

SILON, season 1: The Baltimore Plot, Episode V - Resonators and Deviators

[Radio Static. An old-timey radio being tuned up and down the dial.]

ANNOUNCER: Bowles & Blood Haberdashery 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]

ADVERTISER: *[Whistles a quick bit of Ring Around the Rosie]* You may wonder what's making me feel so tip-top today. Why, it's my new hat from Bowles & Blood. One of the few things that give me that tip-top feeling is the pleasure of being well-dressed. Perfect taste is a criterion, and in hats, there's nothing smarter than a Bowles & Blood. From stem to stern, your Bowles & Blood hat gives off that look of quality that puts you squarely in the style of "today". You see the quality in the carefully molded shape and the subtle shades of color. Next time you pass a Bowles & Blood haberdashery, stop in and try on a Bowles & Blood. Once you see and wear a Bowles & Blood, you'll agree that nothing says "today" like Bowles & Blood.

ANNOUNCER: Oh... um. Right. Welcome back, dear Listeners, to the Noösphere, where reality is formed and destroyed through the power of Ideas. As Mary-Celeste would say, if she were able to say anything at all, that is, if you can hear this message, then it's meant for you. Last time, let's see, what did we learn last time?

ADVERTISER: Last time, our characters were in Baltimore in February 1861. Leah Fox had just recruited a young actor called John Wilkes Booth to join a mysterious group of Palmetto-Pendant wearing ne'er-do-wells. Meanwhile, Kate Warne discovered a Baltimorean plot to assassinate president-elect Abraham Lincoln. And Charles Babbage snuck aboard the Mary-Celeste to steal her Engine's Resonator, sabotaging dear Mary-Celeste in the process.

ANNOUNCER: That was good. Very good.

ADVERTISER: Thank you. I pay attention.

ANNOUNCER: You do, indeed. *[clears throat]* Tonight's episode, "Resonators and Deviators," is the fifth in a six part adventure called "The Baltimore Plot."

[The Noösphere ripples.]

BYRON: I loved – but those I loved are gone;

Had friends – my early friends are fled:
How cheerless feels the heart alone,
When all its former hopes are dead!
Though gay companions o'er the bowl
Dispel awhile the sense of ill'
Though pleasure stirs the maddening soul,
The heart – the heart – is lonely still.

A sweet little bong-bong sounds.

ANNOUNCER: Footnote. Lord Byron wrote the poem "I Would I Were a Careless Child," in 1807, when he was nineteen years old and a student at Cambridge. Among his first published works, it established Byron's enduring

themes of loneliness and longing to find his place in the world. End footnote.

A sweet little bong-bong sounds.

BYRON: *[Beat.]* I hate waiting.

TESLA: Ada is resourceful. She can handle whatever she finds there.

BYRON: Bollocks. You haven't been out there in years. It's dangerous.

TESLA: Are you so ready to charge into battle?

BYRON: That has nothing to do with it. It's bloody Babbage. She can't think clearly when it comes to him. She loves him like a father.

TESLA: She loves you like her father. Mr Babbage was her mentor but he's been gone a long time.

BYRON: He was there a long time in her life. Where was I?

TESLA: You were dead, my friend. She saved you.

BYRON: The Engine saved me.

TESLA: We didn't know much about the Engine then. How to read it, interpret it. Lady Lovelace has always been less reliant on the Engine than any of us. She sees more possibilities. The Engine didn't take us to Greece; your daughter did. *[Beat.]*

BYRON: I need to help her.

TESLA: Even if you go to her now, you can't know that you're helping her.

BYRON: Is that what you told her before she found me in Greece?

TESLA: *[amused]* Probably.

BYRON: Does it seem quieter than usual? *[Beat.]* Mary-Celeste, open a Tether to my daughter's location, please. *[Beat.]*

TESLA: Mary-Celeste?

[Rushed tinkering noises. Opening and closing of console doors.]

TESLA: No. No, no, no. Her voice is gone.

BYRON: What is going on?

TESLA: Mary-Celeste has been sabotaged.

BYRON: What does that mean?

TESLA: It means someone took from us a priceless gift of indescribable beauty and mystery beyond human conception. It means that we can't open a Tether to the Biosphere.

BYRON: But, Ada.

TESLA: She can't get in, and we can't get out. She's on her own.

[A clock ticks loudly, reverberating through the space. It diminishes in volume and scope until it becomes the second hand of a pocket watch.]

KATE: *[impatient]* Come on. They should have received the telegram by now. Come on. *[A knock at the door. Footsteps. The door opens.]* Mr. Pinkerton. What are you doing here?

[The door closes.]

PINKERTON: You have something you want to tell me, Mrs. Warne?

KATE: No. Um. What would--

PINKERTON: So, you think I'm a fool now?

KATE: No!

PINKERTON: Dammit, I need to know I can count on you as I always have.

KATE: *[distressed]* I don't know what to do.

PINKERTON: The Kate Warne I know doesn't dither. She acts and damns the consequences.

KATE: Well, the consequences might just damn me this time.

PINKERTON: *[sighing]* I'm an awfully smart fellow.

KATE: I don't want you to think I'm a lunatic.

PINKERTON: I can't let you go back out there like this. I'll send you back to Chicago if I have to.

KATE: *[scoffs]*

PINKERTON: Don't think I won't. Give me something. Kate.

KATE: When I look at someone, anyone, I see more than just what they look like. I see what they want; when they lie. I have been able to see the intentions; of everyone I've ever met. I don't have to wonder whether someone is good or bad. I know. I see it as clearly as you can see the clothes they wear. It's a kind of talent, I suppose. It sets me apart. And because of it, I've been... conscripted into a group of people that I don't know well.

PINKERTON: Conscripted?

KATE: It's not like that. They have talents like I do. They're the ones who told me about the threat to Mr. Lincoln. They want a great deal from me, but they offer a great deal in return.

PINKERTON: Do you trust them?

KATE: I don't know. I don't know how to judge. I've always gone with my gut – but what does it matter if I see the truth if I can't tell what's right? All I know is I don't want to leave you— to stop being your operative.

PINKERTON: I don't hold with conscription. If you don't want this, then I will get you free

of it. Of course, details might help. You'll always have a place with me. Kate.

KATE: Allan.

[A knock at the door. It opens quickly.]

ADA: Oh.*[tries a southern accent]* I'll come back.

KATE: No stay.

[The door closes.]

KATE: Lady Lovelace, this is Allan Pinkerton. Mr. Pinkerton, this is one of the new friends I was telling you about, Lady Ada Lovelace. She is here to help us find the assassin.

PINKERTON: ...Pleased to meet you.

ADA: Likewise. Mrs. Warne, as much as I admire Mr. Pinkerton. I'm not certain combining our energies is a wise course of action?

KATE: I trust Mr. Pinkerton with my life.

ADA: Then I see I shall be trusting you with mine as well, sir.

PINKERTON: Likewise.

KATE: Where's Byron?

ADA: What is it you've found out about these secessionists who want to kill Mr. Lincoln?

KATE: Mr. Pinkerton...

PINKERTON: Don't look at me, lass. I'm along for the ride. Just go.

KATE: A group of Southern secessionists called the Knights of the Golden Circle talk less but feel worse than most. They all congregate here in Barnum's Hotel. They're mostly made up of gentlemen and slave owners. I can sense their motives, but I don't yet know their plan. I've shaken hands with several of them.

ADA: Oh, dear. I suppose a synesthetic smelling session is in order. Give me the glove.
[she gives it a synthy sniff. The single sustained viola note of Ada's synesthesia, then it fades out.]

[Distant voices]

SECESSIONIST 1: My family has lived and farmed our plantation for 150 years. If I am destined to die, let it be shrouded in glory, saving my beloved South.

SECESSIONIST 2: If a man had the nerve, he could immortalize himself by plunging a knife into Lincoln's heart. Let us have another Brutus.

SECESSIONIST 3: *[Italian Accent]* Lincoln shall never, never be President.

A sweet little bong-bong sound that indicates an interruption

ANNOUNCER: Footnote. Cipriano Ferrandini was an immigrant barber from Corsica who operated out of the basement of the Barnum Hotel. He was also widely believed to be a member of the Knights of the Golden Circle, a collection of secessionists plotting to kill President-Elect Abraham Lincoln in Baltimore and

replace him with a pro-slavery candidate. End footnote.

A sweet little bong-bong sound that indicates the end of an interruption

ADA: Here is your glove back. I understand the situation.

PINKERTON: I'm sorry, did she just smell your glove for memories...

KATE: Later. There's also an actor who may be involved. He handled this newspaper.

ADA: *[sniffs. The single sustained viola note of Ada's synesthesia, then it fades out.]*

[Distant voices]

BOOTH [V.O.]: I have played kings and lords, and I recognize a tyrant. Should I refuse to act, I would curse my willful idleness and deem myself a coward. I will see Lincoln dead if it's the last thing I do.

ADA: Oh, dear.

KATE: Any one of them could do the deed.

PINKERTON: I've met these men, befriended them in the salons of the Barnum Hotel. They believe me to be their friend. As a fellow secessionist, I've been invited to an important meeting tomorrow night.

ADA: Mrs. Warne, you telegraphed about a new player.

KATE: There is another... person of interest, a woman named Leah Fox. She passes information between the Knights and may have even recruited them. She carried these glasses.

ADA: *[sighs and sniffs again. The single sustained viola note of Ada's synesthesia, then it fades out.]*

[Distant voices]

LEAH [V.O.]: If by the death of one man we can give the world to all others, then that man shall not stand in our way.

ADA: I've encountered her before... somewhere.

PINKERTON: Abraham Lincoln is set to arrive in Baltimore at nine o'clock in the evening the day after tomorrow. It's been publicized in all the newspapers along the route. The rail lines in Baltimore are run by two different railroads, the Northern Central and the Baltimore & Ohio. They don't connect, and one must travel a mile between them on foot. Lincoln will be most vulnerable as he passes under a bridge in the heart of town.

ADA: Like Caesar passing through the Theater of Pompey on his way to the Senate.

PINKERTON: I believe they plan to block Lincoln's passage, where they can trap him from both sides. I'll get a confirmation at the meeting, and I'll keep them there as long as I can. Kate, I need you to go to Lincoln in Philadelphia and make him change his schedule, so he arrives on the seven o'clock train instead of the nine o'clock train. He knows you. He'll trust you.

KATE: Fine. Lady Lovelace, Leah Fox is, was once my friend. She can be... dangerous.

And I don't think she's working alone. Someone is directing her, feeding her information. Leah warned me about... well, about you.

ADA: Me?

KATE: Not you specifically, but the League. She said you were on the wrong side of this fight. That you want to keep the Noösphere for yourselves and disregard the lives of those who aren't "special" like us. Synesthetic, I mean.

ADA: She knows about the League?

KATE: She mentioned it by name. And she has a partner I haven't met.

ADA: ...A partner who knows about the Noösphere.

KATE: I think she also caused the first Deviation, the one that brought us together. She tried to stop me from meeting Mr. Pinkerton. *[To PINKERTON]* That first time we saw each other, at the train station. I was going to pick your pocket. I know now, I wouldn't have been successful.

PINKERTON: You've known these folks that long?

KATE: They gave me the idea that I could be a Pinkerton.

ADA: I need to locate this Mrs. Fox.

KATE: You should leave Leah to me.

ADA: I will not. She knows things a woman like her has no right to.

KATE: Since when is knowledge such a bad thing?

ADA: She's not one of us and never will be. She must be made to understand her place.

KATE: Her place?

PINKERTON: Mrs. Warne. Other than me, Lincoln only knows you. Only trusts you. You must be the one to meet him in Philadelphia without delay.

KATE: Fine. How will you find Leah?

ADA: I'll have to return to our ship.

[The sound of an x-point not opening, which then dissipates.]

ADA: What?

KATE: Why isn't your bollard working?

ADA: I'll try again.

[The sound of an x-point not opening again. And a third time.]

PINKERTON: Is something supposed to be happening?

ADA: Yes... but it appears something unknown is doing we don't-know what...*[To KATE]* It looks like I'll have to follow my nose.

PINKERTON: Then we'd all better get going.

KATE: Don't worry. I'm sure Mr. Tesla will fix whatever is wrong.

ADA: He will or he won't. It doesn't change what we must do. Mr. Pinkerton. Mrs. Warne.

[A door opens and closes.]

KATE: *[Beat.]* Allan.

PINKERTON: It's not often someone succeeds at deceiving me.

KATE: You have every right to be angry.

PINKERTON: We don't have time to talk about this now. Your ass needs to be on a train to Philadelphia in twenty minutes.

KATE: I'm having doubts about this mission, sir.

PINKERTON: Slavers and secessionists plan to assassinate the duly elected President of the United States. How does that leave room for doubt?

KATE: But what if allowing Lincoln to be killed is the way to improve the lives of millions?

PINKERTON: Which millions? The ones in chains?

KATE: This thing that's inside of me—What if you could have it too? What if everyone could? I like Mr. Lincoln, but his life shouldn't be more important than anyone else's. Than yours.

PINKERTON: He isn't more important, dammit. But he can do things I can't. No matter how many slaves I help to free, slavery still exists. I don't have the power, the influence, or the skills to change that. I don't have the gifts. He may not know it yet, but he does. What I do have is the freedom to choose what I fight for.

KATE: I thought if you could see as I do, then you could come with me.

PINKERTON: This isn't about me. Or you. It's about judging what's right from wrong and standing with honor. *[Beat.]* You've been lying to me since the moment we met.

KATE: I—

PINKERTON: —Don't. Now, whether it's foolish or not, I still trust you. You know what to do. You know. And you have less than a quarter of an hour to remember it. We all have a job to do; I'm counting on you to do yours.

[A door opens and closes.]

KATE: *[deep breath]* Right.

[A door opens and closes.]

[A warehouse echoes with the workings of a buzzing instrument as it whirs and clicks.]

LEAH: Well, Mr. Babbage. I've done as you asked. I led her here.

BABBAGE: You have? Where is she? I-- Ada, my dear.

ADA: Charles.

BABBAGE: Come, come. Let me show you.

[Ada's footsteps].

LEAH: So, you're the Lady Lovelace?

ADA: I am.

BABBAGE: Yes, yes. Ada, this is my colleague, Mrs. Fox.

ADA: Leah Fox. Mrs. Warne has told me about you.

LEAH: I wish I could say the same.

ADA: *[sniffs, the single sustained viola note of Ada's synesthesia.]* You were with Mrs. Warne at a train station in Chicago in 1856. You went to Rochester, NY?

LEAH: *[unimpressed]* My sisters live there.

ADA: I thought Charles-- But then you already knew Mr. Babbage even then, didn't you.

LEAH: Yeah, I and Charlie go way back.

BABBAGE: Yes, yes. Ada, my dear. Mrs. Fox has been a great help, especially as I had no other friends I could count on. *[Babbage flips a switch, and the machine sounds increase.]* Now, do you see it?

[A beautiful and terrible note begins to play.]

ADA: That noise. Is it a ... resonator?

BABBAGE: You were always the quickest to understand my work. You see, the device makes the vibration and then directs it through these specially constructed elements to this Resonator here.

ADA: Which focuses the vibration and opens an X-Point?

BABBAGE: From the Biosphere! Isn't it impressive?

ADA: What did you use as a conductor?

BABBAGE: A rare-earth metal called tantalum. It took quite some time to find enough for the device casing and mechanisms. And then, I needed to refine it so it could conduct the resonance properly. Mrs. Fox made herself quite helpful in that regard.

LEAH: We make a good team.

ADA: You've made a Deviation Device.

BABBAGE: I've broken through the barrier between the spheres. You can reach your hand into the Noösphere. Go ahead. *[The Noösphere ripples]* The tear is just large enough for a person to pass through - but when we're finished it will be large enough to allow a vessel to enter the Noösphere. Careful now. Only put your hand in. You wouldn't want to fall in there.

[The Noösphere theme plays.]

ADA: *[in awe]* It just goes on forever.

BABBAGE: My theory is, if they are wearing resonating eyeglasses, non synesthetes can interact with it as well. I think it's big enough now to try. Mrs. Fox, would you show Lady Lovelace?

LEAH: My glasses. I'm sorry, Mr. Babbage. I'm afraid I--

BABBAGE: You lost the synesthetic glasses I created for you?

LEAH: It wasn't my fault. I--

ADA: You mean these synesthetic glasses?

LEAH: You have them! How-- Kate picked my pocket, didn't she? The kid's gotten better. I'll take my glasses back now.

[Footsteps to the tear in the Noosphere.]

BABBAGE: Well, Mrs. Fox? What do the glasses allow you to see?

LEAH: I see a tear in the world. I see...

BABBAGE: Can you reach through?

LEAH: I'll try. *[the Noösphere crackles]* Ah! Ooh - that stings. It's so cold. But yes, I can reach it. Ow...

ADA: Those are quite the spectacles.

LEAH: Charlie made them for me to thank me for all I've done for him. He believes in justice and equality. Do you?

ADA: Of course. In the abstract. But one must apply action to the specific.

LEAH: You're stuck here in the Biosphere for good now. Perhaps that will make things less abstract for you.

ADA: What does she mean I'm stuck in the BioSphere? Charles, are you the reason my bollard won't connect to the Noösphere? What have you done?

BABBAGE: I wish there'd been another way, but now we have all we need to make our own ship.

ADA: That Resonator. I recognize it now. You took that from the Engine aboard our ship.

BABBAGE: It was my Engine.

ADA: Mary-Celeste would never have let you leave—

BABBAGE: Which was why the ship was a necessary sacrifice.

ADA: *[laughs]* Dear God, Charles. Do you remember when someone asked you, 'if you put the wrong figures into the machine, would it still produce the right answers?' We thought that so funny. And yet, here you are, putting in the wrong figures and hoping to receive the right answer.

BABBAGE: You assume my figures are wrong. I'll prove to you that I'm right. Once the barrier is destroyed, the NoöSphere and the Biosphere will be one.

ADA: It's not only the barrier you're destroying; it's the NoöSphere, itself. Mrs. Fox, surely you see, this isn't reasonable.

LEAH: If Charlie is right, then I will finally have my place in your secret club. If he's not, then there's no secret anymore. Either works for me.

ADA: It doesn't matter. You're too late. All you've done is strand us both in the BioSphere. Your plan to take down the idea of American Democracy won't work.

BABBAGE: Why not?

ADA: We've prevented this assassination. Fie on your Knights.

LEAH: What do you know about the Knights?

ADA: Wouldn't you like to know?

LEAH: We don't have to worry, Mr. Babbage. She may be book smart, but I can plan an operation like this in my sleep. She's bluffing.

BABBAGE: If this plan doesn't work, then I will try another. I'm so close. I've got everything I need to change events. My wife Georgiana needs me to bring her into the NoöSphere. She's waiting for me.

ADA: I can't let you do this, Charles.

BABBAGE: You can. You will. You'll help me. If you want to see your ridiculous father again, you will. But do it for me, Ada. This is the right thing to do. And it's too late now. We will build a new machine and remake the world.

ADA: I wish Georgiana were synesthetic. I wish the wonders of the NoöSphere were open to everyone. But, I can feel what you're doing to it, Charles. I can feel it in my body, and it's wrong. You're destroying the NoöSphere; each Deviation is like a cut of a knife. Every moment that Deviation is open more Ideas are ripped from the NoöSphere and disappear forever.

BABBAGE: You're wrong, Ada. You'll see.

ADA: But Charles, the risk is too great.

BABBAGE: What risk? The only thing that matters is being able to share the NoöSphere with Georgiana. If she can't join us, there's no point in being there at all.

ADA: You saw something in me that no one else ever had. I'll be forever grateful to you. But I can't let you do this.

[A scuffle.]

BABBAGE: She's got the Resonator. Stop her, Mrs. Fox! Get her away from the Deviation Device.

LEAH: I have you cornered. Look around, Lady Lovelace. There's nothing behind you but the NoöSphere void. You're not going anywhere.

ADA: I could go into the NoöSphere.

BABBAGE: Ada, don't be ridiculous. It's your father who has the death wish - not you. See reason.

ADA: There's a time for reason, and a time for action. Goodbye.

BABBAGE: No! Stop her! Ada!

ADA: *[Ada's voice trails off as she jumps into the NoöSphere gap] Ahhhh!*

[Silence]

LEAH: I didn't think she'd do it. Can she survive in the NoöSphere without a ship?

BABBAGE: She'll just go on and on, forever, falling. God, what have I done? Ada!

LEAH: You can't help her now. She took the Resonator. Will the Deviation still work without your device?

BABBAGE: The Resonator has served its purpose. If Lincoln is assassinated, the gap will widen on its own. We will only need it again should we fail. But Ada said they'd foiled our plan. Ada...

LEAH: She knew about the Knights. If she knew about the Knights then she might know the plan to attack Lincoln when he arrives on the seven o'clock train.... But there's a train arriving earlier, at seven o'clock. If he's on that instead, he'd slip through their swords. That's only twenty-five minutes from now. Damn. I do have someone in reserve. He'll have to do. Will you be all right here?

BABBAGE: *[noncommittal noise]*

LEAH: I'm sure you'll find her once you get us both safely into the NoöSphere.

BABBAGE: The NoöSphere is vast. It would be like finding one person in a million oceans.

LEAH: I must hurry.

[Leah's echoing footsteps leave the warehouse.]

BABBAGE: Ada. She's lost to me. She's lost to the world.

[The NoöSphere ripples. Ada's scream fades in and out again like a Doppler effect.]

KATE *[from the NoöSphere]:* A woman can discover secrets in places where a man can't hope to go.

TESLA: *[from the NoöSphere]:* The more attuned we become with the NoöSphere, the more possibilities are before us. We are, in effect, inside Thoughts – inside Ideas.

BYRON *[from the NoöSphere]:* To live in the NoöSphere is to live inside time.

ADA: Goodbye

[Music]

ANNOUNCER : And that, dear listeners, is where we must leave our adventurers, this time.

ADVERTISER: But what will happen to Ada? Is she lost forever? Will Mary-Celeste's voice ever return?

ANNOUNCER: You'll have to find out next time on The Secret and Impossible League of the NoöSphere in The Baltimore Plot. *[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 and Abraham Lincoln,
Matthew Middleton as Charles Babbage
and Mark Fox as John Wilkes Booth and other voices.
Original music by Michael Owcharuk.
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. 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 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.]