

THE PIT BELOW PARADISE

EPISODE 3 "A GRAVE QUEST"

By J. Evelyn Gaskell

Revised 10-15-23

MUSIC]

ANNOUNCER

**Rusty Quill Presents: The Pit Below
Paradise.**

Episode Three – A Grave Quest

[MUSIC]

SCENE 1

**(INT. - WATER SHOP, DAY. THE PLACE IS FAIRLY CROWDED. DORI
SITS AT A TABLE. RUTH IS ON SHIFT BEHIND THE COUNTER.)**

DORI
Psssst! Psssssssst! Ruth!

RUTH
What? I'm making orders.

DORI
I need your help!

RUTH
Come here, then.

DORI
I'm too scared to get up. She might get suspicious. Please?

**SOUND: RUTH GROANS AND MEETS
DORI AT HER TABLE.**

RUTH
You know I'm not a server, right?

DORI

Have you seen the girl I've been sitting with?

RUTH

She's kind of hard to miss.

DORI

Yeah. Look at this.

RUTH

Whoa! What is this drawing?

DORI

Her sketchbook. I don't know if she's showing off or threatening me, but either way, I gotta get outta here! She's making some sort of offering outside -

RUTH

Alright, slow down. If you don't like her, can you somehow let her down easy——?

SOUND: THE SHOP BELL DINGS.

DORI

——Too late, she's coming back!

(HURRIEDLY)

No, thank you, we're all set. Nevermind! Thank you!

SOUND: JULIET, A WITCH, RETURNS TO SIT ACROSS TABLE FROM DORI. SHE CARRIES HER BEVERAGE AND SETS IT DOWN.

JULIET

(TO RUTH) Hello.

Excuse me.

RUTH

No, no, sorry. Uh... Let me know if you two need anything. At the counter. Where regular people place their orders.

**SOUND: RUTH GOES -- BUT NOT TOO FAR.
THEN, A BEAT.**

DORI

So, Juliet, did you have a pleasant... offering?

JULIET

Well, an offering isn't about *me*. It's about nourishing something *else*. But, yes, I feel gratified having gifted a portion of my drink before consuming anything myself. I hope the Dark and Light aren't offended that you refused.

SOUND: DORI LAUGHS NERVOUSLY.

DORI

What can I say? I'm real thirsty today. If I go donating all my water to deities, I could faint.

JULIET

If you had the kind of power I do, you'd never faint. Your masters wouldn't let you.

**SOUND: BEHIND THE COUNTER, A BUNCH
OF ICE CUBES CRASH TO THE FLOOR.**

RUTH

(STRAINED) My bad! I'll get that.

DORI

I see...

JULIET

I mean... I can't tell you you're *wrong*, but don't you feel you would be better off practicing?

DORI

Practicing ... witchcraft?

JULIET

I prefer not to call it that at this stage. I've been pioneering a new branch. Could I call it a new faith at this point? Perhaps. And I've been looking to mentor an apprentice.

DORI

Oh. I'm sorry, I thought we were just hanging out.

JULIET

I'm not opposed to exploring the two things as one. So long as my apprentice knows to worship *me* first! (LAUGHS) I'm kidding. I'm kidding. That would be profane. But I *would* expect strong devotion from anybody seeking the same.

DORI

You know, you've inspired me. Maybe I *will* go try to commune — uh, *offer* — before drinking any more of this. So I'll just run to the bathroom—

SOUND: DORI TRIES TO GET UP.

JULIET

—The bathroom? No. No, that's not a proper place to speak with the Dark and Light. Go outside, like I did.

DORI

But, uh, these aren't to-go cups! The cashier gave you a dirty look before.

RUTH

Excuse me! Did I hear you say you need a to-go cup? I can help you over here!

CO-WORKER

Ruth, stop yelling...

DORI

Oh, thank you, Miss!

SOUND: DORI BOLTS TO THE COUNTER.

DORI (CONT'D)

(WHISPERING) Help help help help help—

RUTH

—Yep, I was eavesdropping. You need an escape plan?

DORI

So it's not just me, right?!

RUTH

No. Man, she is *watching* you. How did you two even meet?

DORI

Is now the time?

RUTH

No, sorry, sorry. And also — sorry for this.

DORI Huh?

**SOUND: RUTH TURNS A NOZZLE ON DORI
AND DRENCHES HER WITH SELTZER.
PATRONS GASP. DORI SPUTTERS.**

DORI

What the hell?

RUTH

I am so sorry! Stupid nozzle, always breaking!

SOUND: JULIET APPEARS.

JULIET

Dori, what happened?

RUTH

It's my fault. Please, we have a break room this way where you can dry off privately.

DORI

I'm alright. It's only... my favorite shirt. You know, Juliet, this could take a while, so I wouldn't blame you if you wanted to head out—

JULIET

—No, no, of course I'll wait. I'll be right here.

DORI

Great! So will... I.
(TO RUTH) Ruth? I mean, Miss?

RUTH

Right this way.

SOUND: RUTH LEADS DORI AWAY, AROUND A CORNER.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Okay, go in here and unlock the window. You can climb out.

DORI

Thank you!

SOUND: DORI DUCKS INTO THE BREAKROOM, DRAGS A CRATE OVER TO THE WALL, CLIMBS ON IT, THEN OPENS A WINDOW. AS SHE STARTS TO GRUNT AND GROAN AND SQUEEZE HERSELF THROUGH, NARRATION BEGINS:

MAXINE

Would this qualify as putting oneself in danger, Evelyn?

EVELYN It's

worse than that, Maxine.

DORI

Evelyn? Maxine? Can this wait? I'm kind of in the middle of something.

MAXINE

(TO EVELYN) Do go

on.

EVELYN

When one has a responsibility to one's community — when one is an *opener of doorways* — any risk taken is a risk multiplied by hundreds upon hundreds. "Self wounds self and family."

What *are* you in the middle of, Dori? You certainly don't look presentable enough to be seen in public.

MAXINE

Now, now, Evelyn, give her a chance to explain herself. And how it is you came to be at this water shop *again*.

DORI

(NERVOUS)

What do you mean? My friend Ruth works here!

MAXINE

And your other friend? The one you were sitting with, drowning in black drapes and bone ornaments?

DORI

Okay, look, she's not a friend.

MAXINE

I doubt anyone needs to remind you how much is at stake letting you roam free. If you were to let any outsider get too close——

DORI

——No one's getting close! It was one date!

EVELYN

This behavior needs to end. How often do you spend praying these days?

DORI

Hey, I pray every day!

**SOUND: MAXINE PRODUCES A SMALL
NOTEPAD, FLIPS TO A PAGE.**

MAXINE

You don't. You've missed daily prayers on four separate occasions since attending school. Do not lie to us.

DORI

It's hard, okay! Mama never gave me any homework, and now I've got mountains! Sometimes, I'm tired and —— and —— it slips my mind. That's all.

EVELYN

It's unacceptable. No more distractions, Dori.

DORI

Fine, I hear you. I'll say a repentance and... oh no.

**SOUND: DISTANTLY, THE WATER SHOP
BELL DINGS AS JULIET EXITS.**

DORI (CONT'D)

Go! We'll talk later! I need to run!

MAXINE

We *will* be back.

**SOUND: EVELYN AND MAXINE STRIDE
OFF. DORI ATTEMPTS TO FLEE, BUT ONLY
MAKES IT A FEW STEPS.**

JULIET

Dori? I just left you inside.

SOUND: DORI WHIRLS BACK TOWARD HER.

DORI

Juliet! What are you doing? I... I thought you were waiting at the table.

JULIET

**I was *going* to make an offer to the Dark to curse that counter girl for
soaking you and ruining our date. Are you... leaving?**

DORI

Uhhh...

JULIET

You were! You were going to abandon me here!

DORI

Now, "abandon" is a very strong word—

JULIET

—You haven't even seen what I can do with words! But you will... Oh, the curses I have perfected of late. You'll regret this, Dori. When I'm through with you, you'll be begging for the privilege to serve me!

SOUND: DORIAN CRINGES IN PANIC AND SPEDS AWAY.

JULIET

(GROWING FAINTER)

And before the day is out, you'll see what a fool you've been!

SCENE 2

(INT. - DORM BUILDING HALLWAY. AS WILL ARRIVES HOME, HE SPOTS A GAGGLE OF DORIAN'S FELLOW CHURCH MEMBERS.)

Church mom

This is the information that Ned sent out—

Church daughter

How long until you think he's home?

Church dad

We could try coming back in an hour or so...

SOUND: WILL PULLS OUT HIS KEYS.

WILL

Hello. Let me guess — family of Dorian's?

CHURCH MOM

Yes! Oh good, we *are* in the right place!

WILL

Yeah, you're not the first. We've had lots of people stopping by with dorm gifts.

CHURCH MOM

Well, Dorian is very special to us.

WILL

'Course. He's not here right now, but if you're dropping something off, I can take it.

CHURCH MOM

There's a card with it, too, so please make sure he gets that.

**SOUND: SHE HANDS HIM A TINKLY
BRACELET AND NOTE.**

**THEY SHUFFLE OFF. WILL ENTERS HIS
ROOM.**

WILL (NARRATING)

Then they left, same as all the others — after coming all the way here, without even seeing Dorian. As they went, I tried not to think how distressing it would be to have so many family members to care about — although, at that point maybe they all blurred together. Maybe it made the losses easy to gloss over.

I set Dorian's between make-up brushes, crinkled lecture notes, and the *many* reeking pouches of basil. Signs of a life that knew exactly what it wanted to be. A constant reminder of why I liked him so much.

SOUND: THE DOOR FLIES OPEN.

DORIAN

Will, you have to help me!

(DIVERTED) Oh, hey, what's this bracelet?

WILL

Gift from your family..

DORIAN

How thoughtful!

SOUND: DORIAN PUTS ON THE BRACELET.

DORIAN (CONT'D) (URGENT AGAIN)

That's cute!

Anyway, I need help! My ex is trying to curse me! (DIVERTED
AGAIN)

Actually, does she count as an ex if you only went on half a date?

WILL

Half a——?! Dorian!

DORIAN

What?!

WILL

Remember how we've talked about being respectful of people's time
and feelings——

DORIAN

——I don't think you heard me! She's trying to curse me!

(BEAT.)

WILL

(WITHERINGLY SKEPTICAL) *Curse you?*

DORIAN

Yes! She studies "The Anathemon." Of something

WILL

I've never heard of that.

DORIAN

Neither had I until this morning! Apparently it's the "definitive tome"
of curses. She showed me her copy, and her sketchbook, which was
full of all these *drawings*... She kept bringing up 'fluid consistency
tests' and—— (SHUDDERS)
'Organ souring'! -

WILL

Dorian, do you genuinely believe in curses?

DORIAN

No! But if it is true, then trust me, I cannot afford to get cursed!

WILL
(EXTREMELY DRY)

Yes. Your soul *is* delicate.

DORIAN

Hey! I have a mighty soul, thank you very much! You're going to help me, right?

WILL

So let me see if I have this right. You want me, to help you stop a curse that we both agree is imaginary?

DORIAN

If it's imaginary then it won't be hard to stop. Ideally, we can get Ruth in on it, too, and with both of you on my side, it'll take an hour tops.

WILL

What are roommates for?

DORIAN

Yes! It'll be quick, honest! I already have a plan.

WILL

Which is?

DORIAN

Yes, witches!!! We're going off campus! (AS THEY HEAD OUT)

Also, we completely blew past the fact that you actually made a joke with the 'delicate soul' thing...

WILL

I make jokes *all the time*.

SCENE 3

(EXT. - THE HOME OF "THE SOCIETY." EARLY AFTERNOON. WILL, DORIAN, AND RUTH APPROACH AN OVERGROWN TWO-FLOOR HOUSE IN THE SUBURBS CLOSE TO CAMPUS.)

DORI

Alright, this has gotta be the place. When Juliet started showing me her... curse-y things, she mentioned a society on Clement Street that wouldn't let her join. I figure if they're not afraid of her, maybe they can help us.

WILL

She says witches live here?

SOUND: A CAT MEOWS CLOSE BY.

WILL (CONT'D)

Oh. I guess they do. Is it just me, or is that ivy... shimmering?

RUTH

Alright, listen. Dad and I met plenty of con artists all over the country pretending they could speak with the dead or whatever. There's a million tricks to draw in suckers who want to believe magic is real.

SOUND: SHE CROUCHES DOWN TO PET THE CAT. THE CAT PURRS.

RUTH

But we're not suckers, are we, kitty? Are you definitive proof of magic? Are you? No, of course not.

WILL

What could make a plant grow that dark, though?

RUTH

A spray bottle filled with glitter paint.

DORI

Or not! You'd be surprised what kinds of secrets some private communities have figured out — secrets they might want to keep hidden from outsiders.

SOUND: THE CAT ABRUPTLY HISSES AND SPRINTS OFF AS THE FRONT DOOR OPENS.

DORI

Behind the corner, quick!

**SOUND: EVERYONE HIDES. JULIET
STORMS FROM THE HOUSE. THE
SUMMONER FOLLOWS HER TO THE
PORCH.**

JULIET

**Fine! But if you refuse to help me, then you've made an enemy of THE
Juliet, and I'll have my revenge on you, too!**

SUMMONER

You're going to get hurt, Juliet.

JULIET

You can't threaten me.

SUMMONER

***I'm* not. I've never raised a hand against you. But I've *tried* to teach
you that what you send out to another will come back full force.
Consider yourself lucky you haven't gotten carried away already. If
even half of what you told me is true...**

DORI

(WHISPERING)

Why is my life full of witches all of a sudden?!

RUTH

(FULL OF MOCK DREAD)

**Didn't you hear them? You must've brought their curses upon you
with foul deeds!**

DORI

Do you think?

WILL

Ruth, don't forget he's actually spiritual.

RUTH

Oh, sorry——!

DORI

——Everybody shhh!!

JULIET

You think because you've been practicing longer you know all there is to know. Well, there's more out there! I serve the Dark and Light, and the Dark and Light rewards me, no matter how I choose to wield it!

SUMMONER

You serve a reflection of yourself, as do we all. For the last time, be careful. And again, you are not welcome here.

SOUND: JULIET HUFFS AND STOMPS AWAY. RUTH, WILL, AND DORI ATTEMPT TO KEEP COVER, BUT A CAT MARCHES UP TO THEM AND STARTS MEOWING AGAIN.

DORI

(WHISPER)

No! Go away, little cat! Please!

SUMMONER

(FROM THE DOOR)

Hello, Dori. You and your friends may come in. I assume this is about Juliet?

SOUND: WILL AND DORI EMERGE. THE CAT JUMPS ONTO THE PORCH AND PURRS BESIDE THE SUMMONER.

SUMMONER (CONT'D)

Thank you, Sabrina. She's a very loyal familiar. No one gets close to the house without her letting us know.

DORI

Whoa. So, if you know who I am, then... you really are a witch?

SUMMONER

Of course I am. But... it also helps that you three are very bad at whispering. Please, come in.

SCENE 4

(INT. - SITTING ROOM, EARLY AFTERNOON. DORI, RUTH, AND WILL SHARE THE COUCH WHILE THE SUMMONER STANDS OVER A BUBBLING CAULDRON IN A FIREPLACE, LADLING OUT LIQUID INTO CUPS.)

SUMMONER
Can I offer you a drink?

RUTH
No, thanks.

DORI
Um... What is it?

SUMMONER
It's a drink.

(BEAT.)

WILL
We'll pass. Thank you.

SUMMONER
Suit yourselves. I'm sure the spirits won't mind the slight.

DORI
Sp-spirits?

SUMMONER
Oh, yes.

(ANOTHER BEAT.)
Ugh, you all are no fun! I'm only joking with you. Can't you take a little mysticism?

**SOUND: THE DRINKS ARE
UNCEREMONIOUSLY DUMPED OUT.**

WILL
So, you know our names. What's yours?

SUMMONER

You may call me The Summoner. I head the coven that dwells in this house. *We've* had trouble with Juliet in the past, but how did *you* run into her?

WILL

Her.

RUTH

Him.

DORI

Me. We met yesterday by the river! She said she was out there to practice her faith, and I got excited because I was too. She was busy right then so I asked if she might want to go out this morning, and next thing you know I'm stuck in a water shop learning how very, very different our faiths are!

SUMMONER

I see. The way she tells it, she recruited an apprentice into her new practice, but your cowardice resulted in betrayal. You "insulted" her time and trust.

RUTH

(SNORTS)

They went on *one* date!

SUMMONER

Now you see the dilemma my coven has been facing since she began practicing in the area. First, she would not learn as we taught her, then she insisted we were practicing incorrectly, and now, as far as she is concerned, anyone who is not on her side is against her.

WILL

And worthy of cursing.

DORI

Which is one hundred percent what she's planning on doing to me. So, will you help me?

SUMMONER

Perhaps. But something else interests me more at present. (TO WILL)
Will, why do the dead find comfort in you?

WILL

W-What?

SUMMONER

The spirits in this room have clustered around you.

WILL

(UPSET/UNCOMFORTABLE)

Could you... tell them to not?

RUTH

And why would you say that? There's no such thing as ghosts.

SUMMONER

(STILL TO WILL) What's your community?

WILL

My...? You mean my town? Silver Falls?

SUMMONER

Oh. Yes, the ones who found purpose and rebuilt their homes and lives after the fires. Are you sure you don't want a drink? It's only honey and some herbs. It will help the spirits and me to...
(COYLY) ...connect to you.

DORI

(Clears Throat) We're fine, again, thank you. But... do I have any special spirits around me? Anything impressive, maybe?

SUMMONER

(FLATLY)

You wanted help with a curse?

DORI

Do you not like me? Is it because you know *my* community built a church? I've heard witches hate churches.

SOUND: RUTH SNORTS, THEN CLEARS HER THROAT.

WILL

Dori...

SUMMONER

If I disliked you, I wouldn't offer to carve you a bone.

WILL

That's... not the expression.

SUMMONER

It's not an expression.

**SOUND: THEY REACH INTO A NEARBY
BASIN OF LOOSE, RATTLEY BONES.**

SUMMONER (CONT'D)

Do you want a finger or a rib?

WILL

Where did you get those?

DORI

Is one more likely to save me from Juliet's curse?

SUMMONER

Let's get one thing clear: someone like Juliet is never going to cast successfully. She holds no favor from the Dark or Light.

RUTH

By the way, no one's actually explained what the Dark or Light is yet.

DORI

I assumed it was literal.

SUMMONER

Essentially.

WILL

No, really, those are a lot of bones to just *have*.

SUMMONER

These are all donated by former coven members, just as someday I will continue my involvement in the practice from beyond the grave. May I continue? (SMALL BEAT)
All that matters to you three is that this bone will be more of a boon for Dori than a ward against that foolish girl. (TO DORI)

Have anything to trade for it? It's fine if not, but think carefully before answering.

SOUND: DORI LIFTS HER WRIST WITH A JANGLE.

DORI
Uh, What about this?

WILL
Really, Dori?

DORI
Stop condescending.

(TO SUMMONER)
It's a token of love from family. The person who made definitely wants to keep me safe.

SUMMONER Certainly.

SOUND: DORIAN GIVES THE BRACELET.

SUMMONER (CONT'D) Back
in a moment.

SOUND: THE SUMMONER EXITS.

WILL
Remind me not to get you anything for your birthday.

DORI
(TENSE, UNTHINKINGLY)
You won't have to. I'll be dead.

WILL
(SNORTS)
For someone who doesn't believe in curses, you're real scared of this one.

DORI
Nope! I know my faith protects me from nonsense like this.

SUMMONER (OFF)

What was that? Should I stop what I'm doing?

DORI

NO! no no

RUTH

Dorian... Why don't you stop fidgeting and sit down?

DORI

That's probably a good idea.

SOUND: DORI SITS BETWEEN THEM.

WILL

Listen, I've seen you do plenty of things I don't understand. Like pray inside of shrubs, or put basil leaves in literally everything you own — but I don't judge you for it.

RUTH

And I may be sceptical, but... I feel like the Summoner is shooting straight with us. They're genuinely trying to help out, and who am I to say there's not something legit in that?

WILL

Exactly. Some people have different beliefs.

RUTH

And not everybody *needs* to believe the same thing.

DORI

Right... Buuuut what if you categorically know the other person is wrong?

SOUND: WILL/RUTH LAUGH.

DORI (CONT'D)

Seriously! That's what makes it scary! How can you interact with someone whose entire worldview is completely skewed and they don't even know it? And — And what if... the witches *have* got something, *too*? If there *is* a "Dark and Light," what if me getting involved with this stuff has repercussions on *my* church, my faith? I was warned not to stray from purity!

RUTH
(GRINNING)

Oh! Well, you——

WILL
——Ruth, don't you dare. Dori, take a breath. Nothing bad is happening right now. It's okay to make your own decisions and explore new things. You're safe, Dori. **(BEAT)** Do you want to leave?

DORI
I don't know!

WILL
Can we do anything?

DORI
No, I'm —— I'm okay. I really just want the Summoner to get back out here so we can get the help we came for.

WILL
Then we wait.

SOUND: A BEAT LATER, THE SUMMONER RETURNS AND HANDS DORI A BONE.

SUMMONER
Here you are.

DORI
Oh. Okay. Holding bone. Thank you, um, Summoner.

SUMMONER
I can take it back.

DORI
No, no! I said thank you!

SUMMONER
Of course. Now, I've helped you as far as I care to. The rest of your journey is your own.

DORI

Wait! One last thing, please. Do you know where Juliet might have gone?

SUMMONER

Before she smashed my favorite candlabra, I believe she said something about Eddy Street.

RUTH

Oh, I know where that is.

DORI

Me too! And I bet I know what she's doing there.

SUMMONER

It's not hard to guess, no.

WILL

What's on Eddy street?

RUTH

It's a——

DORI

——The next step in our unfolding mystery! Ready?

SUMMONER

One moment —— I'd like to speak privately with Will.

RUTH

(SUSPICIOUS) Why?

WILL

It's fine. I'll meet you both outside.

**SOUND: RUTH AND DORI RELUCTANTLY
EXIT.**

SUMMONER

You feel out of place with them, don't you?

WILL

No. What?

SUMMONER

I don't mean any offense. Only that you carry yourself differently than your friends. You seem more grounded. (SMALL BEAT.)

Well, regardless, I didn't mention this because Dori seemed liable to panic, but it's best if someone is prepared: there was no way for me to help her block a curse. Proper psychic wards take time to construct. I doubt it will happen, but if she *is* cursed, then I can help. Look out for headaches, rashes, or severe bad luck. It's actually easier to react to a curse than it is to prepare against one. In the meantime, I carved her the sigil of common sense. She seems long odds, but maybe it'll help.

WILL

Okay. Thank you.

SUMMONER

Thank you for being reasonable with her so that I didn't have to be.

WILL

I thought you wanted to talk to me alone because of what you said earlier. Was any of that real, about me and the spirits?

SUMMONER

So you do know something about it. Yes, of course it's real. It's obvious to me. We allow several spirits in the house, and since the moment you stepped inside, they were all singularly drawn to you. Ellie — usually she wails, but right now she's utterly content. Why does that unnerve you?

WILL

...Can you ask them to go?

SUMMONER

They'll stay here when you leave, don't worry. And they won't harm you unless——

WILL

(SUDDENLY BREAKING DOWN)

——No, I'm not worried about that.

I don't *want* this stuff to follow me. I don't want to be ruled by it. I can't keep living with this stuff in my head. I need it to let go of me. Please. Can you help?

**SOUND: THE SUMMONER OPENS A CABINET
AND GIVES A NECKLACE TO WILL.**

SUMMONER

Take this necklace. Wear it every day, but take it off and put it back on again before you fall asleep.

(DOING IT FOR HIM)

Loop the cord twice around your neck like this as you picture a warm light glowing protectively over you. Just you, nothing else in sight. Okay?

WILL

I don't have anything to trade you for it.

SUMMONER

It's a gift.

WILL

It'll help?

SUMMONER

I hope so. Sincerely. Feel free to come back any time, and maybe we could talk again... And also share a drink?

SCENE 5

**(EXT. - THE COVEN HOUSE, AFTERNOON. DORIAN AND RUTH
WAITING ON WILL, DORIAN STILL VERY ANTSY.)**

DORIAN

I'm just saying, if they see me messing around with this kind of stuff, it will definitely get back to my family! We have to take care of this fast.

RUTH

Just tell them it's not your fault.

DORIAN

Isn't it my fault though? I'm not supposed to be dating! I knew that!

SOUND: THE HOUSE DOOR OPENS.

RUTH

Yea, but you could still——

DORIAN

——Shhh! He's coming!

SOUND: WILL MEETS THEM ON THE LAWN.

DORIAN (CONT'D)

So? What was that all about?

WILL

They were... asking me on a date.

SOUND: RUTH CROONS.

DORIAN

They——?! What?! What did you say?

WILL

(HALF-JOKING, DISMISSIVE) That's private.

DORIAN

Oh... Okay.

(SMALL BEAT.)

WILL

Really? That's it? You're not begging for details?

DORIAN

You've already told me that, your dating life is private. I won't press.

WILL

Right. I did say that.

(BEAT.)

RUTH

So... Eddy Street?

SCENE 6

(EXT. - EDDY STREET, AFTERNOON. A REMOTE STREET DEVOID OF MUCH ACTIVITY.)

RUTH

Are you sure you know where you're going, Dorian?

DORIAN

Yeah! Up ahead. I went here with some people from class.

RUTH

Oh. We thought of different things when the Summoner said Eddy Street.

DORIAN

Huh? What did you think of?

RUTH

(CAGEY) No, you're probably right. Lead on.

DORIAN

Ok. Here we are!

SOUND: THEY ALL STOP IN FRONT OF A BUILDING. WITHIN, POOL BALLS CLACK DISTANTLY.

WILL

It's a bar.

DORIAN

Yeah! There's nothing else to do on this street, so she's gotta be here. So now we pop inside this nice, public place, buy her a drink, and with my new anti-magic charm——

RUTH

——Not what the Summoner said it does——

DORIAN

——We can safely talk it out like you said is always best!

WILL

No.
(SIGHS) Sorry. I can't go in there.

DORIAN

Why not?

WILL

Because if I do, I might drink.

DORIAN

Oh, you don't... oh I'm sorry. I assumed.

RUTH

(THROWN) Will...?

WILL

Yeah. I can't. There was some time where I... didn't have control.
Anyway, it's still hard to be around that stuff.

RUTH

I didn't know you went through that.

WILL

But there's nothing stopping you two from going in and——

DORIAN

——No. We're not going anywhere without you. It's okay. We're done here.

WILL

But... we walked all the way out here. What about Juliet? The 'curse'?

DORIAN

Isn't real. Or, even if it is, my bone protects me now.

WILL

Dorian, that's not what The Summoner——

DORIAN

——Anyway. Enough about random people. Let's get you back to your precious little library.

WILL

Honestly, I'd rather get home. It's been a long day.

DORIAN

I'm sorry. That's exactly the opposite of what I promised.

WILL

Stop apologizing. Don't make it weird please.

DORIAN

It's not weird. Right, Ruth?

RUTH

Of course not. I think it just caught us off guard *because* we had no idea. Not that you *had* to tell us, but...

DORIAN

Right! But, is that why you don't go to parties?

WILL

I don't enjoy parties.

DORIAN

Come on, you must have once.

WILL

No. You should be careful about how you talk to people, Dorian. I understand your curiosity, but someone else might not.

RUTH

Maybe we should just drop it. Stop in somewhere else? Get some dinner?

DORIAN

It's, like, what? Four o' clock?

RUTH

Who cares? My treat! I'm starving all of a sudden.

DORIAN

Okay, Will, I take it back. One of us is definitely being weird.

WILL

Yeah, Ruth, what's up?

RUTH

When the Summoner said 'Eddy Street' I immediately thought of the graveyard over there.

WILL

I mean – it's the best place to find a witch.

DORIAN

(NERVOUS)

I think you're right. Are we going in there?

RUTH

Are we? I thought will wanted to go home.

WILL

Screw it, we've come this far. Lets go.

SOUND: THEY APPROACH THE GRAVEYARD.

SCENE 7

(EXT. - GRAVEYARD, CONTINUOUS, AS RUTH, DORIAN, AND WILL TREK BETWEEN THE GRAVES, SPREAD OUT A LITTLE FROM EACH OTHER. RUTH AND WILL ARE CLOSER TOGETHER.)

RUTH (NARRATING)

I don't know who Will did that for. Was he trying to prove a point? Or was he already fond enough of Dorian to do this for him?

DORIAN (NARRATING)

I don't know how Will did it. He was kind, he was strong, and he'd never had even an ounce of faith. Following me into witch's trials and graveyards. All I could think of in that moment was how thrilled he would look when my spirit threw open his doorway to Paradise — because if any outsider would be worthy, *he* would.

WILL (NARRATING)

Here's why I did it: Home was calling. And I was always weak for home. I'd come when Doctor Avery called, when Marshall called, and

now the graveyard itself was calling. If I couldn't shake that lung-deep ache reeling me in, at least I could return nerveless, head held high, as warden.

“We are the Trees...” RUTH

What...? WILL

“Our leafy something glade——” RUTH

“——*Dark and leafy* glade
Bands the bright earth with——” WILL

WILL RUTH
“——softer mysteries.” “——softer mysteries.” Yeah.

That was nice. What was that? DORIAN

I-It's a poem. WILL

One day you'll see the tattoo. RUTH

The wh——?! DORIAN

——I do *not* have a tattoo. WILL

On his ass. Every verse. RUTH

SOUND: WILL LAUGHS, LOSING TENSION.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Come on. It's, what? A long, uninterrupted field full of human remains. There's plenty of other stuff around, too. Trees! Don't have nearly as many of these in Silver Falls. Bugs. We did have those. Clouds, the sunset — and... a witch sitting by a gravestone ten rows up.

SOUND: THEY GATHER, SOFTLY.

DORIAN

Look at that little magic kit, that's — that's curse stuff! She's totally doing a ritual! Where's my bone?

WILL

Relax, Dori. Now's your chance. Appeal to her better nature.

DORIAN

...No. No, I have a better idea. Kiss me!

SOUND: RUTH CHOKES.

WILL

(BRIEFLY SHORT-CIRCUITS)

Dorian, that is not a good idea. I'm your roommate, for one thing. For another, if Juliet sees, that will only provoke—

DORIAN

—No, no, it's true love!

SOUND: WILL STAMMERS, INCOHERENT.

DORIAN (CONT'D)

No, I'm right! She can't be mad at someone who's found true love! This is the way out!

WILL

Until she sees you on a date with someone else—

JULIET (OFF)

—YOU!

DORIAN

Please! Kiss me!

WILL

I-I...

RUTH

(GIDDY) If you can't, I will!

SOUND: RUTH YANKS DORI INTO A KISS.

JULIET

(AS SHE RUNS UP)

Dori, you lying, sneaking — WHAT?! What are you—?! How dare you?!

WILL

(WEAKLY) I said that would happen.

DORIAN

Catch me.

SOUND: DORIAN SWOONS INTO RUTH'S ARMS. JULIET FUMBLES WITH SMALL INGREDIENT VIALS. SHE MIXES EACH INTO HER HAND AS SHE SAYS IT.

JULIET

Three drops impure water, to latch to an impure soul....

DORIAN

(SICKENINGLY SAPPY)

Oh, Ruth! If only our love did not cause such pain! I am wracked with guilt over those we have hurt!

SOUND: RUTH SNICKERS.

WILL

Dorian.

JULIET

Bloodied sands, to match the hurt you've caused...

RUTH

Oh, hey, Juliet, whatcha playing with those vials for?

DORIAN

But you make me so incredibly *happy*, my darling! How could anyone fault me for that?

JULIET

Mule hair, for a stubborn ass...!

WILL

Dorian, I think she's cursing you.

DORIAN

WHAT?

WILL

Juliet is this really the place?

JULIET

(OBSTINATE)

And — and — and grave dirt! To call the worst punishment upon you. Death—!

WILL

—Oh, you better not!

SOUND: WILL STEPS FORWARD IN PROTEST AS JULIET RIPS A HANDFUL OF GRAVE SOIL FROM THE GROUND.

JULIET

Hey, get back!

DORIAN

Will!

SOUND: JULIET THROWS THE 'CURSE.'
ALL THAT MUCK HITS WILL IN THE FACE. HE BLOWS IT CLEAR OF HIS LIPS, MILDLY INCONVENIENCED.

RUTH

...That's *some* witchcraft all right.

JULIET

It *isn't* witchcraft. It's my *own* curse method! And you ruined it! It was supposed to be for Dori, but you scared me!

WILL

I was trying to stop you. This is vandalism. At the *least*.

JULIET

Well, she forced my hand!

RUTH

Listen — did Dori do something real rude? Yeah. Did I help? Also Yes. But to be fair, you were pressuring her into worshipping you on the first date.

JULIET

I never pressured anyone!

RUTH

(LAUGHS)

I should have sprayed you with that hose! We wouldn't be here if you hadn't escalated it!

WILL

Let's be fair to Juliet — Dorian *did* make a mistake. More than one. It's kind of his thing. But he also helps his friends beyond anyone I've ever met. Yes, he's flawed, but is he really worth all this?

DORIAN

Hey...

JULIET

(GENUINELY DEVASTATED)

She crawled out of a bathroom window and left me sitting at our table like an idiot!

DORIAN

You're right! I'm sorry! And not just because you're doing a curse ritual on me. Here's the truth! Dating was supposed to be a fun way to pass the time at college. That's it! I didn't realize other — didn't realize you would get hurt. I mean, Will and Ruth tried to tell me, but I didn't get it. I do now. I should've been more considerate of your feelings from the start.

JULIET

“Feelings”? What makes you think I care what you think of me?

RUTH

Um.

JULIET

Just because you throw out some wimpy apology——! You can't——!
You don't——! People like you *never* get consequences. No, if I have
the power to curse someone, and I believe they should be cursed,
then nothing can stop me!

WILL

Well, in your error, you've cursed someone else entirely.

JULIET

You're no better! Three of you ganging up on me!

DORIAN

Juliet, I think we all just want to walk away from this.

JULIET

Oh, yeah? You think I'm stupid? If I let you go, you'll run off and do
the same thing to someone else!

DORIAN

No, I won't. Like I said, I'm not *supposed* to be dating. So I've decided
to stop.

RUTH

(ASIDE, FAST) By the way, he's a good
kisser.

WILL

I -What!?

DORIAN

I have other things to focus on. *My* church. Remember, I told you
about it?

JULIET

I don't think you did.

DORIAN

I definitely did.

RUTH

He definitely did.

JULIET

Why should I believe you?

DORIAN

How can I to prove it?

JULIET

...I have a way.

**SOUND: JULIET PULLS HER SKETCHBOOK
FROM HER BAG AND FLIPS TO A PAGE.**

DORIAN

(QUIETLY) Oh, not the sketchbook.

(NORMAL) Is that a tongue on fire?

JULIET

This is an oath sigil I created. Swear to me on this. *When* you break your oath, the page will burn, and I'll know what you did. Then, I'll ruin you with every power at my disposal. Got it?

SOUND: DORI HASTILY TAPS THE BOOK.

DORIAN

Okay, I swear, alright?

SOUND: JULIET SNAPS THE BOOK SHUT.

JULIET

Fine. I'll be thinking about you, Dori.

SOUND: JULIET HUFFS AND LEAVES.

RUTH

Alright, bring on the next witch, that was easy!

DORIAN

Don't even joke!

(SIGHS.)

You know, Will, your method of solving that involved saying some pretty mean stuff about me.

WILL

But I *also* complimented you plenty and absorbed your curse, so do me a favor and touch that bone of yours...

DORIAN

[stammering] Let's get home so I can make you a cleansing mask — not that I know anything about curse powder, but I've got an idea on what might help.

WILL

Basil leaves?

DORIAN

I'll never tell.

RUTH

Never dating again, huh?

DORIAN

Not as long as I live, Ruth.

RUTH

Shame.

**SOUND: RUTH AND WILL CHUCKLE.
DORIAN EVEN JOINS IN.**

SCENE 8

(INT. - THE DORM ROOM, LATER THAT EVENING. THE TRIO SIT IN A TRIANGLE ON THE FLOOR, COSMETICS SCATTERED ABOUT.)

SOUND: DORI SETS DOWN A TINY POT OF CREAM ON THE FLOOR.

DORIAN

Okay, Ruth, you're done. Don't move your face anymore. OH William?

WILL

'William'?

DORIAN

Just give me your face and stop complaining. Your skin is gonna feel so good after this.

**SOUND: DORI SWIPES CREAM OVER
WILL'S SKIN.**

RUTH

Is it supposed to... tingle?

DORIAN

Yes! That means it's working!

RUTH

How long do we leave this stuff on for?

DORIAN

(SIGHS)

I have a ton to teach you both about personal discovery. Once it firms up, you'll go in the bathroom and wash it off.

RUTH

You want me to walk down the hallway looking like this? Why wouldn't you tell me that before?

DORIAN

How did you think we were going to wash it off?

WILL

We might have some paper bags if you want.

RUTH

Uh-huh, face-sized paper bags, Will?

DORIAN

Alright, alright! Will, you're done. Whew! I'm starting to pity Mama when she had to step between me and Margaret.

RUTH

Huh... You know, you talk about “family” a lot, but I think that’s the first time I’ve heard you mention your mom.

DORIAN

Hm? It can’t be.

WILL

Me too. I’ve never heard you talk about her.

DORIAN

You must’ve! What kind of a girl doesn’t talk about his Mama?

RUTH

I know a girl who doesn’t talk about her father.

DORIAN

Well... Mama’s lovely. She writes for our church — prayers, Ned’s sermons, that kind of thing. Very prestigious. She and Daddy raised me and my sisters to perform personal discovery, like I was just saying. It’s one of our key conventions.

WILL

What else? What other kinds of things does your church believe in?

DORIAN

You really want to know?

(SMALL BEAT)

Well, we celebrate being human. The world’s a mess. Why are we even alive? None of that means we can write off today, or the people around us. So our prayer focuses on being the best version of ourselves, and all our goals are about... wanting a better world. Ruth, how’s your mask feel?

RUTH

That sounds——

DORIAN

——It’s firm! You can go wash up. Take a face towel.

SOUND: RUTH TAKES A TOWEL AND GOES.

DORIAN

Everything alright, Will?

WILL

Yea.

DORIAN

You sure? After everything today, you've seemed a little, I dunno, preoccupied. Did I - did I say thank you, by the way? Like, a real one?

WILL

You made me a face mask.

DORIAN

Yeah, but that's not the same thing. I want us to be close, Will. For real. I think you're great.

WILL

I—

DORIAN

—So that means you can tell me anything, and I'll listen.

WILL

Thanks, that's—

DORIAN

—Just call me an open book. Wait. No, an open ear. And you can be the open book. And I'll read.

WILL

(LAUGHS)

That wasn't a very good demonstration of listening.

DORIAN

Right, right. Sorry. I promise I'm trying.

WILL

No, I know. I'm not any kind of judge, but I can see it. You want to grow. You... take extremely misguided steps sometimes, but the core desire to have positive interactions is there.

DORIAN

You know, you talk funny.

(BEAT.)

No, it's nice, I mean. It's so proper. And I know proper speakers, I've seen what they can do to a room. You've got something like that in you. Like, I know that you're really thinking about what you're saying, and you mean it, and it makes me wanna listen.

WILL

Thank you.

BEAT.

DORIAN

Will, what do you believe in?

WILL

What do you mean?

DORIAN

Like. What do you think about life and stuff?

WILL

You might not like my answer.

DORIAN

I'm ready.

WILL (HE SIGHS, HEAVILY)

Life is...

Coincidence. A matter of timing. The meaning we find in connection to each other is fabricated, and we can only ever survive one at a time.

DORIAN

That *is* sad, but maybe there's some truth in that.

WILL

Really?

DORIAN

We don't live in a pleasant world. Anybody can see that.

WILL

Still, you usually you find some positive spin on things.

DORIAN

This world is too big to be fixed for one person. That's why family is so important.

WILL

I don't think I've ever seen this side of you.

DORIAN

Well, maybe we both showed each other something real today. I like it when you're free with yourself.

WILL

I... appreciate how much you listen. I'm not used to talking this much.

DORIAN

We could talk like this more often. Unless, of course, you want to be *strictly roommates still*, in which case I completely underst—

WILL

(ANOTHER LAUGH) —That's not funny.

DORIAN

It's funny enough for you!

(BEAT. THEN, NERVOUSLY)

Hey, I know you said it's private... You don't have to answer — but are you going to go on that date with the Summoner?

WILL

Oh. Uh... no.

DORIAN

Oh. Cool.

SOUND: RUTH RE-ENTERS.

RUTH

What're we talking about?

DORI
The weather.

WILL
The news.

RUTH
Okay... Am I sleeping over?

DORI
Yes, please! Will, it's past time for you to rinse!

SOUND: WILL GOES OUT INTO THE HALLWAY. WE FOLLOW HIM AS HE STEPS INTO A BATHROOM, RUNS SOME WATER, AND RINSES HIS FACE.

WILL (NARRATING)
Dorian was... not perfect — I don't think anyone could argue that — but there was a kind of natural life to him I could not fathom. It was mesmerizing. One look at him, and that part of my brain shut nearly off. It was amazing, having met someone like him so soon after leaving home. Someone who looked and carried himself like he could never die. Someone I didn't worry about losing every time I lost sight of him.

Marshall. Ruth. Doctor Avery. Every other face I looked at while I was growing up. Would I walk in the door one day and find him crumpled over his crutches at the bottom of the stairs? Would I hear he was murdered last night by a father who snapped? Or that the stress had killed him halfway through a hospital shift? Would I happen across his collapsed corpse in the road because everyone is just *living* up until the moment they die?

No. With Dorian, there was just... peace. The saccharine kind, the kind that never got old because it was peace shared. I could still smell the herbs on my skin, and they'd be there again when I got back to the room — the room where, thanks to random chance, for one year, I would not feel alone. For all the show I made complaining about the scent, the living with him — I was lying. I already missed this.

SOUND: WILL UNCLASPS THE NECKLACE GIVEN TO HIM BY THE SUMMONER, UNWINDS IT, AND WINDS IT BACK AROUND HIS NECK AGAIN.

WILL

Twice around the neck. The past can't touch you.

SCENE 9

(INT. - DORM ROOM, THE SAME NIGHT, BUT MUCH LATER. WILL IS ASLEEP. RUTH AND DORIAN ARE NOT.)

SOUND: DORI TOSSES. AND TOSSES.

RUTH

Dori? You awake?

DORI

Sorry! I'll be quiet.

RUTH

No, you're not bothering me. I was thinking about what you said earlier.

DORI

I knew it. You want a nickname, too. I just don't know what to do with "Ruth." And are you sure you're okay on the fl——?

RUTH

——That is *not* it. I meant... your church. Not, like, the *church* part of it, but the self —— self...

DORIAN

Personal discovery?

RUTH

Yeah, that. I've been, maybe, thinking a lot about that recently, but not necessarily having a word for it. I mean, I don't get why you have *family* following you around, but... they've never *hurt* you or gotten involved in your business. They helped me that time.

DORIAN

And they only follow me around because I'm a little bit special.

RUTH

(SNORTS) In what way?

DORIAN

Um....Homeschooled. I was homeschooled. They make sure I'm adjusting. I trust them, but if *you* were interested in seeing some more of the church, you wouldn't have anybody like that to make you nervous. *Are you interested?*

RUTH

Maybe...

DORIAN

Really? Would you ever want to come down to Paradise Village?

RUTH

Paradise—— Yeah, I guess that checks out.

DORIAN

What do you mean?

RUTH

Dad and I travelled all over before we landed in Silver Falls. We never quite made it to "Paradise Village", though. There were... uh, rumors. Mixed reviews. Some people would say it was a terrible place.

(WITH AN AUDIBLE NOD TO HIM)

Others would say it was the best thing that ever happened to them. But Dad wasn't much of a gambler. Besides, he didn't——
(SNICKERS)

Well, he didn't trust the name, so we didn't press our luck.

DORIAN

Hm. Maybe *you'd* like it.

RUTH

I don't know. It was just a hypothetical.

DORIAN

I get it.

(BEAT.)

RUTH

Tell me more ?

[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 Moffatt.

To subscribe, view associated materials, or join our patreon, visit rustyquill.com

Rate and review us online, tweet us @TheRustyQuill, visit us on facebook

or mail us at mail@rustyquill.com.
Thanks for listening.

Neon Inkwell: The Pit Below Paradise 3 – A Grave Quest

Dorian once again attempts the world of dating, to mixed results. An unexpected first kiss and some heartfelt discussions of faith surround a comedy of errors.

This show contains recurring themes including:

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

Transcripts: <https://shorturl.at/pJQV7>

Showrunner Elizabeth Moffatt

Directed by Micah Rodriguez and Stephanie Resendes

Written by J Evelyn Gaskell

Produced by April Sumner

Executive Producers Alexander J Newall & April Sumner

Featuring

Ian RQ Slater as Dori/Dorian

Victoria Cheng as Ruth

Jenna Krasowski as Juliet

Catherine Rinella as Co-Worker

Lisa Pengov as Maxine

Lisa Stanley as Evelyn

Phi Hamens as Will

April Sumner as Church Mom

Alexander Bryan as Church Dad

Meg McKellar as Church Daughter

Corbeau Sandoval as Summoner

Dialogue Editor – Lowri Ann Davies and Nico Vettese

Sound Designer – Catherine Rinella

Mastering Editor – Catherine Rinella

Music by Sam Jones

Art by Guerrilla Communications

SFX attributions: CC-0: jrssandoval, temawas, Yuval, martinimeniscus, CastIronCarousel, Dlam1991, SpliceSound, aglinder, wibwob, deleted_user_2104797, csaszi, Anthousai, kyles, buzzatsea, SamuelGremaud, usamah, ThunderQuads, JonnyRuss01, xiwire, Nickh69, zepurple, Legnalegna55, Joao_Janz, TRP, krypaw, William020304, mateusboga, krgeorge, frenchiefiz, SholeColtis, TeamEnFil, EllipsenPark, TSP-Talk, Simonus18

CC-by-3.0: jymdavis, lonemonk, CUeckermann, PianoFarm

CC-by-NC 3.0: Silkyworm, BerduSmith, Cally06, CyrileneRossouw, sammycrerar98, 19991218

CC-by-4.0: BarkersPinhead, klankbeeld, pfranzen, pogmothoin, PeteBarry, Nagwense, FMAudio, theojt, everythingsounds, oliwoli, Triad330670, __bernicetredoux, pfranzen, jirgeth

CC-by-NC 4.0: jtn191, 170084, Idalize, timkahn, Nixi_Oodle, audiocoffee

OTHER: Soundly, Catherine Rinella

Support us on Patreon at <https://patreon.com/rustyquill>

Check out our merchandise available at <https://www.redbubble.com/people/RustyQuill/shop> and <https://www.teepublic.com/stores/rusty-quill>

Join our community:

WEBSITE: rustyquill.com

FACEBOOK: [facebook.com/therustyquill](https://www.facebook.com/therustyquill)

TWITTER: [@therustyquill](https://twitter.com/therustyquill)

REDDIT: [reddit.com/r/RustyQuill](https://www.reddit.com/r/RustyQuill)

EMAIL: mail@rustyquill.com

Neon Inkwell is a podcast distributed by Rusty Quill Ltd. and licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Share alike 4.0 International Licence.