



Episode 3

Written by Subika Anwar-Khan

CHARACTERS

HAROONA

She/her

Born in Sri Lanka, but moved to London in her early teens. Has a hybrid Sri Lankan and London accent. Early 20s.

JAMAL

He/him

Of south Asian heritage. Accent: MLE (Multicultural London English). Early 20s

Distant eerie melody underscore

We hear a voice (she/her)

This series contains swearing, references to alcohol, smoking and drugs, and contains some listeners may find claustrophobic.

Fast beat builds, with bassy crashes, as the underscore builds into more of a techno track and then cuts out as we move into...

Prologue

A strong beat plays in the crowded cave. There's laughter, various conversations and drinks being poured. The rave submerges into the background as the scene hones in on Haroona and Jamal.

JAMAL

A bit quieter this side of the cave.

HAROONA

Yeah

She sips her drink

Your set was good. I liked some of the tradition in it.

JAMAL

Thanks. I get that from my mum. She loves to sing.

HAROONA

Really? My family loved listening to qawwali's. They went to many concerts.

JAMAL

Serious? What in Sri Lanka?

HAROONA

Oh yes, they're very popular there. Not just for Sufi's in Pakistan you know. We can enjoy too.

JAMAL

He Chuckles

Sweet.

Pause

Haroona? You're Oak Tree Court, aren't you?

HAROONA

Yeah! You're...

JAMAL

Jamal.

HAROONA

Yeah.

JAMAL

I see your grandad sometimes, in the front garden when I walk across.

HAROONA

She chuckles

He loves nature. Planting, pruning. You name it. And this place.

JAMAL

Yeah he's always helping out around here. The caves are sacred, you know?

HAROONA

Oh really? It's beautiful here. I can see he's worked hard.

JAMAL

You happy about the move? Out of the estate?

HAROONA: Well... the councils' given *us* a bigger place. And it's closer to my work so less travel.

JAMAL

It's a liberty. Been here most my life. My little brother will have to switch schools.

HAROONA

D'you think they'll... *seal* the entrance to the cave? When they take over the estate?

JAMAL

Not if I've got anything to do with it.

The music builds to a pitch; a discordant high note comes in; the world crashes in around them.

One.

Haroonah wakes up deep underground. The space is echoey. She groans.

HAROONA

Argh. My head. Hello?

Panicked breathing.

HELP!

Jamal wakes up coughing and groaning as he brushes the dust and rubble off him.

HAROONA

Jamal!

JAMAL

What happened?

HAROONA

Everything just caved in!

JAMAL

No way.

HAROONA

What?

JAMAL

We should check if anyone else is down here? Hello?

HAROONA

That's where it caved in. Hello? We're down here. Can you hear us?

Shit! I don't have any reception. Do you?

JAMAL

I don't...think so. Nah.

Pause

There might be others down here?

He shouts.

Hello?

HAROONA

Maybe I could climb out. If I can jump high enough.

JAMAL

It's too high.

Haroonna tries to jump, but yelps as she lands heavily and painfully on the ground.

JAMAL

Hey! You alright? You twisted your ankle?

HAROONA

No! I'm fine.

JAMAL

Here.

HAROONA

I can get up myself.

JAMAL

Oh. Course.

A moment of time passes, signified by a tense, swoosh sound.

HAROONA

If you give me a leg up there, or if we shout loud enough-

JAMAL

Even if they hear us, no one there has the equipment to help us get out.

HAROONA

We're not too far down. It can't be that hard to get out.

JAMAL

It's one of the underground rooms. I... recognise it.

The sound of the mycelium fades in: a part eerie, part twinkly, almost metallic sound that pulses

HAROONA

What?

JAMAL

They all connected to each other through the network. See the mycelium?

HAROONA

Wow, they look like veins. They're... glowing.

JAMAL

The hum and the glow... is way down below, if you... take. Take...or something like that.

Under Jamal's line we hear the faint, ethereal sound of a woman singing 'The hum and the glow, is way down below.'

HAROONA

Have youuu... smoked something...?

JAMAL

It's the myth my Mum used to tell us.

HAROONA

The way they pulse is...beautiful. Reminds me of... have you ever seen the sea at night?

JAMAL

Nah, but if it's like this then it's on my bucket list.

HAROONA

It's stunning. It comes from the bioluminescence in the plankton. But this...I wonder if the rock contains phosphorescence...?

JAMAL

Err...

HAROONA

I grew up exploring the caves along the beaches and behind waterfalls in Sri Lanka.

JAMAL

Yeah, your grandad said.

HAROONA

He did?

JAMAL

I'm... sorry you had to leave. Sounds beautiful. I'd love to go.

A moment of time passes, signified by another swoosh sound.

Jamal starts hitting the wall with a piece of wood. The tapping continues under the dialogue.

HAROONA

What are you doing?

JAMAL

Checking where it's hollow.

HAROONA

It's a cave, why would it be hollow?

JAMAL

Parts of it are man made.

HAROONA

That... network isn't natural?

JAMAL

It is but... there's a system built within some of the walls that... feeds it. And where it's hollow, it will lead us towards the door.

HAROONA

There's a door?

JAMAL

Apparently...it leads to a garden. Below. That's what they say.

HAROONA

How do you know all this?

JAMAL

Because I was born here.

A dynamic 'swoosh' sound takes us into...

Two.

Haroon and Jamal step through puddles, rubble and rock as they move deeper into the cave.

HAROONA

So to get out we have to go further down. Not up? And via some...door?

JAMAL

Which was built to protect the garden. So the story goes. *And* this... entire... place.

HAROONA

Which contains a...water system that...feeds the mycelium?

JAMAL

Exactly.

HAROONA

And this network... it's...got...powers.

JAMAL

...You could say that. Yeah.

HAROONA

Right. Why the fuck should I believe you?

JAMAL

Because it might be our only way out of here.

HAROONA

But... you said no one you know has ever found it.

JAMAL

Don't mean it ain't true. And now, it's our chance to find out.

HAROONA

Why did people want to live down *here* of all places?

JAMAL

They had the right idea before they had to move back up. Just look at what's happening to the estate. Down here, there were no rules.

HAROONA

If they had stayed long enough, some... government official would've found out about it eventually.

JAMAL

That's why the people who knew, kept it a secret. And there's no way anyone could... figure out how... everything works. Even if they did find this place.

HAROONA

All it would take is one person. To reveal it all... to someone.

JAMAL

They wouldn't do that though. Not the people who... lived here. Who wanted to preserve... protect it.

HAROONA

Money can really change a person. People can be bought. And these... authorities have a lot more money than they let on.

JAMAL

Not this community. Just give up everything they've worked on? Give up their home? Nah.

HAROONA

It's how the world works my friend.

JAMAL

I disagree.

HAROONA

What will you do about the takeover of the estate? Protest? Squat?

JAMAL

Maybe.

HAROONA

But don't you want to take advantage of all the opportunities in the city? I mean... you're from this country. There's so much *you* could do with your life.

JAMAL

There's more to life than just... money and work you know.

HAROONA

No I just... I didn't mean-

I personally can't wait to move tomorrow. Our place will be so much bigger and I'll be where everything is... happening.

I just think... if this takeover helps more people in the end then maybe we have to make some sacrifices.

If you can afford it then why not? That's where I want to be one day.

JAMAL

You think your Grandad would sell out like that? Give up something he's worked for his entire life?

HAROONA

We left our country because we were suffering there. I know my Nana misses it but it's no life for you there when your only source of income has gone. When my Dad died my mother had to do anything she could for a better life. Here, you can move forward with your life. Grow, get opportunities. You got to take what you can because that's what life is.

JAMAL

I'm sorry that happened to you. It shouldn't have, that's what I believe: That you should thrive and be empowered anywhere you wanna live. But I know the world's not like that. So sometimes you gotta act. Show them you disagree. And the more of us there are to do that, the stronger the fight.

HAROONA

This estate will be just like the beautiful home I left behind.

Another transitional 'swoosh' sound takes us into:

Haroona lifts her foot and we hear water pouring from it.

HAROONA

Fuck.

JAMAL

What?

HAROONA

The water. It's coming through my boots. My socks. Gross.

JAMAL

Didn't you wear waterproofs? It's a rave. In a cave.

HAROONA

Very funny. These...looked better.

JAMAL

Right.

HAROONA

(With rising panic)

We're moving away from the hole. What if that's our only way out?

JAMAL

It's not.

HAROONA

What if it is?

JAMAL

Whatever...

Haroonna takes a couple more steps and there's a sudden splash and scream as she falls into deep water.

JAMAL

Haroonna! Haroonna! Oh my God! Haroonna!

Suddenly a gasp as Haroonna comes up for air.

JAMAL

Haroonna. Here. Take my hand.

Jamal helps Haroonna out of the water. She coughs and splutters. Her voice sounds hoarse.

HAROONA

I didn't see the water.

JAMAL

Are you alright?

HAROONA

Yeah. I couldn't see how deep it was. What's...what's going on?

JAMAL

With growing urgency

We have to find our way out of here quickly. The water. It's rising.

HAROONA

Can't you fix it?

JAMAL

There must be a block in the irrigation system somewhere. I don't know how and... we don't have time. We have to hurry. Otherwise...

HAROONA

No. No! I... have to see my family. I...I have to get back to them.

JAMAL

Listen. I'm going to get us out but you have to trust me.

HAROONA

Ok. Just...hurry.

JAMAL

Ok...this way.

HAROONA

Jamal. Thank you.

Another transitional 'swoosh' sound takes us into:

Three.

Haroon and Jamal wade through water.

HAROONA

I don't even know what I'm looking for. How are we ever gonna find it?

JAMAL

I, I swear my Mum used to come here to like stock up on... supplies or something. Like bottles...erm....

HAROONA

Is it like a door door, with a handle?

JAMAL

I... don't know. I figured they would've built something, an entrance between each place.

HAROONA

So you don't even know what we're looking for? Great! I can't even tell if the rock is hollow here, there's too much water.

JAMAL

Here, use this piece of wood. Just keep tapping and I'll move this stuff out of the way.

Haroon starts tapping the wall.

HAROONA

What if they seal off the entrance whilst we're down here?

JAMAL

They know what's happened. They know we're down here.

Jamal begins moving the rubble as Haroon taps the rock. It sounds hollow this time.

HAROONA

Listen. It's hollow. Here. Move that.

Jamal moves some rubble.

HAROONA

There's an entrance! Jamal!

JAMAL

The door. It must be through there.

HAROONA

I can't. It's too small. And look at the water. We're going further down.

JAMAL

We have to.

HAROONA

I...I can't hold my breath for very long. I was the worst out of everyone when we went in the sea. I hated going underwater. I...can't. I can't see anything-

JAMAL

We have to do this. It's our only way out.

Haroona groans.

JAMAL

Come on. You got this. It's not that deep.

HAROONA

Yet!

Haroona exhales

HAROONA

Ok.

Inhaling she shifts herself into the smaller space, submerging into a deeper water.

HAROONA

Oh God! It's coming up to my thighs here Jamal.

JAMAL

I'm coming in.

Jamal groans as he enters, the water surrounding him.

JAMAL

Shit! It's fucking cold. Fuck! Why did it have to be freezing. Argh!

HAROONA

We're in a cave. People usually die of hypothermia before anything else.

JAMAL

Great. That's...really great.

HAROONA

What's this, on the table? Some kind of instrument. But it's stuck.

JAMAL

It's a harmonium.

HAROONA

I recognise this. It's what they use in those qawwali concerts.

JAMAL

The code to the door must be musical. That will get us out.

HAROONA

Code? What code? You're telling me there's a fucking code?

JAMAL

To protect the garden. Let me try.

Jamal presses a few keys on the harmonium. The sound echoes through the cave.

HAROONA

Look. Up there. The door.

Haroona wades towards the door and tries to open it.

HAROONA

It won't open, play it again.

Jamal begins to play a few more keys. Nothing.

There's the sound of fizzing.

HAROONA

Ah, look, the minerals dissolving.

JAMAL

What?

HAROONA

In the water.

JAMAL

No no. Mineral?

HAROONA

Yeah...erm...Limestone. It's common in the UK.

JAMAL

I remember now.

HAROONA

What?

JAMAL

This place. It's The Mineral Cabinet. We used to come here to get tools, materials, to help us grow vegetables, medicine, all made from minerals to help us... live.

HAROONA

What does that have anything to do with getting us out of here?

JAMAL

I... I don't know but mineral...minerals...that *must* be a clue.

HAROONA

So extract... the mineral to open the door?

JAMAL

That doesn't make any sense. It's a musical code. Hence the harmonium. We must have to play it? But how?

HAROONA

Where's Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan when you need him.

JAMAL

There was a song... the lullaby my mum used to sing to me. Erm...

Again, the barely perceptible, ethereal sound of a woman singing.

HAROONA

And you have to push and pull this thing when you play, look.

Haroonna pushes the bellow of the harmonium which lets out an elongated trumpet reverb that echoes in the small space.

JAMAL

Woah! That takes me back.

HAROONA

Nothing. Great. Maybe if we head back towards the hole the water will take us up.

JAMAL

We can't, it's blocked. We'll drown.

HAROONA

We'll drown in *here*.

JAMAL

We won't. Keep thinking.

HAROONA

Music, minerals... Limestone. It's... it's not on the periodic table?

JAMAL

That's...helpful.

HAROONA

Calcium's the naturally occurring compound for Limestone?

JAMAL

Ok. I have no idea.

HAROONA

Wait! Calcium is 'C A' in the table?

JAMAL

Maybe those are the notes...

HAROONA

Great, play it.

Before he can, the mycelium start to give out a distressed, omnibus, unstable pulses

HAROONA

What was that?

The mycelium bellows, echoes and shudders like a contraction.

JAMAL

It's the network.

HAROONA

But we didn't do anything.

JAMAL

I don't... know what it means.

Another rumble but this time it feels and sounds like an earthquake. They both fall on their feet, splashing into the water they're standing in. It's much deeper. The water surges and there are crashes.

HAROONA

I can't breathe. I can't breathe.

JAMAL

You're alright. You're up. Just...stay calm. Stay calm.

HAROONA

The table! It's broken off! Get the harmonica.

JAMAL

Harmonium!! Argh!

HAROONA

You have to hurry.

JAMAL

Ok.

But before Jamal has a chance to, the mycelium harmonises, its wane, in riffs and waves.

HAROONA

Wait! There it is again. What does it mean?

JAMAL

The network... it could be unstable... broken?

HAROONA

Oh God. Look, more veins. They're pulsating. Quick, just play.

There is the sound of pulsing from the mycelium.

Jamal plays A and C on the harmonium and the door partially opens.

HAROONA

It worked! It worked.

JAMAL

But it's not fully opening. There must be more.

HAROONA

Would it be another mineral?

JAMAL

Yeah, maybe. What?

HAROONA

err... Lithium. There.

JAMAL

Lithium?

HAROONA

Yeah... I think. We used to extract it, to use as medicine. On my papa when we couldn't get into the city.

JAMAL

What are the letters?

HAROONA

Err... L I.

JAMAL

They're not notes. Anything else?

HAROONA

I don't know. (Pause) err...it's number three on the table?

JAMAL

Three? Wh...what if it's a number? An interval.

HAROONA

Great. What's an interval?

JAMAL

The distance two notes are from each other. One fifth, one third...

HAROONA

A third... play that.

JAMAL

No, we have to work out the notes.

HAROONA

Jamal! Think!

JAMAL

I am. It could be anything. Wait, let me just try playing some chords.

HAROONA

Hurry.

Jamal plays the harmonium but it lets out a dull sound.

HAROONA

Why isn't it working?

JAMAL

Get the water out of it. We need to raise it as high as we can.

HAROONA

I can't go under Jamal, I can't.

JAMAL

We're gonna get out. I'm gonna get us out. Ok. Help me get the water out.

HAROONA

Tip it out.

JAMAL

That's better.

HAROONA

I keep slipping. I can't feel the bottom anymore.

JAMAL

Hold on to the side and prop me up.

HAROONA

I can't do both!

JAMAL

Listen. you're going to have to help me play Haroona. I need you to lift me up so I can. You *can* hold your breath. You're gonna save us.

HAROONA

Ok. Ok.

JAMAL

I'm here. Now, take a deep breath.

Haroonah takes a deep breath and goes underwater. Jamal plays the chords, this time they're deeper, clearer.

Tense music starts to underscore.

JAMAL

It's not working. It's not working! Fuck! Haroonah.

Jamal helps Haroonah out of the water. She gasps as she comes up for air.

HAROONAH

The bellow. Use the bellow.

JAMAL

You'll have to go under again.

HAROONAH

Just do it.

Haroonah takes another breath and goes under again. Jamal plays a variety of different thirds, incorporating the bellow. A door unlocks. They splash towards it.

JAMAL

The door, it's open. Quick.

They shut the door behind them. They breathe heavily.

HAROONAH

What just happened?

The mycelium's echo reverberates within the new space. It is clearer, more melodic. It echoes the lullaby.

JAMAL

The code. It was the lullaby. The hum and the glow... is way down below, if you want things to grow, take the seeds you will sow.

HAROONA

It was the clue. It *was* all along.

JAMAL

Yeah.

HAROONA

You saved us.

JAMAL

We did it together.

HAROONA

The network. It's so bright here.

JAMAL

Maybe... it's a sign.

HAROONA

I want to help.

JAMAL

You... sure?

HAROONA

Yeah. I want to protect it too.

JAMAL

Then we have to get to the garden.

The sound of a growing beat, and then fast-paced, energised synth drives us into the end of the episode.

- ***End.***

Eerie melody swells back in

We hear the same voice as the beginning (she/her)

You've been listening to Beneath Our Feet - a Jump Spark and no more superheroes. production funded by Arts Council England. This episode was directed by Fay Lomas and written by Subika Anwar-Khan. This episode was developed through a collective writing process between Zia Ahmed, Subika Anwar-Khan, Sam Grabiner, Ellie Kendrick, Tiwa Lade and Amelia Stubberfield - with Janina Matthewson as lead dramaturg and Ella Watts as consultant producer. With sound design on this episode by Munotida Chinyanga and music by Oliver Vibrans.

Starring Bhavini Sheth as Haroona and Ragevan Vasan as Jamal

Thank you for listening.