

EPISODE 15

CAR, INT, NIGHT

We hear the rush of water.

CARPENTER:

(Narrating)

I keep thinking back to that first flight southwards.

An endless, jolting car ride over the flats, like this one.

The same tinny audio-tapes, played to their end and turned over and played again.

Songs whose relentless over-familiarity we came to despise even as we chanted along to them, chorus and verse.

Tuning the radio in search of relief, but only finding sneering governmental proclamations about the riverside monsters, the worshippers of the Trawler-man, whose churches had finally been found and razed.

Returning to the familiar old songs, the ones we could join in with

And then we arrived at a dead, ruinous place somewhere upon the lower delta, a cabin stood alone by the water's edge, and Nana told us that this was to be our new home.

I remember mostly sensations.

Roaming through the strange-smelling rooms that Nana had purchased, watching the play of light through the boarded-up windows. My brother Em and I, lying flat in the darkness across dank and mildewed mattresses.

On the first night we slept until midday, and we did not dream.

On the second night, we wept for our loved ones who were lost or in the clutches of our enemies, and we could no longer sleep.

And on the third night, Nana Glass decided to feed my brother Em and I to our god.

She had no other options.

The police had taken our parents, and rounded up the rest of the church, and the newspapers had already moved on from the new decrees and were discussing other matters.

And the Trawler-Man, somehow, was not fighting back.

We heard no news of great violence or great transfiguration.

And the water swimming at the bottom of our new garden was stagnant and motionless, no matter how hard we prayed or long we wept.

So something had to be done, to make a difference.

I remember I kept very still, an obedient child, while Em - a larger form - shifted uncomfortably beside me in the low tide, as the water swam around his shins and up around my waist.

I remember the familiar, dusty smell of the sackcloth. I remember feeling surprised that it smelled just the same from inside as it had from the outside.

I remember Nana lifted the sack to pierce the flesh at the very top of my ear, not unkindly, with one of her votive fishing-hooks.

She asked me if I was frightened.

I told her yes.

Yes, I was frightened.

I told my Nana I didn't want to become one of the trembling shrimp-angels that swam out of the ruined corpses of our family's sacrifices. I didn't want to be devoured by the chirruping crab-angels that came swarming up through the shallows to feast.

Nana ran her hand through my hair.

She said, in a voice that was soft and crooning as a lullaby,

'You need to remember, Mallory Glass, that nothing in this rotten world knows how to withstand change.

The blossom wilts in the sudden frost. The dog howls in turn at the howl of thunder. Because cowardice courses through the vein of every living thing, and we tremble when our little bowers of wicker and trash shift in the long winds.

‘So if you’re frightened, that’s only because what’s coming for you is a change that *lasts*.’

The sackcloth was lowered.

The sound of Nana’s feet, splashing away through the garden, and she sang to herself as she left us to die.

We didn’t talk to one another, Em and I, through the night.

We were good children. We didn’t want to spoil things.

But I could hear his breath, unsteady and frightened and pained, a comforting sound that matched my own unsteady breath, as the hours passed, and we shivered together as the currents drifted all around me.

We could hear the whispers, as the angels stirred and crawled around us in the high tide.

When the light of dawn came, and the sackcloth came off my face, and Em’s sackcloth came off, and we were both gasping and shivering in the freezing water but still very much alive, still very much ourselves, the very first thing I remember...

...is that Nana was crying as she held me, and adrift, her long fingers trembling with confusion and sorrow.

Because we were still ourselves and what should have happened had *not* happened, and perhaps that meant that our god had abandoned us.

And I felt so disgraceful, so ashamed of myself, that I’d disappointed her like this.

That I’d proven myself an unworthy vessel, in the only moment when it mattered.

A moment of stillness.

These are the Silt Verses.

We’re nearly there now, our disciples. Nearly at the high tide.

And I name them thus, in order of their arrival.

Méabh de Brún.

Lucille Valentine.

Mintaka Angell.
B. Narr.
Jimmie Yamaguchi.
And Jamie Stewart.

CAR INT, NIGHT

We hear the roar of the car engine, rising.

PAIGE and CARPENTER are driving through the night, trying to find FAULKNER.

Distant police sirens.

PAIGE:
More sirens out there now.

CARPENTER:
The quiet couldn't last.
(Reaching forward)
Suppose that means we're safe to try the radio.

PAIGE:
(Concerned)
No, don't-

CARPENTER begins tuning the radio.

Static. Static.

PAIGE:
(Annoyed)
Do you just **do** things, Carpenter?

CARPENTER:
(Defensive)
I told you. It's fine.

Sid's gone off the air.

And then the static clears - and for a moment, we hear the frantic, exhausted voice of FELIX.

FELIX:
(Over the radio)
This is a special alert. I repeat, this is a special alert.

Any units in the vicinity of Marcel's Crossing who are awake and unoccupied, please make for the town with all due haste.

Miracle in progress. Repeat, suspected miracle in progress.
(*Half to herself*)
What a night. Stay safe out there people.

The radio cuts out again.

PAIGE:
...Marcel's Crossing?

CARPENTER:
(*Grimly*)
It's where we started.

Just keep on driving. We'll come to it in time.

The car engine rises.

CARPENTER:
(*Narrating*)
And in time, we do.

Faint golden lights rising up in the distant darkness.

Before us, the low and sullen sprawl of the undisturbed town.

Somewhere to the north of us, Penda's Slake and Bellwethers and everywhere else we've been haunting.

Ahead of us, the White Gull itself.

We pass by the sign of the Dozy Pilgrim motel, and keep driving, into the winding and sullen streets.

It's late into the heart of the night. Nobody is about on the roads.

The lampposts shine over empty pavements.

CARPENTER:
(*Aloud to PAIGE*)
All quiet.

Doesn't look as if Faulkner's set the Mark off yet, at least.

Pull up here. See if you can find a quiet place to park.

The car draws to a halt. PAIGE parks it.

CARPENTER readies herself to get out.

CARPENTER:
(Intake of breath)
Y-

PAIGE:
I don't want to hear it, Carpenter.

CARPENTER:
I didn't say anything.

PAIGE:
You were about to tell me to drive away now and leave you here.
(Growing slightly annoyed)
I drove *back* here for you two idiots.

You don't get to throw me out now.

CARPENTER:
(Sharply)
I said thank you, didn't I?

CARPENTER relents.

CARPENTER:
Keep your eyes on the river.

If it looks like anything's happening down there, if it looks like anything's changing, you're going to turn this car around and drive out of this town without looking back.

PAIGE:
There are people in these houses, you know. We could still warn them.

CARPENTER:
(Simply)
If it happens, there won't be time. For any of us.

If it **doesn't** happen...they might as well sleep.

Stay by the car. Be ready to drive.

I'll see if I can bring Faulkner back to us.

She opens the car door, steps out, then halts.

She's trying to remember PAIGE's farewell from Chapter 12.

CARPENTER:

I, uh...if it all goes to hell out there, then...

...'May your peace something something on a lonely road.'

(Winning at her own misremembering)

Mangled it, didn't I?

Never mind.

PAIGE:

(Repeating the second half)

'May your peace walk on with you for a while.'

CARPENTER:

(Calmly, liking the sound of it)

Yes.

That's the one.

She takes a breath, then slams the door.

MARCEL'S CROSSING, EXT, NIGHT

We hear CARPENTER, limping forwards through the darkness, her feet echoing on the cobblestones.

As she grows closer to the water, we gradually hear the rising sound of the cicadas and the rushing currents of the White Gull river.

CARPENTER:

(Narrating)

Leg's getting worse.

Now it hurts to walk.

Every step, the pain ricocheting through every bone and every joint, an urgent whispering in your head commanding you to stop.

You can't make it any further, the whisper says. You don't have it in you.

You need to find a place for yourself in the darkness where you can sit down and rest, before it's too late.

It doesn't matter. You were never going to listen to it anyway.

You grit your teeth.

You keep on walking.

You begin to lie to yourself that the next step will be the final one, this will be the last agony until you stop and rest, and then you keep walking, and the lie begins again, and you stoke it like a furnace -

(In audible pain)

- just one more step, just one more step-

-until I reach the end of the town's long high street, and the chilly river wind courses around me and through me.

A broken promenade and sloping stone revetment stands against the darkness of the endless water.

And a great abandoned freight truck, parked awkwardly at an angle over the curb. The driver's door is still open.

Nobody is awake. Nobody is around.

The carnival lights are alive at the end of the pier, glinting bright and full of rapturous violet and red and orange. A ferris wheel. A dodgem rink. Pennants fluttering weakly in the breeze.

Garbage is scattered around the entrance to the pier, dumped to either side of the promenade.

I stoop, and I rummage amongst the discard, until I find a long shard of glass, testing its edge against my thumb.

Sharp. It'll do the work, if I need it to.

Wish I had the same confidence in myself.

I stow the shard away beneath my sleeve, and I keep walking onwards through the pain.

We hear her steps echoing slowly on the promenade boards.

Up onto the promenade, onwards through the dark and through the pain, limping past the deserted concession stands and the bulk of the ferris wheel...

...until, at last, I reach the dodgem rink. Its roof and its walls have been daubed in restless, intricate canticle marks.

There's an unhappy, familiar silhouette just visible at its farthest edge.

FAULKNER:

(Distant)

How you doing back there, Carpenter?

Faulkner's tired, haunted voice echoes back down the pier.

CARPENTER:

...Faulkner?

FAULKNER:

(Distant, sorrowful)

I tried. I really did.

But I couldn't finish it.

CARPENTER's footsteps rattle on the boards as she approaches.

CARPENTER:

(Narrating)

Faulkner's sitting in one of the polished, miniature dodgem cars beneath the colourful roof of the rink.

He looks hunched and miserable, his back turned to me. Gazing out over the darkness of the river.

All around him, in etched white chalk across the floor of the rink, is the grand and unfinished circle of the Wither Mark.

Half-drawn, and abandoned.

FAULKNER's voice is miserable, when he speaks.

FAULKNER:

I was so...

...excited when I began.

I kept looking back, over my shoulder, at the lights of the town, and I thought - this is going to be easy.

You've killed up close. You've looked your sacrifices in the eye as they drowned. You can do this now, without ever faltering.

This isn't even people you'll be killing.

It's only lights. Golden, blinking lights in the darkness, and you'll wipe them out with a single sweeping tide.

And then there was a voice in my head. And it whispered, well, *how many people for each light?*

(Increasingly flustered)

Because you have to know - don't you? - how much harm you'll be doing. You have to be able to weigh it in your hands.

So I started counting.

Twenty-five, thirty lights...so let's say if it's an average household of three, perhaps there's only eighty or ninety people in this town who need to die tonight.

But then you have to account for the houses that are already dark, and you can't tell how many of those there might be from out here, so then the numbers start to get out of hand. Maybe it's a hundred dead.

Maybe it's two hundred. You've got no way of knowing.

How can you commit to harm, if you don't know how much harm you're doing?

(Frustrated)

I should be past this, shouldn't I?

I need to be past caring, if I'm going to come to anything that matters.

And then I looked into the water, for confidence...

(Trailing off - he didn't see the Trawler-man's reflection when he looked into the water)

...and the reflection I saw, it wasn't...

(As if glancing around and noticing at the shard of glass in CARPENTER's hand)

What you holding there?

CARPENTER:

(As if just remembering it exists)

Shard of glass. Was going to kill you with it.

FAULKNER:

Oh.

An awkward silence hangs between them.

CARPENTER:
(Muttering to herself)
Stupid idea anyway-

CARPENTER turns and tosses the glass into the river. A distant splash.

CARPENTER:
You mind if I join you in the car, Faulkner?

FAULKNER:
Sure.

CARPENTER stoops, and settles into the dodgem car beside FAULKNER with a pained grunt.

They sit there in silence before the river.

FAULKNER:
None of this has gone like it was meant to.

CARPENTER:
Never does.

FAULKNER:
Maybe it was always a mad dream, thinking there was something special in me.

CARPENTER:
All the best dreams are the mad ones.

Silence.

FAULKNER:
I tried calling Mason, you know. Told him what we'd found, thought he might help get us out of this mess.

He hung up on me. Just...took what he needed from me and moved on.

I figured if I set the Mark off here, maybe I could show him how wrong he'd been to give up on me.

CARPENTER:
(Gently)
You'd have killed yourself wrecking a really shit little town, Faulkner.

They watch the river.

FAULKNER:

How are we meant to change anything, if we're too afraid to break what's been built?

CARPENTER:

There's one other option left to us. Tonight, at least.

We can run.

FAULKNER:

Seems cowardly.

CARPENTER:

I don't see why.

Our god runs from us all the time. He keeps his back turned to us, he lurks in shadow. Every angle he comes at us different.

He answers when we call him, but only to bring us old bones and debris from the garden, and he never stays to show us his face.

Why should he hate us, because we turn our backs and run?

FAULKNER:

They won't tell it in the Verses.

CARPENTER:

At least we could be alive to tell them how it happened.

We hear the rising sound of sirens in the distance.

CARPENTER:

(Hearing them)

Or maybe not.

I didn't think they'd find us this quickly.

FAULKNER:

I called them here.

CARPENTER:

(Disbelieving)

You...

FAULKNER:

I told you. I thought I was making an ending.

The sirens are growing louder.

And CARPENTER begins to laugh. Heartily, but hysterical, her voice ringing out across the water.

FAULKNER:
What are you-

Carpenter, what are you laughing at?

CARPENTER:
It's not you, Faulkner. Really, it's not you. It's just...
(*Still cracking up*)
...bait and flesh, we're just not very good at this, are we?

Dancing from one calamity to another. Missing our marks. Forgetting the lines as they've been written for us.

They'll write a new chapter for us all right.

Right at the back of the Verses, a chapter for the clowns. Outtakes and bloopers.

She continues to cackle.

FAULKNER:
It's not funny.
(*Annoyed*)
Carpenter, it's not funny-

CARPENTER:
No, you have to laugh. Really, Faulkner, you do.

The laughter's the last thing left to us before we go.

Do you still have my revolver?

FAULKNER:
Threw it away.

CARPENTER:
(*Laughing more, completely unfazed*)
You threw it away. Oh, fine, fine.

Well, no need to worry. We've done all we can at this point. We've come to the end of our pilgrimage.

So this is when our god comes out from his murky depths and proves what he's really willing to sacrifice for us.

Just like the Verses teach us, in the nick of fucking time.

She gets to her feet, and waits.

Silence.

The sirens are getting closer.

Nothing is happening.

CARPENTER:

No, of course not.

Well, let me see if I can force the issue.

FAULKNER:

(Warning)

Carpenter-

CARPENTER walks out across the pier.

She calls out to the river.

We hear her voice echo madly, furiously, jubilantly.

CARPENTER:

(Yelling to the river)

It's over between us, you twin-mouthed prick!

Do you hear me?

Does that stir you from your torpor? Pry the barnacles loose from your sodden ears?

My father and mother were Gregory and Sandra Glass. My grandmother was Adalina Glass. My brother was Em.

They died for you.

Every single one of them died for you, and they thought it meant something.

My name is Carpenter. And I am still alive.

I have loved you so long.

I have tried to know you for so, so much longer.

And I'm done with you. Here and now. I'm not laying down my life for you.

I'm not dying for you, do you hear?

I'd rather die for nothing. My heart filled with nothing. My last death-rattles mocking your name.

Do something about that, if you can.

She turns back to FAULKNER, who's stunned.

FAULKNER:
Carpenter...

CARPENTER:
(Manically)
Pray with me, Faulkner. C'mon.

You lure him, I'll goad him.

Let's see if we can bring the fucker out of his hole. Let's see if we can hook him.

(Yelling)
Faulkner, *pray!*

FAULKNER:
(Obediently)
Trawler-Man of Tide and Flesh. Father in the Water..
You are the Mouth Devouring and the Mouth Returning,
You stand tall at the High Tide and crawl on your belly at the Low Tide.
We, your chosen faithful, beg for your deliverance,
For we find ourselves in grave danger and in need of swift currents to bear us on.

CARPENTER:
You hear that? You hear how much he loves you?

His whole thick head is filled with stories about you. Stories about all you have to offer him.

We hear her boots scuffing frantically at the floorboards.

CARPENTER:
I'll scuff your Wither Mark to shreds rather than use it! Look at that!

Where's your wrath? Where are your angels?
(Screaming)
Damn you, **come on out!**

Her voice echoes.

Silence.

A long silence.

It takes CARPENTER and FAULKNER a moment longer to realise it - but the cicadas have fallen quiet. We can no longer hear the gentle rush of the water.

FAULKNER:
Did that...do anything?

CARPENTER:
Something's different.

It's...gone quiet.

I can't hear the water.

FAULKNER:
(With sudden dread)
Wait.

Look at that.

CARPENTER:
(Narrating)
The White Gull river has drawn back from us.

We stand on the edge of the pier.

Beneath us, we can just make out the gentle, rhythmic slap of fish dying in the open air of the exposed river bed.

CARPENTER and FAULKNER's voices are filled with terror - but also resolution.

They know they're about to die.

CARPENTER:
What were you praying for, exactly?

FAULKNER:
A swift wind on our backs to bear us to safety.

You?

CARPENTER:

Like you said. Some kind of an ending.

FAULKNER:

(Gently)

That works, too.

CARPENTER:

You can't swim, Faulkner.

FAULKNER:

Sister Carpenter...you think that's going to make any kind of difference?

CARPENTER:

Probably not, no.

We can hear the distant sound of an onrushing wave.

Growing louder, and louder-

CAR, INT, NIGHT

-and then that sound becomes the howl of sirens, growing closer and closer.

We hear the police cars pulling up.

Distant shouts.

PAIGE, from inside her own car, is watching.

PAIGE:

(Quietly)

Okay, shit, shit, *shit-*

MARCEL'S CROSSING, EXT, NIGHT

We hear her open the car door and step out, slamming it behind her.

PAIGE:

(Bluffing wildly)

Well, it's about time you sorry bastards showed up! Call yourselves back-up?

All right, gather around - we've got two fugitives loose somewhere in the town.

My name's Investigating Officer Vaughn. I'll be running this operation.

First. I want a perimeter set up along the high street. Then I want officers going door-to-door, in pairs, to-

(Suddenly deflated)

-ah, well, that's just rotten luck, isn't it?

She's spotted something.

HAYWARD is getting out of one of the police cars.

He is, by this point, incredibly annoyed.

HAYWARD:

(Yelling at the other police officers)

Hey! What are you, stupid? She's not a cop, she's an accomplice!

Arrest her!

Thank you!

And then...I want...I want...

...what are you all staring at?

Nobody is listening to him.

HAYWARD:

(With sudden horror)

...what the hell is that?

And we hear the onrush of the tidal wave in the distance.

CARPENTER:

(Narrating)

We don't run.

We stand there, on the edge of the pier, and we gaze up into the open mouths of our oncoming god.

A vast, looming wave, rising high above the trembling banks, growing higher and higher with every passing second.

I can see twisted faces with empty eyes roiling in the foam. A cascade of stretching arms outstretched towards us from the heart of the tide.

First comes the raging torrent...

...and after the long silence.

For all of your mysteries, and offerings, and contradictions, my river...

Maybe you were never anything more than an ending waiting to happen to me.

(With finality)

All right, then.

If this is the only way you know how to let me go.

As the tide comes for us, I close my eyes-

The torrent grows louder and closer.

FAULKNER:

(Narrating)

-I keep my eyes open.

I can't help myself.

I want to see everything he has to show us.

And in the heart of the torrent, I am certain I can see -

(Straining desperately)

I can almost see-

We hear the rush of the torrent sweeping CARPENTER and FAULKNER up.

The crash as it hits the pier, splintering wood, tearing up the ferris wheel and the dodgem rink.

Back in the town, HAYWARD and PAIGE are horrified.

HAYWARD:

RUN!

PAIGE:

(Narrating)

And we run.

Scattering for our lives, the police and me together in a mad dash down the street, as the torrent comes for us.

We scramble upwards, hauling ourselves past windowsills and gutterings, up onto the rooftops of the town, allegiances forgotten

It isn't like I expect it to be.

Nothing is changed in the water's wake. Nothing is destroyed.

The river, if it has a motive...doesn't seem to care about hurting us.

It's content instead to make carnival, upending dodgems and cruisers side-by-side as it comes, sending the colossal ferris wheel careening down the street towards us and past us, until it finally loses momentum and topples down onto its side across the fields on the other side of the town-

We hear the crash. A car siren goes haywire as it's carried away by the tide.

HAYWARD:

(Narrating)

And as the water clears, we find ourselves staring at one another in bafflement...and relief.

Across the darkness, the lights of the town are flicking into life.

Residents are opening their windows. Gazing down in shock at the water sluicing all around them, the bizarre sight of a police cruiser that's been impaled by the long steel pole of a dodgem car.

Gradually, it dissipates, sluicing into the gutters.

The pier is gone. A few stray boards dangle and sway before the new emptiness.

And the river itself has emptied.

When the sun has risen, we clamber gingerly down into the sludge of the White Gull.

As we search throughout the morning, we find strange and inexplicable revelations, offerings that seem to have been delivered to mock us.

Ancient bodies, wrapped in rotten cloth, their flesh twisted and reshaped. Gulls flutter downwards every unattended moment to pick at their leathered flesh.

Fragments of clay pottery from a bygone age.

A crimson-rusted, inexplicably aged freight lorry, lying on its side in the mud, its cabin pocked with a decade's accumulation of black barnacles.

There's no sign of anything else.

The two fugitives have been dashed from the face of this earth.

Police sirens continue to wail in the distance.

We hear the crowing of gulls, high above us.

RADIO, INT, DAY

We hear the radio crackle as it finds the right station.

We have a new radio host, DIANE STONE - a replacement for SID WRIGHT.

She speaks with the same glib cheeriness.

DIANE STONE:

All right, that is seven o'clock!

And if you're just tuning in, this is Diane Stone - no matter where you may roam, you're never alone with Diane Stone.

The station has asked me to say a big, heartfelt thank-you to all of our faithful listeners for sticking with us after a difficult few weeks.

We're never going to take that loyalty for granted - which is why we've taken some extra precautions to ensure that this intimate connection between you and I, as your grateful host, can never again be manipulated by an act of illegal worship.

In the studio with me we have Dengis - care to say a few words, Dengis?

(Dengis does not)

- a very large man who comes with his own pair of adjustable noise-cancelling headphones and a very large cattle-gun - and if I should so much as attempt to ascend to sainthood without permission, he will instantly aim it towards the back of my head, and fire.

By the by, dear listeners, the bounty on our last host Sid Wright has increased to eighty thousand regular.

Please do keep your eyes peeled and your ears swaddled.

All right, it's time for our top stories of the day.

In the Western territories, a diplomatic battle rages over the fate of one Linger Straits citizen who was arrested in the aftermath of what is already being called the Bellwethers Abomination.

The suspect, who remains unnamed, is being held on suspicion of conspiracy to aid and abet the followers of false-faith river-god the Trawler-Man.

We understand that the Linger Straits are calling for her release - threatening severe political consequences if their demands are not met.

Meanwhile, the police continue to scour the White Gull for the bodies of two more fugitives who are understood to have perished while attempting an illegal ritual in the town of Marcel's Crossing.

(Brightly)

I'd like to give a very special shout-out to our new sponsor here at Greater Glottage Radio, the Man With The Blinding Bright Eyes Who Lurks Upon The Crooked Turn.

Every year he takes the lives of over ten thousand motorists in the Peninsula.

Lend him thanks...that it isn't you.

We tune towards a new station.

And we hear MASON's voice. He sounds triumphant as he preaches a sermon.

MASON:

Brothers, sisters, siblings. Children of the water.

I bring news of a great victory. Two of our disciples, acting together in the northern stretches of the Trawler-man's domain.

With neither pity nor hesitation, they called his hand forth and wreaked devastation upon our enemies.

The town of Bellwethers - chosen, of course, for its government facilities and military headquarters - laid to ruin. Returned to the water.

Other strange and magnificent revelations emerged from the silt to demonstrate the power of our faith.

I must warn you.

What comes next will be difficult. The authorities will seek to make an example of us.

But together - together, we shall weather that storm.

And with the river's wrath in our grasp, we shall recover lost ground once more.

Our family shall grow in numbers and strength. And in time, like the Trawler-man's high tide returning, we will find our way back to once-forgotten greatness.

(Paying tribute)

Sister Carpenter. Brother Faulkner.

Your focus, your resolve, your selfless sacrifice...these shall be the image in our minds and the word upon our lips as we march.

Rest now. Rest well, in the garden below.

Your names shall be written in the Verses.

Your story shall never be forgotten.

A moment of silence - and then we hear the fervent, rousing applause of the Parish worshippers.

The radio retunes and crackles again.

SID WRIGHT:

(Soothing)

If you can still hear me - if you're capable of listening to this -

Follow the sound of my voice.

Down the empty lanes, through the ravaged woods, into the corners of this world where they can no longer hear us.

We'll find a place together to lie down in the hollow, and sleep.

Our bodies will join together. Our hands will clasp.

Until there's no way of knowing whose dream belongs to whom.

The radio crackles again - and falls silent.

For a moment we might think that the episode has ended.

But then-

RIVERSIDE, EXT, DAY

-We hear the voice of CARPENTER.

She sounds weak. Exhausted. Nearly delirious.

CARPENTER:

(Narrating)

I open my eyes - and the light is excruciatingly bright.

I'm lying on my side, on a bower of broken reeds and mud. Soaking wet.

It must be close to sunrise.

Shivering.

My trousers and my hands are drenched in mud.

I blink back the pearls of silt from my eyes.

The river has washed me up on its shores.

I'm still...apparently myself.

That's an achievement, under the circumstances.

The sound of CARPENTER rousing herself from the reeds. The grass snaps beneath her weight as she stumbles onwards.

CARPENTER:

(Yelling deliriously)

Faulkner?

Faulkner?

Silence.

CARPENTER:

(Narrating)

Leg still hurts.

But there's a lightness to the pain now, a hysterical absence of weight.

That probably isn't a good sign.

I lift the trouser-leg, as carefully as I can.

The flesh looks...twisted. The bone feels like it's straining to be free.

I raise my hands to my head, and they come down bloodied.

I don't recognise where I am - where the river's carried me to.
Down-water, I think.

There's nobody else around.

I take one step forwards, and wobble. Nearly fall.

The second step feels worse, as I haul myself up through the mud,
over the flood bank, onto the roadside.

The landscape looks different here.

Rolling flats of dead bracken. And beyond, towering grey moorland
hills.

There's no sign of Faulkner, or Paige, or anyone. There are no cars
visible on the road.

I'm lost out here.

But what else can you do, but keep on going?

Just keep limping on.

There are statues along the road here. Identical statues, placed at
occasional intervals, every fifty paces. Long grass and weeds rising up
around their feet.

I collapse at one. Get back to my feet.

Just keep limping on.

The statues watch my progress through eyeless stone faces, their
clasped, long-fingered hands held in crossform.

I don't know what they mean. I have no way of interpreting the marks
scratched beneath the statues' feet.

There can be a god for almost anything.

Gods for sickness. Gods for good health.

And, I'm sure, there are gods for a lonely death, too.

We hear her, limping on.

CARPENTER:

(Narrating unhappily)

There's something walking behind me now.

Trailing me along the road.

It's a long way back, always just visible out of the corner of my eye.

A long way back, but getting closer.

And slowly, we begin to hear the unnatural whisper of the CAIRN MAIDEN.

An inhuman voice, rapidly hissing what sounds like a prayer or an incantation, the exact words purely indecipherable.

CARPENTER:

(Narrating)

It looks like a woman, or something which might have been a woman, long ago.

Draped in drifting white rags of cotton.

Its head is bowed and hidden.

Its greying arms are clasped before it, in crossform over its chest.

Its hands are unnaturally large, its fingers stretching and lingering and long.

I stop walking.

The thing that follows in my footsteps - well, it stops walking too, of course.

We hear CARPENTER stop walking.

CARPENTER:

(Aloud, ragged)

You want something from me, ma'am? Looking for directions?

Silence.

CARPENTER sighs, and then turns and begins to walk again.

The unnatural whisper gradually grows louder.

CARPENTER:

(Narrating)

Better to die like this, probably.

Better alone.

So they don't have to see you.

So you don't have to look at them when you go.

Like an old dog burrowing under the floorboards.

Up ahead on the roadside, there's the shape of an abandoned car,
and hope, pure hope, swells for a heartbeat...

...until you get a little closer, and you can see the true detail of the
rusted wreck.

Its passenger seat is dangling open.

Its bonnet is a broken shell.

Wildflowers are growing up through the wheels.

CARPENTER stops walking again.

The whisper is growing louder still.

CARPENTER:

(Aloud, ragged)

Just going to keep coming after me, aren't you?

Whatever you are.

Let's not drag this out. I'll wait for you here, yeah?

Rest my feet.

We hear the abandoned car door being yanked open.

CARPENTER:

(Narrating)

I'm tired. Honestly, there's that, more than anything else.

I collapse into the welcoming softness of the driver's seat.

Play with the radio, trying to catch a song, maybe. I'm not sure I want to hear any more voices.

The smiling figure is gaining on me.

I can see it in the cracked glass of the rear-view mirror, standing on the edge of the road.

Dirt is pouring through its long fingers, from out of its great shovel-like palms.

When I glance back again, it's closer still.

Three or four feet behind the car, its head still bowed.

I can see the edges of a smile upon its face.

I open the car door, wide and welcoming.

I kick off my boots, closing my eyes as my head sinks into the softness of the seat cushion, and I wait for it to catch up with me.

We can hear the sound of something strange creeping closer.

The unnatural, gurgling sound of the MAIDEN's whisper, so close now that it could be whispering in our ear.

CARPENTER:
(*Out loud, losing consciousness*)
Could be worse. All things considered.

There's not many of us, when you really get down to it, who...

...who even get to choose the thing that...

...the thing that eats us...

Her voice fades into exhausted silence.

We hear the wind softly howling for a while.

And with a thin crackle, one final song comes onto the radio to play us out.

END OF SEASON