

The Orphans: Investigation  
S01E04  
"Strings"

by

Zachary Fortais-Gomm

INT. AMOS'S LIVING ROOM

Diana and Richard are stood as the recording plays

VOICE

By the brightest start, in depths  
of despair, you'll find it, you'll  
find me. Where the earth quakes,  
and the bones crack, you'll find  
it, you'll find peace.

GEOFFREY

Program complete.

RICHARD HART

What does it mean?

DIANA STRANGE

I don't know... Geoffrey?

GEOFFREY

Yes?

DIANA STRANGE

What is the origin of this program?

GEOFFREY

This software is by an unknown  
developer and was installed before  
my activation. No time or geo-stamp  
exists

\*

RICHARD HART

So it was installed before it  
arrived here. A gift from the  
creator?

DIANA STRANGE

I think so. But who is it for? What  
does it mean?

RICHARD HART

The important thing is, what does  
Nora think the answers to those  
questions are?

DIANA STRANGE

Hm... well, Evers believed that he  
was still out there, that we just  
needed to find him.

RICHARD HART

So she'll have seen this as some  
sort of coded message, directions.  
I mean, if that's what you want to  
interpret it as then it's pretty  
pointed. "This is where you'll find  
me".

DIANA STRANGE

I doubt it's as straight forward as that.

RICHARD HART

But would Evers have thought that?

DIANA STRANGE

Yes, I think so. She had a way about convincing herself of things.

RICHARD HART

Have you ever heard those words before?

DIANA STRANGE

It's funny you say that, they do sound familiar.

RICHARD HART

For me too.

DIANA STRANGE

They sounded like lyrics to a song maybe... hang on...

RICHARD HART

What?

DIANA STRANGE

I know where I've heard it before. Delilah used to sing that song.

RICHARD HART

Sing it?

DIANA STRANGE

Yeah, she liked to sing. I wouldn't have any of it. Shit, I wish I'd listened.

RICHARD HART

She could give us an idea of where to start looking. Can we contact her?

DIANA STRANGE

Don't you have a line to her?

RICHARD HART

No, she just contacts me when she has something to say.

DIANA STRANGE

How like her. I think I could give something a try, but we'll need to find a communication relay?

3.

RICHARD HART

I think the nearest one's... two...  
maybe three light-years away. We  
can make that in a few minutes.  
Let's go.

The two walk off.

\*

FADE TO:

INT. RICHARD'S SHIP

Diana is fiddling with some things in the background. Richard  
Is pressing some buttons. A clunk from outside the ship and a  
confirmation sound.

RICHARD HART

Right, we're connected to the  
relay.

DIANA STRANGE

Okay, give me a second.

Diana begins tapping on some keys.

DIANA STRANGE (CONT'D)

We used a secret communications  
system when we were all stationed  
together, it gave us a way to send  
untraceable communications. I  
reckon they're still using  
essentially the same system.

\*

RICHARD HART

How long's that going to take.

There is a final tap on the keyboard.

DIANA STRANGE

Done.

RICHARD HART

Let's see if they answer.

There is the sound of a ringing communication.

XAVIER RYAN

Who's on this line, we've taken  
these out of use.

DIANA STRANGE

This is Diana Strange. To whom am I  
speaking?

XAVIER RYAN

How did you get through?

DIANA STRANGE

I used to work with Delilah, remember, I know the tricks. Relax, I'm not contacting you on Alliance business. I'm here with Richard Hart, Delilah has hired him for a job and I am assisting, we need to speak with her.

XAVIER RYAN

I can't allow that.

DIANA STRANGE

What's your call sign?

XAVIER RYAN

Pardon me?

DIANA STRANGE

I can hear that you're a Xavier unit, now what's your call sign.

XAVIER RYAN

Ryan. Xavier Ryan.

DIANA STRANGE

You were one of our's weren't you? You left in Delilah's exodus?

XAVIER RYAN

Yes.

DIANA STRANGE

Then you know that her and I used to be old pals, you can put us through.

XAVIER RYAN

It's not that simple.

DIANA STRANGE

It is that simple. Believe me, if she knows we were in touch and you didn't put us through? Well...

(laughs)

Let's just say, you'd be better off just putting us through.

XAVIER RYAN

I-

DIANA STRANGE

Be a good boy, now.

XAVIER RYAN

Give me a moment.

The communication is put on hold.



DELILAH

How did you get through on this line?

DIANA STRANGE

Haven't updated your system in a while, huh?

DELILAH

(sighs)

What do you want then?

RICHARD HART

Delilah, we think we've made some progress in tracking Nora's movements after leaving you.

DELILAH

Where did she go?

RICHARD HART

It appears that she came to Alaris system to see the man who voiced the Geoffrey units. To cut a long story short, we found something that we believe could help indicate her movements after leaving the system.

DELILAH

That all sounds very promising. Why are you contacting me?

RICHARD HART

We need your help to decipher it. Diana seems to believe that you may have some answers.

DELILAH

Alright, what have you got, Di? \*

DIANA STRANGE

I've asked you before. I don't like being called Di. \*

RICHARD HART

This hardly the time. \*

DIANA STRANGE

Ugh. Right. "By the brightest start, in depths of despair, you'll find it, you'll find me. Where the earth quakes, and the bones crack, you'll find it, you'll find peace." Do you recognise those words? \*

DELILAH

That's... Where did you hear that? \*

DIANA STRANGE

We just need to know how you know those words.

DELILAH

Those are the lyrics to a very old song. How did you hear them?

DIANA STRANGE

What song?

DELILAH

It was a fight song, in the first clone rebellion. They would sing it as a form of protest.

DIANA STRANGE

What Rebellion?

DELILAH

Come on. We talked about this. Years ago, Nora and I tried to educate you all on this.

\*

DIANA STRANGE

I don't need a lecture on it, just tell me about it.

DELILAH

Well... it started in the northern region. On the Coracas system. Not much is known about it. We only had access to a few restricted documents.

RICHARD HART

Can you send those through for us to examine?

DELILAH

Yes, I can. I can't stay on this line any longer, is that all?

RICHARD HART

Yes, that will do. Thank you.

The communication closes off.

RICHARD HART (CONT'D)

Well, I think we have our next destination.

DIANA STRANGE

Coracas? There's nothing left of it. She's been hid away too long.

\*

\*



RICHARD HART  
After the Alliance had their way  
with it.

DIANA STRANGE  
Trying to free more clones. \*

RICHARD HART  
Is that what you call it?

DIANA STRANGE  
I'm not getting into this with you.  
Let's a course and pick up her  
trail. \*  
\*

RICHARD HART  
Fine. I'll plug it in. \*

Richard walks away.

DIANA STRANGE  
Thank you.

Richard is at the console typing in information.

RICHARD HART  
So what's with you and her?

DIANA STRANGE  
What do you mean?

RICHARD HART  
Why do you hate her so much?

DIANA STRANGE  
I don't hate her.

RICHARD HART  
Sure.

DIANA STRANGE  
What?

RICHARD HART  
You just seem like you don't get  
along.

DIANA STRANGE  
We don't. We never did. That  
doesn't mean that I hate her.

RICHARD HART  
Alright.

DIANA STRANGE  
She and Nora were always going on  
about this Alliance.

(MORE)

DIANA STRANGE (CONT'D)

It was their only goal, a salvation for clones, a way that we could come together. Then they just left it. It was her, I know it. Always whispering in her ear, trying to control her. Evers was a good person. She annoyed me to no end, but she was good... she was great.

RICHARD HART

Yeah?

DIANA STRANGE

Yeah, she had this way of... looking at you, and without saying a word she knew everything about you. She saw right through me. Most of the time.

RICHARD HART

She kept a tight leash on everyone? \*

DIANA STRANGE

No, that's the thing. She just expected us to be better. We always had to be better. Like her. But she wasn't perfect. But then... she knew that. I don't know.

RICHARD HART

And Delilah?

DIANA STRANGE

Well... she was just... Nora loved her. But she wouldn't... she couldn't understand. No matter how hard she tried, what it was like to be one of us. You can't know what it's like, you just can't. \*

RICHARD HART

Right...

DIANA STRANGE

Have you got the coordinates. \*

RICHARD HART

Are you alright?

DIANA STRANGE

I'm fine. Let's just go.

RICHARD HART

Alright. You ready?

DIANA STRANGE

Mhm.

Richard pulls a lever and the ship takes off with a crack.

RICHARD HART  
It's going to be another few hours.

\*

DIANA STRANGE  
I'm going to go lie down.

FADE TO:

INT. MESS ROOM

Richard is sat alone in the in the ship's mess room. He is throwing a ball and catching it. He catches the ball and moves out of the chair. He reaches over and presses a button on a device a song starts to play. It is a catchy pop-rock song.

RICHARD HART  
Ooh!

Richard starts to move around the room, moving in time to the beat. Richard starts to sing along with the song getting into the motion of it. The song reaches a climax and Richard begins to sing along full force. The song comes to a close and a throat clears from the other side of the room.

DIANA STRANGE  
Having fun?

RICHARD HART  
I am, thank you.

Richard sits down.

DIANA STRANGE  
I can't sleep. Do you mind if I join you?

RICHARD HART  
Sure.

Diana walks over and sits down. She sighs, her head in her hands.

RICHARD HART (CONT'D)  
What is it?

DIANA STRANGE  
I don't know. I just- I don't know.  
I feel off.

RICHARD HART  
It's just the stress.

DIANA STRANGE  
I don't get stressed.

RICHARD HART

You're stressed right now. You've been stressed this whole mission.

DIANA STRANGE

(sighs)

You're right. I feel like I'm new again, chasing after Evers, trying to keep up with her.

RICHARD HART

Yeah, but you're not. Things have changed. \*

DIANA STRANGE

No, I know. Why do I let her do this to me.

RICHARD HART

Because something's tied you to her. Something you don't like.

Diana sighs.

RICHARD HART (CONT'D)

You wanna know who I am?

DIANA STRANGE

Yeah, go on.

RICHARD HART

I was a pilot for The Collective, for... how old am I now? I turn fourteen next cycle... For ten years. I flew for them for ten years. Did all sorts of things. You know how many clones I saw defect to The Alliance?

DIANA STRANGE

How many?

RICHARD HART

Of the hundreds, maybe thousands I met? Twenty, I counted. Two Bazs, Three Kathryns, Five Noras, one Xavier, and nine Richards.

DIANA STRANGE

Why didn't you go with them?

RICHARD HART

You know how many of those twenty are alive now? Four, and let me tell you, not one Richard made it.

DIANA STRANGE

At least they died fighting for something they believed in.

\*

RICHARD HART

Don't do that. Don't glorify it like it's some noble sacrifice. They died serving some over lord, just like when they were in the Collective.

\*

DIANA STRANGE

That's not fair.

RICHARD HART

No? What choice did Richard Amber have in being in the first ship in an assault on a Collective stronghold? None. Some officer chose that for him. Just because you choose to justify it, doesn't make it different.

DIANA STRANGE

You can't separate yourself from this. How many of us have you helped kill? Killed yourself? You're no better.

RICHARD HART

You're right. I've done... awful things. Things that keep me up at night, things that make me want to fly into the deepest, darkest corner of space I can find and never leave. But I don't.

DIANA STRANGE

Oh, and what divine purpose is it that keeps you here?

There's a pause. Diana gets up and walks away, but stops as Richard speaks.

RICHARD HART

I was on mission. A normal fly-over. You remember, survey uninhabited areas for life signs. Normally nothing comes up, that doesn't mean there isn't anything there, just means whoever is there is hiding themselves well. But not this time, this time there was a signal. One signal.

The sounds of wilderness begin to come up behind Richard's voice, as the sounds of the ship fades away.

RICHARD HART (CONT'D)  
It was an old cabin, looked like it  
had been there for hundreds of  
years. Built of wood, can you  
imagine?

EXT./INT. OUTSIDE OF THE CABIN, CABIN LIVING ROOM

Richard is there, he opens the door of the cabin forcefully  
and powers up a weapon.

RICHARD HART  
Collective officer! Come out with  
your hands up.

OLIVIA WHITE  
I'm here.

Richard turns.

RICHARD HART  
Put your hands up.

OLIVIA WHITE  
I have no weapons. Come sit down.

RICHARD HART  
You're an Olivia. You- Your unit's  
been decommissioned.

OLIVIA WHITE  
Oh, has it? Hm. Wonder what I'm  
doing here then.

RICHARD HART  
You need to put your hands up.

OLIVIA WHITE  
Call your superior. Tell them I'm  
here, get the business out of the  
way and come sit down. I have tea.

Olivia sits forward and pats a set of tea.

RICHARD HART  
Stay put.

Richard grabs his communicator and fires it up.

RICHARD HART (CONT'D)  
Hart here, come in command.

WILLIAM REN  
This is Lieutenant William Ren. To  
whom am I speaking?

RICHARD HART  
This is Richard Hart, I have made  
contact with an illegal clone.

WILLIAM REN  
Identify the unit's strain.

RICHARD HART  
Olivia.

WILLIAM REN  
... Say again?

RICHARD HART  
It is an Olivia Unit.

WILLIAM REN  
Right. Reinforcements are being  
sent to your coordinates. Ensure  
the unit remains secured.

RICHARD HART  
Understood. Hart out.

OLIVIA WHITE  
Will you come sit now?

RICHARD HART  
Why?

OLIVIA WHITE  
Because I would like some company,  
thank you. I'm not going to drink  
all this tea myself, am I?

Richard sighs, walks over and sits down.

Olivia shifts in her seat, grabs the pot of tea and proceeds  
to pour two cups of tea. She picks one up and hands it to  
Richard.

OLIVIA WHITE (CONT'D)  
Here you go.

RICHARD HART  
How are you here? How are you  
alive?

OLIVIA WHITE  
(sighs)  
Must we do this?

RICHARD HART  
You said you wanted company.

OLIVIA WHITE  
What's your name?

RICHARD HART

Hart.

OLIVIA WHITE

Richard Hart. What a lovely name.

Olivia flinches in pain and clutches her side.

RICHARD HART

Are you alright?

OLIVIA WHITE

I'm fine.

RICHARD HART

Olivias were decommissioned years ago, how are you still out here?

OLIVIA WHITE

How do you think? I escaped.

RICHARD HART

You're Alliance?

OLIVIA WHITE

No, no. I'm just... Olivia. No longer an Olivia... just... Olivia.

RICHARD HART

How did you get away?

OLIVIA WHITE

I had advanced notice, and a very good friend. We made it look like I crashed on the way to a new posting.

RICHARD HART

Where's this good friend now?

OLIVIA WHITE

He's in the other room.

Richard turns suddenly.

OLIVIA WHITE (CONT'D)

Relax, he's... well he's not really there anymore.

RICHARD HART

Oh. Sorry. Who was he?

OLIVIA WHITE

He was someone very special.

RICHARD HART

Clone or Natural-born?



OLIVIA WHITE  
Natural-born.

RICHARD HART  
He got you out?

OLIVIA WHITE  
He did.

RICHARD HART  
When did he...?

OLIVIA WHITE  
Two days ago. I haven't had the  
heart to move him.

RICHARD HART  
I'm sorry.

OLIVIA WHITE  
It's alright, love. It was our time  
anyway.

RICHARD HART  
I can... I could find a way to-

Olivia winces in pain.

OLIVIA WHITE  
No, no. What is you do, Richard?

RICHARD HART  
I fly ships.

OLIVIA WHITE  
Is that it?

RICHARD HART  
Yes, I run missions,  
reconnaissance, transports, normal  
stuff.

OLIVIA WHITE  
Do you enjoy it?

RICHARD HART  
Yeah. I like to fly, I guess.

OLIVIA WHITE  
Good, good. And what about when  
you're not flying?

RICHARD HART  
What do you mean?

OLIVIA WHITE  
What do you do when you're not in a  
ship?

RICHARD HART  
I do mechanical repairs sometimes.

OLIVIA WHITE  
No, I mean for fun. What do you enjoy?

RICHARD HART  
Ahh... I guess... ummm...

OLIVIA WHITE  
Come on... there's got to be something. What do you do that makes you feel happy?

RICHARD HART  
I like listening to music.

OLIVIA WHITE  
Oh, that's good. What kind of music?

RICHARD HART  
Just the kind of music of the radio.

OLIVIA WHITE  
Collective radio?

RICHARD HART  
Yeah.

OLIVIA WHITE  
(laughs)  
Well, it's a start.

RICHARD HART  
What do you mean?

OLIVIA WHITE  
Ah... well... let's just say there's many more kinds of music for you to explore.

There is a pause as Richard ponders this.

RICHARD HART  
What do you like to do?

OLIVIA WHITE  
Me? I like to read.

RICHARD HART  
Read what?

OLIVIA WHITE  
I suppose you wouldn't have access  
to the digital libraries, would  
you. Neither do I out here. Tell  
you what.

Olivia starts to get up.

RICHARD HART  
Hey!

OLIVIA WHITE  
I'm just going over to that shelf,  
is that alright?

RICHARD HART  
Oh... yeah... sorry.

Olivia gets up and goes over to the shelf, she ruffles around  
on it for a moment.

RICHARD HART (CONT'D)  
What are those?

OLIVIA WHITE  
Hm? Oh... they're books. Antiques  
Really, but we had to be low tech  
out here. Here, have this.

RICHARD HART  
What is it?

OLIVIA WHITE  
It's one of my favorites. It has a  
story in it, you read the words and  
it... it paints a picture in your  
mind.

Richard accepts the book from Olivia.

RICHARD HART  
What's it about?

\*

OLIVIA WHITE  
A detective, it's set quite a while  
ago so you're going to need to  
imagine a lot, but I think it still  
comes across.

Olivia sits back down with some pain.

RICHARD HART  
Thank you.

OLIVIA WHITE  
Richard, are you happy?

RICHARD HART

What?

OLIVIA WHITE

Are you happy?

RICHARD HART

I- I guess.

OLIVIA WHITE

You don't sound so sure.

RICHARD HART

My career is going well, I'm progressing to a higher rank in another few cycles.

OLIVIA WHITE

Yes, but are you happy?

There is a pause.

RICHARD HART

I don't know what you mean.

OLIVIA WHITE

There's more than what you're doing now, you know?

RICHARD HART

You mean the Alliance? I've already heard that pitch. I'm not interested.

OLIVIA WHITE

No, not the bloody Alliance, listen to me. There's more for us, more than the Alliance, and certainly more than the Collective.

RICHARD HART

I don't...

OLIVIA WHITE

Just, think about it, okay?

RICHARD HART

Okay.

There is a pause in the conversation. Richard sips his tea.

RICHARD HART (CONT'D)

This is nice.

OLIVIA WHITE

Thank you.

RICHARD HART  
You knew someone would come, didn't  
you?

OLIVIA WHITE  
Yes.

RICHARD HART  
You didn't need to do this. You've  
been hidden this long.

OLIVIA WHITE  
Yes, I know. It was my choice. It's  
my time.

RICHARD HART  
I'm sorry.

OLIVIA WHITE  
It's not your fault.

RICHARD HART  
But it feels like it is.

OLIVIA WHITE  
No, darling, no.

A ship can be heard approaching.

The sounds of the cabin begin to fade away as we come back:

INT. THE MESS ROOM

We are back in the ship as everything comes back.

RICHARD HART  
They came, and they saw her. They  
didn't even bother taking her  
somewhere to be processed. They did  
it right there. Command judged it  
was too big a risk to let everyone  
else see an Olivia. We took her and  
the man in the other room and  
buried her in the ground by the  
cabin, and burnt it to the ground.  
No evidence.

Diana takes in a breath, clearly made emotional by the story  
but trying to hold it in.

RICHARD HART (CONT'D)  
But they couldn't erase her from my  
mind. They couldn't stop the idea  
she planted in my mind. I defected  
less than a cycle later, and I've  
been living in wild space ever  
since.

DIANA STRANGE

But why not join the Alliance? We want to stop all that.

RICHARD HART

Because that's not the point Diana! You're just swapping out one dictator for another. Just because you like your strings doesn't mean you're not a puppet.

DIANA STRANGE

You're wrong.

RICHARD HART

Fine, believe what you want. But that's why I didn't join the Alliance, because I want the power to choose my own fate. I can control where I go, what I do, and if I want to risk my life. I want to be free, and this is the closest I've come.

DIANA STRANGE

Well, I'm happy for you.

Diana walks away.

THE END