

EP 16: Tis the Season

Lincoln:

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[Theme music]

DIPA: Observer Pictures presents Apollyon, written and directed by Faith McQuinn. This is episode 16, Tis the Season.

[A ringback tone. Kate picks up.]

Kate:

What do you want?

Gabriel:

You picked up.

Kate:

I thought maybe you'd stop calling if I finally answered. Who gave you my number anyway?

Gabriel:

No one. I found it.

Kate:

That's bullshit, I changed my name.

Gabriel:

Your dad gave it to me.

Kate:

Of course he did.

Gabriel:

By the way, it's really fucked up that you changed your name. It's not like I'm going to hunt you down or anything.

Kate:

Then what do you call it when you message me five times and call nonstop for a week? What do you want?

Gabriel:

It's Christmas.

Kate:

And?

Gabriel:

It's Link's first Christmas without you. I thought you might want to see him. He's walking now and eating solid foods. It turns out he's really into oat bars. He must have gotten that from you. He really likes building things, or he likes destroying them, I'm not really sure which.

Kate:

Don't do this, please.

Gabriel:

I miss you. He misses you. Do you even miss us?

Kate:

Sometimes.

Gabriel:

Then come back.

Kate:

I can't.

Gabriel:

You really can.

Kate:

I know if I give in and come back, I'll be as miserable as I was while I was there. I was drowning, and the only way to save myself was to leave. I'm doing so much better now.

Gabriel:

You should have told me. You should have talked to me.

Kate:

You wouldn't have understood.

Gabriel:

But I would've helped you.

Kate:

I know, but it wouldn't have mattered. I need to be on my own, and I really need you to respect that.

Gabriel:

Why do you deserve any respect from me? You left us. You didn't even have the decency to tell us you were going. You just ran away.

Kate:

He's a baby, Gabriel! He probably doesn't even know I'm gone.

Gabriel:

Believe me, he knows. Maybe we are better off without you.

Kate:

Finally, we agree on something.

Gabriel:

Fuck you.

Gabriel:

You're going to be on your best behavior tonight.

Lincoln:

As long as you're on yours.

Gabriel:

Hey, hey, hey. We are not doing that shit tonight. This is Reese's first Christmas with her kids in a long time. You won't mess this up. You will be respectful to everyone in that house.

Lincoln:

You're not in the house.

Gabriel:

Lincoln, I swear to the gods that we will go back home right now.

Lincoln:

I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I was just trying to make a joke.

Gabriel:

Trying being the key word.

Lincoln:
Dad!

Gabriel:
And don't eat everything inside.

Lincoln:
Damn, you're like a wall guard.

[The door opens. Christmas music plays.]

Reese:
Welcome, welcome. Merry Christmas. Come on in. You can put the gifts with the others over there.

Gabriel:
Here. These are cookies for later.

Reese:
Ooh, are those the pecan ones you made last year?

Gabriel:
Yep.

Reese:
I might hide them.

Gabriel:
Where is everyone?

Reese:
In the backyard. Theo and the boys are getting the decorations ready.

Lincoln:
You haven't decorated your tree yet?

Reese:
This is how they do Christmas in Phoenix, so I'm respecting their traditions.

Lincoln:
Cool.

Reese:
Follow me. Look who's here! Miles, this is my friend Gabriel and his son Lincoln.

Miles:

Merry Christmas! That's my brother Tony over there by Theo. He's just pretending to be shy, but I'm not. So, hey.

Lincoln:

Hey.

Miles:

You want to help me and Theo sort the tree dec?

Lincoln:

What about your brother?

Miles:

He's so coma, you don't want to be around him. So, want to help?

Lincoln:

Sure, why not?

Miles:

List! So I spent all day printing out a bunch of ornaments.

Tony:

He's not kidding. He's been doing it since sunrise.

Miles:

Shut up. I'm trying to separate them all by size, so we can put the little ones near the top, and the big ones at the bottom.

Gabriel:

What the hell does "so coma" mean?

Reese:

Boring, dull, not worth your time.

Gabriel:

Is that an official definition?

Reese:

Shut it.

Gabriel:

It's like they're speaking a different language. How do you keep up?

Reese:

I don't. I'm just better at it than you are. You want a drink?

Gabriel:

I think I deserve one after that burn.

Reese:

Theo, you want another drink?

Theo:

Yes, please. What is she laughing about?

Gabriel:

Insulting me. Merry Christmas.

Theo:

Merry Christmas. Link seems particularly enthusiastic about decorating. Is this his first time leaving the house since I brought him home?

Gabriel:

Yep.

Theo:

Too bad he didn't get to see the sun.

Gabriel:

Well, I let him go out back this morning.

Tony:

Why did you print so many snowflakes? You should have made some candy canes or reindeer or anything more interesting.

Miles:

If you don't like what I made, you can print your own.

Lincoln:

I like snowflakes. You know they have six branches because water molecules chemically bond into a hexagon?

Tony:

Wait, you like chemistry?

Lincoln:

Yeah. Love it.

Tony:

Ah, straight. Most of my friends think I'm a nerd, but come on, chemistry is real list.

Theo:

Chemistry? When did Link get into that?

Gabriel:

He's always liked it. Just not as much as I was hoping.

Theo:

I wonder if Reese knows Tony likes it too.

Gabriel:

Well, just in case she doesn't, we should keep it to ourselves. I doubt she wants us influencing him.

Theo:

Oh, she wouldn't mind. We can't suppress anyone's love for science. We are the perfect people for him to talk to. We could help him get into some great programs.

Gabriel:

Of course we could. But do you really think Reese wants more scientists around her?

Theo:

We're amazing.

Reese:

Here you go.

Gabriel:

Thanks.

Theo:

Thank you.

Reese:

It's nice to see you two talking.

Theo:

We talk. (Gabriel scoffs) We talk!

Gabriel:

At work.

Theo:
That counts.

Gabriel:
Our last conversation was about lipid components. It doesn't count.

Theo:
Well, we'll have to make it up tonight then.

Gabriel:
Really?

Reese:
Really?

Theo:
It's Christmas! Isn't it the season of charity?

Reese:
Oh, damn.

Tony:
Wait, wait, wait. Do you name the mice?

Theo:
No.

Gabriel:
Well, Theo used to all the time.

Theo:
I learned my lesson.

Tony:
How many of them die?

Reese:
Can we please talk about something else?

Tony:
Mama! I want to know more about lab work. Didn't you tell us that we should always be learning?

Reese:
I did.

Theo:
See?

Gabriel:
We can change the subject. Tony, Miles, what do you want to do while you're here?

Theo:
Oh, your mom said something about the aquarium?

Tony:
Nah, I've been to the aquarium.

Reese:
Oh, not the one here. Atlanta has one of the largest in the States.

Tony:
Oh, so more fish? Sounds great.

Miles:
I want to eat a peach!

Tony:
Straight. I heard they're really sweet.

Miles:
And sticky.

Tony:
Can we get some?

Lincoln:
They're out of season right now.

Tony:
What? Ugh. Well, that's lank.

Lincoln:
Hey, Dad, don't you have some of that frozen... What did you call it?

Gabriel:
Sorbet.

Lincoln:
Yeah, yeah. Sorbet.

Miles:
What's that?

Gabriel:
It's a frozen dessert with fruit and ice.

Tony:
Is the fruit peaches?

Gabriel:
Yeah, it's peaches.

Lincoln:
We had a huge basket of peaches from someone. I don't know who.

Theo:
Yeah, Gabriel, do you remember who those were from?

Gabriel:
Don't start.

Lincoln:
There was no way we'd eat all those, so he made this sorbet thing. We still have some at home. You should come over and have some. That's cool, right? If they come over?

Gabriel:
Yeah. Yeah. As long as Reese is fine with it.

Reese:
Sure. We'll plan a good day.

Miles:
List!

Tony:
Can we see the ICRS headquarters? I read that they do tours.

Theo:
Oh yeah, that could be-

Reese:

I don't think they do them around holidays.

Tony:

Yeah, but Theo and Gabriel work there, so I bet they could get us in. Right?

Reese:

They're very busy, and I doubt they have time to take you on a tour.

Tony:

Oh.

Gabriel:

So Tony, did you just want to see it, or...

Tony:

Oh, I'm really into chemistry, and I thought maybe I could see what it would be like to work there.

Reese:

I'm going to grab the cookies.

Miles:

Is Mama Ree mad?

Theo:

No. I'm sure she just... I think I'll go help her.

Gabriel:

Yeah, good idea. We'll talk peaches.

Theo:

Miles thinks you're mad.

Reese:

I'm not mad.

Theo:

Then what was that?

Reese:

The ICRS over the aquarium? Really?

Theo:
Chemistry would be great for him.

Reese:
It's not that. Tony and Miles both can do whatever they want in life. I will support them.

Theo:
Then what is it?

Reese:
I don't think they want to spend time with me.

Theo:
Why would you think that? They love you, Reese.

Reese:
This is the most talkative they've been since they got here, and nearly everything out of their mouths has been about you and Gabriel and Lincoln.

Theo:
When I was their age, I didn't want much to do with my mom either. That didn't mean I wasn't happy to have her around.

Reese:
Yeah, you had your mom around. (from far away) Cookies!

Lincoln:
Theo, you better hurry.

Theo:
No, I'm good.

Gabriel:
Theo doesn't like pecans.

Miles:
Why not? These are so good.

Tony:
Ew, close your mouth.

Lincoln:
My Dad made them.

Miles:
You sure cook a lot.

Lincoln:
You should see him when he's stressed out. He cooks so much we can't eat it all.

Gabriel:
Link, let's not be in such a sharing mood?

Lincoln:
Sorry.

Tony:
Mom barely cooks. Our freezer is full of ready-mades. We can pick whatever we want to eat.

Reese:
Have you not liked what I've cooked?

Miles:
I liked it all. Especially your pancakes. Ready-made pancakes are nasty.

Lincoln:
Really? They looked pretty good in the box.

Tony:
Nah, they're lank.

Gabriel:
See? They're lank.

Lincoln:
Dad... Don't.

Miles:
Can I have another cookie?

Gabriel:
Help yourself.

Tony:
Link, I saw your rig over there. What games you got?

Lincoln:

Oh, Prax Wars, Guardians of Sunshine, and Theo's favorite, Dragon Stone.

Tony:

You play XR?

Theo:

Not very well, but yes, Link and I play a lot.

Tony:

Do you play, Mama Ree?

Reese:

No. I don't think I'd be very good.

Miles:

You should try!

Reese:

Well, maybe I will while you're here.

Tony:

Can we go outside and check out Link's stuff?

Reese:

Sure, of course.

Gabriel:

Take some cookies with you.

Miles:

List!

Tony:

Not all of them, Miles.

Miles:

I'm leaving some.

Gabriel:

Okay, so what was the thing with the cookies?

Reese:

It doesn't matter.

Theo:
She's afraid the boys don't want to spend time with her.

Gabriel:
They're teenagers, of course they don't.

Theo:
Gabriel!

Gabriel:
What? It's the truth.

Reese:
Well, Link likes being with you.

Gabriel:
Link worries about me. There's a difference.

Reese:
I would take worrying over whatever I'm getting at the moment.

Theo:
I'm sure they just need some time to get used to you.

Reese:
They shouldn't have to get used to me, Theo. I'm their mother.

Lincoln:
So, what do you think of Atlanta so far?

Tony:
It's all really different. I feel rocky here. I thought every limit was the same, but nah.

Lincoln:
Is this your first time out of Phoenix?

Tony:
Yep.

Miles:
You been out of Atlanta ever?

Lincoln:

No, but I'm thinking about college in California. Agriculture.

Miles:

Straight.

Lincoln:

Did you see any of the OL when you were flying?

Tony:

Not really. You're really high up, and everything looks like patches of color and clouds. So many clouds.

Lincoln:

Did you ever want to go there?

Tony:

To the OL? Nah.

Miles:

It's scary.

Lincoln:

I bet it's not.

Miles:

It's colder here.

Lincoln:

What's it like in Phoenix?

Miles:

Way warmer. We only need sweaters at night. Maybe.

Tony:

Mom told us to pack all our sweaters, and Mama Ree still had to buy us coats.

Lincoln:

Really?

Miles:

Your trains go underground too. Ours are all above the streets.

Tony:

Less street art. There are murals and sculptures all over the place. Our buildings have more colors too.

Lincoln:

Seriously? That's list. Atlanta's kind of cold. All metal and glass and concrete.

Miles:

But you have grass. There is no grass at home.

Lincoln:

None?

Miles:

Well, not none, but not very much.

Lincoln:

Wait, what's a cactus like? Does it really hurt if you touch them?

Tony:

Yeah, the stickers are straight damage.

Lincoln:

Oh, I wish I could go. Do you miss it?

Tony:

Yeah.

Miles:

But I like seeing Mama Ree in person, you know?

Reese:

I'm a stranger to them.

Theo:

You talk on holo all the time. I thought being away from my mom would be hard, but talking on holo was like she was here.

Reese:

Theo, I promise you, if you were younger, it would not have been the same. We talk for about an hour once a week. It's like the abridged edition of their lives. Them here, it's incredibly different. I don't know any of their routines. I feel as if I'm treading water.

Theo:
They just need time.

Reese:
Sure. And by the time we're all comfortable, I'll be taking them to the airport, and then it'll be another six years before I see them again.

Theo:
It doesn't have to be six years. I can help you-

Reese:
What? You can help me see them as often as I want? And go through all of that testing and questioning every time? Also, you think me, a non-ICRS employee, won't get flagged for excessive travel? It's not worth the risk.

Theo:
But-

Gabriel:
Theo, stop. It's hard raising kids, harder than you can even begin to imagine. You're constantly worried about them, things that you never even thought to worry about, but you worry about them. I know you want to help, but there is nothing you can say that will change how Reese feels. Am I right?

Reese:
Unfortunately.

Gabriel:
It's times like this, I can see the appeal of living outside the limits. They can travel freely with no worries.

Theo:
Yes. Freedom to travel in exchange for shit healthcare.

Gabriel:
Shit healthcare that we could fix. You know that, right?

Theo:
You know I'm not trying to prevent better healthcare for people outside the limits. If anyone is thinking about them, it's me.

Gabriel:
Theo-

Reese:

I think I'm going to move back to Phoenix.

Gabriel & Theo:

What?

Lincoln:

So, is it really that weird being here with Reese?

Miles:

Yeah, but it's weird being anywhere new. I missed her, so I'm happy we're here.

Tony:

She don't really know us anymore. Still treats us like babies.

Lincoln:

Is that bad?

Tony:

Not bad, but like you said, weird. I missed her too though. She's still our mama.

Lincoln:

You weren't mad when she moved here?

Tony:

I was real mad. I didn't talk to her for a long time.

Lincoln:

I mean, what changed?

Tony:

I don't know. I got older. I get that it wasn't on me and Miles, you know? She still loves us, but she has to live a life too.

Miles:

You sound like Mom.

Tony:

Shut up.

Miles:

Where's your mom, Link?

Tony:

Miles! Don't ask that. Sorry, man. What game do you want to play?

Lincoln:

She's in Toronto.

Miles:

Canada?

Lincoln:

Yeah.

Miles:

Have you seen her lately?

Lincoln:

No. She left when I was a baby.

Tony:

You ever talk to her?

Lincoln:

Nope.

Tony:

Oh, that's lank. Sorry, man.

Lincoln:

No, no, no, it's all right, it's all right. I never knew her. I did find her address. At least, I think it's her. She goes by a different name.

Tony:

What'd you do?

Lincoln:

I sent an email. She hasn't responded yet. Don't know if she will. Shit, I don't even know why I'm telling you this.

Tony:

It's straight.

Lincoln:

Listen, Dad doesn't know, and he can't know.

Miles:
I'm not telling. I swear.

Tony:
My mouth sealed tighter than a wall gate.

Lincoln:
Thanks.

Miles:
Can we play now?

Lincoln:
Yeah, yeah.

Theo:
What about your career?

Reese:
I'll figure something out. I can go back to teaching.

Theo:
Really? But you even said you were so happy being a principal.

Gabriel:
You have to do what's best for you and your kids. I get it.

Theo:
And being that close to Kelsey again? Don't you think you need to really analyze what's-

Reese:
I have been analyzing everything, for a while now. And having them here makes me wonder why I'm still in Atlanta. I'm a different person now. Theo. Kelsey and I are both different. I can do this.

Gabriel:
It's not your choice, Theo.

Theo:
Ah.

Gabriel:

You're not the only one who can make decisions without talking to your friends.

Theo:

Excuse me? You were the one who wasn't on the same page with me! I was making decisions about-

Reese:

You know what? The two of you need to take a step back. I just told you that I'm going to make this huge life change, and somehow, somehow! You've made it about yourselves again.

Theo:

Well, damn it.

Gabriel:

This is why I didn't want to come tonight.

Theo:

Really, Gabriel? We should go talk to her.

Gabriel:

Oh, I'm terrible with this heart-to-heart shit. That's all you.

Theo:

Fine.

Reese:

No, we're not talking right now.

Theo:

Reese.

Reese:

I'm not kidding. Anthony... Sorry. Tony and Miles and Link are having a great time. I think you and Gabriel need to take a walk and figure your shit out. Then maybe you can be the support system I need. Go!

Theo:

Okay, damn.

Gabriel:

I can't believe she kicked us out.

Theo:

I can't believe she's going to move back to Phoenix.

Gabriel:

I think it'll be great for her.

Theo:

I know. I just wish she had more options.

Gabriel:

Are we actually going to talk? I mean, about us, or should we just take a couple of laps and go back? I'm fine either way. I think I ate too much.

Theo:

Felicity Milgrim asked me to come back to the trials team once the selection process is done.

Gabriel:

Okay. We're talking. And what did you tell her?

Theo:

That I would be delighted.

Gabriel:

I'm sorry?

Theo:

Yeah. I think I need to be closer to this than I am.

Gabriel:

Why?

Theo:

I don't know if I'm ready to talk about that yet.

Gabriel:

Mm-hmm. And what did our fearless leader have to say about you changing your mind yet again?

Theo:

Exactly what you think.

Gabriel:

So I guess you're not coming back.

Theo:

Milgrim said that she would make it happen.

Gabriel:

Obviously the wrath of Weiss doesn't scare her. Also, she must have an in with the head of the DHH.

Theo:

She is the head of the DHH.

Gabriel:

Hold on, what?

Theo:

Yeah. Turns out it's a need to know kind of thing.

Gabriel:

And she decided you were need to know?

Theo:

She said it was all about trust. I think you're right about them being like the CEA.

Gabriel:

CIA.

Theo:

Whatever.

Gabriel:

Well, shit. I should probably pull back on the snark a little bit. Or maybe not, because I'm certain I'm not supposed to know that information?

Theo:

Yeah, but still pull back a little.

Gabriel:

Yeah. It was Savreen, wasn't it? She's the one who convinced you to come back to the clinical trials.

Theo:

Yeah.

Gabriel:

Does she have some crazy master plan to blow this all up? Oh, shit. See, I was joking. You know you're her fall guy, right?

Theo:

What's a fall guy?

Gabriel:

The person who gets blamed for everything. She'll come out squeaky clean and you'll be blacklisted. You know what that means, right?

Theo:

Yeah. And that's not what's happening.

Gabriel:

Oh, sure, sure it's not. You think because you're responsible for 6129 that you're untouchable.

Theo:

Okay, I definitely don't think that, especially after discussions with Weiss, none of us are untouchable.

Gabriel:

Maybe Savreen?

Theo:

Maybe.

Gabriel:

I'm just glad that you'll be back.

Theo:

I still don't like the idea of HCTs.

Gabriel:

I didn't really think you changed your mind.

Theo:

You're still okay with them?

Gabriel:

I'm looking at the bigger picture, Theo. Reese is moving away because it's hard for her to see her kids. Your mom died trying to help people get meds they couldn't get. This world is pretty shitty, and we have the opportunity to make it less so. My conscience is clear.

Theo:
You're completely fine with people lying?

Gabriel:
You're lying to me right now!

Theo:
I'm not! I'm simply not telling you everything.

Gabriel:
Oh! Well, with that attitude, you'd fit right in at the DHH.

Theo:
Don't even joke about that.

Gabriel:
Is this what you meant about our relationship being different?

Theo:
I don't... No. Let's just call it plausible deniability.

Gabriel:
You do realize that not a soul on Earth would believe you didn't tell me anything?

Theo:
Yeah, you're probably right.

Gabriel:
Then tell me.

Theo:
If I am Savreen's fall guy, I want to be the only fall guy.

Gabriel:
If you go off the deep end, I go with you. Remember?

Theo:
Savreen doesn't want to put a stop to the HCTs.

Gabriel:
What does she want, then?

Theo:
She wants me to find... She wants me to find hard evidence so we can reveal the true nature of the trials to the public, while a friend of hers works the same angle from the OL side.

Gabriel:

Mm-hmm. And after all that, you still believe you're not the fall guy?

Theo:

People knowing the truth is important.

Gabriel:

That didn't answer my question, Theo.

Theo:

It's the only answer you're going to get.

Gabriel:

Ever?

Theo:

For now.

[Theme music]

DIPA:

This episode featured the voices of Marquita Richardson as Theo Ramsey, James David West as Gabriel Larson, Marisha Tapera as Reese Williams, Kyle Nishimura as Lincoln Larson, Davon Oliver as Miles, Terance Flowers as Anthony, Amanda Noriko Newman as Kate, and me, Drea Silvertooth, as DIPA.

Producer, Amanda Lorraine, Assistant Director, Van Donnell, Sound Design and Mix, Joshua Suhy. Sound recorded by Courtney Holly at Bowman Sound Studios. Original theme composer and Music Supervisor, Katharine Seaton. Additional music provided by Soundstripe Music. Virology Consultant, Peter Krug, Ph.D.

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