yet.

MILTON: You are ready.

CHEYENNE: I am telling you that I am not ready. How are you so sure?

MILTON (gently): We both know you are ready.

CHEYENNE: Well I will have to refuse. If I am not ready, I'm not going.

MILTON: You have no choice.

CHEYENNE (defiant): I should have a choice. You can't expect me to spring to our agreement! Don't you understand, there was never any other choice for me? You know this! I had to take my chance, or I would have been long dead by now. And for what? To live a life that will forever be controlled? To be a puppet that you get to play master with? What gives you the right? What gives them the right or anybody the right to control another human being? (beat) There is one thing that you cannot prevent me from doing. Do you want to know what that little secret is? ...At any moment I can snap my own neck and die. After all, I've been trained for it, haven't I? (beat) Your little experiment, gone forever. And for what? All that investment would have been for nothing. (gesturing to herself) All *this*, for nothing! Is that what you *really* want?

MILTON: You shouldn't be asking anyone that but yourself. Is that what you really want?

CHEYENNE: I want to be free!

MILTON: There is no such thing in life as *free*.

CHEYENNE: You can give me my freedom, Milton.

MILTON: What makes you think I can?

CHEYENNE: I know that you hold the authority. We've become close, haven't we? You can give me this chance.

MILTON: If I had you released, I would hang. Is that what you would prefer?

CHEYENNE: ...No. We could plan something, with the skills I have learnt.

MILTON laughs.

CHEYENNE (cont'd): Don't laugh. We could make it as though I escaped.

MILTON: The observers will never let you out of their sight.

CHEYENNE: Can you make them look the other way?

MILTON: I cannot! (beat) Damn it, Cheyenne. Do you think I'm God? I am under the same surveillance as you. They are watching us this instant. You'd be dumb to think otherwise.

CHEYENNE: I will not live like this.

MILTON: You agreed to it!

CHEYENNE: I want out!!

MILTON: Cheyenne, listen to me...your life will be better than it was before. It will feel like your own. You can carve out a life for yourself within your duty.

CHEYENNE: This is impossible.

MILTON: Give yourself the time to go back out into the world, breathe in all that fresh air, make friends, find a lover...just be happy. When you get called upon, you know what to do. It won't be anything you'd ever have to think about.

CHEYENNE: I don't have the mental strength for what's going to be asked of me.

MILTON: That's not how you were trained.

CHEYENNE: This coldness...how do you expect me to be a fully functioning human being when I have to carry this ice inside myself to survive?

MILTON: What was the alternative? Living the remaining days on the streets, begging for money, doing drugs, sleeping around...when I found you it was in the middle of a February storm, you were huddled up in a ball, inside a rusty car. You would have died. I took you in. I gave you your health back, I brought you back to life. You were given a one in a billion chance. Don't blow this opportunity. Don't get caught up with your old negative way of thinking. Don't do it. (beat) You've been through hell and back inside this program. I know it first hand because I once sat where you are sitting now. The second you decide against the work, you are as good as dead.

MILTON (cont'd): Killing yourself, makes no difference other than the fact that I believe you have in you to be one of our best, and you would have been nothing more than a waste of talent, you're right. Don't let that be you, Cheyenne. Not you. Give yourself a year and if it's not working out, well, we both know where the rabbit hole will go, don't we?

CHEYENNE: When I was a little girl, the one good thing my mother did for me, was she allowed me to come and go as I please. I must have been twelve years old and I was able to be out all hours of the night. I was never scolded, never asked questions, I was left to my own devices.

MILTON: Cheyenne, haven't we become friends?

CHEYENNE: We have.

MILTON: Haven't I been good to you?

CHEYENNE: You've had your moments.

MILTON: Don't you believe in yourself?

CHEYENNE: I do.

MILTON: Don't you want this chance?

CHEYENNE: I thought I did.

MILTON: What do you mean?

CHEYENNE: Of course I'm grateful...to you...Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Blanchett and Mr. Rogers. All of you and more...I've learned so much...I have...I just feel as though with everything you all have given me, I could be so much more...I feel as though I can reach and grab my full potential. Instead, I will be forced to bow down to this institution and never really know who I could have been.

MILTON: That's not true.

CHEYENNE: It is true.

MILTON: You are free to do whatever you desire.

CHEYENNE: Within strict guidelines.

MILTON: Be whoever you wish to be, but when the phone rings you must answer the call! Damn it to hell, what is wrong with you?! If you want to be a painter, PAINT. If you want to be a rock climber, CLIMB. Be a science teacher and TEACH! But when you get contacted, everything stops until you finish your task and that is final. There is no other way around it.

CHEYENNE: Fine! I'll fucking do it!

MILTON (sympathetically): ...Cheyenne.

CHEYENNE: ...I said, I'll stick to our agreement.

MILTON: Will that be all?

CHEYENNE: How long will I have to be on call?

MILTON: Until they decide your work is done. You don't get to decide and neither do I.

CHEYENNE: Who are *they*?

MILTON: You know I can't answer that.

CHEYENNE: Will they make me eventually be like you, hold a similar title, live in this shit-hole building?

MILTON (smiling): This was my own choice. They gave me my walking papers. My work was done, I *wanted* to stay.

CHEYENNE: Why, here?

MILTON: ...Over time you will find yourself connected to this place in more ways than you could ever imagine. You will feel important, you will understand the gravity of your responsibility. That's a tough thing to let go of, when you see it in those terms.

CHEYENNE: Not sure I ever will. (beat) How long were you in the field for?

MILTON: Thirty-two years.

CHEYENNE: That's too long.

MILTON: It goes by in a flash.

CHEYENNE: Right.

MILTON: Is it safe to say we are back on the same page together?

CHEYENNE: I guess so.

MILTON: Cheyenne?

CHEYENNE: Yes, we are on the same page together, as you put it.

MILTON: Well done. I respect your decision. I know it has not been an easy one. Have an early night. You are scheduled to be sent out early in the morning, with instructions. Your first assignment has already been designated and waits for you in your room.

MILTON stands.

MILTON (cont'd): This is our final moment.

CHEYENNE: Why's that?

MILTON: Again, things I am not permitted to explain.

MILTON circles round his desk and
stands in front of CHEYENNE.

Thank you for getting through. I am proud of who you have become.

CHEYENNE: Thank you, Milton.

MILTON walks CHEYENNE to the front
door of his office.

MILTON: Remember, it will get easier. (beat) Cheyenne, you have
tremendous potential...give yourself a chance to see it through. You
won't disappoint yourself, I promise.

CHEYENNE hugs MILTON and kisses him on
the cheek.

CHEYENNE exits the office.

END OF PLAY