

THE PIT BELOW PARADISE

EPIISODE 7 "AFTER LIFE"

By J. Evelyn Gaskell

[MUSIC]

ANNOUNCER

Rusty Quill Presents: The Pit Below Paradise. Episode Seven – Afterlife.

[MUSIC]

SCENE 1

(EXT. - DUSK. WE FADE IN UNDER THE SEA ALONGSIDE DORIAN, THRASHING IN THE THRASHING WATER.)

SOUND: DORIAN MOVES IN THE WATER. HE GRUNTS IN RISING STRAIN. HE'S SINKING.

DORIAN (NARRATING)

Against my legs, the rocks turned into a rope lashing me to the bottom of the lake.

SOUND: DORIAN PUSHES. FOR A SECOND, HE BREAKS THE SURFACE AND GASPS HARD. CHEERS RING ABOVE. HE IS INSTANTLY PULLED BACK UNDER...

DORIAN (NARRATING) (CONT'D)

***Slim* pockets sewn in — no visible drowning aids.**

SOUND: MORE THRASHING. ANOTHER SMALL BREAK ABOVE THE WAVES. DORIAN COUGHS. WATER GETS IN. HE SINKS. AND SINKS, SWALLOWING MORE WATER. LIMBS SLOWING.

DORIAN (NARRATING) (CONT'D)

***Slim* pockets — slim rocks... added up.**

SOUND: SOMETHING HEAVY PLUNGES INTO THE WATER BESIDE HIM. IT GRABS HIM.

A PERSON. RUTH, PULLING HIM UP. DORI'S LIMBS GO SLACK. HE IS DRAGGED UP. THEY BREAK THE SURFACE.

RUTH

Dori, come on, you've got to move! My arm can't... Dori? Oh my God, Dori?

SOUND: PANICKED, SHE MAKES FOR THE SHORE, HISSING IN PAIN, AS OVERHEAD THE CHEERS LESSEN, REPLACED BY CONFUSION.

RUTH

You're okay... Almost there...

PAULETTE (ABOVE)

Ruth! Let him drown! He chose this!

SOUND: RUTH REACHES SHORE, HAULS DORIAN UP, LAYS HIM DOWN.

RUTH

Please breathe. I need you to breathe, Dori.

SOUND: WITH A LURCH, DORIAN COUGHS UP WATER, AND KEEPS COUGHING.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Oh my God, you're okay!

SOUND: SHE HUGS HIM. ABOVE, THE CROWD ERUPTS IN DISBELIEF.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Breathe. You're okay. You didn't die.

DORIAN

Ruth...
(BEAT.) They'll be mad.

RUTH

Why didn't you swim?

DORIAN

I... I tried.

SOUND: HE PULLS ONE ROCK FROM HIS
PANTS, THEN ANOTHER, THEN
ANOTHER, SCATTERING THEM OVER
THE SHORE.

RUTH

What the hell did they do to you?

DORIAN

Everything they could, and I still failed. I'm *relieved!* I'm
supposed to be dead, but I'm relieved! Why?!

PAULETTE (ABOVE)
(FIRM)

Dorian!

RUTH

Don't listen to her.

SOUND: RUTH'S CAR APPROACHES.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Carlos! That's Carlos and Will. Everyone is up on that cliff, Dori.
This is our only chance to run. Come on.

DORIA

N I can't leave my family.

RUTH

We'll look after you. I promise.

PAULETTE (ABOVE)

Dorian! This. Is. Sacrifice!

DORIAN

She wants me go back in. I don't think I can.

(HE COUGHS AGAIN.)

Ruth, I *don't* think I was going to Paradise. I lost my chance. I'm not...

RUTH

You can still come with us. But we have to leave *now* before anyone can stop us.

DORIAN

You're right. I'm sorry. ...Did you say Carlos? The *prophet*?

RUTH

There's some things you need to hear about your church. Come on.

SOUND: SHE HELPS HIM STAND. THEY GO TO THE CAR. ABOVE, A THUNDEROUS OUTRAGE.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Don't think about them. They're selfish. You can leave. You're leaving.

SOUND: THEY CLIMB INSIDE.

DORIAN

Oh my god, what happened to Will...

RUTH

I think they had him digging graves all night. Let him sleep.

SCENE 2

(INT. - RUTH'S CAR, NIGHT. STILL ON THE TRIP HOME.)

RUTH (NARRATING)

We made it about halfway to Silver Falls before the first outburst.

DORI

Stop the car.

RUTH

Carlos, don't.

DORI

Let me out! I have to go back!

CARLOS

You could try, but how would you manage it?

DORI

They'll find me. All I have to do is wait and let them bring me back. They need me! I promised!

RUTH

You said it yourself, you couldn't do it again.

DORI

Then we'll find another way. Everyone in that village is going to suffer for the rest of their lives. Illness, grief, betrayal, doubt. *I* was supposed to fix those things! Mama was right, I'm selfish, I'm faithless——

RUTH

——Dori. I jumped off a cliff for you. Your church tried to stuff me in a torture basement. *Carlos and I* saved Will after *you* lied to him and let him down. Do you think, after all that, I'm going to let you give yourself right back to the people who tried to kill us? Haven't *I* earned some loyalty?

DORI

Take me back.

RUTH

No. They are lying to you.

DORI

You're lying to me because you don't know!

RUTH

Dori, I *wish* I was wrong. Don't you think I would want a better life if it existed?

DORI

—

RUTH

—And, I'm not saying *everything* they've told you is wrong. I don't know that. Maybe there is a Paradise, but this isn't how you reach it.

DORI

You think it was supposed to be easy?

RUTH

The worst thing that's going to happen if you forget about all this is things will stay exactly the same.

DORI

Things are *bad*. People are suffering.

CARLOS

The church has caused more suffering than it has ever prevented. I say that as its agent and its victim.

DORI

Will you tell me, then? What happened to you?

(BEAT.)

CARLOS

Were you interrogated?

DORIAN

Of course. No one is above the security of the church.

CARLOS

How did it go for you?

DORIAN

I sat down with Ned, he asked me some questions, and then he sent me home.

CARLOS

Hmph. Well, my head was bagged and I was put into a basement where they didn't let me stand for weeks.

DORIAN

What?

CARLOS

Its where I would still be if not for Ruth. I can't believe that I had a hand in raising you into this... *faith*. Dorian, I am so sorry.

DORIAN

So you're saying... I'm in a car with a non-believer?

RUTH

Were you *listening*, Dorian?

CARLOS

I was the first, yes, but I knew I would not be the only one the church found reason to detain — though every time a new face came in, I was shocked. These were people I recognized. people who I spoke with often... Our neighbors.

I spent time with the so-called non-believers over the past — well, however long it's been — and in the first days, they all felt the same things I did: confusion, shame, grief at the loss of their church's trust... I believe that the church knew that it needed to project strength, and we were the cost. Only some of us came to realize that we didn't deserve it.

(BEAT.)

DORIAN

That's... I'm sorry.

CARLOS

Don't apologize. We are both being hurt by the same thing.

DORIAN

(QUIETING)

Do you know why they got so *mad* at me? ...Nevermind.
Actually, don't answer that.

SCENE 3

(INT. - WILL'S LIVING ROOM, EARLY AFTERNOON THE NEXT DAY. WILL IS PASSED OUT ON A CREAKY COUCH.)

WILL (NARRATING)

It did not smell like basil leaves when I woke up. It smelled like dust, sand, leather. The spike of dread that followed that moment of was so acute that I recoiled from the instinct to be alive. Seeing all of Marshall's things still piled in our living room did not help.

SOUND: WILL SITS UP.

RUTH (OFF)

Do you think he has coffee?

**SOUND: IN A NEARBY ROOM, A CABINET
OPENS AND A TIN IS PULLED OFF THE
SHELF.**

RUTH (OFF) (CONT'D)

Oh, this is *expired* expired.

CARLOS

(OFF) Oh I could make tea.

RUTH (OFF)

I need something to keep me awake, not put me to bed.

WILL
(GROGGY)

Try the cabinet over the sink.

**SOUND: THE TIN CLATTERS, DROPPED
SUDDENLY. RUTH RUSHES INTO THE
LIVING ROOM, CARLOS BEHIND HER.**

RUTH

You're awake!

WILL

I put it in the same cabinet as the mugs so I'd only have to go
one place in the morning.

RUTH

Shut up about the stupid coffee.

WILL
(DRY)

Why? What else is there to talk about?

**SOUND: SHE HUGS HIM. THEY BOTH
GRUNT IN PAIN.**

WILL (CONT'D)

Careful.

SOUND: SHE LETS GO.

RUTH

Yeah, that wasn't smart. How much do you remember?

WILL

Can we not jump into anything right now?
Except... Thank you. Um, there *isn't* a thank-you, but...
Thank you.

(TO CARLOS)

It's Carlos, right?

CARLOS

Thank you for giving us a safe place to go. And keeping spare razors by your shower.

WILL

Why haven't either of you slept?

(A BEAT. THEN, KNOWINGLY,)

Where is he?

RUTH

Upstairs in Marshall's old room. She's... up and down, trying to figure all this out. Finally crashed about an hour ago. I know it was hard, but I feel really good about what we did. She'd be dead right now if not for us.

(BEAT.)

WILL

Well, I'm awake now. You two need a break. Please go rest.

CARLOS

(TO RUTH)

He's right. Sooner or later, we need to sleep.

SOUND: RUTH SIGHS.

WILL

Go take my bed——

RUTH

——No. Carlos, you take the bed. I'll take the couch.

SOUND: WILL NURSES HIMSELF TO HIS FEET. RUTH FALLS INTO THE CUSHIONS.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Everyone in this house please hold it together for the next five hours.

WILL

Eight. At least.

RUTH

Six and a half.

WILL

As long as you need. It's not all on you.

SOUND: CARLOS AND WILL EXIT.

CARLOS

It's nice to see you in one piece, Will. I'm glad you could get Ruth to rest. I've never seen someone so in control. She's really something.

WILL

Yeah, there's no one like her.

CARLOS

She really cares about Dori. Well, I don't intend to outstay my welcome — I may even be gone by the time she wakes up — but if I can say one thing... I hope you will help those two.

WILL

Of course I will. I love them.

SCENE 4

(INT. - MARSHALL'S ROOM, AFTERNOON. DORIAN SLEEPS. WILL READS IN A CHAIR. THE HOUSE IS QUIET.)

SOUND: OUTSIDE, A LOUD TRUCK RUMBLES BY. WILL SIGHS AS DORI SHIFTS. HE CLOSSES HIS BOOK.

DORIAN

Will...

WILL

Hope you don't mind me sitting in here. I haven't seen you since...

DORIAN

Yes. A lot has happened.

WILL

That's all you have to say?

DORIAN

Do you think I haven't been expecting your anger?

WILL

Two nights ago, I dug your grave. And you knew.

DORIAN

I didn't know they would make you do that.

WILL

But you knew you were going to die!

DORIAN

That doesn't mean I knew how bad of a thing that would be for you! You never told me!

WILL

What does it matter if your death was the first I'd seen or not? You shouldn't have thought you could put me through that.

DORIAN

I'm sorry.

WILL

Are you? Do you know the meaning of the word?

DORIAN

I didn't think you would—— You were always so calm—— Like you could handle anything——

WILL

——Don't put this on me. Say what you did and mean it.

DORIAN

I *thought* I would be bringing you with me. I wasn't going to leave you alone. We were going to go somewhere else, but... I had to go first. And if you knew, you wouldn't have let me!

WILL

So maybe, if you had told me, we could have stopped all this!

DORI

I tried to make them let me go.

WILL

Who? Your family?

DORIAN

No. Carlos and Ruth. I tried to tell them to let me go back so we wouldn't have to have this fight. I *don't* want to make you sad, Will.

WILL

That's what your choice would be? To run and hide from the consequences *again*?

SOUND: WILL PUSHES OUT OF HIS CHAIR.

WILL (CONT'D)

I'm not done with you. But I need more time.

SCENE 5

(INT. - KITCHEN, NIGHT. WILL SITS AT A TABLE WHEN RUTH WANDERS IN.)

WILL

Good morning.

RUTH

Its midnight.

WILL

Still want that coffee?

RUTH

You say that like it's funny, but that's literally where I was headed.

**SOUND: SHE OPENS A CABINET,
PULLS OUT A MUG AND A BAG OF
COFFEE. SETS IT BREWING.**

RUTH (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

WILL

We've missed classes, and I don't see us getting back to school for a while. So, I drafted three letters requesting a leave of absence. Yours needs a signature and I can mail it off tomorrow.

**SOUND: HE SLIDES A PAGE ACROSS THE
TABLE. SHE HESITATES.**

RUTH

Oh. Thank you.

WILL

I'm helpful when I'm not driven to exhaustion, huh?

(BEAT.)

Can you take Dori's up to him?

RUTH

Did you two talk?

WILL

It didn't go well.

RUTH

Yeah, I doubt he's in a good headspace yet. Is Carlos up? Has anybody eaten?

WILL
(SMILING)

Can you relax for five minutes? I handled it. There are leftovers. Oh, and Doctor Avery is coming by tomorrow to look at your arm.

(BEAT.)

RUTH
Thank you. I'm proud of you.

WILL
What?

RUTH
Things "didn't go well." That's good. Don't give in. We need to get through to Dori, and we can't do that if we worry more about her feelings than fixing whatever screwed-up mess this church turned our group into. No matter what... we know him, right?

WILL
I don't know. He hid a *lot*. How can you trust someone like that again?

SOUND: A FLOORBOARD CREAKS IN THE HALL.

RUTH
Carlos?

(BEAT.)

DORI (OFF)
Just getting water.

SOUND: WILL SIGHS GUILTILY.

RUTH
Dori, come here.

DORI (OFF)
No, I don't want to interrupt...

RUTH

Please? Let's all talk. We haven't *talked*.

SOUND: DORI ENTERS THE KITCHEN,
EMOTIONAL.

DORI

Probably because we're all sick to death of talking. It's only making things worse.

WILL

I only said we needed *time*. I miss you.

DORI

Yeah, well, you like things that hurt you.

RUTH

Dori!

SOUND: WILL BURSTS OUT LAUGHING.

WILL

(MATTER-OF-FACT) You like things that brainwash you.

SOUND: AFTER A BEAT, DORI
LAUGHS, TOO.

DORI

Okay. What do you like, Ruth?

WILL

I can answer that.

RUTH

Oh, really? Go ahead.

WILL

Massive massive disasters—— more than one at a time.

SOUND: RUTH LAUGHS, HARD. THEY
ALL DO.

SCENE 6

(INT - WILL'S HOUSE, MORNING. SOMEONE PUNDS ON THE DOOR)

WILL

Hey, Doctor Avery. Thank you for——

MAXINE

——Now, let's do this quietly.

**SOUND: WILL TRIES TO SLAM THE DOOR.
MAXINE CATCHES IT.**

WILL

How did you find us?

MAXINE

You came right home. Of course we found you.

WILL

You're not taking Dorian back.

MAXINE

He can speak for himself. Bring him out here.

WILL

No. Leave.

MAXINE

If I leave without Dorian today, you won't like me when I come back tomorrow.

WILL

We won't be harassed by you.

MAXINE

You'll simply run away again? You won't get far enough.

WILL

Really? I hear you all took a *lot* of care to make sure no one outside your village knew what you were planning. I think you'd do anything to avoid drawing attention to yourselves.

MAXINE

Watch your tongue——!

WILL

Any minute, the only surgeon for miles is going to be here. Everyone knows who he is.

If you're not gone by the time he shows up, I will gladly answer every question he has about Ruth and how she obtained this injury.

CARLOS (WITHIN)

Will? Is everything alright? Who's at the door?

WILL

Would you look at that? Another witness with tons to say about how you all do things in Paradise Village. Get off my porch.

MAXINE

I'm sure you feel *very* tough.

SOUND: SHE BACKS OFF. WILL SHUTS THE DOOR AS CARLOS ENTERS FROM DEEPER IN THE HOUSE.

CARLOS

Everything alright?

WILL

No. Maxine just tried to scare me into giving Dori back. Maybe you could stay a while longer?

CARLOS

Of course I'll stay.

SCENE7

(INT - KITCHEN, A SHORT WHILE LATER, EVERYONE GATHERED.)

DORIAN

Right when I was starting to wrap my head around not going back... Did she hurt you?

WILL

No, but I don't like knowing she could show up at any time.

RUTH

I know we all just got our sleeping schedules back under control, but maybe we could try staying up in shifts tonight? In case they do try anything...

WILL

I think we should talk about what it would be like if we *do* try to report this. I can't believe it hasn't occurred to any of us before now.

RUTH

I can. We have two people who were programmed not to see any issue with the church and two people who were raised to believe there's never enough help to go around.

DORIAN

They'll have evidence on their side, anyway. When I was still planning on going through with it, I made stuff like journals that would help the church seem innocent.

CARLOS

Not to mention, everyone in the village would be willing to pledge witness if the church called on them. Our story would be contradicted and drowned out.

RUTH

So what *can* we do?

CARLOS

I don't know. We know they want Dori, but not why. If it's just to make sure she *won't* say anything, then maybe we could work something out——

DORIAN

——No. I can't see them again. I'll just end up doing whatever they say and going right back to them, I know it.

WILL

We won't let that happen.

CARLOS

Well, I see three possibilities. Either they want Dori to agree to never speak of this again in exchange for letting him go;

(TO DORI DIRECTLY)

or, they want to keep you isolated so that you can be controlled, which we've seen they are capable of; or, thirdly, they want to try again. Until we know which is their goal, it will sadly be difficult for us to fend them off.

RUTH

So, what? We sit around and wait? Isn't there something we can do no matter *what* they want?

DORI

It's too bad we can't run farther. We have nowhere to go.

CARLOS

We could try to make this town aware. Maybe they could enforce some kind of patrol or look-out...

SOUND: WILL STIFLES LAUGHTER.

WILL

Sorry. Not laughing at you, but the only school teacher is also the grocery store clerk and the plumber. There are not enough people in this town to set up any kind of security.

CARLO

I see...

WILL

Yeah. I think we're on our own.

SCENE 8

(INT - BATHROOM, LATE AT NIGHT. DORIAN WASHES HER FACE, PREPARING FOR BED.)

DORI (NARRATING)

When the world survived past the end, everyone acted like it didn't. They still do. They were angry at what they were left with, so they gave up.

SOUND: DORI RINSES.

DORI (NARRATING)

I did not want the same thing to happen inside me.

SOUND: SHE DRIES HER HANDS AND FACE.

DORI

Good night, Dorian. It's important you sleep well and try tomorrow.

SOUND: SHE SIGHS AND EXITS THE BATHROOM, TAKING A FEW STEPS DOWN THE HALLWAY BEFORE PAUSING.

DORI

Ruth?

SOUND: DORIAN POKES HER HEAD INTO THE LIVING ROOM, WHERE RUTH IS STILL SITTING UP ON THE COUCH.

DORI

I see you were serious about staying up all night?

RUTH

Guess so, considering I can't sleep.

(BEAT.)

DORI

Can I join you?

RUTH

Of course, Dori, you don't have to ask.

**SOUND: DORIAN SITS BESIDE HER
ON THE COUCH.**

DORI

Thank you for not letting me go back.

RUTH

Dori——

DORI

——Thank you for jumping after me. For saving Will. For risking yourself for both of us. Thank you for saving Carlos when I didn't even know he was in danger because of me. Thank you for staying awake with me all night and not giving up on me. Thank you for——

RUTH

——Seriously, Dori...

DORI

I want you to know I'm paying attention. Hopefully, when I figure all this out, you and I can still be... close.

(BEAT.)

RUTH

Have you and Will——

DORI

——We haven't, no. He was right that we needed more time before talking. I still have to make things better there.

RUTH
How are you going to do that?

DORI
(WITH A SMIRK) Calmly and
rationally, for once.

SOUND: RUTH LAUGHS.

DORI (CONT'D)
You know, last night, Will said something...

RUTH
You both are *terrible* about bringing up the other when he's not
here.

DORI
Hm. Well, if I know Will, then at about two A.M to get a drink of
water. Maybe he'll want to join us.

RUTH
That's, like, two and a half hours away.

DORI
Have you ever heard of a game called Spit?

RUTH
Called what——?!

DORI
——I'm sure Will has a deck of cards around here somewhere.

TRANSITION TO:
2A.M.

SOUND: RUTH AND DORI GIGGLING,
SLAPPING CARDS DOWN ON THE
COFFEE TABLE.

RUTH
(WHISPER-SHOUT) That's a foul!

DORI
(WHISPER-SHOUT) I got there first!

RUTH
(WHISPER-SHOUT) You bent the card!

DORI
(GASPS, WHISPERS) Don't tell Will!

**SOUND: WILL SHUFFLES IN, GLASS OF
WATER IN HAND.**

WILL
(GROGGY)
Don't tell Will what?

DORI	RUTH
Will!	Will!

DORI
(TO RUTH)
Called it. Water in hand.

WILL
Why are you both still awake?

DORI	RUTH
Havin' fun.	Inescapable dread.

RUTH
Wanna hang?

(BEAT.)

WILL
Sure.

**SOUND: HE SITS ON THE FLOOR
ACROSS FROM THEM. RUTH
SHUFFLES CARDS.**

WILL (CONT'D)

Do I need my glasses?

RUTH

Nah, we'll go slower-paced, change games.

WILL

To what? I don't know any.

RUTH

You know rummy. Let's do rummy.

WILL

Fine, I know one.

SOUND: RUTH DEALS CARDS.

RUTH

Dorian goes first.

**SOUND: DORIAN DRAWS A CARD,
PLACES DOWN THREE.**

RUTH (CONT'D)

Oh, you *would* get a set right off the bat.

DORI

What, like it's hard?

WILL

Have you two just been doing this all night?

RUTH

Yeah. It's been nice. We should play more games together when we're all back at school.

DORI

Um, actually, speaking of school...

RUTH

Conversations usually go better when we're all here. I think it might be a good time to talk, Will.

WILL

Were you... waiting up for me?

RUTH

No!

DORI

Kind of.

DORI

No more lying for me, Ruth. Not even little ones. I've got to get better.

(BEAT.)

WILL

Okay. Let's talk.

DORI

I don't think I can go back. I'm catering tuition, you know? No one's going to pay that now. My grades are terrible. I think my "semester ease" is going to be more permanent.

WILL

You're not coming back?

DORI

It's not that I don't want to, obviously. I love living with you, and I love campus. I just don't see how it's going to work. Ruth, I'm sorry, I know that puts you in a tight spot, too.

RUTH

Yeah. Not the worst I've been in, though, and it's better than owing *them* anything.

WILL

What if you both stayed here?

RUTH

Your house? Will, that's way too big an offer.

WILL

Why? It's been sitting empty for months. If neither of you are on campus, there's no point in me being there. We can all stay here, commute.

DORI

But... We'd be around each other all the time.

WILL

We're already roommates.

DORI

Yea but this is different! This is your house, not exactly neutral territory

WILL

Okay so? Are you planning a second death ceremony I should know about?

DORI

That's not funny! Do you think I haven't been thinking about what a wretched person I am? I have. (DEEP BREATH) Something I never told anyone before is one of my first memories. Before I was proclaimed by the church, when it was just Mama, me, Daddy, and my sisters, we used to live in the village with everybody else. You've seen the place — it's not big by any stretch, but one day, Mama took me to the market square and... I got lost.

One minute I was being watched out for like always, and the next... on my own. Everything was so much bigger than me. I asked a lady for help, and she sat me down and told me to wait. And I remember thinking, "I really want to cry right now." But I didn't. I was pretty sure everything would be okay, since nothing bad had ever happened to me before, so I didn't make a big deal of it. Then I was back with my Mama, and... she wasn't scared, either.

She just hugged me and we got back to her errands. I used to have nightmares where I'd be getting chased, and in the dream I'd go to her for help, and she'd save me. She wouldn't let anything hurt me. But she'd always walk away again. Until I

became the mortal key. Once she finally saw I was special, I got the Mama I always wanted.

**SOUND: DORIAN SNIFFLES, SETS
DOWN HIS CARDS.**

DORI (CONT'D)

I'm a liar! That's all I'll ever be.

RUTH

Oh Dorian...

**SOUND: SHE HUGS HIM. WILL COMES
OVER, HUGS HIM, TOO.**

DORI

I'm sorry. You have both been... more than I ever imagined. Meeting you two changed me. I should have known not to lie. I should have known...

(COLLECTING HIMSELF)

My point being, I am not going to take advantage of your kindness anymore, Will. You went to college to start fresh, and I ruined that. And Ruth, look at what I almost brought you into! I didn't protect you the way you protected me. You two have been good to me at every turn, have been my *friends*, and even now, when I'm a mess and I'm *not* special, you're making sure that I'm safe and... making me a better me.

WILL

(MUFFLED, STILL HUGGING)

That's why I want you here. I forgive you.

RUTH

We forgive you. We love you.

**SOUND: DORI FULLY SUCCUMBS TO HER
EMOTIONS. FOR A MOMENT, ANYWAY.**

RUTH (CONT'D)

But it *is* your turn, and I'm about to win, so hurry up.

SOUND: A BREAK OF LAUGHTER. THE HUG ENDS. DORI COLLECTS HERSELF ONCE MORE.

SCENE 9

(INT. - THE CABINET UNDER THE SINK IN THE KITCHEN, SEVERAL DAYS LATER. CARLOS WORKS WITH A WRENCH TO RE-SCREW A PIPE.)

CARLOS (NARRATING)

Despite Maxine's warning, the house remained quiet. For my part, I dedicated several long hours to the practice of laying in a bed again. But, then...

DORI (MEMORY)

Hey, Carlos? Sorry to bother you, but do you know anything about greasing hinges? The squeak on the bathroom door is aggravating the heck out of me.

CARLOS (NARRATING)

For no reason, I never had children of my own, but my father still obsessively taught me how to care for them. "Come learn this," he used to say. "You'll need to show it to your kids someday." He was always a fervent optimist. Perhaps he was even still alive.

(SMALL BEAT.)

Well, the squeak was a simple fix, but it set something of a precedent. Not two hours later, Dori returned.

DORI (MEMORY)

Okay, so, say someone's guest room had a stuck window sill and they really missed feeling a nice breeze...

CARLOS (NARRATING)

So I sorted that for her also. Then yesterday, Ruth's car — she came in practically weeping over a noise it was making, paranoid, distraught as anything. How could I not try? And finally, this morning.

SOUND: CARLOS GRUNTS, TWISTING THE WRENCH.

CARLOS (NARRATING) (CONT'D)
Will's cautious questions regarding a backed-up sink. I had to think my father would be pleased.

SOUND: RUTH ENTERS, CARRYING A LETTER.

RUTH
Are you getting close with that?

CARLO
I believe I'm done.

SOUND: CARLOS SETS THE WRENCH DOWN, EMERGES, AND TESTS THE SINK. THE WATER RUNS PERFECTLY.

RUTH
Oh, incredible. Thank you for your help. I can't believe none of us knew how to unclog a sink.

CARLOS
Glad you've kept me around, huh?

RUTH
Well, duh. You're great.

CARLOS
(CLEARS THROAT.) What does your letter say?

RUTH
We're confirmed for a semester ease of up to two weeks. Professors informed. Blah, blah.

CARLOS
I guess I'll start looking for job postings, then.

RUTH

What do you mean?

CARLOS

I'm leaving a desperate situation coming here. I have nothing, not even the option to take a bus somewhere else. Silver Falls is where I will have to make my home, at least for now.

RUTH

Well, we could get you an appointment with Mayor Levesque, but——

SOUND: THE FRONT DOOR OPENS.

DORIAN (OFF)

We went thriiftiiiiing! Who wants new clothes? Well, new to us anyway...

SOUND: RUTH SIGHS AS DORI AND WILL ENTER.

WILL

Thanks for grabbing the mail.

RUTH

No problem.

SOUND: SHE TURNS OVER AN ENVELOPE.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Dori...? There's one for you.

(BEAT.)

DORI

What?

RUTH

We don't have to open it.

DORI

You do it. Tell me if it's bad.

SOUND: RUTH RIPS OPEN THE ENVELOPE.

RUTH

It's from... *Lily*.

SOUND: DORI TAKES THE PAPER.

DORI

What? Let me see. "Hi Dori, I know I shouldn't have your address..."

LILY (NARRATING)

(FADE INTO:)

I know I shouldn't have your address, but something is happening that I thought you should know about. Ever since you left, Margaret's been... different. She and Mama have started spending more time together, and they've barely even fought. I think they went to visit Ned yesterday. They were gone for a while. Margaret won't tell me what it's all about, but I'm worried. I don't want our family to break apart, and I don't know who to turn to. Could this be about what you failed to do? Can you help us fix this? Please. I'm begging, and I'm sending all my love as your little sister. Lily.

DORI

What does this mean?

(BEAT.)

Carlos? Could Lily be onto something? Is my sister in danger?

CARLO

I don't know.

RUTH

Oh my God.

WILL

I know this is bad, but we need to stay calm.

DORI

(TO CARLOS)

If you know anything, you have to tell me!

SOUND: CARLOS SITS.

CARLOS

There are... protocols / helped create. We kept contingency plans in case the ceremony failed. One such idea involved, er, passing the torch to a worthy successor.

DORI

...They're going to try again? With *Margaret*?

SOUND: DORI STANDS ABRUPTLY.

WILL

Dori?

DORI

I need your radio. Anyone!

SOUND: WILL HANDS DORI HIS RADIO. SHE DIALS. IT RINGS.

RUTH

Wait, what are you doing?

PAULETTE (RECEIVER)

Hello? Who is this?

DORI

Look, I don't know if you told her to do it or she thinks it's what she wants, but if you try it with *Margaret*, I promise I will bring it all down.

SOUND: SHE HANGS UP.

SCENE 10

(INT. - THE LIVING ROOM, DAY, AS CARLOS READS A BOOK. DORI ENTERS, RESTLESS. SHE PAUSES IN THE DOORWAY.)

CARLOS

Yes, Dori?

DORI

Is there anything else I need to know about what they might be doing back at the village?

CARLOS

I'm sorry. My knowledge really is limited to the past and... speculation. I have no way of knowing for sure.

DORI

I want to fight them. I don't know how or what I can do, but——

CARLOS

——I'll help you. That was a brave thing you did, standing up for your sister.

DORI

Thank you.

(BEAT.)

What are you reading?

CARLOS

A book on new agricultural techniques since the fires.

DORI

"New"? Looks like the cover's falling apart.

CARLOS

It was published nine years ago. Nine years ago, I wasn't in communication with the outside world. The updates are still new to me.

DORI

How are you so calm? We lost everything.

CARLOS

Not everything that is lost stays gone. You and I shared a huge community, yes, but there is another, smaller web of relationships I've noticed forming in this house. You three kids

seem strong together. It's been a lighter weight. I suppose I'm still too relieved to feel weary.

DORI

You and I are going to have one weird, lifelong friendship.

SCENE 11

**(EXT. - BACKYARD, DAY. A WISPY, DRY, WINDY PLACE.
DORIAN LAYS IN THE GRASS.)**

DORIAN

You're not praying. You're not. Praying. You don't want that. You just miss sitting outside. Outside is peaceful. Even if it's less green than you're used to. And the grass is too sharp and poking your neck. That's all fine. This is the world, too.

**SOUND: HE BREATHES IN, OUT.
FOOTSTEPS GROW CLOSER.**

MARGARET

This is where you decided to run off to?

SOUND: DORIAN SITS UP FAST.

DORIAN

Margaret?! You're okay!

SOUND: HE HUGS MARGARET.

MARGARET

Ugh! Let go!

DORIAN

What are you doing? How did you get here?

MARGARET

I'm here to restore faith to my big sibling! (SHE
LAUGHS NASTILY)

Just kidding! / know when something's beyond my ability.

DORIAN

Margaret, what have they been saying to you? Have they——?

MARGARET

——Mama's out front. She wants to talk to you.

**SOUND: DORIAN JOGS AROUND
THE HOUSE.**

DORIAN

Come on! I don't want to lose sight of you.

**SOUND: MARGARET LETS OUT A BIG
GROAN, BUT FOLLOWS. THEY COME
AROUND THE SIDE OF THE BUILDING**

SCENE 12

**(EXT. - WILL'S HOUSE, DAY. NED, PAULLETE, YURI ARE ONE
THE DOORSTEP TALKING WITH WILL AND RUTH)**

WILL

You're not welcome here.

NED

I doubt this will take long. Ah, good afternoon, Dori. We've come to take you home.

RUTH

Ha! You think you can show up here and make demands?
You're a long way from your church.

NED

I'm not here as an authority. No, I'm simply here to facilitate a family reunion. Dori's going to *choose* to come with us.

PAULETTE

Margaret? When did you leave?

MARGARE

I'm good at passing freely, Mama.

PAULETTE

Well... Nevermind. Come stand by me.

**SOUND: MARGARET RETURNS TO
PAULETTE'S SIDE.**

PAULETTE

Dori, do you have any idea the mess you left behind? You crushed the spirit of an entire village!

DORI

You pushed me.

SOUND: MARGARET SCOFFS QUIETLY.

PAULETTE

I'm your mother. I was trying to help you. That's my job.

YURI

Yes. Enough, Dorian. Come fulfill your promise.

DORI

No. It's not real.

NED

Now now, let's think this through. You may feel certain this is the end of it. Your point was made, very publicly. Ceremony past. Of course, you have to turn your back on us now to escape rejection. How could you come back from that? How could we ever forgive you? You'll find that those who trust you are often willing to accept a whole variety of answers which, at first, may not have appealed to them.

RUTH

What does that even mean?

NED

It means that the church is fully in control the information that will reach its worshipers. If we wanted, say, to save Dorian's reputation and give him his place back in the village, we could do that.

MARGARET

Wait, what?

WILL
(SCOFFS)

How?

NED

It wasn't his fault. The outside world tampered with his head, but with enough time spent back home, he can heal.

WILL

So you can throw her off a cliff *again*.

NED

No, no. We wouldn't try that twice. There are new narratives we can spin. Poor, wounded soul, Dori. It's not untrue. We can bring you home.

DORI

I...

PAULETTE

Come home, baby. No matter what, I am *still* your Mama.

MARGARET

Really?!

PAULETTE

Not now, Margaret.

MARGARET

No, of course not! After all this time, you still just want *Dori!* Nothing else matters so long as Dori gets to play the prophesied saviour. It doesn't even matter if she wants it!

YURI

Margaret. This is unbecoming.

MARGAR

I don't——!

NED

Don't worry, Margaret. If Dorian fails the final test, you may still have your chance to prove yourself.

DORI

Don't you dare!

PAULETTE

Do not raise your voice at him, you ungrateful child! I have done everything I could to teach you right from wrong, and this is how you behave?!

DORI

Look at what you taught me, Mama! Do you think I'm happy with this? All I want is my family back! But you were never who I thought you were, were you? I can't go back with you if you're a part of Ned's church, or what will you teach me next, Mama?

PAULETTE

If there is broken trust here, it's because you've become *arrogant!*

DORI

You *pushed* me!

PAULETTE

Just *repent*, Dorian!

(BEAT. TENSIONS DE-ESCALATE.)

DORI

Margaret... I know we haven't had a good relationship, but remember this. How she treats you and me when she doesn't get her way. Think hard about anything she asks you to do. However she makes you feel, it isn't your fault.
(TO PAULETTE)

So you're really planning to turn Margaret then?

PAULETTE

I have no idea what you're talking about.

DORIAN

Then why come here?!

PAULETTE

So I could bring my child home! But I don't know who you are anymore.

NED

Paulette.

PAULETTE

We're giving you another chance!

NED

Paulette.

PAULETTE

Fine, you handle this.

SOUND: NED SAUNTERS UP A FEW STEPS.

NED

Dorian, a word?

DORIAN

No.

NED

I see. Has this world truly turned you against your family so quickly?

DORIAN

Don't.

SOUND: NED APPROACHES ANYWAY.

NED

I only want to make sure you know fully what your decision entails. If you come with us, everything goes back to normal. You'll be loved, cared for, worshiped. If you refuse, you will never see your home again, and, just as you suspected, your birthright will pass to someone else.

DORIAN

You will not harm my sister.

NED

Of course not. Never. She'll receive a glory that no one else in history could hold a candle to. We will owe her endless gratitude.

DORIAN

...*Why?* Why do you do this, Ned? What could you possibly stand to gain from lying to everyone around you?

NED

I'd never lie. Are you with us, or is this the end of our story?

DORIAN

Oh its the end. The beginning of the end, anyway. You won't poison another child like you did me. I'll be there when she needs me, and one day I'll make you tell the truth. You'll tell everyone who believes in you lied to everyone who believed in you the whole time. How many more stories do you think you can spin before it all collapses?

(BEAT.)

NED

(LOUDER, RETREATING)

It's clear you've given up your faith. I can only say I'm so sorry to see it.

DORIAN

You will be sorry.

RUTH

You *could* say sorry for a lot of other things. Did you forget about Carlos? Everything you did to him? Will and me, what about us?

NED

Enough! We will go.

PAULETTE

Ned——!

NED

——I said, we'll go.

PAULETTE

(SHAKING HER HEAD) You are all so weak.

NED

Think carefully —— each of you —— over the coming days. If we hear anything untoward about our faith... If we trace so much as a whisper or rumor back to any of you... We *will* seek retribution.

DORI

Wait. Margaret. You don't have to go with them. If you wanted to start over, we could, I don't know, watch out for each other. *I'll* watch for *you*. Let me try to make it all up to you.

MARGARET

Goodbye, Dorian. *When* you come to regret this decision, just remember... everything that's happened is your fault.

SOUND: NED, PAULETTE, YURI, AND MARGARET PILE INTO A CAR. IN A FIT OF EMOTIONAL IMPULSE, DORIAN RUNS INTO THE HOUSE, BLOWING PAST WILL.

WILL

Dorian? What are you——?

SOUND: THE DOOR SLAMS SHUT. THE CAR

**HEADS OFF. DORIAN BURSTS BACK OUT
AND HURLS SOMETHING. DISTANTLY,
A TINY GLASS BOTTLE SHATTERS.**

DORIAN

Take that with you, Ned!

**SOUND: RUTH AND WILL COME UP
TO HIM, BRACINGLY.**

WILL

Dori...

RUTH

...What was *that*?

DORIAN

**(WITH A BITTER HUFF) Basil leaves. From
your kitchen.**

**SOUND: HE LAUGHS, NOT ENTIRELY WITH
HUMOR.**

DORIAN

**Listen, I... I know what we've planning, but I can't stay here. This
thing between me and them is only going to get worse. I've
dragged you both down far enough. I——**

WILL

——I have my own grudge.

RUTH

**Me too. Super grudge. You think you can kick
fight?**

DORIAN

That's nice of you both, but, really. Carlos and I talked. I've got him.

RUTH

Excuse you. *We* have Carlos. Or are you so wrapped up in your own stuff you want to ruin his surprise?

DORIAN

No. Of course not, but... You two are really serious, aren't you?

WILL

The Mortal Key gets it! Ready to stop pushing us away?

SOUND: DORIAN HUGS THEM BOTH.

DORIAN

Yes.

RUTH

Actually, while I was taking out the trash last night I got approached by this dude who said I should join *his* cult, so bye guys I think I'm gonna go try brainwashing again...

WILL

If we're getting a do-over, this time I call being the rich spoiled kid, please.

DORIAN

Alright, alright. Let's give Carlos the best — weirdest — surprise ever. But... tomorrow? Today's been... Let's just finish today.

WILL

You did. You didn't give in. This isn't an easy thing to navigate, but... Until they're ready, and until we have a solid strategy to go against them, you've done all you can.

RUTH

I'm proud of you.

DORIAN

Thanks. Both of you. For everything.

SCENE 13

(INT. - CARLOS'S GUEST ROOM, THE NEXT MORNING, AS HE LAYS IN BED. HIS BREATHING IS FRUSTRATED. THERE'S A GENTLE KNOCK.)

CARLOS

Yes?

**SOUND: WILL ENTERS. IN THE HALLWAY,
HALF A WHISPER FROM RUTH.**

WILL

Morning, Carlos. We didn't see you at breakfast. Did you want anything?

CARLOS

I'll come down and fix myself something in a minute.

WILL

Okay, but... you don't have to. I don't want you to put yourself in any pain. I actually brought you something, but I understand if——

CARLOS

——Alright, then. Thank you, Will.

**SOUND: WILL ENTERS PROPERLY AND
HANDS CARLOS A PLATE.**

WILL

Hopefully it's warm enough. Thank you for taking care of the drain, by the way. I didn't say that yet.

CARLOS

I don't mind. It's been good to work with my hands.

WILL

And to not have a broken sink.

CARLOS

I'm sure you would have found a way to fix it on your own.

WILL
(SHRUGS)

Maybe. Maybe not. Most of this stuff stayed broken if it could be lived around. Marshall wasn't...

CARLOS
Attentive?

WILL
Caring.

CARLOS
Did you mean to keep so many of his things after he passed? You don't seem fond of the memories.

WILL
I guess I didn't know what to do with the place instead.

CARLOS
He'd be proud of you now.

WILL
(SNORTS) Not likely.

CARLOS
No? Then screw him. I'm proud of you — all three of you.

WILL
(LAUGHS)
Thanks, Carlos. That's good to hear. Because we actually --

**SOUND: RUTH AND DORIAN ENTER
CARRYING PAPERS AND A PIE.**

RUTH
We have news!

DORIAN
And breakfast pie! To lift all our spirits.

CARLOS

What in the world...?

**SOUND: THEY GATHER AT THE FOOT OF
CARLOS'S BED, DORI A BIT CLUMSILY.**

RUTH

Careful, babygirl, don't drop it.

DORIAN

(GASPS)

Ruth! You'll start a scandal.

CARLOS

What is all this?

WILL

Potentially extremely premature.

**SOUND: RUTH GIVES THE PAPERS TO
CARLOS. EVERYTHING FOLLOWING IS
SUPPOSED TO BE OVERWHELMING, A
LITTLE BIT VOMITING INFORMATION.**

CARLOS

Sub-lease...? What...?

DORI

Ruth and I have already signed, look!

RUTH

Shh!

WILL

I-slash-we had something we wanted to ask you. Getting to where we are even over the past few days would not have been possible without your help. I know it's not the biggest house, but if we shuffle some rooms around, we can all fit without having to worry about moving or rent or——

RUTH

—And there's a job waiting for you in town. Record-keeping. Andrea Hunter just turned ninety-four and is *finally* retiring, which means the position will be open for the first time in... ever. It is literally unbelievable that I managed to talk up your document handling experience without, like, mentioning they were all cult prophecies, but the Mayor gave you first dibs if you want it!

CARLOS

This is too much...

WILL

No. Maybe none of us are keen on the word "family" anymore, but this is what a family does. Is it okay with you?

CARLOS

I...I think I would like this very much.

SOUND: RUTH AND DORI CHEER. CARLOS LAUGHS.

CARLOS (NARRATING)

If my father had told me that parenting could feel like this, I might have taken him a little more seriously.

SCENE 14

(EXT. - BACKYARD, NIGHT. DORIAN STANDS ALONE AT THE BACK OF THE HOUSE.)

SOUND: THE DOOR OPENS. WILL STICKS HIS HEAD OUT.

WILL

There you are.

DORIAN

Were you looking for me?

WILL

There's still something we haven't quite worked out.

SOUND: HE EXITS FULLY, JOINS DORI.

WILL (CONT'D)

You and me..

DORIAN

You're right. We never quite worked out.

(BEAT.)

WILL

Ruth and I——

SOUND: RUTH STICKS *HER* HEAD OUT.

RUTH

——There you two are! Carlos got the big radio to work. I'm making tea. Anyone want to come listen?

(BEAT. THEN, SOLEMN)

Did I interrupt something? Are you two...?
(ANOTHER BEAT) I'll leave.

DORIAN

Don't!

SOUND: SLOWLY, RUTH JOINS DORI AND WILL. A LONG, COMFORTABLE BEAT.

DORIAN (CONT'D)

Is it possible to have feelings for two people at once?

WILL / RUTH

Yes.

DORIAN

Good. Well, I do. I never would have made it here if it weren't for you two, and I think we're all better together.

WILL

Me too. Ruth?

RUTH

Obviously it's what I want.

SOUND: DORIAN AND WILL LAUGH.

RUTH (CONT'D)

And I think it's a good idea to try and, I don't know, build some trust back up with people we...

DORIAN

Trust?

RUTH

(HUFFS) Yeah.

WILL

None of us are alone... and we'll figure out the rest.

SOUND: THEY HEAD INSIDE TOGETHER.

[MUSIC]

ANNOUNCER

The Pit Below Paradise is a Neon Inkwell podcast distributed by Rusty Quill Ltd and licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Share-Alike 4.0 International License. This series is written and created by J Evelyn Gaskell and Directed by Micah Rodriguez and Stephanie Resendes. This episode was edited by Lowri Ann Davies, Nico Vettese, Meg McKellar, and Catherine Rinella. With Music from Sam Jones.

It featured Ian RQ Slater as Dori/Dorian, Phi Nelson as Will, Victoria Cheng as Ruth, Isabel Kruse as Paulette, KT Thomas as Ned, Lisa Stanley as Evelyn, Lisa Pengov as Maxine, and Tori Thomson as Margaret. A full list of performance credits is available in the shownotes.

Neon Inkwell is produced by April Sumner with Executive Producer Alexander J Newall and Showrunner Elizabeth

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Neon Inkwell: The Pit Below Paradise 7 – Afterlife

This is sacrifice.

This show contains recurring themes including:

- **Religious Trauma/Indoctrination**
- **Family Conflict**
- **Gaslighting**
- **Childhood Trauma**
- **Child Neglect/Abuse**
- **Alcoholism**
- **Toxic/Unhealthy Relationships**

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Featuring

Ian RQ Slater as Dori/Dorian

Victoria Chen as Ruth

Isabel Kruse as Paulette

Phi Hamens as Will

Neil Strawder as Carlos

Lisa Pengov as Maxine

Madison Mitts as Lily

KT Thomas as Ned

Sergio Salas as Yuri

Tori Thomson as Margaret

Dialogue Editor – Lowri Ann Davies and Nico Vettese

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