

THE SILT VERSES, SEASON 3, CHAPTER 9

RADIO STATION BOOTH, INT, DAY

We hear background noise - gunfire, screaming.

A cheerful AUTOMATED VOICE sounds above. We get the suggestion that this has happened many times before.

AUTOMATED VOICE:

The emergency signal has been activated.

Remember to disable the radio tower and station controls before making your way to the panic chambers in an orderly fashion.

If a stranger approaches you, try not to look at anything they might show you or listen to anything they might try and say to you.

If you are concerned that you might be physically transformnig into the saint of an illicit god, remove yourself from the situation as quickly as possible and find a quiet space away from your co-workers.

The authorities are on their way. Rejoice.

The authorities are on their way-

-and then FAULKNER sits heavily in front of the controls and switches them off.

He takes a breath, adjusts the mic, and then speaks into it.

FAULKNER:

(Strongly, performatively)

Children of the Water.

This is High Prophet Faulkner.

I have made the decision to reject the Katabasian's title, since its wellspring is a place both polluted and foul.

And we have seized control of this radio tower to bring you an urgent message.

(Speechifying)

Well, I must confess, my friends; I have seen many terrible things in my time upon this earth, and yet...and yet I did not expect Greve nor the Downriver Council to be so dishonest in their scheming.

To declare **me** Roemont's assassin when they know, full well, that the agents of the Legislatures were responsible - well, it just shows where their loyalties truly lie, does it not?

We hear a banging on the booth window.

RANE:

(Muffled, trying to get FAULKNER's attention)

High Prophet-

FAULKNER:

(Thrown off his game)

I, ah, I-

I will not stand by as-

RANE:

(Muffled, overlapping)

High Prophet, the memory aid-

FAULKNER:

(To himself)

Oh? Oh, yes.

(More normally, with a bit of a rush in his voice)

To, uh, recap, as we know not all of you have been keeping up with our regular broadcasts-

High Katabasian Roemont is dead, assassinated by government forces.

The Downriver Council has seized control and in secret they are embarking upon a reckless and, and treacherous mission to sell our faith over to the government.

They would **claim**, if they thought to share their plans with you, that legalisation will free us from the wartime draft. But when freedom means forgetting the slights we have suffered over the long decades, when freedom means our god changing beyond all recognition or understanding...

...then brethren, that's no kind of freedom at all.

But there are some who are resisting this tyranny.

First and foremost amongst them - I, High Prophet Faulkner, chosen by the Trawler-man-

(Now a bit irritated that he has to remind people)

-I, I, was responsible for the return of the Wither Mark and the revelations at Bellwethers, you might have heard that was the Linger Straits, but that's untrue, that's all been debunked-

(Getting back on track)

These people believe our god and our faith can be altered to their whim and to their design. Tamed. Shackled. Broken.

But the Trawler-man is a fixed and immutable truth and not some, some postmodern plaything or commercial puppet, and you and I, my friend, we know that as a certainty.

He cannot be tamed, and nor can we.

If you seek to join the truly faithful, the true Children of the Water, come find us in the north. Look for the marks, look for the signs. Seek us in the old refuges.

We will not change. We will not turn. We will remain steadfast as rock, as eternal as the tides themselves.

I did not choose to lead our last resistance.

Truthfully, I sometimes imagine a, a different life for myself. A free life, unbound by duty and the weight of responsibility, where I could live in peace.

My old man worked on a wind farm out south.

(Interrupted)

-could live in peace, and, uh-

RANE is banging on the window again.

RANE:

(Muffled)

High Prophet! High Prophet!

FAULKNER:

(Annoyed)

I already did the damn recap, sibling!

RANE:

(Muffled)

High Prophet, the response team's coming up the road!

FAULKNER returns to his mic.

FAULKNER:

We will remind them of the truths at the heart of our faith. Dark waters and crawling things.

Fateful offerings and reluctant gifts.

We have hallowed the workers at this radio tower as an act of defiance against the Legislatures.

They stride tall now upon many limbs, screeching the name of our god across the floodplains, adding their voices to ours.

When the authorities descend upon this place - in less than a minute from now - they will defend it with the fury of the true believer. With fearless courage, and flawless faith, and as equals.

Look to them as your example, my Children - my family.

No more secrets. No more hidden arrangements. No more Katabasians in locked rooms deciding what's best for the rest of us.

Honesty. Equality. Faith. And fury. That's how we'll win.

The Legislatures will suffer for even thinking they could take the clear waters of the Trawler-man from us.

Watch for the proof of this in the days to come.

The river rises.

And with that, he turns and goes, dashing out into the corridor-

CORRIDOR, INT, DAY

-passing by moaning SAINTS who are already beginning to transform-

FAULKNER:
(Breathless and yelling)
 Come on, Sibling! Come on!

Back to the cars! Hurry!

They burst through the doors and out into the sunshine-

RADIO TOWER, EXT, DAY

-and pound down through the gravel to the cars.

Behind them, we can hear the wailing of sirens and the baying of CRAB-SAINTS in the distance.

FAULKNER and RANE are both laughing hysterically as they reach the cars and slam the doors.

CAR, INT, DAY

We can hear the CRAB-SAINTS still roaring as the cars pull away-

FAULKNER and RANE are both exhilarated and laughing.

RANE:
(Trying to get FAULKNER's attention)
 High Prophet Faulkner!

High Prophet Faulkner!
(As an excited call-and-response)
 These are the Silt Verses!

FAULKNER:
(Exulting)
 And I name our disciples thus! B. Narr!

RANE:
 H.R. Owen!

FAULKNER:
 Steve Shell! And Aud Andrews!

Up ahead, RANE's walkie-talkie bleeps. They lean forward and pick it up.

RANE listens. We can faintly hear a voice on the other end.

However, RANE doesn't answer but is urgently listening to the other end of the line. The mood has turned decidedly tense.

FAULKNER notices.

RANE:
(Into the walkie-talkie, urgently)
 Come in.

Repeat that, please. When?
 (Growing worried)
 OK, and what's happening now?

Mmhm. Get somewhere safe, please.

Signal's about to drop out. Good luck and speak soon.

The river rises.

FAULKNER:
 Sibling, uh...Sibling Rane?
(Leaning forward)
 Is something wrong?

Rane?

RANE puts their foot down on the accelerator.

RANE:
(Suddenly serious and urgent)
 They hit the Gulch.

Late last night. Another government raid.

Hold tight, High Prophet.

FAULKNER reacts.

FAULKNER:

(Trying to persuade himself)

That's...that's fine. Sooner than we expected, but - we knew this might be coming.

We had the evacuation protocols prepared. We were watching for their approach.

RANE doesn't answer.

FAULKNER:

We followed the evacuation protocols, Sibling Rane. Didn't we?

RANE:

I'm not sure yet, High Prophet. It sounds as if some of our people tried to hold out - to protect the sacred Gulch against the blasphemous foe.

FAULKNER:

(Stunned)

Did our defences hold?

(Not getting an answer)

Sibling Rane. Did...did our defences hold?

No answer.

They did not.

CAR, EXT, DAY

-and the car roars on down the road, into the silence.

PARACLETE'S GULCH, INT, NIGHT

FAULKNER and RANE crunch through the rubble.

The GULCH has been decimated. Small fires still burn everywhere.

FAULKNER:

(Calling out)

Siblings? Siblings, is anyone alive in here?

RANE:

(Distantly)

Call out if anyone's alive!

Children of the Water!

FAULKNER:

Where are you? Please, speak up if you're there!

-and distantly, we hear a voice.

FAULKNER:

(Calling to RANE)

I think I hear somebody!

FAULKNER presses on through the rubble, into the remnants of MASON's study, pushing the ruined door to one side-

MASON'S STUDY, INT, DAY

-and a radio is playing upon MASON's desk.

It's a message, left for him to find. The voice of GREVE is playing.

KATABASIAN GREVE:

(Calmly, coldly, on the radio)

To those who still count themselves amongst the followers of Brother Faulkner.

You should understand this one fact about your prophet above all; he is a liar.

Brother Faulkner lied about Bellwethers, a genuine miracle - and one which he bore no responsibility for.

He lied about the Wither Mark, which he claims was delivered unto him by the Trawler-man; it was not.

He lied about the death of Katabasian Mason, which was carried out by his own treacherous hand. He lied about the death of High Katabasian Roemont, a true martyr of the faith.

Now he is lying about the Katabasians' Council and our efforts to save our people from annihilation.

He lies because he does not, in truth, care about the people who took him in and gave him a home.

In his very heart of hearts, he does not even care about the Trawler-man.

He does not care about his mentors, his disciples, his friends, and we know this as a certainty because he has betrayed each of them in turn to continue on his own selfish path towards power and recognition.

Brother Faulkner cares about himself, and the deluded image of himself that he keeps fixed in his mind.

He is his own one true god, his own false and shining idol.

He is, fundamentally, alone in his ambitions, and there is nobody he will not sacrifice to achieve them.

(With finality)

My message for all of you, brethren, is this.

Let him die alone, as he lived.

In the name of swiftly concluding this continued strife and civil war, and for the sake of our people's unity and safety, the Council has unanimously agreed that we will be reaching out to the Legislatures of the Peninsula, to request a formal ceasefire and a potential path to recognition of our faith-

FAULKNER stands there, dumbfounded.

We hear RANE calling, from a distance,

RANE:

(Distant, breathless)

High Prophet Faulkner!

Faulkner, where are you?

RANE comes running into the ruined room.

RANE:

(Breathless)

High Prophet, the jeeps are gone. The supplies from the dreaming pools have been taken, too.

I think most of our people got away

We need to find a safe harbour somewhere upriver. Try and make contact with them-

FAULKNER:

(Under his breath, weakly and numbly)

How many stayed behind?

RANE stops in their tracks.

RANE:

(Baffled)

What?

RANE stares at him for a moment.

RANE:

We need to get you somewhere safe.

(Grabbing FAULKNER)

High Prophet.

(Pleadingly)

High Prophet Faulkner, please **come on-**

RANE forcibly drags FAULKNER away-

CAR, INT, DAY

The car is on the road. The background sound is muffled.

FAULKNER is slowly whispering under his breath, repeating GREVE's words to himself, quietly and obsessively picking over them, recognising the truth in them.

It sounds like a prayer.

FAULKNER:

(Softly, to himself)

You should understand this one fact about your prophet above all; he is a liar.

He lies because he does not care about the people who took him in and gave him a home.

In his heart of hearts, he does not even care about the Trawler-man.

He does not care about his mentors, his disciples, his friends.

Brother Faulkner cares about himself.

He is alone.

Let him **die** alone-

In the background, we hear RANE's voice, again muffled.

RANE:

(Muffled)

High Prophet.

High Prophet Faulkner-

FAULKNER:

(Muffled)

What - what?

He blinks awake. The car has stopped moving.

RANE is staring at him.

FAULKNER:

Uh, just.

Communing with the, uh, the Trawler-man-

(Giving up on the lie)

What's happening?

RANE gives him a confused look.

RANE:

We're here, High Prophet.

FAULKNER undoes his seatbelt and opens the car door. He steps out.

FOREST, EXT, DAY

We're standing in front of FAULKNER's childhood home. Birdsong can faintly be heard in the distance.

He stares up at the little shack, quietly moved.

In spite of everything, it feels good to be home. And so he begins to perform again, not entirely convinced himself, but regaining his confidence as he begins to speak.

FAULKNER:

Well.

Hasn't changed much.

(Admiring the shack)

You're actually the first to see it, Sibling Rane.

You alone of all the Trawler-man's people.

This is...it's a historic moment.

Maybe - maybe this place could be a temple someday, you know? When all of this is over.

Pilgrims could travel for miles to find it. A generation-defining place of worship.

This is where I grew up.

The old water-butt out in the woods - I think maybe, uh, it was out in that direction - that's where our god first came to me.

That's where I submerged my head beneath the surface and I first heard his music calling up to me from black and sodden depths.

RANE:

(Sincere)

Wondrous.

FAULKNER:

Yes, it was. I remember, it was beautiful. Utterly magnificent.

It was music that - music that changed you, Sibling Rane. It was the sound of certainty, the voice of truth.

The Drowning Song.

RANE:
(Sincerely interested)
 Do you still listen to it?

FAULKNER doesn't answer for a moment.

Then he strides forward, changing the topic.

FAULKNER:
 Doesn't look like much, does it?
(Pointing up at a window)
 We all slept in the same room until I was nine, my brothers and me.

Then Dad spent three weeks one summer putting together the extension because he said we were all getting too big.
(Chuckling softly)
 First night that Charlie slept in it, it came crashing down and spilled rainwater on his head, and he, uh-

FAULKNER, thinking of Charlie, trails softly off.

RANE is watching him cautiously.

RANE:
 Are you...certain you want this, High Prophet?

We have other refuges upriver.

FAULKNER:
(Shrugging, trying to be optimistic)
 This is the safest place I could possibly be.

Nobody in the Parish knows it exists - except for you, except for me.

RANE:
 Not Sister Carpenter?

FAULKNER:
(Lying)
 No. No, of course not.

I'm trusting you with my life, Sibling Rane. As I never trusted her fully.

It'll feel fitting, when they tell it later on.

From his own childhood home, the young High Prophet coordinated the retaliatory attacks.

He gathered the true faithful and shepherded them towards a new refuge. He began the faith's rebirth, and in doing so, he was himself reborn.

Silence.

RANE:
(With a little nervous curiosity)
 High Prophet Faulkner.

I've been wondering. Did you...did you mean what you said during the broadcast?

FAULKNER:
(A little guiltily)
 ...when?

RANE:
 You said that you wished sometimes that...that you had not been chosen.

You said that you wished, at times, that the Trawler-man had never spoken to you, and that you could live an ordinary life away from it all.

In a place like this.

FAULKNER may be lying when he speaks next. Or he may just not quite realise that he means what he's saying.

FAULKNER:
 Yes, I meant that.

RANE:
(Relieved)
 It meant a great deal to hear you say that, High Prophet.

It's meant a great deal to me to stand alongside you through all of this.

When - when I was young, I have to confess, I used to dream that I myself had been chosen by the Trawler-man for some great and terrible purpose.

I yearned to hear our god's voice in my head, for him to sing out to me clear and plain that he would lead our people back to glory, just as he did to you-

(Noticing that FAULKNER is stunned by this)

Have I offended you, High Prophet?

FAULKNER:

No. No, I...I remember Sister Thurrocks telling me something similar once.

RANE:

I suppose every young child feels that way at one time or another. We're all alike.

We all want to believe that there's something unique about us, that there's a meaningful destiny in store for us.

And for the great majority of us, growing up means a final shedding of that absurd childishness.

A pause as FAULKNER takes this in.

FAULKNER:

Well said.

RANE:

(Meaning it as a compliment)

But I'm glad, looking back - so truly glad - that it was you who was chosen, in the end, and not me.

FAULKNER takes this in the wrong spirit - as if it's meant to indicate that he's cursed.

FAULKNER:

(Cautious and nervous)

What - what do you mean?

RANE:

(Sincerely)

Only that I could not bear the weight, as you can.

I realise now that to be truly special is an unbearable fate, that...there is a terror in being chosen.

I would have given up in your place, I think. I would have drowned myself in deep waters, or I would have fled.

To have the fixed gaze of a god upon you, to be forever staring back at its reflection, to hear the truths that others would go mad in hearing...

Your resilience, your courage - it's a shining example for all of us to follow.

You must have an extraordinary heart, High Prophet, to carry so much in it.

And I do believe that-

They break off with a little gasp, staring oddly at FAULKNER.

FAULKNER:

(Struck to the core)

Why are you looking at me like that?

But RANE is staring over FAULKNER's shoulder.

RANE:

High Prophet, there's...there's someone else here.

Look.

FAULKNER turns.

FAULKNER'S FATHER is standing in the woods on the other side of the house, gently watering his vegetables - and humming absent-mindedly under his breath.

FAULKNER:

No. No, that's...that's impossible...

(Weakly)

Pop?

(Calling out)

Pop?

Dad?

He breaks into a run, running into his father, grabbing the old man by the arm.

FAULKNER:

(Breathless and stunned)

Dad! Dad! Dad, what - what are you doing here?

FAULKNER's FATHER stares at him, apparently unsurprised to see him.

He's a little hesitant, a little vague, his mind elsewhere.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(Faintly and amiably)

Oh.

You back already, Eddie?

(Faintly, weakly)

C'mon. Lend a hand. We're picking strawberries.

Your Uncle Just's coming to visit us.

-and cut.

KITCHEN, INT, DAY

FAULKNER is on the phone to his older brother EDDIE.

FAULKNER is outraged and distressed - and too angry and upset to recognise how hypocritical he is.

EDDIE:

(Defensively, on the phone)

-we took him in three times in the past three months. We put him in the spare room, we fed him, we tried to keep him safe.

Every single time he'd find his way back downstairs while we were both at work, he'd leave the front door open on his way out, and he'd come back out here.

Hitch-hiking, wandering on the roads. It wasn't safe!

So we bring him food and potable water, I come and I check in on him every weekend and I pay the damn phone bill so we can check in with him every day.

FAULKNER:
Every day?

EDDIE:
(On the phone, defensively)
Well, there's been power cuts-

FAULKNER:
(Through gritted teeth)
So...Eddie, we just leave our dad out here by himself? In the woods?
Without anyone to take care of him?

Is that what we do?

EDDIE:
(On the phone, still furious)
He's not my **prisoner**, godsdamn it.

He's fine out here. He tends to his vegetables, he potters about. He remembers to eat, even if he doesn't always remember to wash.

He's got his routine. He seems happy. This is where he wants to be.

We've been looking at care homes. Right now, we can't afford to put him in one, and we've been hearing some nasty things about the fine print for a lot of the government franchises.

(Pointedly)
Since you're **back**, maybe we could talk about splitting the cost.

He's mobile for now, but dementia is progressive, so this is only ever going to be a stop-gap.

When it gets worse, he won't be able to keep up the escape act-

FAULKNER:
(Forcefully)
It's not dementia, Eddie.

EDDIE:
It comes on early sometimes. It can be brought on by trauma, you know, and he's had a stressful life.
(Sympathetically)
He might get confused about you, Richie.

Just to, just to prepare you, he might get confused, so if he calls you by the wrong name, or-

FAULKNER:

(A little more calmly)

No. No, he **is** confused, but he hasn't done that.

He actually...doesn't recognise me.

He thinks I'm you.

Silence for a moment.

FAULKNER:

Has he had anyone else come to see him?

EDDIE:

(On the phone, shortly)

Who else would there be?

FAULKNER:

He keeps telling me he's expecting a visitor.

EDDIE:

(On the phone)

Maybe he thinks it's you. He asks about you a lot.

(As a warning)

Rich, the early-onset stuff, it's usually hereditary-

FAULKNER:

It's not dementia, Eddie!

He says it's Uncle Just coming to visit. You know what that means?

EDDIE:

(On the phone)

Uncle Just? Uh...yeah, he raised Dad, didn't he? I don't remember him.

Don't think we ever met him.

Dad never talked much, you know.

Man was a mystery to all of us.

(As a little joke)

That's probably why you and I, we're so good at communicating.

Hard to fix the problem when you can't find your way back to the source, isn't it?

FAULKNER does not reply. A long silence passes.

EDDIE:
(*On the phone*)
Are you, uh...

Listen, Richie. Are you staying out there for long?

This weekend, I'm on overtime, and I don't know if you've been keeping up with the news, but it's **not** a great time to lose your job.

(*Quietly and meaningfully*)

If your trouble...if that's all finished, if you can keep your head down...

...It'd be a real weight off my chest if I thought I could rely on you.

Silence.

FAULKNER:
(*Trying to be confident about it*)
Sure. You can rely on me, Eddie.

That trouble I was having, it's all wrapped up, and I was planning on being down this way for a good while as it is.

I'll take good care of him.
(*Less confidently*)
Where, uh - where do you pick up his groceries?

HIGHWAY, EXT, DAY

Traffic whizzes violently past FAULKNER as he trudges on through the pouring rain, clutching grocery bags.

One car honks angrily at him as it passes.

FAULKNER:
(*Yelling back*)
I'm on the hard shoulder, asshole!

KITCHEN, INT, DAY

FAULKNER is chopping vegetables. Outside, it's raining.

Across the room, FAULKNER'S FATHER is sitting in an armchair, watching the garden.

FAULKNER is harried, and over the rest of the episode, we should feel the increased tension and exhaustion of being a carer.

FAULKNER:

(Calling out, trying to get a response)

We're having a curry for lunch, Dad. Lot of vegetables, good healthy fare.

Brain food, OK?

And there's chocolates on the side, too, if you want 'em. The good stuff.

I thought you and I, we deserved a treat.

That'll be nice, right?

(Not getting a response)

You OK, Pop? Just watching out the window?

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(Vaguely)

Watching for Uncle Just's truck.

Think I should go down there, Charlie? See if he's got lost?

He'll expect us to go out and help. Do our part.

FAULKNER:

(Patiently)

Not right now, Dad, it's raining. Wait for it to clear.

On the other side of the room, the phone begins to ring.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(From the chair)

Phone's ringing.

FAULKNER'S FATHER gets to his feet.

FAULKNER:

Leave it. I'll get to it.

Dad. I said I'll get to it-

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

Might be Uncle Just-

FAULKNER drops the knife and lunges across the room to the phone before his dad can reach it.

FAULKNER:

(Losing patience)

I've got it. Go sit down. Eat some chocolate.

FAULKNER gets the phone under his chin and continues to cut.

FAULKNER:

(Into the phone)

Yeah, it's me, Sibling. Report in, please.

RANE:

(On the phone, breathless)

I've made contact with our people upriver, High Prophet. They are relieved to hear you're safe - not that they ever doubted.

The evacuation from the Gulch was taxing, but through it all, yours was the name in their minds and upon their lips as they prayed.

They consider it a proven miracle, an act of intervention by the Trawler-man, that you were away on pilgrimage when the government raids began-

FAULKNER:

(A little nervously)

They shouldn't- they shouldn't think so highly of me, Sibling Rane.

Our movement is more than just one man, after all.

RANE:

(On the phone)

Your humility is just one among your many virtues, High Prophet.

FAULKNER:

What else is there?

RANE:

(On the phone)

The scouts you sent out have returned. They found what they were looking for.

A second refuge upriver - high in the hills, in the mists of the polluted lands.

FAULKNER perks up at this.

FAULKNER:

The Grand Aquifer?

RANE:

(On the phone)

It could be. They **think it could be**.

An abandoned old temple close to the river's source - if not the actual wellspring, then perhaps one of several-

FAULKNER:

How does it look?

A moment's silence.

RANE:

(On the phone)

A little dank, and partially collapsed. Smaller than we would have expected. It'll accommodate all of us, but it'll be a tight fit.

There **is** an old sacrificial pool and meeting hall that might have been grand, once upon a time-

FAULKNER:

(Urgently)

You must **make** it magnificent, Rane. Do you understand me?

Dig it out if you have to, carve fresh mosaics into the walls, but make it look like it ought to.

This will be a new home for our faith, a new beginning. We need it to look the part.

And get onto another radio broadcast about this, OK? Ensure word gets out to our people. "High Prophet Faulkner has found the Grand Aquifer."

Any news on the, um, legalisation announcement? Is it going ahead?

RANE:

We don't know yet. Brother Philly's team are in position and he's keeping in daily contact.

He'll let us know as soon as he thinks it's expected.

FAULKNER looks up.

FAULKNER's FATHER has got up and opened the door.

FAULKNER:

(Yelling)

Pop! Leave the door alone, please.

(Losing his patience)

Stay in here with me. You'll **see** his truck if it comes.

(Into the phone)

Just one moment, please, Sibling.

(Calling again)

Dad, it's raining-

DINNER TABLE, INT, DAY

FAULKNER and FAULKNER'S FATHER are eating in silence, side by side.

There's no conversation between them.

FAULKNER:

(Loudly and clearly)

You enjoying your lunch, Pop?

And unexpectedly, FAULKNER'S FATHER responds with surprising calm, authority, and clarity. He's far more lucid than he has been in previous scenes.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(A little grumpy)

You don't need to talk to me like I'm a godsdamned idiot, you know. I've still got my wits about me.

Curry's delicious, thank you.

You're a good cook, Richie. Can't imagine where you got that from.

(Reflecting on the food)

Maybe a little more pepper next time? To give it a kick?

FAULKNER:

(A little stunned)

Sure, I can add more pepper next time.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

Did you catch the korf this weekend? Who was playing?

FAULKNER watches his dad very carefully. Then he asks,

FAULKNER:

When did you say we were expecting Uncle Just again?

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(Calmly, with a snort of amusement)

Him?

He's been dead for years, Richie. Gods. We don't - we don't talk about him.

(To himself)

Damn funny thing to ask about. Let it lie.

FAULKNER simply doesn't know what to say to this.

BEDROOM, INT, NIGHT

Later that night. For a second we hear FAULKNER snoring - and then he wakes up.

He can hear footfalls on the floorboards outside his room.

FAULKNER:

(Calling)

Pop? Is that you?

KITCHEN, INT, NIGHT

FAULKNER enters the kitchen - and FAULKNER's FATHER is furiously sweeping the floor.

FAULKNER'S FATHER is far more frantic and uncertain than we've seen him - and there's a new undercurrent of fear in his voice.

FAULKNER:

(Softly but a little frazzled)

Hey. Hey, why aren't you in bed? It's late.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(Urgently hissing)

Got to get things ready, Eddie. Got to make things right for Uncle Just, when he comes.

He doesn't like it when things are a mess. Don't want him getting upset with us. Don't want him shouting at us. Don't want him getting his walking-stick.

Come on, get a broom. Come help.

FAULKNER:

(Losing his patience, sentence by sentence)

Nobody's coming, Pop. Put the broom down and come back to bed.

You need to sleep. I need to sleep.

Uncle Just is dead. You told me that yourself.

Please. Stop sweeping and come to bed.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

If he comes home late and things are a mess, he'll be furious with us. He's going to shout.

Better to get it done now, set everything to rights-

FAULKNER:

Come to bed, right now-

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(Growing frantic, overlapping)

Uncle Just's going to be angry if he comes home to a mess, Eddie.

He's going to shout, he's going to shout, he's going to shout, and he'll fetch the box!

No, he's going to shout! He's going to be angry, he's going to shout, he'll fetch the box!

FAULKNER tries to grab the broom from him.

FAULKNER:
(Nearly yelling)
He's not coming!

Dad! Come to bed! Just put it down and come to bed-

The sound cuts out.

KITCHEN, INT, DAY

It's quiet and the daytime again. FAULKNER, softly exhausted, is speaking to RANE again.

FAULKNER:
So how many now?

RANE:
(On the phone)
More than six hundred. We've begun excavating the lower levels of the Aquifer to accommodate everyone.
(Very thrilled)
The newcomers, High Prophet, they're quite extraordinary - you said that we'd attract true believers, and bait and flesh, we've done just that.
(Marvelling)
These people never trusted the Katabasians' Council to begin with; they've known for generations that these people should not be allowed to speak for the faith.

There's an entire caravan of pilgrims from the Order of the Sunken Lugs - did you ever hear of them? They believe that no truth worth hearing is spoken into air.

So they wear, sort of, fish-bowls over their heads, and they make the sounds of the water-

FAULKNER:

(Lying - this sounds absurd)

They - they sound wonderful. Exactly the sort of people we're looking for.

(Coming to the point)

Sibling Rane, uh - have you ever had a family member who's forgotten themselves?

Like dementia? Or...something else?

RANE:

(On the phone)

My great-aunt, once.

I was very young, but I remember she was an elder of the faith, and everyone said it was a great pity to see her forget the verses that she'd once been able to recite from heart.

FAULKNER sits back. He vents his worry and impatience a little.

FAULKNER:

It's not...it's not the forgetting that frightens me, you know?

It's the going back.

It's the idea that you might have made so much progress in life, that you could...have come so far, yet still find yourself reduced to one terrible moment when you were young and helpless.

To become trapped as a frightened child again, and never to be able to move beyond it. Unable to overcome it.

RANE:

(On the phone)

He's bad, then?

FAULKNER:

He..."has good days and bad days." That's what they say, isn't it?

On the good days you can't quite believe in the bad. You think he must be putting on a performance.

He's himself, and then he's not. And it gets so much worse at night.

I haven't slept.

It's like he keeps slipping into bad dreams.
(With a little soft frustration - thinking of when his dad abandoned him)
 And you know, I'd have things to **say** to him.

He made plenty of mistakes.

He left me alone in this damn house when I was too young to take care of myself. To this day, I've never heard him say sorry, I've never had him explain himself to me.

I've got grievances, I've got questions I need answers to.

I've dreamt of running into him again, of...saying these things to him, of letting him know how much he hurt me, and he wouldn't be able to escape from it.

He'd have to face my judgement on him.

Now what am I going to do, yell at him about something he can't remember doing?

Demand answers he's not capable of giving me?

I don't even understand what he's saying half the time.

RANE:

(On the phone)

What they say is, you have to meet him where he is.

He might be 30 or 40 years in the past, he might be talking to people who are dead or gone. It doesn't matter.

Trying to snap him out of it won't work. So you have to go out and meet him in his world. Join him in his story.

FAULKNER:

But what if his past is a nightmare? What if he's trying to escape it, but he can't?

How can I join him in a story that's causing him pain?

(Spotting something outside the window)

Just - just give me a moment, Sibling Rane.

Shit. Think he's fallen down. One moment.

(Yelling)
Dad! Hey, Dad!

FAULKNER drops the phone and goes running out.

WOODS, EXT. DAY

-FAULKNER comes running out.

FAULKNER:
(Yelling)
Pop! Pop!

FAULKNER'S FATHER is lying amongst the leaves, breathing hard, quivering with terror.

FAULKNER:
(Trying to get him up)
You OK, you hurt?

What happened?

FAULKNER's FATHER looks up. Then he says, softly and trembling-

FAULKNER'S FATHER:
(With quiet terror)
He's here, Eddie.

Uncle Just. He's arrived.

He's in the trees.

Can you see him, Eddie?

FAULKNER looks up.

And we hear a sudden, horrifying sting. A FIGURE is watching them silently from amongst the trees.

FAULKNER:
(Stunned and horrified)
Yes. I can see him.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

He's going to shout.

*-and as if on cue, we hear a horrible, drawn-out, inhuman SCREAM echoing through the trees.
UNCLE Just is here.*

FAULKNER:

(Urgently, getting his father up on his feet)

Come on. Get inside. Get inside, quick.

Dad. Move faster. I need you to move faster-

Cut.

KITCHEN, INT, DAY

FAULKNER is on the phone to EDDIE.

EDDIE is sceptical. FAULKNER is frantic and terrified.

EDDIE:

(On the phone)

Well, what **kind** of angel?

FAULKNER:

I don't know what it is, but it's in the woods, and it's watching the house.

It's not a person.

-it's the visitor he's been expecting, Eddie.

But it's not Uncle Just, it's not human. It doesn't look human.

I don't know if it's a god of death of terror, or, or, something else,
something raised by his own damn memories and his forgetting, but it's
here, and it's after our dad.

EDDIE:

(On the phone)

A god of death?

FAULKNER:

Yeah. Yeah. Someone told me about them once. They, they haunt your
steps, they trail after you, and they keep getting closer.

We saw it. Dad and I, we both saw it-

EDDIE doesn't reply.

FAULKNER:

...Eddie, you believe me, don't you?

EDDIE:

(On the phone, accusatory)

You always used to tell us you could see things out in the woods, Richie.
You were always playing games with us.

FAULKNER:

It's not a game.

We need to get him out of here. You need to come and pick him up.

A moment of silence. EDDIE is reluctant and a little angry - he thinks FAULKNER is handing off the responsibility to him.

EDDIE:

(On the phone)

Well, where's **your** car?

FAULKNER:

I got dropped off.

EDDIE:

(On the phone)

Can they come and pick you up again?

FAULKNER:

No, they're -

(Giving up on the explanation)

Eddie, I need **you** to come get him and take him away from here.

Silence for a moment. The two brothers are too angry over too much to come to an agreement here.

EDDIE:

(On the phone, annoyed)

And then what happens next? I'm back to taking care of him by himself?

I...I drag him back to my apartment so you can be left alone in his house?

FAULKNER:

(Frantic)

I'm not playing games with you. I'm not **lying**.

EDDIE:

(Overlapping, on the phone)

You always lie to me. You can't stop lying to me-

FAULKNER:

Something's after him and I don't know how long he has.

(Pleading)

You'll be saving his life.

If you come now, Eddie, I promise you, you'll be saving his life-

EDDIE is furious and exhausted.

He takes a breath, and then makes his point clear.

EDDIE:

(On the phone)

Listen, I'm working the night shift tonight. They got me on overtime.

Because they're short-staffed right now, and because they will tear up my contract if I don't keep smiling and telling my manager I'm happy to pitch in.

That's my priority. I can't live in your world, Richie.

I can't live with you and Dad amongst the gods and angels and the amateur dramatics, because I have to live **here**.

And it's killing me. Day in, day out.

You want to come save **me**?

A long silence.

EDDIE:

(On the phone, relenting)

Look. I can try and get a day off tomorrow.

I'll drive out, come pick him up, maybe we can all go to lunch. Have a proper conversation.

It feels like we're overdue, you and I, for a long and honest talk.

FAULKNER:
(Thoughtfully)
Tomorrow.
(Thinking, scheming)
OK, OK, tomorrow. That's fine.

EDDIE:
(On the phone)
If not tomorrow, maybe the day after-

FAULKNER:
(Firmly)
We'll see you tomorrow morning, Eddie. I'm looking forward to it.

-We hear the phone go down.

KITCHEN, EXT, DAY

-and it goes back up.

FAULKNER:
(Urgently)
Sibling Rane.

I need some warding marks.

A moment's silence.

RANE:
(On the phone)
I'm sorry, High Prophet?

FAULKNER:
Warding marks, defensive sigils. Anything that might keep a god at bay.
Not just ours - anyone's. As many as possible.

I want you to speak to the archivist, gather as many as you can for me. I need them by tonight.

RANE:
(On the phone, a little shocked)
 The sigils of the false faiths?

FAULKNER:
(Calmly)
 It's not blasphemy if the High Prophet does it, Sibling Rane. Get me those sigils.

I'll take 'em, I'll use 'em, I don't care what I'm speaking to, so long as it's a god that answers.

And then I need you to send a car. Come and pick us both up. As soon as you can.

A moment's silence.

RANE:
(On the phone)
 I'll see what I can do, of course. Give me a couple of hours, High Prophet.

KITCHEN, INT, DAY

FAULKNER is frantically sketching prayer-marks across the doors and windows.

He is enthusiastic, and wild, and perhaps starting to lose his mind a little.

FAULKNER'S FATHER is in his chair again.

FAULKNER:
(Excitedly, as he draws)
 So they call this the Ox-Bow's Horns.

The Trawler-man, his watery embrace will surround and protect us on all sides, as if we are an island unto ourselves.

Looks beautiful, doesn't it?
(Beginning to sketch another mark)
 And we've got another mark out in the corridor, and a third line of defence at the bathroom door.

This is a prayer-mark to a licenced wind-god - you'll like that, won't you, Dad? A wind-god like back at the farm.

It's meant to blow back any intruders with the, with the force of a hurricane.

It's what the government's using in the war, I think - you know, up on the coast? So you know it's good, it's been tested.

(Glancing up at FAULKNER'S FATHER)

What you looking at, Dad? He still out there?

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(Absently)

Just watching for Uncle Just.

FAULKNER:

Well, let me know if you see him, Pop - OK?

(Firmly)

And don't go outside. We're not going out to meet him. He's not getting either of us.

(Chuckling maniacally)

Uncle Just...fuck Uncle Just!

He's not welcome here. He's not getting in-

Suddenly, the windowsills rattle. The wind howls. It sounds very much like the SHOUT of UNCLE Just.

FAULKNER'S FATHER gasps in shock and whimpers wordlessly.

FAULKNER:

(Soothingly)

Just the wind, Dad. Just the wind.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

He'll be here soon.

FAULKNER:

(Excitedly and angrily)

Fuck Uncle Just, I said! We're not going to let him get you, Pop, you understand?

He's not coming in. I've made us safe.

(Trying to be enthusiastic)

All right, so we're going to sleep on the kitchen floor tonight. You and me, we're going to - we're going to have a sleepover, we're going to both stay in here, so we're together.

And then Eddie's coming to pick us up in the morning, and we're all going for lunch.

(Realising something)

Fuck. I need to cook us dinner.

(Frustrated and taking it out on his father)

When did you last eat, Dad? If you're hungry, you need to tell me, OK?

(Not getting an answer)

I'll put something on.

FAULKNER, increasingly exhausted and frazzled, goes to the stove and begins to rattle pots.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(Staring out of the window)

He's in the trees. I can see him. He's brought his walking-stick.

FAULKNER looks up urgently.

He runs over and closes the curtains.

FAULKNER:

Don't look at his face.

Dad. Please don't look at his face. Come away from the window.

Come help me with dinner. That's what you're going to focus on.

FAULKNER'S FATHER has picked up the broom again from the side.

FAULKNER:

(Furious and exhausted)

Dad, put the broom down. You're going to wreck the sigils-

FAULKNER'S FATHER is desperately trying to sweep away the prayer-marks-

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(Agitated)

It's a mess. All these marks.

He - he won't like it, when he comes, we need to get it clean-

FAULKNER:

(Beginning to yell)

Dad, please put it down! Put it down!

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(Getting upset)

I need to get it clean, there's too much mess-

FAULKNER catches hold of his dad by the shoulders.

FAULKNER:

(Frantically)

Dad. Listen to me. Who was he?

Who was Uncle Just? What did he do to you?

You need to explain to me, you need to make me understand, because otherwise I can't help-

FAULKNER'S FATHER stares at him for a moment, as if he's about to reveal a great truth - and then he withers.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(Feebly, sobbing)

He's going to shout, he's going to shout, he's going to shout-

-and we cut.

KITCHEN, INT, NIGHT

The wind is powerful; a storm batters the windows and the walls.

FAULKNER'S FATHER is sleeping - snoring away.

FAULKNER walks back and forth, keeping watch.

And as the wind howls, he speaks aloud to the Trawler-man. His voice is soft, and like CARPENTER before him - he's no longer praying, but offering an ultimatum.

FAULKNER:

(Weakly, hoarsely)

Can you hear that, river?

A god's coming for my dad.

And you're going to keep him safe.

You will. You'll keep him safe until morning, and whatever's out there, you'll pit your strength against it, and you'll win.

I don't say that because I've laid the marks. I don't say that because I have faith in you.

I say that because I know you want to go on living.

I'm your last hope, river.

I'm the one who's going to keep you fed.

You know what they're going to turn you into, if they win?

Some kept thing, some kind of pet.

They'll give you a new name that suits their purpose. They'll twist you out of shape until you no longer recognise yourself. Until you forget what you used to be.

So you need to...you need to play ball with me, here, river. **I'm** the one you need to placate.

So make your offerings to me, and do it fast.

Drown the forest outside. Turn it to quagmire. Burst the pipes beneath this house, rise up in a great and terrible flood.

Do whatever you can to keep him safe.

Because if you can't keep him safe, if you can't protect him for the sake of the man who's going to protect you in turn...

...then what's your purpose? What do I need you for?

Well? Do you and I understand one another?

Silence. A long silence-

And then, suddenly, the wind shrieks with the horrible voice of UNCLE Just, circling around the cabin.

FAULKNER:

(Under his breath)

You're not getting in, Uncle Just. You're not having him.

You're not getting in-

WHAM.

A knock at the door.

Another knock.

The SHRIEKS continue and the door is half-rattling off its hinges.

FAULKNER:

(Yelling out, frantically)

This house is protected.

This house is protected, and it's watched. You're not getting in, Uncle Just! You're leaving hungry.

You're-

WHAM. The door breaks open. And UNCLE JUST's SHRIEKING fills the room-

FAULKNER:

(Panicked)

Dad, get up! Get up, we need to move-

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

What's - what's happening-

They hurry back through the corridor and into the BATHROOM as UNCLE JUST SCREAMS.

BATHROOM, INT, NIGHT

FAULKNER slams the door shut-

FAULKNER:

Get in the tub, OK? You'll be safe in there, you'll be protected, just don't scuff the marks-

The door rattles, we hear those HORRIBLE SHRIEKS-

-but the door remains tightly closed.

FAULKNER:

OK. OK, I think we're safe. It can't get in.

It can't get through. The marks are holding.

Dad, did you hear that? We're OK. We're safe.

He turns.

FAULKNER'S FATHER is whimpering, cowering from him in the bathtub.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(Softly terrified)

Please don't-

Uncle, please. Please don't shout, please don't shout-

FAULKNER:

Hey. Hey. It's OK. He couldn't get in.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(Flinching away)

No. Please...

Uncle, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Please don't shout-

FAULKNER stares down at him with sudden horror and pity.

FAULKNER:

No, no, no. I'm not him, Pop.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(Not hearing it)

Please- I'm sorry, please don't fetch the box-

FAULKNER leans in and holds his father close.

FAULKNER:
(Soothing, like he's shushing a child)
 No, no, no. I've got you.

It's me, it's your son.

I'm Richard. Nobody's going to hurt you. I love you.

I'm not him.

Around them, the winds howl and the door shakes as UNCLE Just distantly SCREAMS, trying to force its way in.

Then the noise dies - there's quiet again.

FAULKNER and FAULKNER'S FATHER, together, breathe hard - both of them terrified.

BATHROOM, INT, NIGHT

Hours later. Everything is quiet. The noise has stilled.

FAULKNER stirs in the tub.

FAULKNER'S FATHER is standing over him. Once again, he's a changed man - calm, assured, and quiet. He seems entirely lucid and confident, coherent.

We can feel the quiet authority and the love in his voice.

He speaks gently.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:
(Softly)
 You awake, Richie?

FAULKNER sits awake.

FAULKNER:
 What's going on, Pop?

FAULKNER'S FATHER:
 Couldn't sleep.

FAULKNER:

Did it come back?

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(Gently)

The storm? No. No, it's all been quiet.

I was thinking about you, Richard. Had you on my mind. Kept me awake, worrying about you.

Remembered Eddie telling me a little while ago that you might be in some kind of trouble.

FAULKNER relaxes a little.

Then he speaks honestly.

FAULKNER:

(Softly)

Yes. I've been in trouble for a little while now.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(Gently)

It'll all blow over in time. Time's all you need.

FAULKNER:

I hope so.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

Your voice is deeper than I remember. It's got a richness to it.

FAULKNER:

Yeah. Yeah, I imagine it is.

(Just explaining it, matter-of-factly)

Uh, I've been on testosterone, since the last time I saw you.

I actually found a group a few years back - a, a church - and they helped me get on the treatment.

So-

We might imagine this is a half-lie - that the Parish of Tide and Flesh probably stole hormones off the back of a truck - but FAULKNER'S FATHER accepts it.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

It suits you.

It sounds like it belongs.

FAULKNER:

Thank you.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

I'm sorry we couldn't make that happen for you.

The savings never seemed to stick around.

FAULKNER:

It's OK. You always were doing the best you could.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

Are you happier now, Richard?

FAULKNER hesitates - and then lies.

FAULKNER:

Yes, I'm happier.

I live out by the water. I don't have much. But I'm everything I always wanted to be.

FAULKNER'S FATHER takes this in.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

Do you grow things?

FAULKNER:

(Softly, choking as he lies)

Yes, I grow things.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

And do you have a family out there?

This cuts FAULKNER to the quick.

He does not.

FAULKNER:

(Choking up)

Actually, I don't think I do.

Not any more.

FAULKNER begins to sob.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:
(*Gently, not understanding*)
Why are you crying?

FAULKNER:
Because I'm a coward, Dad.

I'm a coward, and I'm selfish, and all of it's been for nothing.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:
(*Softly, kindly*)
No. No, you're not a coward.

FAULKNER:
I've been calling myself chosen and a prophet and all these different things, pretending I'm something special, and I've been playing that part and playing it well. People love me, people believe in me.

They believe there's a god that loves us and has a plan for us and I'm the one who's going to make it all happen, but...

...but none of it's been real. None of it's going to help.

And the consequences, they're going to catch up with me. Aren't they?

FAULKNER'S FATHER:
(*Simply*)
I imagine they will.

Do you enjoy playing the part of the prophet, Richard?

FAULKNER:
No. I don't think I do.

I don't think I want to be him any more.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:
Good.

So you'll find another part. You'll become someone else.

I can't wait to meet him when he gets here.

FAULKNER wipes away a tear.

FAULKNER:

I don't...I honestly don't know if I can get free from what I've become, though.

I don't know how I'm meant to get away.

And even if I **can** get away, is there going to be anything left of me?

FAULKNER'S FATHER considers.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

Well, it takes courage, changing anything. In the world or in ourselves.

And you've always had courage. Ever since you were small. Even when you were unhappy.

You were always brave enough to know what needed to change.

FAULKNER:

No. No, I'm not brave at all.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:

(Gently)

Of course you are-

FAULKNER, tearfully, whispers it into the air.

FAULKNER:

I'm a coward. And a liar.

I killed Charlie. That was my fault. It wasn't an accident, it wasn't the Trawler-man's fault, I was responsible.

I watched him drown out in the water-butt. I could have saved him. Instead I helped him do it.

And I never admitted it to you-

FAULKNER'S FATHER:
(Comforting and shushing him)
 No. No, that's not right.

FAULKNER:
(Growing angry)
 I killed Charlie, Dad! That was my fault, he was my brother, and I let it happen, and I lied to all of you!

FAULKNER'S FATHER:
(Gently, kindly)
 I killed Charlie, Richard.

Yes. I killed him, and I failed him.

I left all three of you alone for days and weeks at a time, when I knew you needed someone responsible enough to be watching over you and there was no-one to do the job but me. I knew I was failing you, every day, but I went on living with my failure because the consequences hadn't caught up with me yet.

I should have covered that water butt up a long time ago.

And Charlie failed **you**, too, you know.

Because he was your older brother, and I always told him his job was to keep you safe, and instead he let that happen - to both of you.
(Almost gently amused)
 Can you really not stand to share the blame?

FAULKNER just stares back at him.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:
 You're not the centre of all things past and future, son.

You're not at the heart of a story of your own making. You're adrift, just like the rest of us.

There's no more truth to your fragments than mine.

Know what that means?

It means you can't take credit for the storms in the night or the warmth of the sun on your face.

But you're not to blame for the way it started, and the way it started isn't to blame for what you've done.

You don't need that weight, Richard.

You'll be happier without it. Better things will grow, once it's lifted from you.

FAULKNER:
It's not just him.

I've got blood on my hands. I've turned on people who loved me. I've made things worse for everyone else just to get my way.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:
Can you make it better?

FAULKNER:
I don't know.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:
Will you try?

FAULKNER:
I don't know if I can.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:
You can always try, son. It's never too late to try.

Silence overhead.

FAULKNER'S FATHER gets to his feet.

FAULKNER'S FATHER:
Sounds like the storm's passed over. Better head out.

FAULKNER:
(*Jolting awake*)
You can't go. No, no, Dad - you can't go-

-but somehow, FAULKNER'S FATHER is already pulling the door open.

We can hear the shrieking of UNCLE Just, growing louder and louder-

FAULKNER'S FATHER:
Your Uncle Just's come to see me.

FAULKNER:
(Frantically)
Dad, it's not Uncle Just out there.

It's a **god**, it's a god of death, and it wants to take you-

FAULKNER'S FATHER:
(Calmly, matter-of-factly)
Every god's a god of death, Richard.

It's the only thing we need them for.

*He opens the door. The shrieking grows louder, and louder, filling the room-
-and FAULKNER sits upright.*

KITCHEN, INT, DAY

It's the morning. FAULKNER is still sleeping on the floor. The wind is still and silent.

And the door is swinging slowly back and forth on its hinges.

FAULKNER'S FATHER has left in the night.

FAULKNER:
Dad? Dad?
(Suddenly horrified)
Dad!

Dad!

WOODS, EXT, DAY

FAULKNER walks outside.

The woods are empty.

He runs this way and that, stumbling and scrambling through the bracken, searching for his father.

FAULKNER:
(Screaming in distress)
Dad, where are you?

Dad! Dad!

Where did you go?

Dad! Where are you? DAD!

FAULKNER screams and screams out into the trees - but his father has gone.

He's alone.

FADE OUT.

We might think the episode has ended. But then-

FOREST, EXT, DAY

We hear SIBLING RANE pulling up in their car. It's days later.

They get out.

RANE:
(Calling)
High Prophet! High Prophet Faulkner!

Faulkner!

CABIN, INT, DAY

The CABIN is empty.

We hear the ansaphone ping.

EDDIE:

(On the phone, a little tired and guilty)

Hey, little brother. So I knew I said I'd come on Shrivels-Day, but they put me on another shift at the last minute. Sorry about that.

I'm thinking, uh, I'll make it tomorrow. Maybe the day after.

Hope that's OK. Hope you haven't driven each other crazy yet. All right.

He hangs up, just as RANE comes into the deserted cabin.

RANE:

(Calling out)

I apologise for intruding! We were worried about you!

Faulkner?

Nobody answers.

RANE:

(Increasingly worried, yelling out)

High Prophet Faulkner?

Faulkner, where have you gone?

RANE turns and runs through the woods.

WATER BUTT, EXT. DAY

FAULKNER, standing on the edge of the water butt, takes a final breath-

FAULKNER:

(Softly)

Takes courage.

-and then he plunges into the water.

Time passes.

We hear bubbles rising.

And then RANE runs in from the distance, frantically, still yelling,

RANE:
Bait and flesh! Faulkner, Faulkner!

RANE scrambles into the water butt, grabbing FAULKNER and pulling him back up.

FAULKNER:
No, stop! Stop, let go of me, let go of me!

RANE:
It's OK, High Prophet, it's me, it's me! I've got you, you're safe!

FAULKNER splutters and coughs as he surfaces.

Silence for a moment.

RANE:
(Sheepish and a little awed)
Did you...did you hear the music?

FAULKNER, just staring back at them, does not respond.

END OF EPISODE