

Bella and Theo: Detectives of Crime "PILOT"

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PRODUCTION DRAFT

INT. A GREY LYNN FLAT - A BEDROOM - NIGHT

MARY-JO BRIDGES, 21, sleeps lightly. On her bedside table sits an unfinished glass of white wine and an unopened Blue Raspberry Powerade. Moonlight shines through the open window and catches on the Powerade bottle, azure liquid shimmering, splaying a soft blue across Mary-Jo's face.

The moonlight's path is interrupted. Something is in the room with Mary-Jo, a shadow between the window and her bed. After a moment, the shadow moves on.

Mary-Jo opens her eyes as a RIGID CLANKING sounds from the corridor outside her bedroom. She sits up confidently and pulls a piece of plywood from under her pillow.

INT. THE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mary-Jo exits her bedroom into THE HALLWAY and walks slowly towards THE KITCHEN. She is fully dressed, denim-on-denim, from a party earlier in the night. As she nears the Kitchen the clanking sound is overtaken by the familiar WHIR of a microwave.

Int. The Kitchen - Continuous

She turns into the kitchen, hoisting the plywood dangerously. The microwave continues to whirl. Recognition crosses Mary-Jo's face.

MARY-JO

Oh, it's you. I didn't expect to see-

A DING, and the microwave ends its cycle. In time with the noise, blue light explodes from the direction of Mary-Jo's attention. The light expands, covering Mary-Jo's face as she screams and screams.

FADE TO WHITE

CREDITS SEQUENCE

FADE IN:

INT. THE KITCHEN - A WEEK LATER - MORNING

BELLA and THEO, Detectives of Crime, examine their surroundings while waiting for Mary-Jo. Both wear trench-coats and expressions of discontent. Theo scrutinises a hung print while Bella investigates knick-knacks.

Mary-Jo enters and shakily sits at the dining table. The two gumshoes seat themselves across from her and prepare themselves with notebooks and writing tools. Bella holds a fountain pen, Theo a thick colour pencil.

(CONTINUED)

BELLA
Mary-Jo Bridges?

MARY-JO
(clearing her throat)
Yeah...I mean, YES.

BELLA
Our names are Bella-

THEO
And Theo.

BELLA
Your flatmates asked us to come
and talk to you about your
incident. Six days ago, was it?

THEO
I wrote down seven.

MARY-JO
It was five days ago.

BELLA
Hm. It sounds like you got quite
a fright.

MARY-JO
...yeah...

BELLA
Could you describe what happened?

MARY-JO
Who are you people? I already
talked to the fuzz.

BELLA
We're not police. We're
independent.

THEO
We specialise in the events your
friend described to us over the
phone.

MARY-JO
God. This is some BuzzFeed thing,
isn't it? "Ten signs your
flatmate is crazy."

BELLA
We're not from BuzzFeed. We're
independent, and we offer our
services to those who require
them.

MARY-JO

I could tell you what happened...it can't make me any more of a joke. It was Monday night. I'd been at a gig and went to bed as soon as I got in. At, like, three AM, I woke up. I don't know why.

Mary-Jo's wary description of her evening is crosscut with footage from the previous scene.

MARY-JO

I heard this noise. It was strange, like, weird. It sort-of freaked me out so...I grabbed something to protect myself with. This banging was coming from the kitchen...I got closer and the microwave was going. It was kind of a relief. I thought, hey, its just Max, or someone else who lives here, they're getting a snack. I don't know. I turned the corner and said the thing they always say in those BBC crime shows.

THEO

What do they say?

MARY-JO

"Oh, it's you! What are you doing here?" It was a joke. But Max wasn't there. It was this...this DARK figure. It was sort-of...inspecting the back of the oatmeal bag. The microwave stopped and it turned and saw me. Then, I don't know how to say it...this thing...it...

Bella and Theo are completely engaged in the story.

MARY-JO

IT EXPLODED.

THEO

No way!

BELLA

What happened then?

MARY-JO

I-I don't know. There was so much light. I woke up the next day in my bed, but since then, whenever

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARY-JO (cont'd)
I close my eyes, I see...I see
this symbol...

THEO
Can you draw it for us?

MARY-JO
I drew it for my flatmates, and I
drew it for my parents, and I
drew it for the police. They all
laughed.

BELLA
We're not going to laugh,
Mary-Jo.

Theo hands Mary-Jo his notebook and pencil. Confidently she draws thick lines. It begins with a circle, which is split into Eleven parts. Of the eleven, three are filled with wriggling dots.

Bella and Theo make eye contact, aware of the significance this symbol could hold. Bella turns to Mary-Jo.

BELLA
Your flatmates wanted us to tell
you they know you haven't paid
power in two months, and that
you've got two weeks to find a
new place to live.

INT. THE DOC OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY

Bella and Theo share a desk. Bella is on her laptop, Theo looking over her shoulder. On the table is a full ashtray, an empty wine bottle, a formerly full coffee plunger, and a broken syringe. These detectives have the requisite vices.

BELLA
This is big. It's, maybe, what
we've been searching for.

THEO
We know nothing about it.

BELLA
What's to know? There's a symbol.
That's evidence there's something
spooky going on.

THEO
Is the symbol the key?

(CONTINUED)

BELLA
It's all we've got to go on.

THEO
Have you identified it yet?

A reverse shot of the laptop screen, Bella and Theo are trawling through the NZ ONLINE archives. They are in the "Seals and Emblems" sub-page.

BELLA
I think I'm getting close. I'm at the cross-section of "Circle-based" and "Squiggly lines."

THEO
This doesn't seem very spiritual-

BELLA
Found it.

She clicks the logo and it opens a new window.

BELLA
"ENTRY INCOMPLETE?"

THEO
How long do you think it'll be 'til they update it?

BELLA
The site hasn't been altered since 2003, so I'm guessing real soon.

THEO
Can we get in touch with the host? There's an email at the bottom of the page.

BELLA
I'm sending it now.

THEO
I hope she's still alive.

BELLA
And still on AOL.

A buffalo is born alone and dies alone.

A PING comes from Bella's laptop.

BELLA
(reading from the screen)
"Meet me in my office in 11 minutes." There's an address.

The two make eye contact again.

THEO

Let's move.

BELLA

Yah.

INT. A UNIVERSITY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Bella and Theo are seated in the office of Olivia Kelly, Professor of Symbology.

OLIVIA

...when I ran that website I was a doctoral candidate. I left it online because I thought it wouldn't cause any harm...

BELLA

You stopped working on it when you finished your thesis?

OLIVIA

Slightly earlier, to be honest. I was working on the entry for the symbol you emailed me when everything started getting...strange. Clanging in the night, feelings of being watched, stuff like that. It was lack of sleep and the pressure of looming deadlines, and I had too much to focus on. I thought I'd return to the site, it just never really happened.

THEO

Had you completed the research for the entry on this symbol?

OLIVIA

I hadn't written a coherent summation of it though.

THEO

Could you give us access to your research?

OLIVIA

I don't have raw material from thirteen years ago - that's moronic. I can give you the name of the book I first found the symbol in thirteen years ago, but that's it.

(CONTINUED)

Olivia writes down a number on a scrap of paper. Bella picks it up and reads it.

BELLA
New Zealand history, here we
come.

EXT. THE DOC OFFICE - EVENING

Bella and Theo have returned to the office. A plate of sandwiches sits in front of them, and Bella is eating one while looking over a dusty New Zealand history tome wrapped in leather. Their detective suits are wrinkled.

THEO
...It says here that the symbol
was used by a Captain connected
to The New Zealand Company. It
was his signature, and he
claims...dumb...he claims he saw
it burnt into the sky one summer
evening.

BELLA
Very Constantine.

THEO
Indeed.

BELLA
Is there more information.

THEO
Just this map, but I can't work
out what it means. There aren't
any rivers or settlements. It's
essentially blank.

BELLA
It's a desert.

Bella takes the book and rotates it.

THEO
Are you sure it's not a pinup.

BELLA
Everything is.

THEO
How do we read it?

Bella reaches into her detective pocket and removes a scrap of paper. It has the symbol on it. She holds it over the map, and shifts it around, trying to make some connection.

BELLA

Should we just go to the desert?

THEO

That doesn't seem very
scientific.

BELLA

Field research is the backbone of
any good detective's methodology.

EXT. THE ONE DESERT IN AUCKLAND - LATE DAY

The glistening sand sits flat and dead in the heat of the sun. Theo and Bella can be seen in the distance, walking. Bella carries a small box, Theo a shovel.

BELLA

A little farther, it's just over
the crest of this other unmarked
patch of sand.

They walk fifty more meters and stop. Bella opens the box. From it she removes a dowsing rod, takes a moment to centre herself, and begins to search. Theo follows in-step. After a minute's dowsing Bella stops suddenly. Theo bumps into her.

BELLA

Here.

Bella takes the shovel and begins to dig. She hits metal quickly and both of them use their hands to uncover a wooden box.

THEO

Do you want to open it?

BELLA

Stop making me some Pandora.

She hesitates.

BELLA

I'll do it, but it's the last
time.

As Bella opens the box there's a Ding and a blue arrow materialises in the sky above them.

THE ONE DESERT IN AUCKLAND - EVENING

Bella and Theo are still walking, following the arrow without relent. In the near distance glows a blue light.

(CONTINUED)

THEO

Do you see that?

BELLA

Uh-huh.

Submerged in the sand in front of them is a large chunk of twisted metal, angular and badly burnt. The blue light is emitting from a hole in the side. The blue light cuts out, and the arrow above Bella and Theo disappears. They both touch the object, and are surprised by it's coldness.

BELLA

It's a spacecraft.

THEO

What's protocol here? Is it like uncovering a murder? Are we supposed to hand it over to the police?

Bella feels around the hull of the ship, until she finds a hatch and opens it. Inside is a corpse, rotten, torn, and burnt. Bella puts her finger into the hole and pulls it out covered in slime. She licks her finger.

BELLA

It's cooked. I think they died in entry.

THEO

Maybe whoever it was didn't research Earth's atmosphere thoroughly enough.

BELLA

Or maybe they were aiming for the hole in the ozone layer, but missed...

On a hill, 150 meters from Bella and Theo, a shadowy figure, a transparent figure, hovers watching them. It glows a soft blue.

Theo has pulled out his phone to check if he has reception.

Bella turns her head towards the ghostly presence and narrows her eyes, knowingly.

CUT TO BLACK.