

# **THE PIT BELOW PARADISE**

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## **EPISODE 5**

### **"WILL & WANT"**

**By J. Evelyn Gaskell**

**Revised 10-15-23**

**[MUSIC]**

**ANNOUNCER**

**Rusty Quill Presents: The Pit Below Paradise. Episode Five – Will and Want.**

**[MUSIC]**

**SCENE 1**

**MONTAGE - A DREAM-LIKE SPAN, EACH RUTH LINE BROKEN BY A VARYING AMOUNT OF TIME.**

**RUTH**

**So... When are we going back?**

**RUTH**

**No, really, Dorian, can we visit again soon?**

**RUTH**

**Dori, it's been three weeks. Come on, it would be weird for me to go without you. Where's the person who's all gungho family?**

**DORIAN**

**Ruth, there's something we have to tell you.**

**RUTH**

**(NEUTRAL)**

**Really! Yeah, no, I assumed you two would at some point. Congratulations.**

**WILL**

**Thanks, um... It's still new. And secret, obviously.**

**RUTH**

**Obviously... Considering you waited this long to tell me.**

**RUTH**

**Yeah, I'd love to, but there's this meditation thing Dori's church is doing out in Young City, so I'm gonna be gone for the night.**

I'm going to go meet them since Dori doesn't want to go home. I bet you two will be happy to get some alone time, though!

**RUTH**

Of course I didn't tell them anything! No one even asked, god, you two are getting so cagey.

(RUTH EXITS THE SCENE. WE SETTLE,  
MORE CONCRETELY, INTO WILL AND  
DORIAN ALONE IN THEIR DORM, CURLED  
UP AND LISTENING TO THE RADIO.

**WILL**

Are you thinking about it at all?

**DORIAN**

(INNOCENTLY) Thinking about what?

**WILL**

She really wants to go back.

**DORIAN**

But you hate it there.

**WILL**

I don't *hate* it.

**DORIAN**

But you would rather not go, and I'd rather not go without you.

**WILL**

Why should my feelings matter more than hers?

**DORIAN**

They don't...I just don't want you to be uncomfortable is all.  
Come on, the commercial's almost over.

**ANNOUNCER (RADIO)**

And now, back to: Wendy Serenity, Monster Killer!

**WILL**

She's not going to stop asking.

**SCENE 2**

**(INT. - DINING HALL, RUTH AND WILL EATING TOGETHER.)**

**WILL**

Sorry you haven't been able to go back yet.

**RUTH**

Has Dorian mentioned *anything*? I thought his family was super clingy. I figured he'd be going back in no time.

**WILL**

**(HESITATES)**

I think they fought. That's the one thing he doesn't really talk about.

**RUTH**

But that's what spurred him to...

**(INTO HER DRINK)**

You know, say he likes you?

**WILL**

**(DEEPLY UNCOMFORTABLE)**

Maybe? Like I said, it's all still new, so we don't know exactly where we...

**RUTH**

But it hasn't been *no* time. You two must have talked about it a little — n-not that it's any of my business!

**WILL**

We've talked.

**(BEAT.)**

**RUTH**

...Are you sure about that?

**WILL**

I'm sure we both have our own secrets — and a right to them.

RUTH

Well, has he talked about *me*? I mean——! Me and the village.

WILL

Like what?

RUTH

Like, whether or not I would be a good fit. If I can just get over there again, maybe Yuri or Paulette could help me talk to Ned... about setting me up with housing and work.

WILL

Wait, *what*?

RUTH

Oh, come on, is it that bizarre?

WILL

You're in school!

RUTH

Only because I have nowhere else to go! If I had somewhere else, I wouldn't bother!

WILL

Ruth, you've lived there for *one* weekend.

RUTH

Yeah, and I was happy every single second of it. That's *never* happened before. Do you know what that feels like?

WILL

I'm... skeptical, but——

RUTH

——You hate that place.

WILL

No. No, I don't.

(SIGHS.)

I would never want to live there, but if it makes you both happy... then I can get used to it. And I'll get through to Dori.

**RUTH**  
**(VERY WARMLY) Really? Thank you, Will.**

**SCENE 3**

**(INT. - THE DORM ROOM, WILL RETURNING WITH HIS HANDS FULL WHILE DORIAN CALLS HOME ON HIS RADIO.)**

**DORIAN**  
I know.

**PAULETTE (RECEIVER)**  
Your ceremony is four weeks away, honey. You need to check in.

**DORIAN**  
I know — Oh, Mama, my roommate just walked in. I gotta let you go. Talk soon. Love you.

**SOUND: HE HANGS UP.**

**DORIAN (CONT'D)**  
**(FLIRTATIOUSLY)**  
Hey, *roommate*.

**WILL**  
Did she say “ceremony?”

**DORIAN**  
Yeah. It’s a... village thing. Anyway, i-it’s not important. What are those?

**WILL**  
Fruit custards from the dining hall. Wanna sit outside?

**SCENE 4**

**(EXT. - FLOWER GARDEN, AFTERNOON. DORI AND WILL LOUNGING AROUND IN THE GRASS.)**

**DORI**

This is different than what I thought it would be.

**WILL**

What?

**DORI**

You know. Me and you.

**WILL**

Yeah. But it's... nice, right? I like spending time with you.

**DORI**

Yeah! And you know I like you.

**(BEAT.)**

Oh, I memorized you a poem!

**WILL**

Really?

**DORI**

Yeah. From the library. Okay, how does it start... Ahem: "O, that yourself were——!"

No, hold on. Um...Ahem:

"Oh, that you were yourself! But you are, love, No longer... Um. Against this coming end you should prepare..."

**(BEAT.)**

"Who lets so bare a house fall to decay!"

Right? Because you're studying architecture? Maybe I need to read it again. Sorry. It was gonna be a good surprise, too.

**WILL**

**(SMILING)**

No, it was sweet. Do you like Shakespeare?

**DORI**

He was the most famous name I could think of...

**SOUND: DORI TAKES AN AWKWARD  
BITE OF CUSTARD; CHOKES ON IT.  
IT'S A WHOLE EVENT.**

**WILL**  
Dori?

**DORI**  
(COUGHING) Fine, I'm fine...  
(GETTING CONTROL)

Ugh, good thing Ruth didn't see that. She'd never let me live that down. "Can't even eat custard and walk at the same time!"

**WILL**  
How do you know *I'll* let you live it down?

**DORI**  
Because you're Will. You're the sweet one.

**WILL**  
I'm *sweet*? I thought *you* were the sweet one. I don't talk enough to be "sweet."

**DORI**  
No! You're the sweet one, Ruth's the funny exciting one, and I'm the charming one.

**WILL**  
(DISBELIEVING LAUGH)  
Charming?

**DORI**  
Yeah! I charmed you, didn't I? Besides, a relationship where the two people are just sweet wouldn't work, would it? Someone has to keep it interesting.

(BEAT.)  
She really does keep coming up, huh.

**WILL**  
That's natural. We're all friends who spend a lot of time together. Speaking of——



**DORI**

—No, I know, I know. And it's nice to be alone, obviously, but... I'm starting to feel like the balance is off. Someone's always getting excluded now.

**WILL**

If you and I are together, Ruth is left out. If you and Ruth are together, I'm...

**DORI**

Crabby.

**WILL**

I am *not* crabby.

**DORI**

It's justified! You *should* be crabby! *I'm* still crabby, after how they treated you.

**WILL**

But Ruth had a really good time there. And you care about Ruth.

**DORI**

You know, when you and her hang out, things don't feel out of balance. You two make sense.

**WILL**

We've known each other a long time. Ruth and I fight if we spend too long on our own. Things *do* go out of balance.

**DORI**

"Balance" is starting to not even feel like a word anymore. Baaaalance.

**WILL**

The point *I'm* trying to make is, even if we're all friends who owe each other certain respects, we're also all adults who can handle our own emotions. I know it's not personal if you and Ruth want to go to the village together.

**DORI**

But what about you?

WILL  
What *about* me? I just told you.

DORI  
But—

WILL  
—Dori.

(SIGHS.)  
You're using me as an excuse. At some point, you maybe need to consider why *you're* stalling going home.

DORI  
I'm not stalling. I love home. What kind of a girl—

WILL  
—doesn't like his home. Yeah. Fine. If I'm the only thing stopping you, then I'll come, too.

DORI  
After what happened with the meditation?!

WILL  
I can make my own decisions, Dori. Besides, if this place is going to be special to you two, it's not like I can ignore it.

SOUND: WILL PULLS OUT HIS RADIO.

WILL (CONT'D)  
So? Does that solve your problem?

DORI I...  
I guess so. Technically.

WILL  
Great.

SOUND: WILL DIALS OUT A CALL.

DORI  
What are you doing?

(SMALL BEAT.)

**RUTH**

Hello?

**WILL**  
(INTO RADIO)

Hey, Ruth? I'm gonna hand you to Dori. You two pick a date.

**SCENE 5**

(INT. - RUTH'S CAR, MORNING. RUTH, WILL, AND DORIAN TRAVEL UP THE LONG DIRT ROAD TO PARADISE VILLAGE, SURROUNDED BY TREES.)

**DORIAN**

So Will and I do not look at each other.

**WILL**

We can't *not* look at each other. That would be weird.

**DORIAN**

Fine. We are allowed to look at each other a medium amount, only when it feels normal. And we don't go off anywhere alone.

**RUTH**

And I go anywhere and everywhere, you help me make sure that happens, and I look at anyone I want.

(BEAT.)

What the... who is that?

**DORIAN**

Did you take the right turn?

**RUTH**

Of course I did. There's only one road!

**DORIAN**

Uh, then, I don't understand.

**SOUND: THE CAR SLOWS. RUTH  
ROLLS  
DOWN HER WINDOW. OUTSIDE THE**

**VEHICLE, A FENCE GUARD APPROACHES.**

**FENCE GUARD**

Can I help y— Oh. Dorian. Who are these two?

**DORIAN**

Yeah, hi, what's going on here? There was never a fence on this road before! And why do you have a weapon?

**SOUND: THE GUARD HEFTS A RIFLE.**

**FENCE GUARD**

Oh, this? No cause for concern. Just in case a bear wanders too close. Protection while I'm on duty.

**DORIAN**

But *why* are you on duty?

**FENCE GUARD**

Village felt the need for an increase in security. We've had some issues with outsiders coming and going.

**RUTH**

How? This place is all canvas and basil.

**FENCE GUARD**

**(CHUCKLES)**

There's a little more to us than that. Simply can't be too careful. No one'll stop Dorian from coming in, of course, or you two if you're with him I suppose, but y'all *will* need Ned's permission to leave. That's become standard for anyone.

**RUTH**

Even just to, like, run out and pick up supplies?

**FENCE GUARD**

'Fraid so.

**WILL**

**(LOWLY)**

Are we... sure we still want to do this?

**(BEAT.)**

**RUTH**

**Of course. It's common sense for a place with a lot of food to be security-conscious. Right, Dori?**

**DORIAN**

**Yeah... It makes sense to me.**

**FENCE GUARD**

**Then I'll get this gate open for ya. Welcome home, Dori.**

**SOUND: HE STRIDES OFF, PATS THE HOOD OF THE CAR. A GATE OPENS.**

**RUTH**

**He slapped my car...**

**SOUND: THEY DRIVE ON.**

## **SCENE 6**

**(INT. - RUTH'S CAR, MORNING, AS THEY CRUISE THROUGH THE VILLAGE PROPER.)**

**DORIAN**

**Well, at least the village is the same on the inside.**

**(SIGHS)**

**Home again. No, this is good. I can do this.**

**SOUND: WILL REACHES FOR DORIAN'S HAND.**

**WILL**

**Hey. You love it here.**

**DORIAN**

**Careful!**

**SOUND: DORI SNATCHES HER HAND BACK.**

**DORIAN (CONT'D)**

**You're already breaking rule one!**

**WILL**

**Sorry! I didn't — I was trying to comfort you.**

**DORIAN**

**Well, don't. Someone could see.**

**(TENSE BEAT.)**

**RUTH**

**Dori, now's kind of your last chance to get anything off your chest. You sure you're feeling okay?**

**DORIAN**

**I... No. I'm not.**

**PAULETTE (OFF)**

**Kids!**

**WILL**

**(SOFTLY)**

**Damn.**

**SOUND: RUTH ROLLS HER WINDOW DOWN. PAULETTE DRAWS UP BESIDE THE CAR, HOLDING A BASKET OF CLOTH.**

**PAULETTE**

**You made it! It's so good to see you again. Hi, Ruth. Will.**

**RUTH**

**WILL**

**Hi, Paulette.**

**Hi.**

**DORIAN**

**Hi, Mama. Didn't expect to run into you before we got to the house.**

**SOUND: PAULETTE HEFTS HER  
BASKET.**

**PAULETTE**

**I've been out and about since sun-up. Lily's birthday is next week, so I thought she might like a new dress. Something real nice for special occasions. But sweetie, did I hear you right? Did you say you were driving up to the house?**

**DORIAN**

**Uh yea, where else would we go?**

**PAULETT**

**E I thought Ned called you.**

**DORIAN**

**Ned?**

**PAULETTE**

**Yes. He's arranging a couple rooms for you and your friends, to host you.**

**WILL**

**What?**

**RUTH**

**Yeah, wait, the *leader*?**

**DORIAN**

**(TERSE)**

**What brought on this... change of plans?**

**PAULETTE**

**Your college education, of course! With the things you're learning at school, it only makes sense for Ned to use you to help the village. He wants to get to know you better, and your friends, of course. He wants to start job training right away ——— sorry, kids, but that does mean Dori may get pulled away from time to time!**

**RUTH**

**Hey, that's exciting! Now, if only it can be that easy for me.**

**DORIAN**

So, wait. I'm really not staying at home?

**PAULETTE**

Well, you're not a kid anymore, baby. But you're all invited for lunch tomorrow. I'll see you then, okay?

**DORIAN**

...Okay.

**SOUND: PAULETTE TURNS AWAY. RUTH RESUMES DRIVING.**

**WILL**

Why wouldn't someone call to tell us all this? (SMALL, UNSURE BEAT.)

You know, it's not too late to turn around.

**RUTH**

Actually, according to that gate guy, it kind of is.

**DORIAN**

(DEVASTATED)

No, no, it's fine. Let's go to Ned's. I'm sure it will be just as comforting as the house I grew up in, where all my things are, and where my family is...

## **SCENE 7**

(INT. - NED'S HOUSE, MORNING. DORI, RUTH, AND WILL LET THEMSELVES INTO A HUGE FOYER WHERE MAXINE RUMMAGES IN A DESK.)

**DORIAN**

Maxine! Long time no see.

**SOUND: SHE STOPS, SLIGHTLY HARRIED.**

**MAXINE**

Dorian! Ruth, Will.

**WILL**

Have we met?



**MAXINE**

You'll have to forgive me, I just walked in the door myself. Please feel free to hang up your coats and set your things down. We'll have them brought to your rooms.

**SOUND: THEY SHED THEIR COATS, BAGS.**

**DORIAN**

How did everyone know we were coming here except us?

**MAXINE**

That's my fault. It was my responsibility to radio this morning when the decision was made, but something came up. I'm afraid I've been running around most of the day. Mr. Ziliak is in his private study. I'll take you to him.

**SOUND: THEY FOLLOW MAXINE  
DEEPER INTO THE HOUSE.**

**RUTH**

How is this place even bigger on the inside?

**WILL**

Why is it so flashy? I thought you said your services were all outside. Why do you need all the...?

**DORIAN**

Scriptures on the walls? I think someone just... Gifted them to Ned. Wouldn't it be unkind not to hang them? We've got tons of talented people who want to show our leader their appreciation. What's wrong with that?

**WILL**

Hmm.

**SOUND: MAXINE KNOCKS ON A DOOR.**

**NED (WITHIN)**

Yes?

**MAXINE**

Your guests have arrived, Ned.

**SOUND: NED COMES OUT TO GREET THEM.**

**NED**

**Wonderful! Right on schedule. I'll take them from here. Are their rooms ready?**

**MAXINE**

**Yes, sir.**

**NED**

**Marvelous. And I trust all went well this morning?**

**MAXINE**

**Straightforward, sir. I'll go handle the wrap-up.**

**NED**

**Actually, keep Evelyn on that. But get yourself ready to go.**

**SOUND: MAXINE DEPARTS.**

**NED (CONT'D)**

**Ruth. Good to see you again. You look vibrant.**

**RUTH**

**Excited to be back. Thank you for hosting us.**

**NED**

**Nonsense. You're practically family already. Allow me to show you where you'll be staying.**

**SOUND: HE LEADS THEM DOWN THE HALL.**

**NED (CONT'D)**

**Now Dorian, Ruth, you'll be across the hall from each other here. Will, you're a little ways downward yet, at the end there on the right. Everyone, go on. Take a peek.**

**SOUND: WILL HEADS DOWN THE HALL.  
BEHIND HIM, WE HEAR DORIAN AND RUTH  
ENTERING THEIR ROOMS.**

**DORIAN**

**Three rooms... We wouldn't have had that in the ranch house.**

**RUTH**

Oh my God. This is beautiful!

**NED**

You can see the whole village through that window.

**DORIAN**

Thank you, Ned. It's lovely.

**SOUND: WILL OPENS HIS DOOR. HE  
HUFFS A SOUR LAUGH.**

**WILL (NARRATING)**

It was beautiful! An unmade twin bed with a stack of white sheets folded over top. My bag sideways on the room's only end table. Through the scraggly pine branches scratching nearflush against the window, I could *almost* see... more trees.

**RUTH**

Can I light these candles?

**NED**

Of course! There should be some matches in the desk.

**RUTH**

Awesome, how's yours, Dori?

**SOUND: SHE CROSSES TO DORI'S  
ROOM AS WILL RE-ENTERS THE  
HALLWAY.**

**RUTH (CONT'D)**

Look at your closet space! Sure we don't want to stay a week?

**NED**

**(QUIETLY)**

Everything up to your standards?

**WILL**

I'd say it was exactly what I expected.

**SOUND: NED CHUCKLES.**

**WILL (CONT'D)**

**Mr. Ziliak, I don't intend to make myself at home in your village. I'm here for them. That's all.**

**NED**

**I understand, let's say I arranged a car for your transportation home...**

**WILL**

**If they'd ——**

**DORIAN**

**Will! Can we see your room?**

**NED**

**I was thinking Ruth might like a tour of the town's major facilities. The stables, the library, some gathering spots. That way, you and I could have a little private sit-down.**

**DORIAN**

**What about——**

**WILL**

**——I'll be fine, Dori.**

**RUTH**

**Couldn't Will come with me?**

**NED**

**Of course. If he wants to. I simply understood that William likes to keep to himself.**

**WILL**

**It's Will. I'll stay. If you two don't have fun, I swear——**

**SOUND: DORI AND RUTH  
CHUCKLE.**

**WILL (CONT'D)  
(SMILING)**

**Just enjoy yourselves.**

**RUTH**

Thanks for coming, Will.

**WILL**

Go on. Tell me all about it later.

**NED**

You should find Maxine down in the foyer. She's an excellent guide. Have her show you anything you'd like.

**RUTH**

Quite the welcome you hand out around here.

**SOUND: SHE GOES OFF.**

**WILL**

Alright. I'll see you later, Dorian.

## **SCENE 8**

**(INT. - WILL'S ROOM, AFTERNOON. WILL READS IN BED WHEN HIS RADIO RINGS.)**

**SOUND: HE ANSWERS.**

**WILL**

Hello?

**RUTH (RECEIVER)**

Hey! I wanted to check in. Also, I just got shown around the library, and it's *so cute!*

**WILL**

That's great.

**RUTH (RECEIVER)**

Want me to borrow anything for you? They've got poets who were actually alive in this century.

**WILL**

I'm alright. Seen anything cool?  
**(BEAT.)** Ruth?

**RUTH**  
**(RECEIVER)** I may have gone on a house  
tour.

**WILL**  
What? Really?

**RUTH (RECEIVER)**  
Yeah. It's not definitive, obviously, and everyone's being kind of  
sly, but... yeah. I really think I need to go for it.

**(BEAT.)**

**WILL**  
When you get the chance to run, you take it.

**(ANOTHER.)**

**RUTH (RECEIVER)**  
You know, I really am so happy for... **(VOICE  
LOWERS)**  
You and Dorian. You're going to make each other so —  
actually, uh, Maxine's got the car. Gotta go.

**WILL**  
Ruth——!

**SOUND: THE CALL CUTS OUT.**

**WILL (NARRATING)**  
Just when I'd managed to forget the anxieties dangling over me,  
Ruth kindly gave me a reminder. I'd spent the better part of two  
hours trying to calm myself with familiar books, jumping  
nervously between them — and for some reason, I was still  
here. I'd done my job, gotten my friends out of their rut. The only  
goal now was to slip off on my own before either of them had a  
chance to argue.

I couldn't have been a high priority for Ned Ziliak, but still, he'd  
seemed happy enough at the idea of getting rid of me. What was  
the hold up? If my two best friends were going to drift away, I  
didn't want to be stuck watching it. That's all I set out to do. Talk  
to Ned.

**SOUND: WILL HEADS DOWN THE HALLWAY.**

**DORI (WITHIN)**

**—doesn't make any sense! You can't keep lying to me!**

**SOUND: WILL FREEZES.**

**NED (WITHIN)**

**Now, Dori, I think you're misinterpreting where I'm coming from. I only care about what's best for you.**

**FADE TO: INT. -  
NED'S OFFICE**

**DORI**

**I did everything you ever asked. I'm asking for one thing.**

**NED**

**But why? If you believe so strongly that he's worthy, what does a few weeks change? You'll see him again.**

**DORI**

**But things will be different.**

**NED**

**Which matters more to you? What you've been working toward your whole life, or an ordinary boy you met a few months ago?**

**DORI**

**It's not just him. Ruth, too, she's really important to me.**

**NED**

**She'll be joining us before long. You'll still see her as much as you want — within reason, while she adjusts.**

**DORI**

**But you can't just give me something and—**

**NED**

**—It's not just that the village needs you. *You* need to come back to the village. We've allowed you to... *drift* up to a certain point, but these last weeks are crucial. Once, I would never have**

even *dreamed* I'd have to lecture you. Now it's all I can do to keep you in check. Why is that?

DORI

...Fine. I'll go to *Harriet*. But I won't give in on school.

SOUND: DORI OPENS THE DOOR  
TO LEAVE. SHE GASPS. WILL  
RECOILS.

DORI

Will! You nearly gave me a heart attack. What are you doing?

WILL

L-Looking for the bathroom. Are you finished with your...?

DORI

Actually, I have to head out, too.

WILL

Where?

DORI

Just some routine counselling. But, um... When I get back... Can we talk, maybe? It's important.

WILL

'Course.

NED (WITHIN)

Dorian. Evelyn's waiting outside.

DORI

Later, then.

SOUND: DORI GOES.

NED (WITHIN)

How much did you hear, Will?

WILL

Nothing, sir. Just passing by.



**NED (WITHIN)**

Carry on, then. I'll see about arranging that car for you.

**SCENE 9**

**(INT. - WILL'S ROOM, EVENING. HE SITS. AND SITS.)**

**WILL (NARRATING)**

I didn't touch my books after that. The hours just... passed. One minute, I looked up, and the sun was long gone. Was Dorian, still? What did she want to talk about? Would she explain what I had overheard? Would I tell her I'd heard it? What was it that she needed to *do*? Was she *safe*? Were any of us?

**SOUND: A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. WILL STARTLES.**

**WILL**

Who is it?

**RUTH (OFF)**

Me. Can you let me in? I've got some kind of squash soup thing from a kitchen guy named Gabe. Smells great. (BEAT.) Will?

**SOUND: WILL STRIDES OVER, USHERS HER IN, AND SHUTS THE DOOR.**

**WILL**

Something bad is going on with Dori.

**RUTH**

What? Is she okay? Oh my god, wait, is this your room——?

**WILL**

——Who cares, Ruth? Listen. She's lying to us about something. I heard her and Ned talking. There's some big day or event coming up in the village, and he's putting pressure on her, but somehow we come into it, too? It doesn't even make sense until I say it out loud, but I think Ned sees us —— *me* —— as a threat. Since I won't join in, like... like you.

(BEAT.)

RUTH

They were talking about *us*?

WILL

Dori was arguing *for us*, but it sounded like Ned was trying to create distance. He might have even been talking about pulling her out of school.

RUTH

No, that doesn't make sense. Paulette said Ned wanted to *use* Dorian's "new education" or whatever.

WILL

I don't trust them. Dori will argue with them to their face, but then defend them to us when we ask.

(GROANS IN REALIZATION)

A few days ago, I walked in on her and her Mom talking about a ceremony, and she completely distracted me, I didn't even——

RUTH

——Will. You know I'm always on your side, but let's talk this through rationally. Closed religions exist.

WILL

They're letting *you* in!

RUTH

Okay, maybe not "closed" closed, but you know what I mean! And nobody's said anything concrete on that. Anyway, maybe whatever they're doing isn't shared with outsiders.

WILL

Ned said that. He called me an "outsider." You don't think that's a weird word?

RUTH

I'm pretty sure *you* called me an outsider when I first moved to Silver Falls. A lot of places keep tight-knit. Did they say anything dangerous or scary?

**WILL**

I... I don't remember for sure. It was — It was the tone. God, my heart was beating so fast—

**RUTH**

—Hey. Sit down.

**SOUND: WILL SITS, AND RUTH BESIDE HIM.**

**WILL**

Do you *really* think there's nothing weird about this place? Fences popping up out of nowhere and Dorian always getting yanked away... If you'd heard it, you'd believe me. I don't think Dorian can see he's being manipulated, and he won't let us in enough to hear it from us.

**RUTH**

You're jumping to a pretty major conclusion based on one conversation you weren't even supposed to hear.

**WILL**

Ruth, I know you want to make this work, but you just said it! They're keeping major secrets! You need to be careful. Anybody who can give out something this huge, no strings attached, can take it away just as easily.

**RUTH**

Why do you think I gotta make a good impression?

**WILL**

I don't *know*. Make sure you can trust them. Don't let them hold it over you. You deserve to belong regardless.

**RUTH**

...You think so?

**WILL**

Always have.

**RUTH**

**(HALF-JOKING)**

Careful. Don't let Dori hear you say that.

**WILL**

Did you see if he was back? *That* he definitely lied about. He said he was going to meet "Harriet" but then he told me he was going for counselling.

**RUTH**

Will, Harriet's a counsellor. She runs the meditation, remember? You need to relax, eat, and then we'll, I don't know, go for a walk? Wait for Dori to get back together.

**WILL**

I was thinking of leaving.

**RUTH**

What?

**WILL**

Ned was going to find someone to drive me home. I don't know if I can now. Something's *wrong*.

**RUTH**

Come on.

**SOUND: SHE FETCHES THEIR  
BOWLS.**

**RUTH (CONT'D)**

You need to be a human for a second. Get out of your brain. Food. No talking. Stay right here with me.

**SOUND: WILL TAKES A SPOONFUL.  
THEY EAT FOR A MOMENT.**

**WILL**

Does it feel like we abandoned you?

**RUTH**

Will...

**WILL**

I don't think I'm supposed to feel guilty. But I do.

RUTH

You're not making any sense.

WILL

You know what I'm talking about.

RUTH

Yeah, well. We can't talk about it.

WILL

Why not?

RUTH

Because what kind of a friend would I be if I put *my* loneliness on you. You deserve to be in a relationship that makes you happy. Both of you do.

WILL

You make me happy, too. You're my best friend.

RUTH

Will, please dont.

WILL

And *he* likes you so much, too. I keep thinking back to when I first found out you were home, and Dorian kept saying we just needed to talk, to *both* of us, but we wouldn't listen — but then, the second we did, we worked everything out.

RUTH

And now we're here, and I am extremely grateful. But I need to work *this* out alone.

WILL

Ruth, you're not—

RUTH

—You're spiraling. Don't spill every thought in your head. Eat. Then let's get out of this depressing room.

**SCENE 10**

**(INT. - THE BLACK ROOM, A SENSORY DEPRIVATION CHAMBER.)**

**SOUND: A DOOR OPENS.**

**HARRIET**

**Dori? You can come out now.**

**SOUND: DORI STUMBLES INTO THE HALL.**

**DORI**

**What, uh...? What time...?**

**HARRIET**

**You've been inside for six hours. Do you feel centered?**

**DORI**

**I feel... better.**

**HARRIET**

**Good. Disconnect to reconnect.**

**DORI**

**Yes. Yes, it was a hard disconnect. But I feel good now.**

**HARRIET**

**Your sister is here to walk you home.**

**SCENE 11**

**(INT. - RUTH'S ROOM, LATE EVENING. RUTH GETS READY FOR BED WHILE WILL PACES.)**

**WILL**

**Do you think he'll be back at all tonight?**

**RUTH**

**(YAWNS.)**

**I don't know. Please sit before you carve a line in the floor.**

**SOUND: A LAMP CLICKS OFF. RUTH GETS UNDER THE COVERS. WILL STOPS PACING, SITS IN A CHAIR.**

**WILL**

**Thank you for letting me stay. Sorry I said all that before.**

**RUTH**

**Don't worry. I wouldn't leave you alone.  
(BEAT.) Or Dorian.**

**SOUND: FOOTSTEPS IN THE HALLWAY, SOFT. A NEARBY DOOR OPENS.**

**WILL (CONT'D)**

**Is that——?**

**RUTH**

**——Go on.**

**SOUND: WILL HURRIES INTO THE HALL.**

**DORI**

**Oh. Hey. Is Ruth still up?**

**RUTH  
(FROM BED)**

**No. Unless you need me. But no.**

**WILL**

**I was waiting for you. Can I come in?**

**DORI  
(HESITATES)**

**I don't know if that's a good idea. I think there are still... you know... people around.**

**WILL**

**It's after midnight.**

**DORI**

**Ned's people tend to work late hours.**

**WILL**

I really need to talk to you. You were gone all day.

**RUTH  
(FROM BED)**

He's been freaking out.

**DORI**

Alright, come in.

**SOUND: WILL AND DORI ENTER DORI'S  
ROOM.**

**DORI (CONT'D)**

I'm sorry I was gone so long. I wasn't expecting Ned to start... training me... right away.

**WILL**

I thought you were at counselling.

**(BEAT.)**

**DORI**

Uh...Yeah.

**WILL**

Dori. Please don't lie to me.

**DORI**

Well. If I tell you the truth, will you promise you won't try to help me?

**WILL**

Dori, what the hell is going on?

**DORI**

If I told you something that you couldn't believe, or something that scared you, would you try to help me?

**WILL**

O-Of course I would——

**DORI**

——Then I can't tell you.



WILL  
What?

DORI  
I may be upset with my church over some small things, but *nothing* can push me away from what I owe them.

WILL  
Fine. I won't press if you tell me one thing: are you safe?

DORI  
...You need to get better at arguing. Are you staying?

WILL  
I thought you wanted to follow the rules.

DORI  
Sometimes I want you more.

SOUND: DORI CLIMBS INTO BED. THEN,  
AFTER A MOMENT, WILL. THEY SETTLE.

WILL  
(laughs) somewhere a page in a sketchbook is burning.

DORI  
(laughs) yea maybe.

DORI (CONT'D)  
Are you angry?

WILL  
I'm *scared*. For you.

DORI  
I promise you'll understand soon. Everything will be okay.

SOUND: WILL SLIDES HIS HAND  
OVER THE SHEETS. DORI TAKES IT.

WILL (NARRATING)  
Her fingers grazed over the inside of my palm before her hand settled into mine. I realized one thing because of the other: I am

a gravedigger inhabited by death, and Dori makes me feel alive.  
Did trust even factor into it?

Once she fell asleep, I was alone again, alone still, with all these thoughts I couldn't hold. With her hand given to me. And too much doubt. I knew that I should have tried resting, but I stared at her cheekbones in what little light there was and held my breath for the sake of hearing hers.

Then, for one more night, I slept.

## SCENE 12

(INT. - THE BEDROOM, NEXT MORNING, WITH BOTH WILL AND DORIAN STILL IN BED.)

SOUND: DORIAN AND WILL ASLEEP.  
THEN — KNOCK, KNOCK.

WILL

...Does that mean we have to get up?

DORIAN

(A TELLING BEAT) I'm good here.

SOUND: WILL SNICKERS. SOME  
TENSION FROM LAST NIGHT IS GONE.

DORIAN

Hi.

WILL

Hi.

(BEAT.)

I have a new question. What if I still wanted to help you, even if I didn't know what was going on?

DORIAN

How would you do that?

WILL

I think I just wouldn't let you stop me.

DORIAN

It wouldn't be *just* me trying to stop you.

SOUND: ANOTHER KNOCK ON THE  
DOOR.

RUTH (OFF)

Everybody decent?

DORIAN

Ugh, Ruth, yes. Get in here.

SOUND: THE DOOR SWINGS  
OPEN.

RUTH

'Sup. How are the conspiracies panning out?

WILL

I'm still trying to figure out if we can even joke about it. He's not being helpful.

DORIAN

(SIGHS) Ruth, come join us. I need to cuddle.

RUTH

(STAMMERS) You have a *boyfriend* for that.

DORIAN

Well, maybe I want you both.

WILL

(SMILING)

You are so spoiled.

RUTH

For real?

DORIAN

Mhmm.

**SOUND: SHE ENTERS FULLY. THE BED  
SHIFTS. THEY ALL SETTLE.**

**DORIAN (CONT'D)**

**Doesn't this feel right when we're all together? No  
misunderstandings, no one in our way——**

**SOUND: DORIAN'S RADIO RINGS  
ACROSS THE ROOM.**

**DORIAN (CONT'D)**

**(GROANS LOUDLY. SIGHS.)**

**That must be my Mama. Be right back.**

**SOUND: HE GOES AND ANSWERS IT.  
RUTH AND WILL CONFER QUIETLY.**

**RUTH**

**So?**

**WILL**

**Something is up. But he seems okay. I only wish he would talk to  
me.**

**RUTH**

**Sorry if it seemed like I was brushing you off last night. I *do*  
really want this place to be all he says it is.**

**DORIAN (OFF)**

**Alright, we'll go soon.**

**(Beat)**

**Alright, now.**

**(Beat)**

**Okay, love you, bye.**

**SOUND: DORIAN RETURNS.**

**DORIAN (CONT'D)**

**Okay! Who's up for a Sunday morning errand?**

**SCENE 13**

**(EXT. - DIRT ROAD, MORNING. DORIAN, WILL, AND RUTH ARE WALKING ALL THE WAY TO THE RANCH HOUSE.)**

**SOUND: EXHAUSTED, TRUDGING FOOTSTEPS. RUTH CARRIES A BASKET OF BEANS.**

**WILL**

**Regretting not bringing your car yet?**

**RUTH**

**(CRUNCH)**

**Worried that my legs will get more jacked than yours?**

**DORI**

**Stop eating our beans. Mama will have a fit.**

**RUTH**

**I'm gonna tell them you did it. I'm everyone's favorite this weekend.**

**WILL**

**To be fair, at this rate, the basket *will* be half-empty before we even hit the forest.**

**RUTH**

**It's not *my* fault someone dragged us out of Ned's before we got to enjoy a nice breakfast!**

**DORI**

**Hey, can we take a shortcut?**

**RUTH**

*Is there a shortcut?*

**DORI**

**We should be able to cut through the old strawberry fields, and that'll get us back to the road without having to go all the way around.**

**SOUND: AS ONE, THEY STEP OFF THE PATH.**

**WILL**

**There you go. Eat some strawberries.**

**RUTH**

*Not out of season?*

**DORI**

**You will if you value the opportunity to try my Mama's bean salad.**

**SOUND: RUTH AND WILL BUST OUT LAUGHING.**

**RUTH**

**I'm sorry! I want bean salad!**

**SOUND: A CAR DOOR SLAMS.**

**EVELYN (OFF)**

**Hey! Get back from there!**

**SOUND: EVERYONE FREEZES, STARTLED.**

**RUTH**

**Is that Evelyn?**

**WILL**

**Who?**

**RUTH**

**She's like Maxine. They work together.**

**DORI**

And you met the nice one.

**RUTH**  
**(LOWLY)**

Come on, let's not piss anyone off.

**SOUND: THEY WALK OVER TO  
EVELYN.**

**EVELYN**

Oh, it's you three. Dorian, I'd expect you to know better.

**DORI**

What? It's a field.

**WILL**

Hang on. There's a building over there. See? Bottom of the hill.

**EVELYN**

This section of the village is abandoned. It's dangerous.  
Certainly, no place for outsiders.

**WILL**

Huh. What was——?

**EVELYN**  
**(FIRMLY)**

——Just trying to look out for you.

**SOUND: SHE GETS BACK INTO HER  
CAR AND DRIVES OFF.**

**WILL**

Dori? Do you know what's down there?

**DORI**

All I know is what she said. If we shouldn't get close, I'm sure it's  
for good reason.

**WILL**

You believe her that easily?

**DORI**  
What do you want me to say?

**(BEAT.)**

**RUTH**  
So... no shortcut?

#### **SCENE 14**

**(INT. - RANCH HOUSE, AFTERNOON. DORI, WILL, AND RUTH ENTER. IN THE OTHER ROOM, A CONVERSATION.)**

**PAULETTE (WITHIN)**  
As long as it will work this soon, I don't see why not. If we need more time, either way, he isn't going back to——

**DORIAN (WITHIN)**  
**(POINTEDLY) ——**  
We're home!

**WILL (NARRATING)**  
It was easy to find more shapeless clues once we reached the ranch house. Of the pictures on the wall, Dori's were biggest, but far fewer in number than Margaret and Lily's. What made her, in a family that preached love and unity, so unconsciously othered?

**SOUND: NED AND PAULETTE ENTER.**

**NED**  
**(TO WILL)**  
So you *are* here. I was starting to think you'd fled in the night.

**WILL**  
S-Sorry?

**NED**  
Someone came by your room this morning, about six, ready to get you loaded up and on your way home —— like you asked —— only, you weren't *in* your room. Fond of early morning walks?



WILL

|—

RUTH

—That's my fault. I woke up with bad cramps. Will's always helped me through them, since we were kids. He was in my room.

PAULETTE

Well, that's a relief. Now, the table is set and the girls are hungry. We should all—

WILL

—Excuse me. I don't feel very well.

SOUND: A STUNNED BEAT. THEN, WILL  
FLEES OUTSIDE.

## SCENE 15

(EXT. - THE PORCH, MOMENTS LATER. WILL LEANS ON THE  
BANNISTER, BREATHING SHAKILY.)

SOUND: A STRETCH OF ALMOST  
UNBEARABLE AMBIENCE. THEN,  
THE DOOR OPENS.

DORIAN

I can leave if you want to be alone, but... figured you might be hungry.

SOUND: DORIAN HANDS WILL A  
PLATE.

WILL

Thank you. Sorry. Couldn't be in there. Ned was looking at me like he *knew*, and...

DORIAN

Don't apologize. I wanted to check on you earlier, but, well, I was told it might not be a good idea.

**WILL**

Your mom doesn't like me either, does she?

**DORIAN**

Of course she does! She likes everybody.

**WILL**

(DOUBTFUL) Sure.

**DORIAN**

You're still worrying after yesterday, aren't you?

**WILL**

What did you want to talk to me about before you left?

**DORIAN**

I... It's nothing. I got ahead of myself.

**WILL**

The thing that freaks me out most is why you refuse to tell me.

**DORIAN**

What, you tell *me* everything? Sometimes you get all weird and clam up for no reason and I never know why, but I don't automatically jump to the worst conclusion and force you to explain yourself!

**WILL**

That's because I buried corpses. Since I was eight.

(BEAT.)

**DORIAN**

(STRICKEN)

What?

**WILL**

I don't talk about it because... I don't want people to know. It's just... Its just something I can't talk about.

**DORIAN**

H-Hang on.... I need to think for a sec.

**WILL**  
**(HUFFS)**

See? No going back. Dori, I've never felt this way about anyone before. I'm sorry I didn't tell you and I'm sorry I won't ever be like you.

**DORIAN**  
**(STARTS TO PANIC)**

But you — if you — what about life after death! Doesn't that help? That makes you feel better, right?

**WILL**  
No. I don't believe in it.

**DORIAN**  
Of course you do! There's life after death, Will!

**WILL**  
Whoa! I wasn't trying to argue your faith! But... no.

**DORIAN**  
No, no, no, no, no, no. No, no, no, no, no, no. You need to not be scared! You need to trust me!

**WILL**  
**(RHETORICAL)**  
What, are you planning on dying any time soon?

**SOUND: MOVEMENT FROM INSIDE, THE  
SCRAPES OF CHAIRS.**

**DORIAN**  
**(DOGGED)**  
They're just clearing up. Will, something's about to happen.

**WILL**  
I know. Involving you.

**DORIAN**  
Y-Yes. I swear, I would have done things differently if I'd known.

What is it? **WILL**

**DORIAN**  
I didn't think I'd ever have to explain it. I can't — I — I don't know what to—

**WILL**  
—Dorian, breathe. Slowly. What is going on?

**SOUND: DORIAN  
HYPERVENTILATES.**

**WILL (CONT'D)**  
Hey. Calm down.

**DORIAN**  
I'm sorry. It's my fault. I thought you'd be excited...

**WILL**  
You're scaring me, Dorian. Can I get — who should I get?

**DORIAN**  
N-no. No one. I don't know what they'll...

**SOUND: DORIAN FAINTS.**

**WILL**  
Dorian? Dorian! HELP!

**SOUND: HASTE FROM INSIDE —  
FOOTSTEPS, POUNDING TOWARD US.  
EVERYONE SPILLS OUT THE DOOR,  
RUTH FIRST.**

**RUTH**  
Oh my God, what happened?

**WILL**  
He passed out!

**PAULETTE**  
Yuri, bring him inside.

**SOUND: YURI PICKS UP DORIAN AND  
CARRIES HIM INTO THE HOUSE.**

**NED**

I'm sure he's alright, Paulette. Go with him, your family needs you. I'll come in in a minute to help out.

**SOUND: SHE RETREATS. THE  
SCREEN DOOR SLAPS SHUT.**

**RUTH  
(TO WILL)**

You okay?

**NED**

Thank you, Will, for your diligent raising of an alarm, but for the health of my parishioner, I think it's well past time you left the village. I'll radio for a car.

**SOUND: NED HEADS ONTO THE GRASS AND  
MAKES A CALL. (SEE WALLA DOC.)**

**WILL**

He can't be serious. He's only saying it's my fault to push me out!

**RUTH**  
Will, he's mad, and he's the leader——

**WILL**  
——Come on! It's an act! *Everything* that happens here is an act!

**RUTH**  
I could —— I could bring you home.

**WILL**  
No, we can't leave Dori. I'm not going. She was *just about* to tell me...

**SOUND: NED HANGS UP AND RETURNS.**

**NED**  
Everything alright over here?

RUTH  
(TO WILL)

Take my car. *We'll* get a ride back.

NED

Will, I apologize, but I do insist. Be sensible. Take Ruth's offer and collect your things. If you don't go willingly, you'll be removed.

WILL

I'll go if Dorian tells me he's fine. *Convincingly*.

RUTH

I'll make sure Dorian's okay. We probably won't be able to leave right when he wakes up, so we'll stay the night and follow you in the morning.

(BEAT.)

WILL

Okay. Will you tell him something at least?

RUTH

Of course.

WILL

Just... make sure he hears the old advice.

RUTH

...Okay. I'll radio you when he's awake. My keys are on the desk in my room.

SOUND: RUTH HEADS BACK INTO THE HOUSE. A CAR PULLS UP.

NED

Evelyn will escort you back to my house.

WILL

That was... fast.

**NED**

**Word to the wise — always keep someone you trust nearby. Once you have all your belongings, take the road down to the gate. Give the word “Harvest” to the lookout and you’ll be let through.**

**SCENE 16**

**(INT. - THE BASEMENT, A SMALL, BARE UNDERGROUND ROOM. RAGGED PRISONERS, INCLUDING CARLOS, SIT CONFINED TO METAL CHAIRS. THESE ARE ALL "THE NON-BELIEVERS.")**

**EVELYN**

**Alright... Sandra. Hell of a spin you caused today. Time for confession. How’s it feel to be back in that chair?**

**SOUND: SANDRA WHIMPERS.**

**EVELYN (CONT'D)**

**What, did you think someone in the village would help you? Or you’d make it out of the woods on foot? (LAUGHS.) I’ll bet that fence was a nasty shock. (SERIOUS)  
Where were you going? Who did you want to alert?**

**SANDRA**

**I’m sorry...**

**CARLOS  
(LOW)**

**Don’t...**

**EVELYN**

**What was that, Carlos?**

**CARLOS  
(TO SANDRA)**

**They’ll never believe you... Just don’t.**

**SOUND: EVELYN UNDOES A PAIR OF LEATHER STRAPS ON CARLOS’S WRISTS.**

**EVELYN**

Tell you what, pal. Get up. Go ahead. I'm gonna make you an offer. Make *one* person confess... and you'll sleep on a mattress tonight.

**SOUND: CARLOS STANDS SHAKILY.**

**EVELYN (CONT'D)**

There. Stretch those legs. Feels good, hm? Don't hold out on us. Show us what blessed stuff this great prophet is made of! Come on! They can't fight back! I'll show you!

**SOUND: SHE SOCKS A  
NONBELIEVER IN THE GUT.**

**CARLOS**

Stop it!

**EVELYN**

Why? You ready to try?

**CARLOS**

I won't hurt anyone. I won't turn on these people like the church turned on us.

**SOUND: THE BASEMENT DOOR  
SLAMS OPEN. MAXINE PUSHES IN  
WILL**

**MAXINE**

Evelyn? What's going on?

**EVELYN**

Ned's orders. We're offering a chance for redemption. Untie them all.

**MAXINE**

Wasn't this one under Dorian's protection?

**EVELYN**

He was.

**WILL**

What is this place? Who are all of you?



**CARLOS**

**Everyone stay calm!**

**EVELYN (MOCKING)**

***Everyone stay calm!* This might be your only chance to earn back your place in the village! Show us you want it!**

**SOUND: THE NON-BELIEVERS  
SLUGGISHLY CONVERGE ON WILL. HE  
TAKES SEVERAL BLOWS.**

**WILL**

**What's happening?!**

**CARLOS**

**You don't have to do this! Don't do this!**

**SOUND: CARLOS WRANGLES A  
NONBELIEVER OFF WILL.**

**MAXINE**

**Get off him! Everyone off!**

**SOUND: THE NON-BELIEVERS  
SCRAMBLE AWAY, EXCEPT CARLOS.  
WILL GROANS.**

**CARLOS**

**It's okay. You're alright.**

**MAXINE**

**It's Will, yes? I apologize, but you've been brought to the wrong place. I learned something interesting about you from that Silver Falls girl. Apparently, you are both adept diggers. Now it so happens that, very soon, we'll be in need of a fresh grave.**

**[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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listening.**

## **Neon Inkwell: The Pit Below Paradise 5 – Will & Want**

**Will has reservations, Dori has responsibilities, Ruth just wants to find her place.**

**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**

**Victoria Chen as Ruth**

**Ian RQ Slater as Dori/Dorian**

**Phi Hamens as Will**

**Isabel Kruse as Paulette**

**Annie Fitch as Radio Announcer**

**Alexander Bryan as Fence Guard**

**Lisa Pengov as Maxine**

**KT Thomas as Ned**

**Gigi Guizado as Harriet**

**Lisa Stanley as Evelyn**

**Jenna Krasowski as Sandra**

**Neil Strawder as Carlos**

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