**THE PIT BELOW PARADISE**

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**EPISODE 4**

**"DYING FAITH"**

**By J. Evelyn Gaskell Revised 9-30-23**

**[MUSIC]**

**ANNOUNCER**

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

**Episode Four – Dying Faith**

**[MUSIC]**

**SCENE 1**

**(INT. - THE DORM ROOM, MORNING. DORIAN SLEEPING, THE ONLY ONE THERE.)**

**SOUND: A RINGING BELL, NOT A**

**DOORBELL, SOUNDS OUTSIDE THE DOOR.**

**DORIAN Mmm...**

**SOUND: THE BELL AGAIN. DORIAN STIRS.**

# **DORIAN**

***Who* is...?**

**Ned? What are you doing here on a Satur—— I mean, please come in.**

# **NED**

**Good morning, Dorian. Or is it Dori now?**

**DORIAN   
Oh, I like both. You talked to my mom?**

# **NED**

**We spoke yesterday afternoon. She was looking for advice on how best to pray ...**

**DORIAN**

**“How best to pray..” Wh-what do you mean?**

**NED**

**You haven't been ringing your bell, Dorian.**

# **DORIAN**

**(CONCERNED HE MISHEARD) Umm...**

# **DORIAN (CONT'D)**

**Oh, the doll! I thought you —— nevermind. Yeah, you know, actually a ton of people have been coming by with gifts like that. There was this rattly bracelet and a little pen and...**

# **NED**

**(ICY)**

**How kind. They’re showing their faith in you.**

**(BEAT.)**

**You’re changing, Dori. I’d hoped you’d prove resilient, like you promised.**

# **DORIAN**

**(WOUNDED) I...**

# **NED**

**I sent you Maxine and Evelyn so you would always have family. People you could trust. Why didn’t you use them?**

**DORIA  
I —— I did.**

# **NED**

**Why didn’t you *listen* to them? I know they’ve been trying to keep you on the right path.**

**(BEAT.) Do you serve your family?**

**DORIAN (SLIGHT HESITATION) Yes.**

**NED**

**Don't think. Just answer. Do you have what it takes——**

# **DORIAN NED**

**——Yes. ——to do your job?**

**DORIAN (NO HESITATION) Yes.**

# **NED**

**Then get dressed and be outside in two minutes.**

**SCENE 2**

**(EXT. - PARKING LOT, MORNING. DORIAN NEARS NED’S CAR, WHERE NED, PAULETTE, AND EVELYN STAND WAITING.)**

**DORIAN Mama?**

**PAULETTE Hi, honey.**

**SOUND: HE RUSHES TO HER. THEY HUG.**

**DORIAN What’s going on? Am I really in trouble?**

# **PAULETTE**

**What *is* going on, sweetie? Evelyn says you haven’t been praying, you’ve been mixing with the outsider kids——**

# **DORIAN**

**——Mama, Mama, Mama. Hold on a second. You told me to blend in.**

**PAULETT No one told you could date!**

# **EVELYN**

**And you knew that, Dorian. But you chose to ignore it.**

**DORIAN I’m not hurting anyone!**

**NED Not yet.**

# **PAULETTE**

**You’re twisting my heart, baby. I’m a mess of worry these days. *One* stray thought is all it takes to start someone off their path.**

# **DORIAN**

**Not *me*, though. You know me! Faith like a blizzard’s got snowflakes, remember?**

**EVELYN Until you stop praying.**

# **PAULETTE**

**Now *that* is not like you, Dorian Charles.**

**DORIAN Mama...**

# **PAULETTE**

**And that is why Ned and I have decided you’re coming home.**

**DORIAN Wait, what?**

**EVELYN Why so alarmed?**

# **DORIAN**

**B-Because it’s so sudden! I can’t just disappear! That’s the opposite of blending in. My friends will——**

# **NED**

**——A family emergency ought to do the trick. Tell them you’ve got an uncle who’s passing.**

**DORIAN Wait, then... I’m coming back?**

# **PAULETTE**

**Of course you are. As long as there’s no reason for concern. You haven’t visited, not once, and *that’s* why you’re struggling. So, from now on, Evelyn will come to pick you up on Friday afternoons and drop you back off on Sunday nights.**

**DORIAN But that’s all my free time——!**

**PAULETTE   
—Are you arguing with me?**

**DORIAN No.**

**(UNSURE BEAT.)**

**But Mama, Ned, you don’t understand. I’ve been... starting their discoveries. For the church. Ruth especially seems real interested. I haven’t *struggled* with anything. I’m bringing in more people to join us!**

**(BEAT.)**

**EVELYN**

**If that’s true, why didn’t you tell me before now?**

# **PAULETTE**

**Evelyn, do not accuse my child of lying. This is good news.**

**Isn’t it, Ned?**

**NED Certainly. Go on, Miss Dori.**

# **DORIAN**

**Um, yeah! So! I’ve been talking to them both... about personal discovery, some of the tenets. It wasn’t too long ago that Ruth and I stayed up until, oh, two? Three in the morning? Talking about her maybe attending a workshop or——**

# **PAULETTE**

**——Well, this is perfect! You’ve got to invite them over!**

**DORIAN Really?**

# **PAULETTE**

**Absolutely. Harriet’s running a guided meditation this afternoon. It’s the perfect chance for newcomers to get involved!**

# **DORIAN**

**Alright. I mean, it’s short notice, so I can’t make any promises, but... if it’s really okay, then of course I’ll invite them. I’ll go find them now.**

# **DORIAN (NARRATING)**

**And I meant *almost* every word. But could you blame me for throwing up a shield? No one in the church had ever done more than give me a stern look before, and now suddenly they were dragging me out of bed to ambush me in a parking lot? I didn’t feel any different from the Dorian who had left Paradise village a few short months ago —— well, except for that one thing.**

**Was I a bad friend to consider using Ruth and Will to calm my family? I *hadn’t* intended on bringing either of them to the church, not how I was implying, but if it kept my family’s trust in me firm, wouldn’t that be alright?**

**SCENE 3**

**(INT.- RUTH’S ROOM, A LITTLE WHILE LATER.)**

# **RUTH**

**They woke you up, so you had to wake *me* up?**

**DORI**

**You said you wanted to visit.**

# **RUTH**

**I mean, I have thought about it more, but this is pretty sudden. Have you talked to Will?**

**DORI**

**Not yet. He usually spends Saturday mornings in the library.**

# **RUTH**

**Are we trash students? Eugh Nevermind. My only thing is if I’m going, I’m *not* committing.**

# **DORI**

**No, of course not! No one comes in like that. You try it out a little and decide as you go. And no matter what, you’re still my friend.**

# **RUTH**

**I *do* want to change. I'm tired of being exhausted and... I don't know... scared all the time. Do you think they can help me with that?**

**DORI**

**Ruth, absolutely! You’ll come, then?**

# **RUTH**

**Sure. But do you want me to drive so your family doesn’t have to keep waiting on us?**

**Scene 4**

# **INT - LIBRARY, ANOTHER SHORT WHILE LATER. DORI AND RUTH SIT AT WILL’S TABLE.)**

**WILL   
So... you’ve both already decided to go.**

# **RUTH**

**I mean, I can’t *not* meet the people who are paying for my college.**

**DORI   
And I can’t disobey my Mama.**

# **WILL**

**But if your uncle is sick, wouldn’t that make this a time for family? Why would they want Ruth and I there?**

# **DORI**

**(SHRUGGING)**

**I asked. We’ve got the space, and there’ll be plenty for you to do all weekend. I just wouldn’t be surprised if I’ve got to step away now and again for, er, family time.**

**(BEAT.)**

**WILL Well, if you’ve both decided.**

# **RUTH**

**Will, we’re not trying to, like, go off without you, but you don’t *have* to come.**

**DORI You do seem a bit reluctant.**

# **WILL**

**I don’t like going new places.**

**(SIGHS)**

**But you’re special, Dori, so I’ll make an exception.**

# **DORIAN (NARRATING)**

**So... I had them. But now what if my family somehow *didn’t* like them? What if my only reason to stay at school became the reason I wasn’t allowed back? What if these two worlds really couldn’t mix? What if one broke the other?**

**Scene 5**

# **- RUTH'S CAR, EARLY AFTERNOON, AS SHE DRIVES HERSELF, WILL, AND DORIAN UP THE ROAD INTO PARADISE VILLAGE.)**

**RUTH Are those market stalls?**

**DORIAN**

**Kind of? We don’t really use money around here.**

# **RUTH**

**Hey, food’s more valuable anyway.**

**(BEAT.)**

**I’m not going to lie, I expected there to be, you know, a *church*.**

**DORIAN It’s over there.**

# **RUTH**

**The... tent? What if it rains?**

**DORIAN It’s a tent.**

**(TO WILL) Will, you’re quiet.**

**WILL Yes.**

**DORIAN**

**What do you think? Are you excited?**

# **WILL**

**I’m interested in seeing where you came from. It ought to explain a lot. (BEAT.) I'm excited.**

**DORIAN That’s the spirit!**

**RUTH Is *that* it?**

**WILL**

**It can't be, that house is huge.**

# **DORIAN**

**No, that's where Ned lives. We're going all the way to the end of the road. You literally can’t end up anywhere else, so you will know when you get there.**

**RUTH**

**Why does “Ned” get a big house?**

# **DORIAN**

**I don’t know, why does the dean get the biggest office? You know, you’re missing some valuable basil action out the window.**

# **RUTH**

**I’m watching where I’m going! Unless you want to hit a tree.**

**SOUND: THE ROAD TURNS ROUGH,**

**BUMPIER, AS THEY ENTER FOREST.**

**WILL How tall is this mountain?**

# **DORIAN**

**Quit complaining and get ready!**

**WILL (GRUMBLING) *I* was just asking...**

**(BEAT.)**

**DORIAN  
Okay okay, okay! Da-da-da-da! My house.**

**RUTH How much land do you *have*?**

# **DORIAN**

**I mean, is any land really *anybody’s*? But there’s no one else living out here if that’s what you mean.**

**RUTH For how far?**

# **DORIAN**

**For all of it. The only thing past that forest is a set of cliffs.**

**RUTH Whoa. Should we go diving?**

# **WILL**

**(SCOFFS)**

**Maybe not. Are we getting out?**

**SOUND: DOORS OPEN. RUTH EXITS.**

**DORIAN STAYS, TWISTS IN HIS SEAT.**

# **DORIAN**

**Will, hang on. Are you sure you want to be here?**

**(BEAT.)**

# **WILL**

**Sorry. I know my temper’s not the best. Especially not when things go off routine.**

**DORIAN**

**I get it. We’ll get you set up with a good book in no time.**

# **SOUND: THEY EXIT THE CAR. THE**

**SCREEN DOOR ON THE HOUSE SQUEAKS OPEN AS DORIAN'S PARENTS EMERGE.**

# **PAULETTE**

**Hiii!!! Oh, it's so nice to meet Dori's friends! How was the drive up? Not too bad I hope?**

# **RUTH**

**Oh, it was nothing!**

# **PAULETTE**

**You must be Ruth! I'm Paulette, but you can call me whatever makes you feel comfortable. Are you a hugger?**

# **RUTH**

**(NO) Sure!**

**PAULETTE**

**And Will! Dori's told us so much about you. Hug?**

**WILL**

# **(OVER THE HUG)**

**Well, one thing makes more sense already.**

**PAULETTE Are you kids hungry?**

**(TO YURI)**

**Oh, Yuri darling, why don't you show Ruth where to park?**

**YURI This way. All set?**

**SOUND: DOGS BARKING.**

**MARGARET (OFF)**

**Ugh! Lily!**

**SOUND: TWO DOGS COME CHARING AROUND THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE, MARGARET AND LILY RACING AFTER THEM.**

**LILY**

**It’s not my fault! You said they’d already been out!**

**RUTH**

**Whoa!**

**SOUND: RUTH CATCHES BOTH DOGS BY THE COLLARS. THEY RELENT.**

**RUTH (CONT’D)**

**Lucky you keep collars on them.**

**LILY**

**I’ve got their leashes!**

**PAULETTE**

**What in the world happened, you two?! Those dogs could’ve** **bowled someone over.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **LILY**  **Margaret said to open the kennel! We were going inside to clean it —— yes, it is true —— and the dogs were jumping, so I thought we had to tie them off first —— no, all you said was they were just excited, so I opened it, and they went berserk!** | **MARGARET**  **Lily wasn’t paying attention —— No, that’s not true! Obviously they were going to run out and go off so I assumed you would help me get them under control instead of throwing the door wide open —— well, obviously they were—** |

**PAULETTE**

**——Both of you, enough! What I hear is the kennel still needs cleaning, so take the dogs from Ruth and go.**

**MARGARET**

**You don’t believe me, do you? Whether it’s Dorian or Lily, you always take someone else’s side!**

**PAULETTE**

**Margaret, please, we have company——**

**SOUND: MARGARET STORMS INTO THE**

**HOUSE. A BEAT.**

**LILY**

**Forgive her. She’s tired today. Sorry for disturbing you all. I’ll handle the kennel, Mama.**

**SOUND: LILY GOES, TOO. PAULETTE**

**ALSO BACKS OFF.**

**PAULETTE**

**Excuse that little display. I’ll go check on Margaret.**

**YURI**

**Strong reflexes. You’ve got lots of energy?**

# **RUTH**

**Me? However much I need to get by.**

**YURI Are you any good with goats?**

**RUT I don't... know?**

**YURI   
I’ll show you the pasture later**

**PAULETTE**

**Now, now, let them at least get settled, darling.**

**WILL**

**Oh, yeah. Where are we going to sleep?**

**DORIAN**

**We can share my room! Come on, I'll show you.**

**SCENE 6**

**(INT. - THE RANCH HOUSE, SHORTLY AFTERWARD.)**

**SOUND: DORIAN LEADS RUTH AND WILL UP A SET OF STAIRS.**

# **DORIAN**

**So, through there’s the kitchen. Bathroom’s this door. And my bedroom’s upstairs.**

# **RUTH**

***Oh wait.* There’s a baby photo. Will, give me your glasses. I need to inspect every inch.**

# **DORIAN**

**Ok, but that means Will and I get first dibs on sleeping arrangements.**

**RUTH Fine! I’m coming.**

# **DORIAN (NARRATING)**

**I didn’t realize how much I’d missed that room until I stepped over the threshold. Everything inside it was a symbol of love: the rugs, woven and dragged up two flights of stairs. The matching cushions and drapes. The bed, newly made, covers washed fresh for my arrival. All the things on the shelves and the shelves themselves —— I was home.**

# **RUTH**

**Oh my God, Dori, you didn’t tell us that you were genuinely spoiled... This room is huge.**

# **DORIAN**

**It used to be the attic. Anyway, this is the bed. Air any issues now.**

**WILL Three of us in one bed?**

# **RUTH**

**I mean… It's big. As long as you both shower, I don't see why not.**

**DORIAN Great! I get the middle!**

# **RUTH**

**(SNORTS)**

**Sure. Now, I guess I'm meeting a goat or something?**

# **DORIAN**

**If my dad is letting you in with his goats already, then he definitely trusts you.**

# **RUTH**

**Thanks, Dori.**

**Now, you two leave this door open or else.**

**DORIAN**

**Oh yea, ha ha we will!**

**SOUND: RUTH LEAVES. A BRIEFLY LOADED SILENCE. WILL PERUSES A BOOKSHELF.**

**DORIAN   
So... will this work as your secret hideaway while you’re here?**

**WILL Yes. Are these your books?**

# **DORIAN**

**Yeah, feel free to take a look. I know there’s not many. You brought your own, right?**

**(BEAT.) Will? Will?**

# **WILL**

**(JOLTS) Sorry —— that’s my book.**

**DORIAN Huh?**

# **WILL**

**The nature poetry collection. Mary Colborne-Veel, Matthew Arnold... It’s the same book. In *much* better condition.**

**SOUND: DORI JOINS HIM.**

# **DORIAN**

**I doubt I ever even opened it. Take it.**

**WILL What?**

# **DORIAN**

**Your copy’s all beat up. You practically store it in a safe. Take mine, I want you to have it.**

**(A LONG BEAT.)**

# **DORIAN (CONT’D)**

**You haven’t been this quiet since the day we moved in.**

**WILL I don’t know what to say.**

# **DORIAN**

**Say whatever’s in your head.**

**SOUND: WILL TAKES THE BOOK.**

# **WILL**

**Sometimes, I think of you when I read this one: (FLIPS TO A PAGE)**

**“The Unattainable, by Ruby Archer**

**“She treads the mystic trail**

**That points to yonder peak;**

**Her raptured eyes to the morning skies A world of homage speak.**

**“The sunshine wanders down,**

**Half drowsed in dreams of mist,**

**And wakes the trees with his breath of breeze**

**To a sense of something missed...”**

**SOUND: DORI ABRUPTLY CLOSES THE BOOK.**

**DORIAN Stop.**

**WILL Sorry. That was...**

# **DORIAN**

**No. It’s not that. I mean, yes, but I should probably —— I mean, we should probably —— my Mama is probably——**

**WILL   
——Yeah, probably.**

**SCENE 7**

**(EXT. - MEDITATION TENT, AFTERNOON. A CROWD OF PARISHIONERS ARE MILLING ABOUT, PREPARING TO SETTLE. HARRIET AND A WORKER STAND BEHIND A FOLD-OUT TABLE WITH DRINKS LAID OUT. RUTH, DORI, AND WILL ARE ENTERING.)**

# **RUTH**

**And we were goat-proofing this little, little tree, and a bunch of the goats were *also* so little, and your dad is really fun to work with! He doesn’t try to chat, he just cares about getting stuff done. I was holding up some of the fence stuff and he goes, “Sturdy arms.” You’re damn right, sturdy arms!**

**(HAPPY SIGH)**

**I am so glad we came. Thank you, Dori. Also, do you guys do *anything* inside?**

**DORI Not prayer.**

# **WILL**

**(SOUR)**

**I thought this was meditation.**

# **DORI**

**Which is a step down from prayer, yes, but they follow a lot of the same principles. I’m glad you had fun, Ruth.**

**SOUND: A NEARBY PARISHIONER, ZOE, STOPS IN HER TRACKS.**

**ZOE *Dori*? Back from college?**

# **DORI**

**Hi, Zoe! These are my friends, W—— Ruth and Will. They’ve never done this before.**

# **ZOE**

**Welcome! We’re so lucky to have you. Have you stopped by the supplement table yet?**

**RUTH What’s that?**

# **ZOE**

**(UNSURE) Well, it’s, uh——**

**DORI (LAUGHS POLITELY) ——No, go ahead!**

**ZOE It’s a part of prayer.**

# **DORI**

**(QUICKLY) Meditation.**

# **ZOE**

**Right. Or prayer, or any activity where people might want to feel closer to each other. Harriet, over there by the table——**

**DORI**

**——She’s going to be leading the meditation.**

# **ZOE**

**Right. And so she’s prepared a little drink for us all to share beforehand called a supplement. I love it, I think it’s so nice.**

**WILL ...What’s in it?**

**ZOE Not sure.**

**(SHE SNIFFS HER CUP.) Smells basil-y!**

**RUTH Huh! Basil? Really?**

**DORI**

# **(POINTED, TO RUTH)**

***Thanks*, Zoe. Would you mind if we sat with you? Maybe you and Ruth could pick out our seats.**

**ZOE Absolutely! Right this way.**

**SOUND: RUTH AND ZOE GO OFF. THERE’S AN AWKWARD BEAT.**

# **DORI**

**Will... About back at the house——**

**WILL   
——That’s the table?**

**SOUND: THEY WALK OVER TO HARRIET’S TABLE, STIFFLY.**

# **HARRIET**

**Ah, Dorian, you made it. This must be one of your friends. I thought your mother had mentioned two would be joining us. I have handouts prepared.**

**DORI Hi, Harriet. Yes, they——**

**WILL**

**——I don’t know if I’m joining. What’s in these drinks?**

# **HARRIET**

**The primary component is basil leaves, for their intellectual enhancement.**

**WILL**

**What are the other components?**

**HARRIET**

**Nothing dangerous, if that’s what you’re worried about.**

**DORI**

**No, Harriet, he really needs to know. You can tell him, dietary stuff.**

# **HARRIET**

**Well, whatever diet he’s working with, it’s only a small sip. Surely, it won’t affect——**

**WILL**

**——Is there any alcohol in this?**

# **HARRIET**

**(RELUCTANT)**

**Well, yes. It’s a relaxant. It helps with the meditation.**

**SOUND: WILL SIGHS.**

**DORI**

**Will, I’m sorry, I didn’t know——**

**WILL**

**——It’s fine. I just won’t take it.**

# **HARRIET**

**Oh, don’t be silly! It’s one sip!**

**DORI No! *No.***

**HARRIET   
Well, then I’m afraid he can’t participate.**

**DORI Harriet——**

# **WILL**

**——I don’t *want* to participate.   
(TO DORI) I’ll wait outside.**

**DORI**

**Wait, but... No. I don’t want to leave you.**

# **HARRIET**

***You* can’t go, Dorian. You’re on atonement. Paulette sent a personal prayer for you to follow during today’s session.**

**SOUND: HARRIET SLIDES A PAGE OVER THE TABLE.**

# **DORI**

**I’ll do it later, then! We’ll get Ruth, and we’ll all go somewhere——**

**WILL  
——Dori. I want to be alone.**

**(BEAT.)**

**DORI   
Okay. I’m sorry. I really didn’t know.**

# **WILL**

**I’m sure you didn’t.**

**SOUND: WILL EXITS THE TENT.**

# **HARRIET**

**Well. That’s regrettable. But you can’t get through to everyone. Here’s two supplements and a sheet for your other friend. It’s good to have you back, Dori.**

**SOUND: HARRIET SLIDES TWO SMALL CUPS AND ANOTHER PAGE OVER.**

**DORI Yeah, thanks.**

**SOUND: DORI TAKES EVERYTHING SHE’S**

**OFFERED, POURS THE SUPPLEMENTS ON THE TABLE, AND GOES TO TAKE HER SEAT ALONGSIDE RUTH AND ZOE.**

**RUTH Hey. Where’s Will?**

# **ZOE**

**Did you not get your supplements?**

**DORI Turns out they’re alcoholic.**

**RUTH Oh. Does he need...?**

**DORI Here’s a meditation guide.**

**SOUND: SHE HANDS IT TO RUTH.**

# **ZOE**

**I don’t understand, Dori. The supplements are part of the experience. You don’t want to ruin Ruth’s first meditation.**

# **DORI**

**Oh my god. Nothing’s getting ruined! Give her yours, then, if you care so much.**

**(BEAT.)**

# **ZOE**

**(SOFTLY) Okay. Ruth?**

**RUTH Sure. Thanks.**

**SOUND: RUTH ACCEPTS ZOE’S CUP.**

**SCENE 8**

**(EXT. - COMMUNE, AFTERNOON. WILL GATHERS HIMSELF SOME DISTANCE FROM THE MEDITATION TENT. HARRIET APPROACHES.)**

# **HARRIET**

**Excuse me, young man. Dori’s friend?**

**SOUND: WILL SIGHS.**

**HARRIET (CONT’D)**

# **(CLEARS THROAT)**

**About the supplement... I certainly didn’t mean to upset you so badly. I would hate for you to get the wrong impression on your first day.**

**WILL   
Is there something I can help you with?**

# **HARRIET**

**I want to make sure you know it’s not about *exclusion*. It’s about *unity*.**

**SOUND: WILL SNORTS.**

# **HARRIET (CONT’D)**

**And I truly think you still ought to try meditation. Before you know it, you won’t *need* to limit yourself because your soul will be healed——**

**WILL**

**——Okay. I’ve heard enough. Leave me alone.**

# **HARRIET**

**Suit yourself, but nobody who tries supplement meditations has experienced any repercussions——**

# **WILL (NARRATING)**

**Before I knew it, I was walking away from the village. And, while I wished more than anything to be leaving for good, I... didn’t. Because that meant showing my two best friends that I was the odd one out. The one who didn’t want to get better, who couldn’t join the world the way they both wanted to so badly.**

**SOUND: THE RANCH HOUSE SCREEN DOOR,**

**THEN THE FRONT DOOR. WILL STEPS**

**INTO THE ENTRYWAY. FOOTSTEPS IN THE KITCHEN; THEN, PAULETTE EMERGES.**

# **PAULETTE**

**Will? What are you doing here? I thought you were all down at the meditation.**

# **WILL**

**I couldn’t participate. Sorry to intrude. I’ll only be upstairs, if that’s alright.**

**PAULETTE Nonsense! What’s the matter? What happened?**

**SOUND: WILL SIGHS, SPEECHLESS.**

# **PAULETTE (CONT’D)**

**(TENDER)**

**Well, nevermind. Since you’re back, I could use some help with dinner, if you’re up for it.**

**SOUND: WILL TAKES A FEW STEPS CLOSER.**

**WILL Sure. What do you need?**

# **PAULETTE**

**You chop vegetables, and I suppose *I’ll* wrack my brain for some old Dorian stories.**

# **WILL (NARRATING)**

**As it happens, I warmed up to Paulette quickly.**

**SCENE 9**

**(EXT. - MEDITATION TENT, AFTERNOON. RUTH, DORI, AND ZOE SIT AMONG OTHER CHURCHGOERS. HARRIET STANDS BEFORE THEM, ADDRESSING THE GATHERING.)**

# **HARRIET**

**Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for coming out to today’s program. If you are ready to get started, please hold up your supplement.**

**SOUND: ARMS RAISE.**

# **HARRIET (CONT’D)**

**Just about everyone. Ellen, could you get us one in the second row, please?**

**ZOE Make that two, please.**

**SOUND: A WORKER LEANS IN CLOSE TO DORI, OFFERING A SMALL CUP.**

# **DORI**

**(LOWLY) Oh, thank you.**

# **HARRIET**

**Perfect. Now, if you’re using a guide, just keep it in hand, but prioritize going where your spirit takes you. You never know what you might learn. Otherwise, feel free to use your personal method, whatever that may be. On three —— One, two, three.**

**SOUND: THE CHURCHGOERS ALL DRINK**

**THEIR SUPPLEMENTS -- EXCEPT DORI, WHO DUMPS HERS OUT ON THE GRASS.**

**RUTH Dori!**

**ZOE Shh!**

# **HARRIET**

**(STERN) Everyone, you may begin.**

**SOUND: DORI'S DRAWN-OUT BREATHING AS SHE ENTERS A SEMI-MEDITATIVE STATE.**

# **DORI (NARRATING)**

**This is my apology to you. You have wanted to be faithful, and I became distracted. I have hindered you, my spirit, and drifted toward temptation. You keep me from loneliness and disgrace. If we are to be two sharing one life, I owe it to you to repent and recognize. I must remember our path. I am here to listen to what you need.**

**SOUND: TRANSITION TO THE CLIFFS OUTSIDE THE RANCH HOUSE, THE CRASHING WAVES BELOW.**

# **HARRIET (OFF)**

**If your mind wanders, go with it... Embrace the warmth bubbling up inside you...**

**SOUND: A LOUD, ABRUPT WAVE CRASH, LIKE A SLAP.**

**PAULETTE (MEMORY)**

**You are so lucky, Dorian. You don’t have to suffer, or be afraid, ever.**

**DORI (NARRATING) And I wasn't.**

# **NED (MEMORY)**

**You'd have to study your faith hard. You wouldn't get to be like everybody else.**

**DORI (NARRATING) I didn't want to be.**

**SOUND: THE ROAR OF THE WATER SWELLS. DORI BREATHES.**

**DORI (NARRATING) (CONT'D) Sometimes, I can already feel the water.**

**SOUND: A BELL TOLLS. THE WAVES FADES.**

# **DORI (MEMORY)**

**(FROM EPISODE ONE) Dori.**

**PAULETTE (MEMORY) You're my special little boy!**

# **DORI (MEMORY)**

**(FROM EPISODE ONE) Dooorrrrri.**

**WILL (MEMORY) You’re special, Dori. So I’ll make an exception.**

**DORI (NARRATING)**

**No! Don't think about him right now! Focus.**

# **PAULETTE (MEMORY)**

**Let's practice praying. When you pray, you're trying to have a conversation with yourself. You're either going to be listening or speaking. It'll get easier to know which you need as you get older, but for now, let's just try listening.**

# **PAULETTE (NARRATING)**

**I wrote these words for you, Dorian. You can't let me down. Don't you want to make me proud? Don't you want to stay my special, lovely little——?**

**SOUND: A BELL TOLLS. INSISTENTLY.**

**DORI GASPS AS WATER RUSHES BACK IN.**

**PAULETTE (NARRATING) (CONT'D) I repent...**

# **DORI (NARRATING)**

**(DROWNING) I repent...**

**PAULETTE (NARRATING) ...and recommit myself.**

# **DORI (NARRATING)**

**(DROWNING) ...and recommit myself.**

**SOUND: SHE CONTINUES TO FIGHT THE WATER.**

# **PAULETTE (NARRATING)**

**I have chosen to live *and die* by the tenets of my faith. It was the duty of my family to discover the truth. It is *my* duty to lead us all to our reward.**

**SOUND: THE WATER OVERWHELMS, THEN FADES, LEAVING US IN A PLANE OF UTTER SILENCE.**

# **DORI**

**(ECHOING) Hello?**

**SOUND: A DOOR CREAKS OPEN.**

**PAULETTE (NARRATING)   
I apologize to you, my spirit, because through you...**

**DORI I have to get back to them!**

**PAULETTE (NARRATING) I can become something more.**

**SOUND: TRANSITION BACK TO THE**

**PRESENT. DORI BREATHES RAGGEDLY.**

# **RUTH**

**(WHISPER)**

**Hey. That was kind of amazing.**

# **DORI**

**(WHISPER) D-Did you go through yours?**

# **HARRIET**

**Twenty-five minutes have passed. If you have not begun to already, it’s time to think about returning.**

# **RUTH**

**(WHISPER)**

**Yeah. It was... God, sometimes I feel like I'm being pulled in so many different directions that... It was really nice. I had some realizations.**

**SOUND: ZOE INHALES, ROUSING.**

# **ZOE**

**Amazing, isn’t it? Wait until you learn formal prayer. There are all kinds of focusing techniques to get you really untethered. You can spend hours exploring, learning, healing. It’s addictive.**

# **HARRIET**

**For those interested, I will be hosting a session in the black room at seven-thirty tonight. See me for more details.**

**RUTH What’s the black room?**

# **DORI**

**You’re not ready for that. Come on, we have to go find Will.**

**SOUND: DORI GATHERS HER THINGS AND STANDS.**

# **RUTH**

**Oh. I guess you’re right. It was really nice to meet you, Zoe.**

# **ZOE**

**You, too! I hope we’ll see you back again soon, Ruth. You’re a natural.**

**SOUND: RUTH AND DORI LEAVE.**

**RUTH Hey, did something happen?**

# **DORI**

**(SHARP) What are you talking about?**

# **RUTH**

**Even before the whole —— thing, you and Will were acting weird with each other.**

# **DORI**

**Oh. Yeah. Will... I don’t know how to talk about it. He and I... Yes, something happened, but I have a lot on my mind right now.**

**RUTH Oh...**

**SCENE 10**

**(INT. - RANCH HOUSE ENTRYWAY, EVENING. DORIAN AND RUTH ENTER. WITHIN, PAULETTE AND WILL SET THE TABLE.)**

**PAULETTE (OFF) Dorian? Ruth? Is that you?**

**SOUND: RUTH KICKS OFF HER SHOES.**

# **RUTH**

**Most of us. Your son’s come back without his vocal cords.**

**SOUND: PAULETTE ENTERS FROM THE DINING ROOM.**

**PAULETTE Dorian? What’s wrong, sweetie?**

# **DORI**

**It’s hitting me about my uncle. Mama, can we talk outside?**

**WILL**

**Hey. How’d that go?**

**RUTH**

**Um. Good, but I heard you had an awful time. And, also, I kind of heard——**

**SOUND: MARGARET ENTERS.**

**MARGARET**

**Oh. Hello. I was looking for Paulette.**

**RUTH**

**Ouch. First name treatment. She went outside with Dori.**

**MARGARET**

**I should’ve guessed. She’s never here!**

**SOUND: MARGARET STARTS TO GO.**

**RUTH**

**Margaret, wait! Is... everything okay?**

**MARGARET**

**No. Why? Would you two want to help me?**

**SCENE 11**

**(EXT. - PORCH, MOMENTS LATER. DORIAN AND PAULETTE SIT ON THE PORCH SWING.)**

**PAULETTE What do you mean “cold”?**

# **DORIAN**

**I mean I felt *cold*. That has never happened to me while praying before. I got this *really* bad feeling.**

# **PAULETTE**

**That’s guilt, honey. You’ve never had to do a serious atonement before.**

# **DORIAN**

**I know what guilt feels like, Mama. This was scary.   
(BEAT, TEARY)**

**What’s wrong with me? Please, really listen. Don’t just say it’s school and yank me back until the new ceremony. I like it at school. It’s something else, it’s...**

# **PAULETTE**

**Listen to me carefully. You did the right thing telling me, but right now, we are all in an extremely delicate position. You’ve brought two outsiders here who could turn non-believer quicker than a snap. We *will* address this before you leave, but for now, set it all aside. Can you play your part?**

**(BEAT.)**

**DORIAN Yes.**

**PAULETTE Then, let’s go back in.**

**SOUND: THEY HEAD INSIDE, WHERE...**

**RUTH**

**Hey! We’re learning to weave baskets!**

**MARGARET**

**I told you the one in the shed was about to snap, Mama. It near broke my wrist.**

**PAULETTE**

**(SOFTLY, TO DORI) There we are, then.**

**SCENE 12**

**(EXT. - RANCH HOUSE, MORNING.)**

# **DORIAN (NARRATING)**

**Somehow, I did it. I lasted until morning, pretending everything was normal until I could pretend to sleep. By that point, Ruth was the only thing holding it all together.**

# **RUTH**

**I haven’t hauled wood in *years*. I forgot how much it was like a puzzle. Your dad said I can make real tight stacks. God, what am I even going to college for?**

**WILL**

**Vaguely helpful qualifications?**

**DORIAN**

**A short buffer against the start of real life?**

# **RUTH**

**Haha. No, but... really. What if I liked this way better?**

**SOUND: NED’S CAR PULLS UP, EVELYN IN THE DRIVER SEAT.**

**WILL Who is that?**

**SOUND: NED GETS OUT.**

# **NED**

**Good morning, Dorian. Is it finally my privilege to meet your school friends?**

**DORIAN Hello, Ned. Yes...**

**RUTH Ned, as in the pastor?**

# **NED**

**(CHUCKLES)**

**Not even close to the term I’d use. Just a leader.**

# **RUTH**

**Right, sorry. My name’s Ruth. Thanks for letting us visit your community. It’s beautiful.**

# **NED**

**Isn’t it? All thanks to the fine folks who work day in and day out to reap superb fruits from a charred earth.**

**DORIAN**

**Was it my mother you wanted, Ned? I can go fetch her——**

# **NED**

**——No need. We’ve already spoken. She let me know how you were feeling about Uncle Woodrow. I’m here to take you for a visit.**

**(BEAT.)**

**DORIAN  
Right now?**

# **NED**

**These things don’t work on much of a schedule, I’m afraid. Can your friends manage without you for the morning?**

**WILL  
(TO DORIAN)**

**We could come with you, if you want.**

**NED That’s real nice of you...?**

**WILL Will.**

**NED**

**That’s real nice of you, Will, but this is a family matter.**

# **DORIAN**

**Yeah, I... have to do this alone. Enjoy yourselves, okay? I’ll be back soon.**

**SOUND: DORIAN AND NED LOAD INTO THE CAR.**

**SCENE 13**

**(INT. - INSIDE NED'S CAR, SHORTLY AFTER, WITH EVELYN DRIVING. DORIAN AND NED SIT IN THE BACK, TENSE.)**

**DORIAN Where are we really going?**

# **NED**

**I wouldn’t lie, Dori. We’ve got family passing on.**

**DORIAN We... We do? Who?**

**(BEAT.) Ned?**

# **NED**

**All in good time. Evelyn, I’d appreciate a simple drop-off. You can join Maxine in her new responsabilities.**

**EVELYN Of course.**

**DORIAN What are they doing?**

**NED**

**The only thing that matters these days —— keeping you safe.**

**DORIAN**

**How is that different from what they were already doing?**

# **EVELYN**

**We’ll be doing it less directly from now on. If you need something, we’ll expect you to call. Maxine and I are more necessary here performing interrogations.**

# **NED**

**We’ve uncovered more non-believers in our ranks. You must have noticed that Sandra has been missing?**

**DORIAN *She* was a...?**

**NED Upsetting, isn’t it? Keep that in mind.**

**SOUND: THE CAR SLOWS, STOPS. NED OPENS HIS DOOR.**

# **NED (CONT’D)**

**I’ll radio you when you’re needed again. We may be awhile.**

**EVELYN Yes, Ned.**

**SOUND: DORIAN GETS OUT, TOO. HE AND**

**NED STAND IN THE CENTER OF THE COMMUNE BY AN OLD, QUIET HOUSE. EVELYN DRIVES AWAY.**

**DORIAN Whose house is this?**

**NED Woodrow Hill’s.**

# **DORIAN**

***Woodrow Hill?* I thought you were just using a name back there. I didn’t know he was still alive.**

# **NED**

**He’s been sick for many years. We chose not to address the rumors as his condition declined. The transition of the church to my hands went smoothly enough that there was no outcry for his return. So we’ve kept him in peace as long as we could, and now that he’s nearing the end, he wants to go quietly. But he knows who *you* are. Are you ready to meet him?**

**DORIAN**

**The *founder*? Of course, but—— ...Of course.**

# **NED**

**(KNOWINGLY)**

**You don't build your faith with studies. You build your faith with tests.**

**SOUND: NED AND DORIAN HEAD UP TO THE HOUSE. NED OPENS THE FRONT DOOR WITHOUT KNOCKING.**

**NED (CONT’D) After you.**

**SCENE 14**

**(INT. - WOODROW'S HOME, WE FOLLOW DORIAN INTO THE ENTRYWAY. WITHIN, AN OXYGEN MACHINE HISSES RHYTHMICALLY.)**

**DORIAN Should I take my shoes off?**

**WOODROW (WITHIN) Hello?**

**NED This way.**

**SOUND: THEY CONTINUE INSIDE.**

# **DORIAN (NARRATING)**

**He must have been ninety, withered and propped up on pillows in a tall bed. The man who’d changed the world was hooked up to only one machine, which helped him breathe —— everything else was clearly just about making him comfortable.**

# **WOODROW**

**Well, this is a very welcome surprise.**

**DORIAN Hello, Mr. Hill. I’m Dorian.**

# **WOODROW**

**Remarkable. Remarkable! It's you yourself. And Ned! Welcome! Come in, please!**

# **NED**

**Good morning, Woodrow. I’ve brought you your key to paradise.**

**WOODR So you have. I am quite humbled.**

# **DORIAN**

***You’re* humbled? I’m meeting *Woodrow Hill*. I’m meeting history.**

**WOODRO And I am meeting the future.**

**DORIAN May I pull up a chair?**

# **WOODROW**

**Yes, sit! We have plenty to talk about. Would you be very kind and pour me some water? There’s a pitcher by the window.**

**DORIAN Of course.**

**NED Please Woodrow, allow me.**

**SOUND: NED POURS A GLASS OF WATER AND HANDS IT TO WOODROW.**

**NED**

**I thought it was time you two finally meet.**

# **WOODROW**

**Ah. You must be talking to Samantha. She won't tell me how**

**I'm doing anymore, but I imagine all the right people know. Well, what a parting gift, I must say. The proof of my convictions pausing their work for a moment to tell me I was right. Tell me, Dorian, I’ve always wondered: which is your favorite prayer?**

# **DORIAN**

**(THINKS FOR A MOMENT.) For the downtrodden.**

**WOODROW**

# **(RECITING WITH FEELING)**

**I ask myself, “Shall I try again?” And the answer was always,**

**“Only if you are certain.”**

**(AUDIBLE SMILE)**

**Your mother's writings are a gift to this church.**

# **DORIAN**

**Oh, she’d die to know you read them! You should hear the ones she throws away. She only likes the ones you can "use from multiple angles." She says a prayer is best when you can come back to it your whole life and keep finding some new way of hearing it.**

# **WOODROW**

**Most useful things are that way. But you’re mistaken. I’ve spoken with Paulette many times.**

**DORIAN You did? She never mentioned...**

# **NED**

**Understand, Miss Dori, that this here is a tightly-kept secret.**

**You knowing makes eight people total.**

**WOODROW Including me.**

# **DORIAN**

**Why don’t you want them to know you’re alive? I’d think you’d want to spend every minute possible with the people who love you.**

**WOODROW   
- Expectation can be a burden.**

**NED Mm.**

# **WOODROW**

**I lived in the spotlight for most of my life, drawing people in, building most of this village by hand. By the time my lungs grew sick of me, I was more content to pass the torch and live out my days hearing my own legend.**

**NED**

**And, of course, preparing to reach Paradise.**

# **WOODROW**

**Body healed, eternity in my prime! It’s the only fitting reward for what I went through to get here.**

**DORIAN   
Did you ever think it would get this far?**

# **WOODROW**

**But you must know by now, Dorian. The curious thing about loyalty is how it repays faith given. That first generation... When I truly felt their trust, I knew that I would never let them down. Even after I’m gone, you’ll all remember. I built the mirror that gave life purpose.**

**DORIAN Are you scared at all?**

# **WOODROW**

**Why should I be? Your day is on the horizon. Soon, all will join me again in a better home. Together, we’ll learn what it is to be perfect. All thanks to me and you.**

**DORIAN Right... My day.**

# **NED**

**Dorian, why don’t you tell Woodrow some of the things you’ve done to demonstrate your worthiness?**

**(UNSURE BEAT.)**

# **DORIAN**

**Oh sure, um, I knew from my first day of school. I-Insisted, even. And I didn’t back down until everybody saw I meant it. Mama and Daddy pulled me back out straight away and I started homeschooling with tutors, with Ned... I know every prayer by heart.**

**WOODR I would expect nothing less.**

# **NED**

**Dorian is being modest. He hasn’t mentioned the *strict* guidelines on nourishment, personal life, spiritual study. Why, when he was young, we used to put him through more rigorous trials than we do now! Barely ten years old, we’d have him in one of Harriet’s rooms all day long, and when we’d pull him out, he could tell us such stories of the bridge he wandered, and all those thousands of doorways waiting to be opened.**

**DORIAN I’d forgotten that...**

# **NED**

**Coming out with details you couldn’t have known! Things we could corroborate, mind you, with *your* texts, Woodrow. Books the kid had never even touched before.**

**WOODROW**

# **(WEARY, DRIFTING)**

**My prophesied one... Our savior... You are exactly who I hoped you would be.**

**NED**

**A hero who *chose* this. It’s what he’s always wanted, too.**

**DORIAN**

**I——**

# **WOODROW**

**——You are a very good kid, Dorian. I am glad I got to meet you in this life.**

**(STUNNED BEAT.)**

# **DORIAN**

**Well, I'm sure you——**

**NED Thank you, Woodrow.**

**WOODROW Thank you, Ned, for your gift.**

**NED**

**You take that rest now. You've got somewhere else to be.**

**WOODROW**

# **(CLASPS DORIAN'S HAND WEAKLY)**

**Paradise! Hopefully we are the last to make it there the hard way.**

**DORIAN Wait, but...?**

**NED Now, now, Dorian.**

**SOUND: THE HISSING OF THE OXYGEN MACHINE CHANGES JUST SLIGHTLY. IT ISN'T BEING USED ANYMORE.**

**NED (CONT'D) This is what he wanted.**

**SCENE 15**

**(EXT. - THE YARD OUTSIDE, A LITTLE WHILE LATER, APPROACHING EVENING. DORIAN AND NED SIT SIDE BY SIDE, NED PATIENTLY AND DORIAN IN SHOCK.)**

# **DORIAN (NARRATING)**

**We sat together under a tree in the yard that used to be Woodrow Hill's. I didn't know how to make sense of what had happened in there. For all the time I’d spent thinking about death and how it would feel, I had never actually seen it. Someone who I’d met was gone now, on to a place that I and everyone else had only ever guessed at. And he’d held my hand asked me to follow him.**

# **NED**

**Dorian. What are you thinking?**

**DORIA I have no idea.**

**These *are* the real lessons, aren't they? Why did you keep me from them?**

# **NED**

**Because you never needed reminding of what was at stake before.**

# **DORIAN**

**Well, why did you say all those things in there? It was like you were trying to prove a point by rubbing my face in it.**

# **NED**

**Dorian. I was comforting a dying man. A man to whom we both owe everything. Are you saying you don’t feel confident. *Have* *you changed*?**

# **DORIAN**

**(SIGHS/GROWLS)**

**It’s other things that keep changing, not me! First, I was getting my ceremony. Then, it was pushed back. I wasn’t supposed to go to college, but then I was, but now I’m maybe not again. I thought the whole point of me leaving was that I was supposed to make friends and look normal. Now me doing exactly that is getting people all worked up.**

**I *know* how we got here, but...**

**Ned, would anybody have really noticed if I never left home? Why am I getting pushed in so many directions now? Where is all this pressure coming from?**

# **NED**

**This is the exact road I didn’t want you going down. I said it before you left, remember? You have the strongest faith of anybody I’ve ever met. But that which is purest is also easiest to bruise —— which means your job is getting tougher, and we can’t protect you from everything.**

**(BEAT.)**

**DORIAN When's his funeral?**

# **NED**

**There won't be one. He’s gone on. We'll meet Woodrow again soon.**

# **DORIAN**

**(AGGRIEVED) So what do I do?**

# **NED**

**Have faith. Didn't I trust you not to stray when I gave you my blessing to head out into the wicked world?**

**DORIAN**

**Yes, you did, but it *isn't* wicked——**

# **NED**

**——So have faith in me in return, Dorian. And if you can't have faith in me, have faith in your people. Have faith in Woodrow, who believed so damn hard, he was able to go the exact moment he was ready. Wasn't that a miracle?**

**DORIAN It... It was.**

# **NED**

**That's the power we give each other when we remain united. But you have to make the choice to be with us —— or else you better quit now. If you’re having doubts, then you're spitting on Woodrow's memory, and I will not abide that weakness. Nothing else matters.**

**DORIAN Nothing else matters.**

**NED   
And we will never speak of this again.**

# **DORIAN**

**Ned... I’ve got something else I’m not sure I should say.**

**NED (DISAPPOINTED) Dori...**

# **DORIAN**

**You brought up that spiritual training I used to do, where I’d go in for prayer and come out with all sorts of new knowledge... I didn’t remember it, but now I do, and —— and —— Mama put those words in me.**

**(BEAT)**

**I don’t remember what I would do all day in those empty rooms, but I remember her saying how impressed people would be if I showed it was working. So, she told me what to say.**

**NE  
I know.**

**DORIAN ...What? How do you know? *I* didn’t know.**

# **NED**

**What you must understand, Dorian, is that part of raising a chosen one is creating an environment where they will reach their utmost potential.**

**DORIAN**

**You and Mama have held back so many——**

# **NED**

**——However you learned about the bridge of doorways, it *is* your Destiny. Everything this church has shown you about yourself, your faith, is true.**

**DORIAN   
So now... It’s just one final decision.**

**NED I’m glad you understand.**

**SCENE 16**

**(EXT. - RANCH HOUSE, EVENING. DORI, RUTH, AND WILL PACK RUTH’S CAR. DORI’S FAMILY PREPARES TO SEND THEM OFF.)**

**LILY**

**It’s been so nice to see the friends Dori’s making at school. That place must not be as bad as we thought.**

**RUTH**

**(LAUGHS, SURPRISED)**

**Not terrible, no. Thanks for sharing your house. Margaret, it was cool hanging out with you.**

**SOUND: MARGARET HUGS RUTH SUDDENLY.**

**MARGARET**

**I hope you’ll come back soon.**

**RUTH**

**I... would really like to. See you again kid.**

**PAULETTE**

**Consider an open invitation fully extended, dear. We have**

**loved meeting you. You are always, always welcome.**

**RUTH**

**Thank you.**

**SOUND: RUTH HEFTS A DUFFLE INTO THE TRUNK.**

**PAULETTE**

# **(AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT)**

**Oh, and you, too, Will, dear! Any time you might want to visit!**

**WILL Thank you, Paulette.**

**SOUND: HE CLIMBS INTO THE PASSENGER SIDE.**

# **RUTH**

**Dori won’t be glad you’re taking shotgun.**

**SOUND: THE DOOR SLAMS. SHE SIGHS.**

**RUTH Goodbye, Yuri.**

**YURI**

**Next time, you can see the greenhouse.**

# **RUTH**

**(BEAMING) Can’t wait. Oh, and here’s herself now!**

**SOUND: DORIAN TRUDGES UP, BAG IN HAND.**

**DORIAN Where’s Will?**

**RUTH (VOICE LOWERING) He did not have a good time.**

# **DORIAN**

**Who can blame him? Thank goodness you did, though. Really. Oh, shoot! I almost forgot!**

**SOUND: DORIAN KNOCKS ON THE CAR WINDOW. WILL CRACKS THE DOOR.**

**WILL What?**

# **DORIAN**

**Can you help me with something? Real quick.**

**SOUND: WILL SIGHS AND EXITS THE CAR.**

**WILL What? Aren’t we ready to go?**

# **DORIAN**

**I’m trying to be more studious, so I packed some books. The bag was too heavy, though. I left it upstairs.**

**YURI Leave Will. I can help.**

# **DORIAN**

**No, Daddy, Will’s a book guy. It’ll make him happy. (TO WILL) Won’t it?**

**WILL (SARCASTIC) Overjoyed. Lead the way.**

**SCENE 17**

**(INT. - DORI’S BEDROOM, MOMENTS LATER. DORI FOLLOWS WILL IN AND SHUTS THE DOOR AFTER THEM.)**

**DORI  
I lied to get you up here.**

**WILL Are we doing this *now*?**

**DORIAN You're angry.**

# **WILL**

**(FIRMLY) No.**

**(WITH A SIGH)**

**No. It’s just that I’ve already had this argument with you five times in my head since you got back, so I’m kind of keyed up. I know I put you in a bad spot yesterday, but why did you ice me out?**

# **DORIAN**

**I... panicked. First, can you forgive me for how I treated you? You holding that book and reading was... one of the nicest things I’ve ever felt.**

**SOUND: WILL SHUFFLES, UNCERTAIN.**

**WILL   
‘Course I forgive you. Do you mean that?**

# **DORIAN**

**I’m the only honest one in my family.   
(SMALL BEAT.)**

**They told me to behave one way while they’ve been living another. I trusted them more than I should have. I’ve *always* put my family first, on faith, but... they’ve showed me everyone keeps secrets. I want one, too. You. You could be my one secret.**

**WILL You mean...?**

# **DORIAN**

**I mean you could kiss me right now, and no one would know.**

**WILL Is that what you want?**

**DORIAN   
Yes.**

# **WILL**

**(SMILING, DISBELIEVING) Really? I thought you——**

# **DORIAN**

**——Will, yes. For a long time, I’ve wanted... I was scared...**

**SOUND: WILL KISSES DORIAN. A BEAT.**

# **WILL**

**This actually *isn’t* a very secret place. We have to get back outside.**

**DORIAN Okay. Don’t forget this.**

**SOUND: HE HOLDS OUT A BOOK.**

# **DORIAN (CONT’D)**

**I can’t wait to hear what other poems you think are about me.**

**SOUND: THEY HAD BACK DOWNSTAIRS.**

# **DORIAN (NARRATING)**

**With nobody left to keep tabs on me at college, it was possible I was about to be free for the first time in my life. And my family would just have to respect that I was going to have *one* thing for myself. And then, when it was time, as I had promised, I would perform their ceremony and change the world. But until then... I’d appreciate my own piece of this one.**

**[MUSIC]**

**ANNOUNCER**

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**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.**

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**Neon Inkwell: The Pit Below Paradise 4 – Dying Faith**

**This week, Dori goes home. Will and Ruth get to experience Paradise, but not everyone thinks its what it pretends to be.**

**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**](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  
KT Tomas as Ned Ziliak  
Isabel Kruse as Paulette  
Lisa Stanley as Evelyn  
Victoria Cheng as Ruth  
Phi Hamens as Will  
Sergio Salas as Yuri  
Tori Thomson as Margaret  
Hannah Preisinger as Zoe  
Gigi Guizado as Harriet  
David A Meyers as Woodrow**

**Dialogue Editor – Lowri Ann Davies and Nico Vettese  
Sound Designer – Tessa Vroom  
Mastering Editor - Meg McKellar**

**Music by Sam Jones  
Art by Guerrilla Communications**

**SFX by previously credited artitsts**

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