



Alpha Tango Monorail, Part 2: Transcription

Length: 10:52

Opens with music playing in the background.

Introduction: Have you ever loved someone so much, dear listeners, it nearly drove you mad? What were you willing to do for that person? What lengths were you willing to go to hold on? This is Jones and Woolf. A monthly audio fiction podcast featuring original music. The second part of this month's story, "Alpha Tango Monorail," explores the chaos of love and all the volatility that emotion can bring. Enjoy.

Music continues to play in the background as the story begins.

Narrator: Why did I do it?
when everything was going so smooth
well
I guess
there are always excuses
and mine
was the 2020 Club
an underground establishment
a wide open and wild place
with trap music and go-go blaring
while all kinds of deals went down
all shady in those smoke-filled rooms
there were beautiful women too
who sauntered from table to table
carrying drinks, willing to do more than just smile
to get a tip
I can't speak for the other customers
but I only had eyes for one
girl by the name of Penelope
eyes as sharp as shards of broken glass
with a head full of wild black curls
and a snake tattoo slithering up the side of her hip
and sliding down the side of her thigh
I spent a lot of nights with her
feeling myself
drifting away
to places unknown
on emotions I couldn't name
or classify by code
there was only Penelope
with her soft lips

whispering in my ear
breathing on my throat
I still think about her all the time
even today
even though all I can see now is her body twisted in that back
room
head cranked to the side
the latest victim of the DC Slayer
all that beautiful black hair
those soft, soft curls
soaked in all that blood

Music continues to play in the background.

Narrator: Penelope De La Cruz
from the barrios of San Juan
with her proud shoulders and her bright eyes
that had already seen too much
my God
she told me once
her mother
had been a something of a priestess
back on the island
and blessed her with ancient wisdom
the ability
to always see the truth
shining through the smoke of any lie
when we were making love
and she was looking deep inside me
I knew she could see the truth there too
that we were both prostitutes
only I didn't have the courage to admit it
She asked me once
Why do you twist yourself up so much
constantly trying to spin
what your conscience is trying to tell you?
Why not just listen
or abandon it completely?
Why not live your truth, however terrible it might be?
but the truth was
I couldn't stop tearing myself apart
I was ashamed of who I was
of who I'd become
Penelope was like a vacation from all that guilt

she reminded me
of what it felt like to be young
of what it felt like to be in love
without ambition
to believe in things
beyond dollars and cents
beyond
Penelope
with her soft red lips
and her soft brown thighs
believe me
I know how ridiculous it sounds
for a grown man
to fall in love with a girl
half his age
taking morality lessons from someone
working the back rooms of a club
but there was something inside her
a vibrance, a vitality
an honesty
that I knew was missing in me
and once I finally decided
to dip into that Alpha Tango Monorail
there was no stopping me
from telling her how I felt
in the back room of the 2020 Club
music thumping outside
smell of cigarette smoke
and perfume hanging all around us
in the days when she called me guapo
and kissed me on the hair
my God
Penelope De La Cruz
the girl I gave my heart to in middle age
the one I always loved most

Music continues to play in the background.

Narrator: Honesty
combined with love
can be a very dangerous mix
and once I told Ms. De La Cruz
that I wanted her to quit the club
and run away with me

our relationship
started to sour
things at the Lotus Corporation
meanwhile
were even worse
see
when I first started the business
I tried my best to be
responsible
I was careful
not to go overboard
with clients
and sometimes I had to refuse
to sell certain emotions
to people I knew
were too unstable
to handle them
but over the years
as the demand got higher
and my clients got richer
and more powerful
I started to slip
I told myself
it wasn't my job to judge
I provided a service for a fee
I was a businessman
that was it
nothing more
but then
when I broke one of my oldest rules
and dipped into my own product
and got a taste
for honesty
well
that's when my business really started to go to shit
because I was in so deep
with the girl I worshipped from San Juan
that I let everything else
go to slop
especially with Senator Adams
my number one client
I'd already lost count
of how many times
he'd come to my office
looking for more Zulu Delta Terror
code name for intimidation

precursor to rage
along with confidence
a very dangerous mix

Music continues to play in the background.

Narrator: Even now
I can't help but think
that if Penelope
would have listened to me
if she would have just
left the club
and run away with me
that none of this would have ever happened
but Ms. De La Cruz
she had her own ideas
despite her age
she was the one of the most independent people
I'd ever met
and she decided
if she was going to leave the 2020 Club
it was going to be on her terms
and not on mine
I think she liked me
more than some of her other customers
but the moment
I started making demands
telling her that she had to
leave the club
and get an honest job
well
Penelope put me right back in my place
I still have the gash
she ripped across my cheek
with the turquoise rings on her fingers
the night I tried to drag her from the club myself
right after I asked her to marry me
right after she said no
that was the night I got banned from 2020
the floor manager said I could never come back
and the Russian bouncers at the door
made that point pretty clear
by taking me in the alley out back
and busting my nose

and a couple of my ribs
and I knew
if I came back again
they might do the same to my arm
or legs maybe
but I couldn't let things
end like that between me and Penelope
I've never been the kind of guy
to just accept disappointment
so I went back the next week
snuck in through a basement window
sat in the back of the club with my hat pulled low
watching the woman I wanted for my wife
smile
and flirt with other men
feeling myself
slowly starting to slip away

Music continues to play in the background.

Narrator: When you deal with emotions
 on the level I do
 selling them to
 the most influential people in the country
 in a business
 that's borderline illegal
 you learn to hate the unexpected
 and spend your time trying to control
 what's unpredictable
 and I was pretty good at it
 I thought
 at least
 I liked to think
 that nothing ever surprised me
 but nothing could have prepared me
 for what came next
 when I saw my number one client
 my Frankenstein
 Senator Don Adams
 walk into the 2020 Club for the first time
 and sit down at a table right next to
 Ms. De La Cruz
 with a cigar in his mouth
 and a gleam in his eye

I was too far away
to hear what he said
but I knew
how pumped up he was
on Zulu Delta Terror
and I knew personally
the effect it had on people
the fear it produced
but I guess
if there was one person in DC
who wasn't going to be intimidated
by any man
it was Penelope
and so she just sat there
real cool
smiling with those soft red lips
listening impassively
until
the Senator whispered in her ear
and pulled out a wad of cash
and after she started to lead him to the back room
the same way she'd done with me
so many times before
I watched her hips slink away
and their bodies fade into a cloud of smoke
and everything inside me
was falling
and breaking away
into chaos
I didn't wait long
until I ran to her room
I didn't care about the consequences
if the Russian bouncers saw me
or what it meant for my business
all I could think about was Penelope
all I knew was that she should be with me
not some phony politician
some spoiled rich kid
who owed his whole career
to manufactured emotions he bought from me
but when I opened the door
Senator Adams was gone
and that's when I saw her
my little girl
the woman I loved
lying on the bed

her face cranked to the side
looking back at me
motionless
and horrified
with all that black hair
and the blood dripping from her face like tears

Closes with music playing in the background.

Closing: "Alpha Tango Monorail" was written and narrated by me, Anthony Jones. The music was done by Joel Woolf. A big shout out to the folks at F(r)iction Magazine for all their hard work behind the scenes. We'll be back next week with the third and final part of "Alpha Tango Monorail." Until then my ephemeral friends, thanks for listening.