

WELCOME TO FOSTERS

EPISODE 3

“Apprentice”

Written by Imogen Cassidy

[Title Music, with lyrics]

FEMME SINGER (VERSE)

It's not the money or the time,
It's not my heart on the line,
It's not the spirits or the wine.

MASC SINGER (VERSE)

It's that I know it's mine.

[Verse repeats once with both voices singing together under episode titles]

ANNOUNCER (NINA NIKOLIC)

Rusty Quill presents: Welcome To
Fosters. Episode three, Apprentice.

[Music continues]

CHORUS

Time, time, time, it's time,
Time, time, time, it's time,

MASC SINGER

It's not my heart on the line, not this time.

[Music ends]

1. INTERIOR, DAY, FOSTER'S OFFICE, FLASHBACK

An office near a busy urban area. Despite this there is the odd chirp of birds from outdoors. JILL is typing on a computer keyboard.

TIM

I don't see why we can't do it by hand.

JILL

The software's going to make it so much easier, Tim, I promise. You've been living in the dark ages for too long.

TIM

We don't have enough clients to have a database.

JILL

Can't grow a business without room to grow it in.

TIM

What if I don't want to grow the business?

JILL

Oh come on, Tim, gotta have something to leave me when you retire.

The office phone starts ringing.

TIM

(snorts) I'm not that old.

JILL picks up the handset while TIM walks over to file documents elsewhere in the room.

JILL

Foster and Foster's this is Jill can I help you? (pause) Oh hi Rashida did you get the... oh. Oh. yeah. Um. Yeah.

Long beat.

JILL (CONT.)

(worried sigh) Okay I'll let him know. We can be there in... fifteen minutes. Stay safe.

TIM closes a filing drawer.

TIM

Was that Rashida? You know I always thought she fancied you a bit you should...

JILL lets out a stressed breath; TIM realises something isn't right.

TIM (CONT.)

Jill?

JILL

There's been a summoning. At least three separate demons. Leichhardt.

JILL gets up and starts collecting her things.

JILL (CONT.)

Rash wants us to go help, they're gathering... uh... everyone. Everyone in the area with magical talent. It's bad, Tim.

TIM

Let me get my things. Did she say what kind?

JILL

No.

TIM

Guess it doesn't really matter. Let's go.

2. EXTERIOR, DAY, LEICHHARDT MARKET, CONTINUED FLASHBACK

A helicopter hovers in the distance, there are emergency service sirens approaching, and a Tannoy system announces a pre-recorded evacuation message. TIM and JILL are walking but stop as JILL speaks.

**TANNOY
(background)**

**You must evacuate the area immediately.
There is an emergency event in the
market. Do not stay to complete
purchases or retrieve your items.
(repeating)**

JILL

**I thought this was the place, do you
think?**

TIM

**They've cordoned it off. No civilians, but
they don't want a panic, yeah? Look over
there.**

JILL

Oh. Oh right. Okay. Um...

TIM

You okay?

JILL

**I dunno. Nervous. Rash said there were
three of them.**

TIM

You sense anything?

JILL

Um...

A magical hum rises, with a slight whispery static.

JILL (CONT.)

That way. Oh man.

Sound of muffled explosions.

JILL (CONT.)

Tim, it's big and I think...

TIM

I'm here with you, kid. We're gonna be okay.

Another muffled explosion.

JILL

It's fire...

A rapid series of muffled explosions heralds the breaching of the market walls near JILL and TIM; glass and debris collapse into the street while distantly people scream.

JILL (CONT.)

Tim!

A monstrous scream as TIM speaks.

TIM

Get down! A barrier, get a barrier up, Jill!

TIM fires a blast of magic towards the demon. It responds in pain.

JILL

Oh God!

Another rapid blast of magic from TIM; the demon's response is pained and angry.

JILL (CONT.)

Oh god! Tim!

TIM's next blast of magic is countered by the demon, turning to immolate him.

JILL (CONT.)

Tim you don't—

Fire engulfs TIM's location.

TIM

Argh! Arggggh!

JILL

(screamed)

Tim!!! Tim!! (crying)

Flames surround the area. A large stomping movement from the demon.

JILL (CONT.)

Tim no!!! (sobs)

JILL screams, grief-stricken and angry; the demon stomps and cries out.

3. EXTERIOR, DAY, LEICHHARDT MARKET, CONTINUED FLASHBACK

The demon is gone. A helicopter hovers overhead still; but there are many more sirens from emergency services arriving or attending the scene. JILL is taking in shattered breaths; RASHIDA runs over debris as she spots JILL.

RASHIDA

Jill? Jill! Jill where's your uncle?

RASHIDA is halted by a muffled police radio.

JILL

I... I couldn't...

RASHIDA

(into the radio)

No, it's all right we've got them all, Foster managed the fire one but he's not here I'm just trying to... Jill?

RASHIDA walks over to JILL.

RASHIDA (CONT.)

Jill are you hurt?

JILL

(small)

He's gone.

RASHIDA

(shocked)

What?

JILL

I couldn't do it. Couldn't...

RASHIDA

Oh... bloody hell. Get me an ambo over here!

JILL
(sobbing)

(crosstalk) I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry. (continues to cry)

**3. EXTERIOR, LATE MORNING, LOBBY COURTHOUSE,
CONTINUED FLASHBACK**

The sound of people moving and chatting echoes against a marble and brick interior. The COUNCIL DEFENDER walks up to JILL and RASHIDA.

COUNCIL DEFENDER
You couldn't have had a better verdict,
Jill. All clear.

JILL
(unenthusiastic)
That's great.

COUNCIL DEFENDER
Thank you Sergeant Baqri. Your evidence
was what tipped the scale in Jill's favour.

RASHIDA
Easy enough to tell the Council what
happened. Might have saved us all a lot of
time if they'd just listened to us on the
day.

COUNCIL DEFENDER
Oh, you know how they are. Gotta fill in
all their little forms! Dot the i's and cross
the t's!

RASHIDA

Bit removed from actually doing any of the magical work though, isn't it?

COUNCIL DEFENDER

(stiffly)

We all have our talents, Sergeant. Well, Jill, hopefully we won't be seeing you again any time soon.

JILL

Mmmmm. Um.

JILL gives the COUNCIL DEFENDER a handshake.

JILL (CONT.)

Thanks. Thanks for everything.

COUNCIL DEFENDER

My pleasure, Jill. Goodbye, Sergeant.

JILL and RASHIDA are quiet as the COUNCIL DEFENDER walks away.

RASHIDA

I hate every single one of them.

JILL

They're just doing their job, Rash.

RASHIDA

You did nothing wrong. If anything, I should have been the one up there, I called you in in the first place and sent you in without—

JILL

Rash. It's all right. It's done now.

RASHIDA

Bloody waste of time, that's what this was.

JILL

(mocking)

Dotting the t's and crossing the i's, Rash.

Beat.

RASHIDA

You sure you're okay?

Beat.

JILL

**Yeah. Yeah, I will be. I better get back...
got some papers to sort out at the office.**

RASHIDA

Go eat something first, hey?

JILL

(fondly)

Okay.

A friendly hug.

JILL (CONT.)

Okay I will.

4. INTERIOR, NOON, BUSY CAFÉ, CONTINUED FLASHBACK

A popular café with people chatting, music, and dining. A glass rattles as GLORIA stops by JILL's table.

GLORIA

**Hey, you didn't eat your eggs.
Something... wrong with them?**

JILL

(distracted)

**Oh. No. They're nice. Lovely actually I was
just... Are you the chef?**

GLORIA

**Cook, actually. Not a chef officially yet.
But I made them. Wanted to make sure
you liked them.**

JILL

Oh. Um, they're great.

With a clink of cutlery JILL tries the eggs.

JILL (CONT.)

(impressed)

**They're amazing. I'm sorry I didn't... (small
laugh, then sigh) It's been... It's been kind
of a day.**

GLORIA

Uck, aren't they all?

JILL

**(laughs) Yeah. Yeah, yeah I guess they
are. Um. My name's Jill, by the way.**

GLORIA

(hopeful)

You flirting with me?

JILL

I... I think so? Yes? Ah, is that weird?

GLORIA

Yep.

JILL

(laugh) Oh god, I'm sorry. As I said, it's been... (crosstalk in sync) a day.

GLORIA

(crosstalk in sync) ... a day.

It's all right, (laugh) I was going to flirt with you too, But ah, I had to make sure you liked my eggs first.

JILL

Well... that's... it's a good thing I do then I suppose.

GLORIA

My name's Gloria. Finish those up, you look a bit peaky.

JILL

(chuckle) Thanks.

[Music transition — gentle keyboard]

6. INTERIOR, MORNING, JILL AND GLORIA'S HOME, PRESENT DAY.

A quiet, compact suburban home. A few birds call out a morning chorus. GLORIA is still under the covers as JILL finishes up her shower in the adjoining bathroom.

GLORIA

Mmmmffmn?

JILL exits the shower.

JILL

Morning sleepyhead.

GLORIA

(grumbly)

Mmmnnnnmm.

JILL

**Yeah I know it's early... I've got the
interviews today.**

JILL dries herself in the bedroom area.

GLORIA

(gradually more coherent)

**(yawning) Oh. Finally. Replacing Mark?
Never did like him.**

JILL

**Hindsight is twenty-twenty, love, I didn't
know he'd be... like that when I hired him.**

GLORIA

**Eh. You should be spending every day
with someone brilliant. Like me, for
example.**

Wanna take the day off?

JILL

**Rent doesn't pay itself. Have you won the
lottery yet? Have they hired you for your
own cooking show?**

GLORIA

I am not resorting to reality television for anyone.

JILL
(faux hurt)

Not even me? Mmmph. Love is dead.

A long beat while JILL starts searching the wardrobe for clothes.

GLORIA

You had a rough one last night. Stressed about finding someone new?

JILL

Rough?

GLORIA

Dreams.

Beat.

JILL

Sorry. Did I wake you?

GLORIA

Couple of times. I thought...

JILL

What?

GLORIA

I thought they were getting better. You know... after...

JILL

Years of therapy?

JILL sits on the bed.

JILL (CONT.)

**(sighing) They are. I promise. Just...
stress will bring it out again, I guess.**

GLORIA

It wasn't your fault, you know.

JILL

**Marie wasn't my fault. I was twelve. And
she survived. More than I can say for Tim.**

GLORIA

Jill...

JILL

Tim was my fault.

GLORIA

You were still just a kid.

JILL

I was twenty-two.

GLORIA

Spring bloody chicken.

Beat.

JILL

**He didn't take apprentices, you know.
Just me. Before that he was happy to
work alone. I... I don't know why.**

GLORIA

Maybe he had his own Mark Wilson and vowed never to go back.

JILL laughs.

GLORIA (CONT.)

I can see the appeal of working by himself. If I could cook in a room for me and me alone; if I never had to deal with another customer again? Hell yeah I'd do that.

JILL

You'd eat all the food too?

GLORIA

Maaaybe. Or I'd save some for my wife, whose appreciation is worth more than a million dollars in tips.

JILL

A million?

GLORIA

Yes.

They kiss.

JILL

(sighs) Mark wasn't that bad you know. Okay at magic. Could write up a half decent report even. I didn't have to correct his spelling after the first... hundred times.

GLORIA

He didn't respect you.

JILL

(noncommittal sound)

GLORIA

He couldn't drive!

JILL

True.

GLORIA

(faux outrage)

And he said my hollandaise was bland.

JILL

(actual outrage)

He did what?

GLORIA

**I didn't tell you when he was your
apprentice because I knew you'd react
like that.**

JILL

No one disrespects the hollandaise!

A beat and then they chuckle together.

JILL (CONT.)

It's all right, you know. I'm all right.

Beat.

GLORIA

I know. I just worry.

JILL gets up, getting ready to leave, taking a few steps.

GLORIA (CONT.)

Wait!

JILL

What.

GLORIA

(with goodhumour)

Take your goddamn phone!

They both chuckle.

7. INTERIOR, MORNING, JILL'S OFFICE

JILL runs up the staircase, trying to get to the office phone ringing behind the door.

JILL

Shit, shit, shit. Shit! Shit shit.

She gets quickly through the door, dropping her bag and putting the phone on speaker. She is breathless but trying to cover it up.

JILL (CONT.)

Welcome to Foster's, this is Jill Foster speaking, how can I help you?

BRIAN

(coming from phone speaker)

Ms Foster, good morning. My name is Brian, I'm Sylvia Price's personal assistant and I was wondering...

As they chat, she puts down her keys and the mail, and sits.

JILL

Um, sorry, did you say Sylvia Price?

BRIAN

Ms Price, yes. I'm assuming you are aware of who she...

JILL

Yes. Yes I know who she is, sorry it's just... busy morning. (nervous laugh)

BRIAN

Indeed. Well, Ms Price is interested in engaging you for a private consult regarding a delicate matter.

JILL

Oh. Uh. Okay. Sure. What's the job?

BRIAN

It's not something she wants discussed over the phone, I hope you can understand that. Would it be convenient for you to schedule a meeting?

JILL

All right. I can come in... uh.... tomorrow?

BRIAN

That would be satisfactory. Would ten AM suit?

JILL

(attempting to casually dissuade)

Sure, can do that. Um, will this be at her office only mine isn't very...

BRIAN

If you would be so kind as to come to the
Bond street offices, yes, Ms Foster.

JILL

Okay, I'll be there at ten then.

BRIAN

Thank you, Ms Foster.

The phone beeps as the call ends.

JILL

Bloody hell. Siri, set an alarm for nine AM
tomorrow.

MOBILE PHONE

Your alarm is set to nine am.

JILL begins faffing with paperwork.

JILL

(sighs) Mark didn't pay the hubcap bill.
What time is it?

JILL turns about in her chair.

JILL (CONT.)

When's the first one due in... Ooh where's
the bloody... (trails off)

The office phone rings again. JILL lifts the receiver to put it on
speaker phone.

JILL (CONT.)

Morning, this is Jill Foster speaking.

RASHIDA

Jill, it's Rashida.

JILL

(a little subdued)

Oh. Hey.

RASHIDA

Listen, we've had some stuff happening in the area that we could use your help with, any chance you could come to the station this afternoon?

JILL

I've got a lot on today, Rash.

RASHIDA

It won't take long, I just want some eyes on this that aren't department, if you know what I mean.

JILL

Eyes on what?

RASHIDA

(exasperated)

Magical stuff, Jill. I'm not going to be calling you to help with an AVO am I?

JILL

Depends on what it's for.

RASHIDA

Like I said, there's a lot of stuff happening at the moment and we could use some extra help. Some extra experienced help. Like, for example, the help of a long

standing well trained magical adept who has done more than two years at the academy and doesn't just pass shit down to the stupidest probationary constable because he wants to piss off to the pub early.

JILL

(amused)

Are you getting a little fed up with the constraints of bureaucracy, Sergeant?

RASHIDA

We'll pay you Jill. We always pay you.

JILL

(with emphasis)

Eventually.

RASHIDA

Look, I wouldn't ask if it wasn't serious.

JILL

There are lots of other magical adepts in this city, Rashida.

RASHIDA

Most of them don't have a history with us.

JILL

You mean most of them don't owe you.

RASHIDA

You don't owe us, Jill.

JILL

**The way Constable Newman looks at me
says otherwise.**

RASHIDA

Newman looks at everyone like that.

Beat.

RASHIDA (CONT.)

Jill?

JILL

**I've got interviews today, Rash. I don't
know how long they're gonna take, but if I
can get there afterwards, I will. What time
do you finish?**

RASHIDA

I'm on till six.

JILL

Twelve-hour shifts again?

RASHIDA

**That's what they pay me for. See you at
the station then?**

JILL

Yeah—I'll call you if I can't make it.

JILL hangs up the phone, looks through a few papers.

JILL (CONT.)

(muttering)

Eh. Did I get the time wrong?

She gets up from her desk and walks to the office door, opening it.

JILL (CONT.)

**(sighs) Late. Not a good start but... Oh.
Oh hi. Um. What are you doing there?**

OLIVER

Uh... waiting for an interview?

JILL

Are you Harriet Saunders?

OLIVER

Um. No?

JILL

Right. Uh. No. Who are you then?

OLIVER

I'm Oliver. Oliver Long?

JILL

**Oh. You're the second kid. Um. You
weren't due for... another half hour.**

OLIVER

**Yea — I know. It, it's fine, I can wait. I'm
just... the bus was early. Or I caught the
early one so I figured I could just wait
while... you...**

JILL

On the stairs.

OLIVER

Well there's nowhere...

JILL

... else for you to wait. That's true.

Awkward beat.

JILL (CONT.)

**Well. I'm meant to be having another
applicant about now, so...**

OLIVER

It's okay! I've got my phone I'll just ah...

JILL

You're sure?

OLIVER

Really. It's fine it's ah...

JILL

Okay.

She shuts the door and walks a few steps before halting.

JILL (CONT.)

(annoyed muttering) Bugger this.

She opens the door again.

JILL (CONT.)

**Look, come in, she's late, I don't like
lateness, so if she turns up while I'm
interviewing you we can just stay quiet
and pretend no one's here, agreed?**

OLIVER zips a backpack up and stands.

OLIVER

Sounds fine to me.

They walk into the office, shutting the door behind them and sitting down on the few office chairs in the room. JILL picks up OLIVER's CV to review.

JILL

So. You're Oliver Long, you finished your cert one... oh four years ago?

OLIVER

Ah...yes.

JILL

Didn't wanna leap right into magic as a career then, I see.

OLIVER

My... mum wasn't keen and there... well there isn't much magic work up in Airlie—it's more of a tourist town, surfing and diving and stuff, you know?

JILL

Not into that?

OLIVER

No. Not... not really.

JILL

Well, the water's too cold in Sydney so that's probably good. (small laugh)

JILL turns a page of OLIVER's CV.

JILL (CONT.)

(friendly)

Service station attendant. Fast food. Bartender. Oooh, garbage collector.

You've done pretty much every minimum wage job out there, haven't you?

OLIVER

Actually garbage collection pays a lot more than that.

JILL

Didn't like the smell?

OLIVER

More the early mornings, to be honest. (hastily) Although I can do early mornings fine! If you need me to it's just ah...

JILL

They don't turn the magic on until nine in this office, kid. Never gotten fired though. I was fired twice. From here.

OLIVER

But you own...

JILL

My uncle said it wasn't a joke but it was difficult to tell, sometimes, with him.

OLIVER

I heard he was...

JILL

I know it still says Foster and Foster on the door and he was so proud of it when he got it made. Like a proper detective agency. He always did like crime dramas. Anyway if I changed the name the door would have to go and I'd have to change

all the letterheads so it just seemed easier
after he died...

JILL's mobile phone pings and vibrates with an incoming call.

JILL (CONT.)

Excuse me.

She answers. From the other side of the call comes a frantic femme voice that's indistinct along with a series of big splashes and watery flailing about.

JILL (CONT.)

Foster and Foster this is... oh hi Debbie.
Mmm hmmm. In the rainwater tank? I did
tell Ian he needed to get the wards
renewed if he didn't... was that one of...
oh. Debbie.

A clattering smash of plates from DEBBIE's side of the call.

JILL (CONT.)

Debbie do you need me...
Okay, alright, we'll be right down.

JILL hangs up the phone. She contemplates for a beat.

JILL (CONT.)

How long has it been since you've used a
spirit box?

OLIVER

I had to use one for my practical in the
cert one exam.

JILL

Which you passed. According to your CV.

She stands, gathering her things.

JILL (CONT.)

**Good. There's one in the cupboard there.
Grab it and follow me.**

[Music transition — a wailing lead guitar from the theme music]

8. INTERIOR, DAY, DEBBIE'S CAFÉ

JILL and OLIVER stride into the café. Inside it is full of complaining diners; behind a door comes frustrated shouts and muffled banging from COLIN.

COLIN

**(in background very muffled, underneath
conversation with DEBBIE)**

Come on you little bugger get in the...

I need another sau...

Oh come on you little blighter!...

Hey, woah woah woah woah...

Oh no don't go back in there!...

**That's it, get in the sauce, get, come on,
get in there... arr!**

DEBBIE

**Jill! Oh thank Christ, it's bedlam back
there.**

JILL

Hey, Debbie.

DEBBIE

(aggressively agitated)

**Hi. I think there's ten of them, seriously,
there's water everywhere, three**

customers got drenched while they were waiting for their eggs and Ian's up the coast, not answering his phone. I figured...

JILL

I sent him a reminder about the wards two weeks ago.

DEBBIE

I know, I know but you know how tight he is...

An even larger bang and clank.

COLIN

(continued muffled crosstalk)

Oh Christ how many are there!?

Alright that's it, I'm gonna...your... I'm gonna fix you...

JILL

Who's that?

DEBBIE

Colin was trying to get a cover on the tank, you know, to stop them splashing everywhere.

COLIN

(continued muffled crosstalk)

Word of God you little mongrel!

JILL

That's not gonna end well.

JILL, OLIVER and DEBBIE race to enter the back of the café. Inside water sloshes and splashes and the metal tank boings as **COLIN** tries to capture the **NIXIE**. The **NIXIE** is conversing rapidly and excitedly in simple German words and phrases (printed at the end of the transcript). It's a cacophony.

COLIN

(crosstalk)

I missed the blighter again!

DEBBIE

See there's hundreds of them they're in the rainwater tank we can't...

JILL

Colin don't put your...

COLIN

(crosstalk)

So there you are you little **WOAH—**

A splash as the **NIXIE** drags **COLIN** headfirst into the water. He blubs out air trying to yell while submerged.

OLIVER

It's okay! It's okay there's only... look if you could just....

JILL

Get the trap open! That's it. You just need to...

OLIVER opens the trap and starts winding the mechanism.

OLIVER

I know! I know! I've got it! Compesce, liga, contineas et seram. Compesce, liga,

**contineas et seram. Compesce, liga,
contineas et seram.**

As OLIVER chants the Latin, there is a whistling wind noise, and with a slurping, sucking sound the trap snaps shut.

NIXIE

Waaahhhh!!!

COLIN pulls himself out, coughing and spluttering in the background as the others talk. Inside the trap the NIXIE disconsolately complains in German.

NIXIE (CONT.)

(crosstalk, variations of the following)

Nein! Nein! Nein! Nicht fair, nicht fair! Zu trocken, zu trocken, zurücklegen, zurücklegen. Wohin? Wohin? Wohin?

OLIVER (CONT.)

Got 'em.

DEBBIE

It's... tiny.

JILL

You'd be surprised how much damage one nixie can do.

DEBBIE

Oh it's a mess out here.

Colin continues to choke and cough.

DEBBIE (CONT.)
(without sympathy)

Coll for God's sake go get dry will you?
I'll fetch a mop or... something.

DEBBIE, JILL and OLIVER exit back into the main café area. Diners are still complaining, as is the trapped NIXIE.

DEBBIE (CONT.)
Hey. Thanks. Thanks uh...

OLIVER
I'm ah...

DEBBIE
Who's he?

JILL
My new apprentice. Oliver.

OLIVER unzips a backpack and places the trap inside.

DEBBIE
Oh, Wilson finally buggered off then? Was wondering why he hadn't come in for his double soy oat milk disaster the last few weeks. Nice to meet you Oliver. Next time you want a coffee it's on me. Provided you don't want oat milk.

OLIVER
Th...thanks.

JILL
You might want to get onto Ian about those wards, Deb.

DEBBIE

Oh, I will.

JILL

Remind him that I charge more for getting rid of nixies than preventing them.

DEBBIE

(sharp laugh) oh yeah. I will. You right to go?

JILL

See you later Debbie.

OLIVER

Yeah. See you.

The door bell jingles as JILL and OLIVER leave the café. Outside there is the traffic noise and the odd magpie call. They walk down the street.

OLIVER (CONT.)

Did you mean what you said in there?

JILL

Mmm?

OLIVER

You said I was your new...

JILL

Apprentice.

OLIVER

Yes.

JILL

I mean... Do you still want the job?

OLIVER

(enthusiastic)

**Yes! Yes I still... I mean, yeah, I need it
and it looks like it'll be um...**

JILL

**(chuckles) I'd ask if you could start right
away but you sort of already have.**

OLIVER

Uh. What do we do with this, anyway?

**OLIVER brings the bag up to JILL, trapped inside the NIXIE is still
plaintively complaining.**

NIXIE

Wohin? Wohin? Wohin?

JILL

Toss it into the closest water source.

OLIVER

Seems like it'll just come back if we...

JILL

**That's why Ian needs to fork out on
wards.**

NIXIE

Wohin? Zurücklegen.

JILL

You can do wards as well, right?

OLIVER

Of course.

JILL

**Well then. Looks like I managed to hire
someone competent for a change.**

OLIVER

Thanks?

JILL

(laughing) Welcome to Foster's.

[Music transition — downbeat grungy guitar]

9. INTERIOR, DAY, PRICE & BOONE SECURITY STATION

The hum of servers, monitors, and other technology. TULELE is at the station with earbuds on, playing a just audible episode of Stellar Firma. The security door clicks open, and TULELE hastily pushes his chair back and pulls out his earbuds.

TULELE

This area is restricted I'm afraid.

BRIAN

No need to stand up uh... Mr Masoe.

TULELE has ignored that walks up to BRIAN.

TULELE

Sir I have to...

BRIAN

**I assure you I am allowed to be here, Mr
Masoe. Here.**

BRIAN presents his identification.

TULELE

Oh. Mr Hewlitt-Smith. Okay.

BRIAN

(faux friendly)

You can call me Brian. I'm Ms Price's PA?

TULELE

**Ms Price's... oh...! (crosstalk) Oh okay
okay... I, I gotcha...ah**

BRIAN

**(crosstalk) Indeed. I'm sure you're familiar
with her.**

TULELE

**Yeah. Yeah. I think we've spoken on the
phone a...**

BRIAN

**A few times, yes, when security matters
cross my desk.**

TULELE

Nice to meet you in person, sir.

TULELE gives BRIAN a handshake.

BRIAN

(obviously pleased)

**Well, thank you, Mr Masoe. So. This
station is responsible for the security of
Ms Price's library, is it not?**

BRIAN and TULELE move around to the station's monitors.

TULELE

We monitor the whole building, yeah.

TULELE sits back down to access the controls. There is the odd keyboard tap as he flicks through cameras.

TULELE (CONT.)

So, obviously you've got the front entrance and the loading dock and the mail room, the library and the restricted areas are on these monitors here...

BRIAN

I see. Very good.

TULELE

We don't have a direct camera in Ms Price's office for privacy reasons but...

BRIAN

(laughs) Oh yes. Look there's my desk. Mmm. I should probably get the cleaners to give it a more thorough dusting, don't you think?

TULELE laughs nervously, followed by an awkward beat.

BRIAN (CONT.)

How long have you been with us, personally, Mr Masoe?

TULELE

Coming up on... eight months now, I think?

BRIAN

Ah yes. I think I remember when we hired you.

TULELE

Ah... that's part of your job then is it? Hiring people? Only I was interviewed by Phil and Kate and I never talked to...

BRIAN

Ah, I'm responsible for a lot of things, Mr Masoe.

Awkward beat.

TULELE

Can I help with anything else? Only I'm supposed to be on shift at the moment, so...

BRIAN

Tell me, you can't possibly keep track of all these cameras at all times, can you Mr Masoe?

TULELE

Well, we're not expected to, really. It all goes into digital storage; we're more just for emergencies, right, so, if someone has a heart attack in the lobby and I see it I can call an ambulance straight away. Phil said that happened once before I started. And sometimes we get people in the lobby—non-company journalists or homeless guys or whatever and I can escort them off the premises once I see them, especially if Jenn on reception calls

me in. And if anything goes wrong? We can look things up on the footage if we have a general time. You know how it is.

BRIAN

I see. Well then, there is something you can help me with Mr Masoe.

TULELE

Oh. Good.

BRIAN

I'd like you to pull up the security footage from the last twelve months. For the library. There's been an incident.

TULELE

Okay. Should be easy enough I guess. What's this for?

TULELE types in some specific commands.

BRIAN

Someone has stolen from Ms Price. She would like to know whom.

[Music transition — lead guitar from the theme music]

10. EXTERIOR, DAY, COASTAL PARK IN SYDNEY HARBOUR

The consistent low roar of waves hitting a beach. Every so often a gull calls out.

OLIVER unzips the backpack and takes out the trap holding the **NIXIE**.

NIXIE

(underneath as crosstalk)

**Raus, raus, raus. Jetzt, jetzt, jetzt.
Trocken, trocken, trocken. Dumm, dumm,
dumm. Raus, raus, raus. Fürze, Fürze,
Fürze. Raus, raus, raus.**

OLIVER

**Are you sure it's okay just to toss it into
the harbour?**

JILL

**Closest large body of water, my young
apprentice.**

OLIVER

Please do NOT call me that.

JILL

(laughing) Ah okay.

**OLIVER opens the trap and the NIXIE rapidly scampers out before
plunging into the water.**

NIXIE

(ecstatic)

Ahh!! Endlich!! Juhuu!!!

OLIVER

Did it just wave?

JILL

**Looks like it. I wonder if it's the same one
I evicted from Ian's last year? Probably.**

Ian might start thinking I pay it to remind him about the wards if this keeps up.

OLIVER

Do you?

JILL

(a little too quickly)

Oh No. That'd be unethical. So. Um.

I don't tend to do interviews that often and I hope I didn't just railroad you back there into taking a job it's just that...

OLIVER

Usually they ask me if I have any questions.

JILL

Yeah.

OLIVER

Sooooo?

JILL

Oh. Sorry. Did you have any questions about the job?

OLIVER

Was what we just did an example of what we would normally be doing?

JILL

Pretty much. The businesses in the local area use us for things like wards, minor exorcisms, scut work, mainly. Most of them are better about keeping them up than Ian is, so actually evicting spirits

isn't something we do a lot of. Annandale is a pretty active area, like most of Sydney. Settled early, when they didn't bother to keep the convict and supply ships free of spirits that wanted to hitch a ride.

OLIVER

I always thought they brought them over deliberately.

JILL

Some of them did. Nice to have spiritual servants when you're braving the frontiers.

OLIVER

Mmmm.

JILL

Yeah, I know. Pretty screwed up all round.

OLIVER

You don't have to do stuff more dangerous than this?

JILL

Most of the time? No. That's handled by the police. They've got a lot more heavy hitters in the force, more access to high end magical gear. And really in the end most of the nastier spirits leave us alone. We are, after all, the biggest and nastiest ones, and the wips even have guns these days.

OLIVER

Seems excessive.

JILL

If you're a fire mage like... (sounds a bit more subdued) if you're a fire mage and you face something that eats fire, you need something to fall back on.

OLIVER

A water pistol?

JILL

(laughs, then trails off) Look, my last apprentice left for a lot of reasons. I like to think the biggest one was that he was... well there was a personality clash. But there's stuff about me that a lot of the magical community doesn't... I'm not exactly popular with...

Beat. JILL shuffles.

JILL (CONT.)

I inherited the business from my uncle. I told you he died, right? So...

Beat. OLIVER takes a breath.

OLIVER

He died in the Leichhardt disaster and you were arrested for magical misconduct resulting in death.

JILL

Um...

OLIVER

I did some research. Before I applied for the job.

JILL

Ah.

OLIVER

I'm not trying to... to take advantage or anything. I hope you get that? You saw my CV I've got gaps and I didn't do any magic for years before coming down. I figured I'd have a better chance at a job with someone like you than with some of the big firms. Or trying for something corporate.

Beat.

OLIVER (CONT.)

I mean I did... did try for corporate but they didn't want me and...

JILL

Very thorough of you.

Long beat.

JILL (CONT.)

Ah... Are you going to ask?

OLIVER

What?

JILL

About Tim. About how he died.

OLIVER

I mean, I applied for the job. I figured you would have gone to jail or something if it'd really been your fault.

JILL

That implies a level of faith in our judicial system that becomes you, Oliver.

OLIVER

Eh...!

JILL

Well, if you're a mage and you're facing a fire summoning you should have backup. Tim didn't. Have backup. Except that he was supposed to—it was supposed to be me. But I'm... not good at fire. So he died. And as far as I'm concerned, yeah, that was my fault.

OLIVER

You didn't summon the demons though. They got who did that. It was in the papers. My mum told me about it when my magic...

Beat.

JILL

How did you find out about yours?

OLIVER

(exhales) Saw the ghost of my tinamatua, just after she passed.

JILL

Ooof.

OLIVER

Yeah. Wasn't the best day, gotta say. But nothing too weird, right? I-I know some folks who summon demons or burn things down...

JILL

(laughs through nose) Yeaaaah.

OLIVER

Oh. Oh I'm sorry.

JILL

It's okay. Ancient history now. Anyway, I don't take fire jobs these days.

OLIVER

I'm pretty good at fire actually.

JILL

(laughing a little) That's reassuring. So. You're still okay with taking the job?

OLIVER

Yes!

JILL

Oh, thank God. I got a call from Sylvia Price's PA this morning and she needs adepts and it would have looked bad if I'd shown up without an apprentice.

OLIVER

Sylvia Price? From Price & Boone? Don't they have... they have their own magical staff!

JILL

Yeah. They do.

OLIVER

Seems weird.

JILL

**Rich folk are always weird.
Do you own a suit?**

OLIVER

Um. Yeah?

JILL

Come on, let's get back to the office. Got a lot to catch you up on before you go this afternoon. I guess I'm going to have to go and help out Rashida and, it'll be good for you to meet her, she'll probably like you.

OLIVER

You want me to start right now?

JILL

(hesitating)

If you're okay with that? Obviously we need to do the paperwork and stuff and obviously I'll pay you starting from this morning...

OLIVER

I mean... sure!

JILL

Great!

Beat.

JILL (CONT.)

Can you drive?

OLIVER

Yeah.

JILL

Cool. And thanks.

OLIVER

What for?

JILL

For... never mind. Let's go.

They turn and walk away.

[Music transition — strums of rhythm guitar from theme music]

11. INTERIOR, DAY, POLICE STATION

An officer walks by with heavy steps and a jangle of keys and fobs before leaving through a security door. In the background there's the busy murmur of officers and staff working at desks and receiving calls.

JILL

I swear these places smell weird.

OLIVER

I wouldn't know.

JILL

Never been in trouble with the law before,
Oliver?

OLIVER

You mean you didn't do a background
check on me?

JILL

I wasn't searching for apprentices who
had the same life experience I did, so no.
You don't think it smells weird?

OLIVER audibly sniffs a few times. A door opens nearby.

RASHIDA

Jill!

JILL

Hey, Rash.

RASHIDA walks towards them, shutting the door behind her.

RASHIDA

I appreciate you coming. Let's just... uh...
get out of the noise.

RASHIDA stops beside them.

JILL

And the smell, eh Oliver?

RASHIDA

What? Oh. Hi.

OLIVER

Hi. I'm Oliver.

RASHIDA

Hi. Sergeant Rashida Baqri, Magus
Department. You're Jill's new apprentice?

OLIVER

Yeah! Just started.

Beat.

JILL

Mark wasn't that bad Rash, you know...

RASHIDA

Did you hear me say anything at all, Jill?
Come on.

RASHIDA leads them down a corridor, to the police equivalent of a
client meeting room. They enter, **RASHIDA** shutting the door behind
them.

JILL

So what's this job then?

The sit around a desk.

RASHIDA

We've had a recurrence of the
McGuinness hauntings—you know, over
in Darlington.

RASHIDA pulls out a wheeled chair for herself, sits and gathers
some papers to slide over to **JILL**.

JILL

McGuinness?

RASHIDA

It was a big thing... ten years ago? I had a few people on it and they turned up a mention that Tim had looked into something similar. Back in the 80's?

JILL picks up one of the pages.

JILL

Oh. If he did any work on it, it should be in the files.

RASHIDA

Yeah, that was what I was thinking. Maybe if we look back at the case we can find out why it's recurring so often. Although to be honest it could well be part of everything else that's going on and have nothing to do with that at all.

JILL

I can have a look, go over there and check it out?

RASHIDA

That's what I was hoping.

OLIVER

Um. What do you mean, "everything else that's going on?"

Beat.

RASHIDA

Want a coffee or anything? Oliver?

OLIVER

Yeah, that would be...

JILL

Coffee would be great.

RASHIDA stands up.

RASHIDA

White Oliver?

OLIVER

Yes.

RASHIDA walks over to the refreshments area and begins making coffee using an automatic machine.

JILL

So what's going on Rashida? It's not just the McGuinness hauntings, is it?

RASHIDA

(sighs) Look. I wanted to ask, over the past few months, have you noticed anything... weird happening? Magically, I mean.

JILL

Weird is a pretty relative term when it comes to this kind of thing, Rash, you know that.

RASHIDA

You know what I mean.

JILL

...Possibly.

RASHIDA

So?

JILL

You're going to have to give me a little bit more information.

RASHIDA

We're busy. Way busier than we should be. The number of hauntings has gone up and they're way more intense—I think we had four poltergeists last month and that's more than I've seen in the last ten years.

Sugar for you Jill?

JILL

Yeah.

RASHIDA

Spirits that would normally settle with a minor banishment are demanding blood tribute and getting violent if we don't give it.

OLIVER

They're being violent? That's... not usual is it?

RASHIDA

No, it takes a lot of energy for a non-corporeal spirit to affect the world and most of the time there just isn't enough to go around.

JILL

That could be why I haven't seen much of it. If they're violent, they don't tend to call me. They'll go straight to you guys.

RASHIDA

And that's what they've been doing.

RASHIDA walks back to the desk with the coffees.

RASHIDA (CONT.)

Here.

JILL

Thanks.

RASHIDA

We're getting burned out, we're getting calls every day, nearly every one of them is legitimate. I had to banish a wrath demon yesterday—I haven't seen one of those for nearly a decade. Newman got iced by what he swears was a banshee. He's off on medical leave for a month and I can't afford to lose any more officers, not if it's going to keep up like this.

JILL

That's why he wasn't here to glare at me.

RASHIDA

There were even reports of a Pooka down in Randwick, but it turned out two racehorses were possessed, which you know, almost as bad. It's been... really weird Jill.

Beat.

RASHIDA (CONT.)

You seriously haven't seen anything strange?

JILL

Mmm... It's been busier than normal, I'll give you that. A few wards have broken earlier than they should have, I just put that down to Mark being shoddy.

OLIVER

Is it just in Sydney?

JILL

Hmm! Good question.

RASHIDA

Yeah. Yeah it is. Localised around the city too.

RASHIDA slides a map across.

RASHIDA (CONT.)

I've checked with Gosford and Wollongong and they're fine; further inland seems normal. It's just... here.

JILL

Well we know Sydney's always more active for this kind of thing, though, right? It's always been like that. Oldest white city, first place the Old World spirits shoved themselves into; means we get the lion's share of the hauntings and the infestations and all of that.

OLIVER

But as she said, there's not usually enough magical energy for there to be this much—

RASHIDA

Exactly! Even if we'd had two or three bad weeks we could put it down to the council doing something big that they didn't bother to tell us about, but we've contacted them and they've said there's nothing.

JILL

(amused)

You talked to the council?

RASHIDA

Standard procedure.

JILL

They come out of their arses long enough to give you more than a "no there's nothing, bugger off?"

RASHIDA

(frustrated by council)

They agreed there was a lot more ambient magic in the vicinity of Sydney and that it would be a “good idea” for us to investigate further.

JILL

(small scoff) Didn't offer to help?

RASHIDA

No.

JILL

Quelle Suprise.

RASHIDA

Hence me calling you, Jill. We're spending all our time putting out fires... metaphorical. Mostly. I don't have the time or the manpower to pull someone off the street and onto research. Something's happening, something big enough to disrupt the magical balance of the entire city.

Beat.

RASHIDA (CONT.)

We need your help.

Long beat.

JILL

Mark and I did a job, couple of months back, just before he left. In the national park? There was a forest spirit—you know the spot I'm talking about?

RASHIDA

Near Taronga?

JILL

Yeah. Some suburban grandma lost her cat to it. It went over to the fae.

RASHIDA

Not supposed to have cats over there. Or let them out. Did you report her?

JILL

It wasn't my job to rat her out to the wips, Rash.

RASHIDA

Jill, you know we depend on the community to—

JILL

Yeah, it's our responsibility as citizens to help the police help the community... Look, the cat's gone and no one is supposed to go up there anyway, and Mrs West would have just smiled at Constable Newman and he would have told her to not do it again and it wouldn't have mattered anyway.

RASHIDA

Do you really think that we—

JILL

Yes! I really think that you! Look, point is, I had a chat with the forest spirit, and the forest spirit said that something was coming.

RASHIDA

Okay. So this is precisely what I wanted to know! You could have just told me.

JILL

You know what spirits are like. They'll shove a portent in any chance they get. I wrote it off as it trying to make itself sound more impressive. As if it wasn't already pretty impressive—that cat scared the shit out of Mark.

RASHIDA

What did it say?

JILL

M... meow?

RASHIDA

(trying to remain serious)

Not the cat.

JILL

Oh.(breath)

It said the dead were restless.

[Music transition — single choral “oooh” note.]

12. INTERIOR, DAY, HALLWAY UNDER PRICE & BOONE OFFICES

BRIAN and MOOK 1 stand near the zombie holding facility. Agitated thumping and groans come through from the other side.

MOOK 1

Sir, we've done all the reinforcing of the doors that we can. It's not going to hold much longer.

BRIAN

It doesn't have to.

MOOK 1

I don't understand why they're so much more aggressive now. They were fine up until we put the last one in. Now it's just...

A particularly loud crash and an agitated zombie cries out.

MOOK 1 (CONT'D)

(workplace angry)

It's like that. All the time!

High-heeled footsteps herald SYLVIA's approach.

MOOK 1 (CONT'D)

(frightened)

Ms Price! Um. Ahh. We're doing we're doing everything we—

SYLVIA

Brian?

BRIAN

(aggressive, to MOOK 1)

I've had enough excuses.

MOOK 1

Sir, I—

BRIAN

Bar the door. Nail boards over it if you have to.

MOOK 1

But Sir!

SYLVIA

(calmly)

You have all the resources of the company behind you. Use your ingenuity. We obviously hired you for a reason.

MOOK 1

Yes... ah yes ma'am. Right away ma'am.

MOOK 1 jogs away.

BRIAN

It will hold.

SYLVIA

I have every confidence in you, Brian.

A loud bang from the holding facility.

SYLVIA (CONT.)

And... you know what will happen to you if it fails.

Another loud bang from the holding facility.

[Music — End Credits, instrumental]

ANNOUNCER (NINA NIKOLIC)

Welcome to Fosters is a Neon Inkwell podcast distributed by Rusty Quill Limited and licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Share-Alike 4.0 International License.

This series is written and created by Imogen Cassidy and directed by Chris Magilton. This episode was edited by Elizabeth Moffatt, Lowri Ann Davies, and

Meg McKellar, with title track and music from Sam Jones, and additional music from Nico Vettese.

The series features Nina Nikolic as Jill Foster, Tim Sefo as Oliver Long, Harrison Keen as Mark Wilson, Sebrina Thornton-Walker as Gloria Foster, Hannah Aroni as Sylvia Price, Michael Bache as Brian Hewlitt-Smith, Isabelle Houghton as Young Jill, Alice Magilton as Marie, Zara Moffatt as the Nixie, Shakira Searle as Amena Malouf, Faryaal Jabbar as Rashida Baqri, and Chris Alosio as Tulele.

Additional voices by Lowri Ann Davies, Lee Davis-Thalbourne, Maia Harlap, Filloyd Kennedy, Chris Magilton, Matt Malachite, Elizabeth Moffatt, Cooper Mortlock, Hamish Plaggemars, Brooke Scobie and Dallas Tipau.

The production would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which this series is set, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. We pay our respects to elders, past and present.

Neon Inkwell is produced by April Sumner with Executive Producer Alexander J Newall and Showrunner Elizabeth Moffatt.

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Scene 8 — Text spoken by NIXIE before capture. Voice is doubled (one speaking left, one speaking right) so that it appears there are multiple nixies before its capture.

**Ich lebe wie der Teufel in Frankreich. Tanz
mit ihm, tanz, tanz, tanz! Kennst du sie?
Zwei kleine Monster, Hänsel und Gretel.
Koch! Koch! Koch! Oh, ein neuer
Besucher. Was für ein Vergnügen!
Vergnügen! Vergnügen! Ein neuer
Besucher. Mein Zuhause ist nicht groß.
Du großer, großer, großer!
"Leben ist kein Ponyhof". Ponys, Ponys,
Ponys! Große Giraffe, hör auf zu
planschen. Ich versuche dich zu
ertränken! Halt, große Giraffe! Halt! Halt!
Ertrinken, ertrinken, ertrinken! "Du gehst
mir auf den Keks". Mehr, mehr, halt, halt,
halt! Noch mehr, noch mehr. Große
Forellen! Groß, groß, klatsch, klatsch,
klatsch. Halt, halt, halt!**