

**SILON, season 1: The Baltimore Plot, Episode III - Good and Bad Aren't the Same as Truth and Lies**

*[Radio Static. An old-timey radio tunes up and down the dial]*

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**ANNOUNCER:** The Henry Deringer Pistol Company is proud to sponsor this audio performance of The Secret and Impossible League of the NoöSphere presented by Live Girls! Theater and Pendant Productions.

*[applause]*

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**ANNOUNCER:** A pocket pistol! Very, um, very handy. Yes. Hello Listeners, welcome back to the NoöSphere, where reality is formed and destroyed through the power of Ideas. Tonight's episode, entitled "Good and Bad Aren't the Same as Truth and Lies," is the third in a six-part adventure called "The Baltimore Plot." Let's enjoy what our narrator, the ghost-ship Mary-Celeste, wishes to share with us today. I feel safer already. Welcome back, dear listeners, to the NoöSphere; a world where reality is formed and destroyed through the power of Ideas. Tonight's episode, "An Embrace, an Impasse, and an Invitation," is the second in a six-part adventure called "The Baltimore Plot." Let's tune in to find out what our narrator, the ghost-ship Mary-Celeste, will share with us today.

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*[NooSphere Theme music.]*

*[A sound like a rope squeak as we tether to Mary-Celeste in the NooSphere.]*

**MARY-CELESTE** *[disembodied voice]:* If you can hear this message, then it's meant for you. In our last episode, Detectives Kate Warne and Allan Pinkerton were in the midst of foiling a heist when Lord Byron spirited Kate into the NoöSphere. Our clandestine league extended her an invitation to join them in preventing serious time abnormalities. Kate agreed to help them, for the moment.

Take a listen as I connect us, rather late in the evening, mind you, to a rather dank alley behind a waterfront warehouse in Chicago. The year is 1858. We rejoin Kate at the moment she returns from her first visit to the NoöSphere.

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*[Victorian era night time city sounds: distant conversations, horses and carriages on cobblestones, that kind of thing.]*

*[An x-point opens.]*

**BYRON:** Thank you for agreeing to help us, Mrs. Warne. Now, I believe your thief is about to exit that door.

**KATE:** Thank you for... trusting me, Mr. Byron.

**BYRON:** *[grumble under his breath]* I'm a Lord. *[aloud]* Goodbye for now.

*[An x-point closes.]*

**KATE:** *[laughs. A door opens and closes.]* Stop right there.

*[Kate cocks her pistol.]*

**LEAH:** Katie Warne!

**KATE:** Leah Fox? What are you doing here? Are you the one stealing from this place?

**LEAH:** It's not stealing if it's meant to be mine.

**KATE:** That's not my line anymore.

**LEAH:** You sure? Seems like you finally traded the small-time for the long con.

**KATE:** It's not like that. I do good now.

**LEAH:** Good and bad aren't the same as truth and lies.

**KATE:** You know all about lies.

**LEAH:** You know I never lied to you.

**KATE:** Maybe I didn't know the right questions to ask.

**LEAH:** I'm standing right here. I heard you're with Pinkerton now. I never thought a man would come between us.

**KATE:** It's not like that. Mr. Pinkerton is a good man.

**LEAH:** And I'm not a good woman, is that it? I never pretended to be one. You wanna ask questions? How'd the man who owns this place get to where he got? Who dug this piece of metal out of the ground with tiny little hands? Not him.

**KATE:** That item doesn't belong to you, it belongs to my client, you know, the man who own the warehouse you just stole that from?

**LEAH:** This beauty is more mine than his. At least I'll put it to use.

*[A sweet little bong-bong sound interrupts the scene.]*

**ANNOUNCER:** Footnote. The rare earth metal the ladies are discussing is tantalum. Named after the mythical Greek figure, Tantalus, who was forever tantalized by objects just out of his reach, tantalum is a lustrous, corrosion-resistant metal. Because it is chemically inert and capable of being immersed in acid it's considered a valuable substance for laboratory equipment. To this day, this conflict metal is considered a technology-critical element. End footnote.

*[A sweet little bong-bong sound concludes the footnote interruption.]*

**KATE:** What possible use could you have for a piece of rare metal?

**LEAH:** I have connections.

**KATE:** You mean with that same skill with the deep pockets you asked me to help you con?

**LEAH:** Are you going to shoot me, Kate?

*[Kate decocks her pistol.]*

**KATE:** No.

**LEAH:** Katie-girl, I—

**KATE:** Go. My debt to you is paid.

**LEAH:** I never considered it a debt. We're friends.

**KATE:** Go. Leave now, before my boss comes back.

**LEAH:** I miss you.

*[Leah runs away.]*

**KATE:** Dammit.

*[Pinkerton enters from the wooden ladder to the roof.]*

**PINKERTON:** Damn what?

**KATE:** *[quick intake of breath]* I hate waiting.

**PINKERTON:** Well, the rooftop door is locked. When this mudsill comes out, he'll be ours.

**KATE:** Mr. Pinkerton, have you given any thought to that request from George McClellan... about the railroads?

**PINKERTON:** This is hardly the time.

**KATE:** I'm just curious.

**PINKERTON:** Like I told him, I am not in the private security business.

**KATE:** But imagine the freedom we'd get from a steady income. We could take the more interesting cases, ones for people who can't generally afford us.

**PINKERTON:** I'm not interested in the railroad business.

*[Pause.]*

**KATE:** We've never spoken about your politics.

**PINKERTON:** I don't really think now is the best moment, Mrs. Warne.

**KATE:** I would support any idea that furthers your private interests.

**PINKERTON:** What are you talking about?

**KATE:** Just that you aren't alone in preferring the railroad that runs Underground to those that run above it.

*[A sweet little bong-bong sound interrupts the scene.]*

**ANNOUNCER:** Footnote. As early as 1844, Pinkerton's home outside Chicago was a regular stop on the Underground Railroad. End footnote.

*[A sweet little bong-bong sound concludes the footnote interruption.]*

**KATE:** To be clear—

**PINKERTON:** I understand you perfectly. What I need clarified is how you know about my private business?

**KATE:** Mr. Pinkerton, I'm on your side in this.

**PINKERTON:** *[sighing]* I can't guarantee a whole railroad. I don't have the men.

**KATE:** You wouldn't need more than four or five men per line if they were in disguise. Once the first few arrests are made by operatives wearing plain clothes, the Agency's reputation would do the rest.

**PINKERTON:** Plain clothes, huh? Now there's an idea. I—

*[Noise from inside the building - an interior door opening.]*

**PINKERTON:** *[whisper]* We'll talk about this later.

*[Pinkerton and Kate hurry to flank the alley door as it clicks open and snicks shut.]*

*[We hear the crook's heavy footsteps.]*

**KATE:** Hey mister—

**CROOK:** Listen, lady, I'm not interested—

*[Kate punches him in the stomach. They struggle. The crook gets hit in the groin.]*

**KATE:** Drop the bag.

*[The crook drops the bag.]*

**KATE:** Lie down on the ground and keep your hands above your head...I will shoot you.

*[Kate cocks her gun.]*

**KATE:** Down.

*[Kate shoves the crook to the ground. The crook groans as Kate knees him in the back]*

**PINKERTON:** I've got the bag he was carrying. One of the pieces of tantalum is missing.

**KATE:** Maybe he wasn't working alone.

**PINKERTON:** Did anyone come through the alley while I was gone?

**KATE:** *[quick intake of breath]* No.

**PINKERTON:** Well, let's take him out front. We'll send Timothy for the constables.

**KATE:** So, about the railroads—

**PINKERTON:** I'll think about it, Mrs. Warne.

**KATE:** That's all I ask, Mr. Pinkerton.

**PINKERTON:** That's never all you ask.

*[Sound of a scuffle.]*

**KATE:** Hey now, mister. Don't get all wrathful on me. Let's go meet the constabulary.

**PINKERTON:** I wouldn't push her if I were you, b'hoy.

*[Kate and the crook exit.]*

**PINKERTON:** I rarely do, myself.

*[Pinkerton exits.]*

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*[The NoöSphere ripples. The engine emits a deep, mechanical breathing.]*

*[Ada flips through books, slamming one shut.]*

**ADA:** *[frustrated noise]* Mary-Celeste, are there any more references in Rochester, New York to mathematicians or scientists or artists in 1856?

**MARY-CELESTE** *[disembodied voice]:* You have looked through all of them, Ada.

**ADA:** Drat... Was it you I sensed in that train station, Charles? What were you looking for?

*[Ada sighs and stretches, she starts to pace.]*

**ADA:** Mary-Celeste- what is this new contraption of Mr. Tesla's?

**MARY-CELESTE** *[disembodied voice]:* It's a copper finial.

**ADA:** Do you know what it does? It's—

**MARY-CELESTE** *[disembodied voice]:* You shouldn't touch it—

*[The NoöSphere theme disappears, replaced by the Tesla Coil-like noise of the copper finial.]*

**BABBAGE** *[hologram]:* Ada?

**ADA:** Charles?

**BABBAGE** *[hologram]:* I see you like you're right in front of me.

**ADA:** Where are you?

**BABBAGE** *[hologram]:* It's good to see you. Are you well? Is your father still plaguing your existence with his melancholic diatribes?

**ADA:** Why did you leave, Charles? You didn't even say goodbye.

**BABBAGE** *[hologram]:* I've done it, my dear. I've found a way to save Georgiana.

**ADA:** But without an Engine you can't navigate or tether to x-points or even safely breach the barrier between the spheres. You can't— You've discovered a way to return to the NoöSphere.

**BABBAGE** *[hologram]:* I can't go into the details. But we have a plan.

**ADA:** We?

**BABBAGE** [*hologram*]: I'm going to bring her back, darling.

*[A sweet little bong-bong sound interrupts the scene.]*

**ANNOUNCER:** Footnote. In 1814, Charles Babbage, considered by many as the "father of the computer", married his sweetheart Georgiana Whitmore, against his family's wishes. The marriage was a very happy one. But tragedy struck in 1827. In the space of a year Babbage's father, his 10-year old son Charles, his newborn son Alexander, and his beloved wife Georgiana all died unexpectedly leaving Charles Babbage inconsolable. End footnote.

*[A sweet little bong-bong sound concludes the footnote interruption.]*

**ADA:** You can't change what happens to Georgiana, Charles. Everything you try destabilizes the NoöSphere.

**BABBAGE** [*hologram*]: I have a new approach. Will you help me?

**ADA:** What do you plan to do?

**BABBAGE** [*hologram*]: I can't tell you unless you join me. The others won't understand.

**ADA:** And you don't trust me.

**BABBAGE** [*hologram*]: Your father has a way with words.

**ADA:** But he doesn't have a way with me.

**BABBAGE** [*hologram*]: Sweet girl, have you never wondered why only synesthetes can enter the NoöSphere? Imagine if anyone could. If everyone had unlimited access to the world of Ideas, imagine what would that do to progress? To technology!

**ADA:** But what if these Deviations dilute the Ideas or cause the barrier between the spheres to disintegrate altogether? The equations to test such a theory would be extraordinarily difficult to prove. There are too many variables.

**BABBAGE** [*hologram*]: Errors using inadequate data are much less numerous than those using no data at all. I have to try.

**ADA:** You've built another Engine. Who wrote your algorithms?



**BABBAGE** [*hologram*]: I've found a very willing pupil. She's not you, but then no one is.

**ADA**: You're working with someone else? Who? Who is this woman?

**BABBAGE** [*hologram*]: If one is blessed with the power of invention, many will always be found who have the capacity of applying principles.

*[A sweet little bong-bong sound interrupts the scene.]*

**ANNOUNCER**: Footnote. Charles Babbage wrote thoughts similar to these in 1830 in a treatise called Reflections on the Decline of Science in England and on Some of its Causes. End Footnote.

*[A sweet little bong-bong sound concludes the footnote interruption.]*

**BABBAGE** [*hologram*]: Is that a copper finial conductor? Is Mr. Tesla harnessing Ideas?

That's—

**ADA**: Enough!

*[The hologram transmission cuts out. the Tesla coil-like noise of the copper finial disappears, replaced by the NoöSphere Theme.]*

**ADA**: Oh, Charles...

*[The NoöSphere ripples. The engine detects an anomaly.]*

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*[Byron and Tesla enter.]*

**BYRON**: Ah, Mr. Tesla and I thought we heard the elegant ka-chunks of the Engine detecting an Anomaly, Ducky?

**ADA**: Please don't call me that.

**BYRON**: What do you mean, mon petit canard? You would prefer I call you by Babbage's affectionate avatar, Oh Enchantress of Numbers?

**ADA**: Stop. Just stop. Please.

**BYRON:** Of course. Ada.

**TESLA:** Lady Lovelace, did you touch the copper finial--

**ADA:** Yes.

**TESLA:** Did it send you somewhere?

**ADA:** Send me somewhere? No. But something strange happened. Oh-- and we have a new Anamoly. Let me transcribe it...

*[Ada scribbles a translation.]*

**BYRON:** Ducky, when you say "something strange" happened--

*[The Noösphere ripples. It ripples again. It ripples again. THE SHIP SHAKES. The Noösphere cracks.]*

**BYRON:** What in the blazes?

**ADA:** *[feels the Noösphere break like a pain in her head]* I felt that. I felt the Deviation. Perhaps I oughtn't to have touched your finial, Mr. Tesla.

**TESLA:** The more attuned we become with the Noösphere, the more possibilities are before us. Currently, we need Mary-Celeste and the Engine to travel, but theoretically, navigating the Noösphere could be as simple as thinking. We need only have an Idea, and it would be our reality.

**BYRON:** Do you need to sit down, Ada?

**ADA:** We need to contact Mrs. Warne.

**BYRON:** Another trip to Chicago, then?

**TESLA:** I have another idea. If I connect Mrs. Warne's hairpin to the copper finial, it should--

*[Tesla activates the finial.]*

**KATE** *[hologram]:* Mr. Tesla! I can see you! Can you hear me?

**TESLA:** Hello, Mrs. Warne.

**KATE** [*hologram*]: This is spectacular.

**ADA**: Were you able to complete the task we set you?

**KATE** [*hologram*]: Yes. Pinkerton operatives now protect the railroads.

**TESLA**: That is excellent news.

**KATE** [*hologram*]: So, is the Noösphere back to normal? Is it all over?

**ADA**: Father, here's the transcription. It says, "The Baltimore Plot." Will you interpret it for us?

**BYRON**: Of course.

**ADA**: No theatrics, please. I'm... not in the mood.

**BYRON**: Fine. [*The Noösphere speaks through him. A single sustained cello note plays...*] "But O heart! heart! Heart! O the bleeding drops of red, Where on the deck my Captain lies, Fallen cold and dead." Oh, oh my. Oh no.

**ADA**: Father, what happened to you?

**BYRON**: Something was speaking through me. It happened when I touched your hand, Ada. It's from a poem yet to be written in young Mrs. Warne's time. A poem of grief for a captain who dies just as his ship has reached the end of a stormy and dangerous voyage.

**TESLA**: What does it mean, Byron?

**BYRON**: It means that Abraham Lincoln is going to be assassinated.

**KATE** [*hologram*]: Oh no.

**MARY-CELESTE** [*disembodied voice*]: Abraham Lincoln's assassination is not a Deviation.

**KATE** [*hologram*]: It's not?

**TESLA**: That was very poetic but not very actionable.

**BYRON**: Fine. It means... [*A single sustained cello note...*] It means a plot exists to assassinate president-elect Abraham Lincoln before he takes office on his contemplated passage through Baltimore to the White House in Washington DC. That should be actionable enough for you.

**MARY-CELESTE** [*disembodied voice*]: The Baltimore Plot is still not a Deviation, George.

**BYRON**: Unless the assassination actually takes place.

**KATE** [*hologram*]: The South is ready to secede. If a Southerner assassinates the President-Elect—

*[The Noösphere speaks through Ada. A single sustained viola note plays...]*

**ADA**: [*channeling Noösphere*] Then the political experiment known as American Democracy will fail.

**BYRON**: Ada! Not you, too! Sit down, my dear.

**ADA**: I'm fine.

**BYRON**: You are clearly ill--

**ADA**: --I will be the judge of my own comfort.

**TESLA**: American Democracy is a pivotal Idea of the 18th century. It becomes a dominating political force in the 19th and 20th centuries. Entire regions of the Noösphere are constructed on its foundations.

**ADA**: So this one Deviation could destroy the Noösphere entirely.

**TESLA**: How do you mean?

**ADA**: I don't have a strong grasp of American politics, but just now, when the Noösphere was speaking through me, I was made to understand that after Lincoln is elected President, the South will secede. And rather than allow that secession to go unchallenged, Abraham Lincoln will lead the country into Civil War.

**KATE** [*hologram*]: Damn the devil.

**BYRON**: But if this isn't a Deviation, if Lincoln is meant to die anyway and there's no way to avoid a war— then why does it matter to the Noösphere if he is killed now or later?

**ADA**: In 1862 Lincoln will deliver a speech that becomes known as the Gettysburg Address. He will redefine the Civil War as "a new birth of freedom" that would bring true equality to all of its citizens. His speech is integral to the survival of America's representative democracy; that the—

*[The Noösphere speaks through Ada. A single sustained viola note plays....]*

**ADA & MARY-CELESTE:** —"government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

**TESLA:** Interesting.

**BYRON:** We're taking it in turns to be possessed by the Noösphere. I rather think "interesting" rather undersells the case, my man.

**KATE [hologram]:** But if Lincoln dies now, in Baltimore, before the war begins?

**ADA:** Then the South secedes without resistance, the American Experiment fails in its infancy, and—

**KATE [hologram]:** —and four million human souls remain in bondage. What can we do?

**TESLA:** All roads lead back to you, Mrs. Warne. You and Mr. Pinkerton must protect the president-elect.

**KATE [hologram]:** I'm just supposed to march up to Abraham Lincoln and demand to take over his security detail?

**BYRON:** We have complete faith in you.

**KATE [hologram]:** Great. I'll do what I can.

*[Hologram sound goes out.]*

**TESLA:** So, we would be saving Lincoln now only to let him die later?

**ADA:** Given the right time and place, Lincoln is meant to be the martyr of liberty.

**BYRON:** If a man dies for a great cause at the perfect moment, both the man and the cause become greater yet. Lucky sod.

**TESLA:** Lady Lovelace, are you--?

**ADA:** I'm fine. I'm just a little more... intuitive than usual.

**BYRON:** Your invention seems to conduct the Noösphere quite effectively, Mr. Tesla. Let's nobody touch it anymore, please.

**TESLA:** You don't think it caused the Deviation, do you? Should I dismantle it?

**ADA:** No! Don't--- don't take it apart just yet.

**BYRON:** Could Babbage have caused this?

**TESLA:** Not without another Engine. But with one... or with some other conducting resonator... it's possible.

**ADA:** You always blame him.

**BYRON:** Ada, it's admirable that Babbage loves his wife. And I'm grateful to him. He was there to be a father to you when I couldn't be, but--

**ADA:** Chose not to be.

**BYRON:** I die when you are nine.

**ADA:** My mother locked me in closets for hours if I expressed a thought she found too poetic. She hated you that much. I was five. You were still very much alive then. You should have meant nothing to me, and yet I saved you. How can you blame Mr. Babbage for trying to save the woman he loves from an early death? You're the poet. You're supposed to be able to understand love and explain it to the rest of us.

**BYRON:** The heart can't live in the past.

**ADA:** We live inside time.

**TESLA:** Ada, Byron, please. We must face this Deviation together. We have work to do.

*[Tesla walks off and shuts a door.]*

**BYRON:** I need a drink.

*[Byron stalks off in the other direction. Another door shuts.]*

**ADA:** Charles, I hope you know what you're doing.

*[The Noösphere ripples. The ship shakes. The Noösphere cracks three more times.]*

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[Music]

**ANNOUNCER:** Oh my! What is happening to the NoöSphere? Is it cracking up? Where will that leave our intrepid adventurers?

**MARY-CELESTE:** Remember this: nothing in the NoöSphere happens by chance. You were meant to hear this story.

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**ANNOUNCER:** Next time on The Secret and Impossible League of the NoöSphere in The Baltimore Plot:

*[The NoöSphere ripples.]*

**PINKERTON:** Mrs. Warne, this is Abraham Lincoln.

**LINCOLN:** Mrs. Warne.

**KATE:** Delighted to meet you, Mr. Lincoln.

**LINCOLN:** I doubt it. I'm not that delightful. Now, Allan, what's this cloak and dagger business all about?

**PINKERTON:** News has reached me through one of my operatives. There have been threats made against your life.

*[The NoöSphere ripples.]*

**KATE:** Casting a play, are you, Leah?

**LEAH:** My dear... I've just been making a new acquaintance. Have you met Mr. John Wilkes Booth?

**KATE:** I haven't had that pleasure.

**BOOTH:** The pleasure's all mine, Ma'am.

*[Credits music.]*

**ANNOUNCER:** Pendant Productions would like to express our thanks to our stars:  
Alyssa Kay as Lady Ada Lovelace,

Marena Kleinpeter as Kate Warne,  
Daniel Christensen as Lord Byron,  
Sherif Amin as Nikola Tesla,  
Caitlin Frances as Leah Fox,  
Troy Lund as Allan Pinkerton,  
Imogen Love as Mary-Celeste,  
Matthew Middleton as Charles Babbage,  
and Mark Fox as the crook and other voices.  
Advertisements were read by Shawnmarie Stanton and  
I am Roy Stanton.

SILON was conceived and written by Darian Lindle. The Baltimore Plot was originally produced as a stage play directed by Meghan Shalom Arnette for Live Girls! Theater. This episode was directed by V C Morrison and assistant directed by Paul Brueggemann.

Songs "The Game Stays the Same," "A Desperate Move," "Driven Beyond Measure," "A Lovely Night," and "Standing Tall" by Josh Molen at [TheTunePeddler.com](http://TheTunePeddler.com).

Other original music and the SILON theme were composed by Michael Owcharuk. Some sound cues created by Stefanie Senior. Produced by Pendant Productions. This production is Copyright 2021 Pendant Productions and Live Girls! Theater.

Stay safe and good luck.

**ADVERTISER:** For more full-cast audio dramas, please visit our friends at Jim French's Imagination Theater at [harrynile.com](http://harrynile.com) or search for Pendant Productions wherever you find your podcasts. Thanks for listening.

*[An old-timey radio tuner moves up and down the dial again, ending in radio static.]*