

# DIE FOR ME

Episode 1 - "10 of Pentacles"

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**TEASER**

INT. DARLING PARLOR - NIGHT (DREAM)

The dreamy DARLING WALTZ dances a party of couples around the parlor of the lavish Darling Estate.

Relief statues of dragonflies and finches, carved from the moldings and the bones of the house, stir with life and encircle a pair of disparate twins:

Petite blonde TINKA DARLING (30) waltzes with her tall brunette brother DAVID DARLING (30).

FOOTSTEPS FROM UPSTAIRS stop the twins in front of a window framed by sculpted ivy.

DAVID

I dreamt that the rain brought in  
the tide, so I had to climb up The  
Gates --

The wooden ivy writhes and sprawls.

TINKA

And it was difficult to balance?

THE MUSIC SOFTENS. Ivy frames the window, and the twins acknowledge their view.

Outside, it's Capricorn season. The stars beam and pulse.

TINKA (CONT'D)

I remember something similar.

Far off, the moon lays on the ground like an abandoned ball. A colossal child's toy replaces the village of Linden Hollow.

A SHARP, UNANTICIPATED END to the waltz blacks out the stars! Cold chills freeze David and send Tinka running.

INT. DARLING PARLOR - NIGHT

The parlor is dark and empty. The relief carvings are still.

INT. DARLING PARLOR - NIGHT (DREAM)

David looks around. The Partygoers stand in death's pose. Coins cover their eyes.

Six mute, corpse-pale wraiths known as THE LEMURE weave through the frozen crowd.

INT. DARLING FOYER - NIGHT (DREAM)

HEAVY FOOTSTEPS chase Tinka to the front door.

TINKA

David?

THE LIVING STATUE OF BERNARD DARLING (40) is a nightmarish caricature of a long-faced man. His skin is tarnished stone. A clumsy, violent swipe barely misses Tinka and...

SHATTERS the stained-glass!

DAVID (O.S.)

Tinka!

Tinka runs before the metallic monster attacks again! She finds her brother.

TINKA

David!

DAVID

(assesses situation)

It's Bernard Darling!

The Six Lemure, through rectangular pupils, politely watch the twins from the parlor archway.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT (DREAM)

Bernard's FOOTSTEPS chase the twins down the hallway turned, by dreaming, into an endless exhibit of Darling ancestors.

Ghostly arms stretch from their frames to swipe, scratch, and whack Tinka.

EXT. LINDEN FOREST - NIGHT

Barren tree limbs swipe, scratch, and whack Tinka.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT (DREAM)

Shifting floorboards retaliate against David's steps.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

David's big bare feet climb a SHAKY fire escape.

EXT. COMMERCE CENTRE - NIGHT (DREAM)

A stone grip grabs David's neck and lifts him off the ground. Small town streetlamps multiply into a twilight city line.

SIRENS WAIL! David's waking up.

END DREAM.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

David collapses clutching his throat in the NOISY MODERN CITY. A SLIGHTLY SHADOW moves out of the corner of his eye, but it seems nothing is there.

**END TEASER**

ACT I

EXT. LINDEN FOREST - NIGHT

BERNARD'S FOOTSTEPS FADE. Small feet with black painted toenails traverse the desiccated leaves of late October.

TITLES UP: October 22nd, 1999.

Sun in Libra

Moon in Pisces

Mercury in Scorpio

Venus in Virgo

Mars in Capricorn

Jupiter in Taurus

Saturn in Taurus(R)

Uranus in Aquarius(R)

Neptune in Aquarius

Pluto in Sagittarius

Tinka, her dream gown now muddy pajamas, doesn't wake up as much as realize that she isn't asleep.

GLASS CLINKS! Jars containing scrolls, playing cards, and other charms swing from the branches of the old Linden Tree.

Unfocused eyes blink, then again.

The jars gain momentum until one SHATTERS against the others.

EXT. LINDEN PLAZA - NIGHT

A SCREAM OF SHATTERING GLASS ECHOES through Linden Plaza. Every ground floor window erupts. Shards of glass shoot and scatter through the dead night air.

Tenants rush to their windows.

The Living Statue of Bernard Darling jumps from the window of The Electronics Store!

EXT. COMMERCE CENTRE - NIGHT

The statue of Bernard Darling stands stalwart.

EXT. LINDEN FOREST - NIGHT

Closer to daybreak, creatures of the forest look on until...

CAMERA FLASHES cut through twilight. Police congregate around a sole tire impression on a dirt path leading north.

Confident and contentious Rookie Officer SAM HANSON (30) runs onto the scene. THE CAPTAIN, a pal, hangs back for him.

SAM

Captain, why are you here? Who's checking the Darling Estate?

CAPTAIN

I wouldn't go up to that house before sun-up, Sam, even with a warrant. Besides...

Five Lemure emerge and disappear into the shifting shadows.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Tire tracks head north.

(in reverie)

My dad saw Bernard Darling once; said he looked like a monster.

SAM

Sir, there's a direct path to --

CAPTAIN

He'd taken my mom to the theatre. They were on their way home when...

BEGIN VIGNETTE:

INT. DOWNTOWN ALLEY - NIGHT (VIGNETTE)

On a cobbled street in a 1921 silent film, A COUPLE necks in secret. They hear something and look!

TWO SERVANTS and A NURSE wheel physically catatonic, horribly disfigured Bernard Darling out of a doctor's office. Bernard wavers precariously and the Nurse shouts at the men.

TEXT: BE CAREFUL!

Bernard's eyes catch The Couple watching him.

MELODRAMATIC HORROR MUSIC from The Woman. The Man brings his hand to MUFFLE her scream.

To The Couple, Bernard is a monster made of stone.

END VIGNETTE.

EXT. LINDEN FOREST - NIGHT

The Captain's superstitious fixation is exasperating.

SAM

We need to question Tinka --

CAPTAIN

We don't through those gates half-cocked, Sam! It ain't worth the paperwork. Bernard's downtown, witnesses are at the plaza, and we're about to go north. Where do you want to work?

SAM

Trails.

CAPTAIN

There's a whole line of Darling's before Tinka and the boy, you know.

STATIC. Captain picks up his radio, over.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Yeah?

OFFICER

(over radio)

We're still at the courthouse. Honeycutt says he moved.

EXT. COMMERCE CENTRE - NIGHT

TWO JUMPY OFFICERS aim at the statue of Bernard Darling.

OFFICER

Do we shoot if it moves again?

EXT. LINDEN FOREST - NIGHT

The Captain hurries to investigate.

CAPTAIN

No! I'll be right there.

(to Sam)

Remember why we don't go near that house, Sam! Join the search north.

Sam's goes to check the trail.

INT. TINKA'S ROOM - NIGHT

At 5:32, Tinka is still restless. She slinks out of bed.

INT. JACK AND JILL BATHROOM

A RUNNING SHOWER warms the Jack and Jill bathroom. Tinka places the unraveled scroll charm on the counter:

"MARS."

TINKA

Mars, Mars, crossing stars.

Steam covers the mirror.

Tinka removes her robe and, obscured by the veil of steam, jumps in a relaxing shower of lavender, lemon, and foxglove.

Her eyes rest. Active thought dissolves under the water.

CLINKING coins open Tinka's eyes.

BEGIN PREMONITION:

EXT. LINDEN FOREST - NIGHT (PREMONITION)

Sam bustles past a tree and -- CLINK, CLINK! -- disturbs five coins hanging from a branch.

Written on the coins in black paint: "ALERT."

END PREMONITION.

EXT. THE DARLING GATES - NIGHT

Sam, flashlight gripped between teeth, RATTLES and SHAKES the tall iron fence in his attempt to scale the gates.

Tinka approaches, a night-black coat cloaking all but her fair hair and face. Her sharp eyes watch.

Sam's knee, irritated by an old injury, gives way. A bitter HISS accompanies his return to ground.

TINKA

What are you doing, officer?

Sam jumps like a scaredy cat.

SAM  
Shit, Tinka! Goddamn it!

TINKA  
You're not welcome here, Sam.

SAM  
Why are you awake, Tinka?

TINKA  
Why are you here?

SAM  
Someone has to check on you.

TINKA  
You wouldn't make it up the driveway.

SAM  
Why are you awake? On the lookout?

TINKA  
(unconcerned)  
I have a lot to do.

SAM  
A lot to orchestrate? I'll bet.  
Busy night for the Darling's.

TINKA  
What does that mean?

SAM  
The village is gonna be talking  
about him into the new millennium.

TINKA  
If you're trespassing to harass  
David, he's --

SAM  
(pouncing)  
Twin bond doesn't stretch as far as  
you thought, does it?

Tinka's struck nerve shatters dawn. The sun fills the skies  
with red warnings.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Guess you were wrong about that.

TINKA

If you're under the impression you  
have some sort of insight about me,  
I'd prefer you not be. Now leave.

She turns to leave.

SAM

Bernard Darling.

Tinka slinks, like curiosity's cat, back to the officer.  
She's close enough Sam smells her shampoo.

SAM (CONT'D)

He's back.

TINKA

(he's joking)

The evil greedy Darling Cursed into  
Stone? Finally came back to bring  
strife to Linden Hollow?

SAM

Breaking news.

TINKA

(challenging)

You don't even believe that old  
legend anymore, do you?

SAM

A cold case is a cold case.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. DARLING MAUSOLEM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

In 1989, teen sleuths David and Tinka break into Bernard's  
casket and behold the remains.

Fibrodysplasia Ossificans Progressivais a rare disease that  
causes muscle to gradually be replaced by bone.

Foliage of bone grew off a normal skeleton. Bernard's spine  
fused and curved. Hardened shoulder joints flared into  
cancerous horned padding.

Bernard lived a painful, terrifying life of constraint.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. DARLING ESTATE - DAY

Tinka blinks away the memory.

TINKA

He wasn't well... Tell me why  
you're here, Sam.

SAM

The Man of Stone probably doesn't  
like these big companies muscling  
in on the Darling-Bullitt Trust.

Tinka scoffs.

SAM (CONT'D)

Hates it enough to murder.

She can't tell if he's serious.

TINKA

A murder?

(when he's serious)

And just you stand there, breathing  
through your mouth and wasting my  
time, talking about a STATUE?

SAM

Injuries to the body looked like  
cane marks.

TINKA

Is that your expert opinion?

SAM

He's with the Almandine coroner.  
Can't say for sure, but I just  
smell a jinx.

TINKA

Chase boogeymen all you like, Sam,  
just stay off my property. I can  
get you fired.

SAM

I'm not even on duty yet!

Tinka is repulsed enough to finally return home.

SAM (CONT'D)

The town will hear that Bernard  
Darling's back by sunrise, Tinka!

With her back to Sam, Tinka's concern surfaces.

INT. BULLITT INVESTMENTS BREAK ROOM - DAY

CLARKE WOOD (28) entertains his CO-WORKERS with the scandal from last night.

CLARKE

The noise was BRUTAL, like a bomb!  
I feel like I was at the window  
before I was even awake!

WORKER

But a statue?

CLARKE

I've passed that statue every day  
of my life, man! It was him!

INSERT FLASBACK: Clark can't believe he's witnessing The Living Statue of Bernard Darling abscond south.

BALTHAZAR "BALTHI" VEE (30) enters for some caffeination.

CLARKE (CONT'D)

Hey, Balthi. Seen the jinx today?

Balthi, an attractive foreign man, focuses on his work.

BALTHI

Seen the what?

CLARKE

Tinka. You're chummy with her,  
aren't you?

BALTHI

Oh, she's talking to Jack.

Everyone SNICKERS.

Tinka is actually eavesdropping around the corner.

BALTHI (CONT'D)

Actually, did I hear you say that a  
statue killed that guy last night?

It sounds stupid when Balthi says it.

CLARKE

No, it was Bernard Darling!

BALTHI

The man from the statue?

CLARKE  
He IS the statue!

What aren't you getting, Balthi? Jeez!

EXT. LINDEN PLAZA - DAY

HAZEL STRIKE (27) walks to work, already lost in the day. Autumn is her favorite season. Halloween is her favorite holiday, and Linden Hollow comes alive in the season. Gourds, banners, lights, and a pronounced spooky ambiance.

She stops in her tracks and doesn't recognize the world.

The Plaza is a crime scene.

Hazel steps, slowly and unsurely, ahead. Almandine Police Officers have just began clearing the scene.

MEGAN (O.S.)  
Hazel! Hazel!

MEGAN (24) catches up and they walk together.

HAZEL  
Megan, what happened? Oh my God! Is the museum okay? Your store --

MEGAN  
-- It's fine! You know that statue in front of the court house?

They sidestep AN OFFICER and settle in The Coffee Stand line.

HAZEL  
Yeah?

MEGAN  
It killed Ron Hopper!

HAZEL  
What?

MEGAN  
I swear to God! At 4, I heard this ear piercing, brutal scream! I think I woke up screaming too!

INSERT SHOT: Megan leans out her window, watching Bernard flee west to the courthouse. A Lemure stares up at her.