

Pamela Paul:

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DiPA:

Observer Pictures presents Apollyon, written and directed by Faith McQuinn. This is episode four, Unfamiliar.

Jamilla:

Microbiology?

Theo:

Yes.

Jamilla:

Are you planning on teaching?

Theo:

(laughs) Definitely not.

Jamilla:

You don't have to say it with such veracity.

Theo:

Ugh, I'm sorry mom. What I mean is that I'm not cut out to teach.

Jamilla:

You're 18. You have no idea what you're cut out for.

Theo:

Ugh, fine. I don't want to teach. I wanna do things that'll end up in textbooks.

Jamilla:

Is this your way of rebellion?

Theo:

(laughs) What? No. Ugh, only you would think that choosing microbiology was my rebellion phase.

Jamilla:

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Oh, so you admit it could be a phase?

Theo:

It is not a phase. I really believe this is my calling. I don't think I'm cut out for the soft sciences.

Jamilla:

Soft sciences? Oh, I get it now. This is Savreen's fault.

Theo:

Mom, I made this decision all on my own.

Jamilla:

Lab work isn't as glamorous as she makes it out to be, you know? It's hours, spending windowless rooms, winding into microscopes and poking dead things.

Theo:

As opposed to hours spent in windowless lecture halls, droning on and on about the mysteries of the brains?

Jamilla:

I do not drone!

Theo:

Are you actually mad at me?

Jamilla:

I'm not mad.

Theo:

Uh, good.

Jamilla:

A little disappointed, though.

Theo:

Ugh, mom!

Jamilla:

What? Your father was a teacher, I'm a teacher! I really thought you'd be one as well.

Theo:

In neuroscience?

Jamilla:

I mean, it's far more interesting than boring old biology.

Theo:

Microbiology.

Jamilla:

Tomato, tomato. At least you're staying here. I don't know what I'd do if you moved away.

Theo:

I couldn't imagine leaving Atlanta, or you.

Jamilla:

Oh, honey, that was the sweetest thing. It almost makes up for your poor academic choices.

Theo:

(laughs)

Jamilla:

(laughs)

Theo:

Hey.

Gabriel:

Hey, do you have a minute?

Theo:

Yeah. I'm just... uh, I'm just sitting on my mom's front porch 'cause... I, I don't think I can go inside by myself.

Gabriel:

But, if this is a bad time, uh, please tell me to fuck off.

Theo:

(laughs) No. No, what is it?

Gabriel:

We started the second round of the 6129 at 80 mcg stamp.

Theo:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Gabriel:

I wanna run a simultaneous test at a lower dosage instead of waiting to duplicate results on this one.

Theo:

What dosage?

Gabriel:

70 mcg.

Theo:

Yeah, let's do it. I'm sure Xavier would want for us to come back with twice the results. Have you spoken to him?

Gabriel:

No. He surprisingly hasn't summoned me yet. I expect I won't last long, especially once I put the second experiment on record.

Theo:

Thanks for looping me in on this.

Gabriel:

We're a team. I momentarily forgot that. It won't happen again, I promise.

Theo:

I know.

Theo:

I should be on holo for that inevitable meeting with Xavier.

Gabriel:

You should focus on what you need to do there. I'll give you a run down after the fact.

Theo:

Uh, Gabriel, I can handle it.

Gabriel:

I know, but you don't have to. You've got enough to worry about.

Theo:

Uh.

Gabriel:

How long have you been sitting on the front porch?

Theo:

20 minutes.

Gabriel:

You're gonna have to go in eventually.

Theo:

It's... It's very strange to be in an unfamiliar place that should be familiar. My mother lived here.

Gabriel:

I can stay on the phone while you go in.

Theo:

Savreen's on her way, but plus, don't you have work to do?

Gabriel:

Yeah, but-

Theo:

I'll be okay. You should get back to work. Call me if anything changes.

Gabriel:

You're sure?

Theo:

Yeah.

Gabriel:

Take care, all right?

Theo:

I will.

Savreen:

Oh, Theo, I'm so sorry. You haven't gone in yet?

Theo:

I didn't want to, not alone.

Savreen:

Okay.

DiPA:

Welcome home, Jamilla.

Savreen:

DiPA, silent. Are you all right?

Theo:

It's cozier in person.

Savreen:

Jamilla said she always wanted everyone who came over, to feel at home.

Theo:

And the first time I'm here, she's not. We'll need to clean up and pack up anything that's important. I need to go speak to her lawyer about, uh, her will, so I know what to do with everything. I also need to make interment arrangement. She has a plot next to dad in Atlanta. QF said they can arrange the cremation, but, uh, I don't know how it works sending cremains over borders. Uh, and I only have, uh, five days.

Savreen:

If you don't get everything done, I can take care of whatever you need.

Theo:

I don't wanna burden you with this. Uh, it's my responsibility.

Savreen:

Right now, I think you need to take a moment. Let's sit.

Theo:

Hey, mom. I'm here.

Jamilla:

Hello, hello.

Theo:

(laughs)

Jamilla:

(laughs) I thought you were bringing your friend with you. What's his name?

Theo:

Oh, Gabriel.

Jamilla:

Yes, he's cute.

Theo:

(laughs) I guess.

Jamilla:

You guess? You two aren't?

Theo:

Uh, no, mom. We aren't. And even if we were, I would not talk to you about it.

Jamilla:

Oh, please. We're both adults.

Theo:

(laughs)

Jamilla:

Anyway, I thought he was coming.

Theo:

No, his little boy woke up with a fever.

Jamilla:

Oh. Well, that's too bad. You have to take them some food then.

Theo:

Uh, I will.

Jamilla:

Come help me finish up dinner. Will you move the rice to the serving dish?

Theo:

Sure. I have some news.

Jamilla:

Oh, yeah?

Theo:

I was offered a position in the Experimental Virology Department, at ICRS Headquarters.

Jamilla:

Experimental Virology?

Theo:

Yes. Gabriel and I are gonna be-

Jamilla:

You're gonna be working directly with Apollyon?

Theo:

Yeah. We'll be working towards developing better drugs, hopefully getting people away from having to take Redivir everyday.

Jamilla:

Oh.

Theo:

What?

Jamilla:

It's good that you and Gabriel will get to work together.

Theo:

But?

Jamilla:

But nothing.

Theo:

Clearly you have more to say on the topic.

Jamilla:

No.

Theo:

You're not happy for me?

Jamilla:

I'm happy if you're happy, honey.

Theo:

What the hell, mom? The, this is the opportunity of a lifetime.

Jamilla:

It is very difficult for me to be thrilled that my only daughter will be working with the deadliest virus on the planet. I have seen up close what AVS can do, and you're telling me you'll be handling it daily?

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Theo:

It will be in a controlled environment. There hasn't been a lab accident in years.

Jamilla:

That doesn't mean there never will be one.

Theo:

I have literally been dreaming about this since college.

Jamilla:

I know and I'm happy that your dreams are being fulfilled, but I'm terrified. Nothing you say will change that. I also know nothing I say will make you walk away from this opportunity. Just promise me that you will be safe.

Theo:

Of course, I promise.

Jamilla:

Good. I don't know what I'd do if I lost you.

Theo:

You'll never lose me, mom.

Theo:

Four years. She's... She lived here for four years and I didn't even try to visit, not even when she got sick. What the hell is wrong with me. I w- why wouldn't I?

Savreen:

That is the nature of the world we live in, Theo. She knew what it meant to move here.

Theo:

Uh, she always tease me about working too much, but I know that she was disappointed in me for never making enough time for her.

Savreen:

No. (laughs) Jamilla was very proud of you.

Theo:

(laughs)

Savreen:

Look at me. You were her greatest joy. Anytime she met someone, the first thing out of her mouth was something about you. She adored you, and more importantly, she knew how much you loved her. Let me show you something. Come on, stand up. (silence)

Savreen:

This is your mother's office.

Theo:

Uh, it looks exactly like her and dad's office in our old house.

Savreen:

Jamilla loved having little get-togethers, cocktail parties, game nights, pot clubs. People were in and out of this house, regularly. But, no one, but me was allowed in this space. And only I was allowed sometimes. This was her sanctuary.

Theo:

(laughs) She even has my little desk. (laughs) When they would both be in here, I would sit on the floor in between them and, uh, then dad got me a little desk so I could work when they worked, you know? The three of us spent a lot of time in that office and, um, when dad died, mom never went back in. And then, one day she said we were moving. And it was like losing him all over again.

Savreen:

She never wanted to leave that house, but she had to move.

Theo:

For financial reasons. I know the story, Savreen.

Savreen:

She-

Theo:

Please stop reminding me that you were closer to my mom than I was.

Savreen:

I'm going to clean up the kitchen. Give you some time.

Theo:

No, I'm... Uh, I'm sorry.

Savreen:

I should be the one apologizing. The last thing I want to do is upset you more.

Theo:

I never thought I'd have to deal with this. I mean, I, I know death is inevitable for all of us. I just assumed she had years and years ahead of her. Not this way.

Jamilla:

Are you even paying attention to me?

Theo:

Yes, mom. I'm simply multitasking. I can call you back when I'm done with my chores, if that would make you feel better.

Jamilla:

Actually, yes.

Theo:

Ugh, fine. I'll do them later.

Jamilla:

Turn on your video.

Theo:

As long as you promise not to talk about how I look.

Jamilla:

I promise. Oh. (laughs)

Theo:

Ah, you promised. (laughs)

Jamilla:

I didn't say a word.

Theo:

"Oh," is a word.

Jamilla:

(laughs) You just took me by surprise.

Theo:

I'm cleaning. What did you expect? (laughs) I'm gonna turn it back off.

Jamilla:

No, no, please don't. I wanted to see your face. I really wish we could be in the same room when I told you this.

Theo:

Told me what?

Jamilla:

Hmm. I tested positive for AVS. Theodora? Are you still there? It looks like your video froze.

Theo:

I'm still here.

Jamilla:

Did you hear what I said?

Theo:

Yes, I heard you. I, how did you... How did this happen?

Jamilla:

That's not important.

Theo:

It is.

Jamilla:

No, it's not because it doesn't matter. What matters is that I had no symptoms, it was caught at my regular monthly testing. I'm on Redivir and I feel fine.

Theo:

How long were you quarantined?

Jamilla:

Only 72 hours.

Theo:

Are you sure you had no symptoms?

Jamilla:

None, honey. The doctors at QF would've told me.

Theo:

You're taking your Redivir dose daily, at the same time?

Jamilla:

Yes.

Theo:

We should set up an automatic delivery so that you never run out. You cannot run out! I can get that done right now, if you want.

Jamilla:

That's a wonderful idea.

Theo:

Mom, you need to tell me how this happened.

Jamilla:

I said it's not important.

Theo:

Indulge me. Please.

Jamilla:

I did a guest speaking engagement at the university, maybe I encountered someone there. Savreen and I went to the Opera, maybe I encountered someone there.

Theo:

Fine.

Jamilla:

QF did a full history and everyone who needed to be informed, has been.

Theo:

I wish I could be there with you. Work is really crazy right now.

Jamilla:

I know.

Theo:

I'm so sorry, mom.

Jamilla:

You didn't do anything.

Theo:

I know, but this shouldn't have happened to you.

Jamilla:

I'll be okay, Theodora.

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Theo:

I'll make sure to get the automatic delivery set up.

Jamilla:

Thank you. Well, I'm gonna let you go. I miss you lots.

Theo:

Love you more.

Theo:

Since the day she was diagnosed, I've worked twice as hard, developing a vaccine, thinking if I could just get it done, maybe it would be a gateway to a cure. But, I was too late.

Savreen:

You are not to blame for your mother's death. Do you know why I moved to Denver?

Theo:

I don't know.

Savreen:

My husband always wanted to come here. Do you remember him?

Theo:

A little bit.

Savreen:

Before we were married, he told me that he'd be attending university in California. I had never left India, but he made this country sound so wonderful. Turns out, we both hated California and wanted to leave as soon as possible.

Theo:

(laughs)

Savreen:

(laughs) We spent the summer after my graduation, traveling. Zeeshan fell in love with Colorado, but especially Denver. He ended up applying for a job here, but it fell through. I remember how devastated he was. I accepted a position at the Center for Disease Control and Atlanta became a home. He didn't seem to mind. He loved his work, the friends we made, but I knew he was simply settling. Right before his death, he asked me to move here. I couldn't say no. I had to do this for him.

Theo:

Is this supposed to make me feel better?

Savreen:

We do not have control over every aspect of our lives. For years, I found myself thinking, "I should've tried harder, I should've found a way to get here while he was still with me." Then I remembered that he is with me. Our bodies move on, but our spirits are returner. Look around this room at all these photographs. Your mother lived a life she wanted to live. And even though the two of you were thousands of miles apart, she spoke of you like you were in the room. You cannot blame yourself for any of this. You continuing to do the work you were meant to do, will honor her legacy.

Theo:

Mom always loved having so many photos, everywhere. (laughs) When we moved, she carefully wrapped every framed photograph.

Savreen:

Hmm. (laughs)

Theo:

I always searched for months, to find the best picture frames to send for her birthday. Hmm, where was this one taken?

Savreen:

Oh, that's, uh... Jamilla and I volunteered there.

Theo:

There? What is it?

Savreen:

Um, it's a clinic.

Theo:

A medical clinic?

Savreen:

Yes, this was taken last year. We had a thanksgiving celebration.

Theo:

What did you and mom do at a medical clinic?

Savreen:

We both have medical degrees, if you recall.

Theo:

Yeah, but when's the last time you practiced internal medicine? And when did clinics start needing volunteer psychiatrists?

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Savreen:

We answered calls, checked in patients, took vitals...

Theo:

Oh. I didn't know clinics used volunteers for things like that. Uh, come to think of it, I didn't know clinics used volunteers at all.

Savreen:

Some do.

Theo:

Why wouldn't she tell me about that? Why wouldn't you tell me about that?

Savreen:

It's not something that came up in conversation, I guess.

Theo:

How long were you volunteering?

Savreen:

I've been doing it for about five years. Jamilla started about four years ago.

Theo:

When she moved here?

Savreen:

A few months after, yes.

Theo:

That's a long time for it to not come up in conversation.

Savreen:

I suppose.

Theo:

She didn't contract AVS by doing a guest lecture at the university, did she?

Savreen:

Theo, I-

Theo:

Savreen! Whatever excuse you're about to give me, don't! Did she contract AVS from someone at the university?

Savreen:

No.

Theo:

Did she even do guest lectures?

Savreen:

She did.

Theo:

Why would she lie to me?

Savreen:

I didn't know she hadn't told you.

Theo:

Bullshit!

Savreen:

Uh, she didn't want to worry.

Theo:

Of course. That was her favorite thing. She never wanted me to worry about her. She never wanted to be a burden. That's why she came all the way out here, isn't it? To get as far away from me as possible.

Savreen:

No.

Theo:

So, was it for you? I know you're her best friend, but I'm her daughter. I mean, why did my mother move 2,000 miles away from me? Why did she leave me?

Savreen:

I-

Theo:

Please, don't. It's getting late. I need to call her lawyer.

Savreen:

DiPA, please pull up contact information for Cleaver Associates, Office Wall Monitor.

Theo:

I'm going to go outside and make the call.

Savreen:

I'll get the kitchen cleaned up. Maybe make some tea?

Theo:

I'm not thirsty.

Young Theo:

I'm not moving

Jamilla:

Little girl, get up off that floor and go dry off.

Young Theo:

No, I want to go back outside.

Jamilla:

It is storming, Theodora. You cannot be out there anymore.

Eric:

Mm-mm-mm. Really? Did you [inaudible 00:21:50] our child?

Jamilla:

She would like you to believe that.

Young Theo:

I'm protesting, daddy.

Jamilla:

Where did you learn that word?

Young Theo:

Daddy said it to attack mean South America and that some people think it's bad. He thinks it's a rite of passage for rude sculpture.

Eric:

(laughs) Youth culture, honey. I'm working on a lecture about social movement activism.

Jamilla:

Obviously. I told you that that was a bad idea. I think maybe you should stop bothering daddy while he's working.

Eric:

Nonsense, Milly. I love having her with me when I work. It makes it more fun. (laughs)

Jamilla:

Eric, she shouldn't be disrupting you.

Eric:

Well, family and work can and should coexist.

Jamilla:

Yes because then we end up a second grader who wants to start a revolution.

Eric:

Nope, nope, nope. That means we end up raising a little girl who understands that loving her family and changing the world, are of equal importance.

Young Theo:

What's a revolution?

Eric:

If you come with me to the bathroom and dry off, I'll tell you.

Jamilla:

Ugh, for the love of it all.

Eric:

Viva la revolution.

Young Theo:

Viva la revolution! (laughs)

Eric:

(laughs)

Mr. Claver:

I have all the forms in front of me now. Uh, again, I am so sorry for your loss, Dr. Ramsey. Jamilla was an amazing person.

Theo:

Thank you.

Mr. Claver:

We can, of course, begin the probate immediately. Uh, I, personally, handled her estate a few weeks ago, so I'm quite familiar with it. Uh, the process should be swift.

Theo:

A few weeks ago? I'm sorry, did she by chance mentioned why she was doing it now?

Mr. Claver:

No, um, but I truly believe it is never too early to think about your last will and testament. Death is so hard for those left behind and it makes it even harder when our loved ones' affairs aren't in order.

Theo:

Right.

Mr. Claver:

I have some time next Monday.

Theo:

I'm, mm... I won't be here. I have to go back to Atlanta in a couple of days. Is there any chance you can fit me in tomorrow?

Mr. Claver:

Uh, hold on. (silence) I can make some time early tomorrow. I, I usually have breakfast before work, so you can join me. I'll bring all forms and we can get the process started. How des 8:30 sound?

Theo:

8:30 is great. Thank you.

Mr. Claver:

Wonderful. I'll send you the address.

Theo:

Thank you.

Mr. Claver:

Of course.

Theo:

What the hell, mom?

Savreen:

I'm making tea.

Theo:

Hey.

Gabriel:

Weiss messaged me.

Theo:

Just now? It's after 7:00.

Gabriel:

Yep. I got it on my private line.

Theo:

Ugh, shit. I haven't checked my messages today.

Gabriel:

I know that, too. You wanna know how?

Theo:

Oh, Jesus. He does know I am here, right?

Gabriel:

I'm pretty sure he doesn't care. He wants a meeting tomorrow at 10:30. I feel like an asshole asking, but can you be on holo?

Theo:

10:30 should be fine. And you're not the asshole here.

Gabriel:

Well, I'm asshole adjacent.

Theo:

(laughs)

Gabriel:

I'll send you all the data so you're good to go.

Theo:

I can... Oh, shit. I forgot about the time difference.

Gabriel:

What? Do you have something you need to do?

Theo:

Yes, but I also need to be in that meeting.

Gabriel:

Theo, you don't. You need to be taking care of things there, taking care of yourself. I can deal with [inaudible 00:25:20] Xavier.

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Theo:

Yeah, but... (laughs) I don't need his wrath hanging over my head. I'll get it moved.

Gabriel:

You sure?

Theo:

Yeah, it's not... Um, I'll get it moved.

Gabriel:

All right. Well, I need to make dinner and then I'll send you everything.

Theo:

Yeah, okay. Thanks.

Gabriel:

Yep. Take care.

Theo:

You, too.

Theo:

I'm not thirsty.

Savreen:

DiPa, silent mode off.

DiPA:

Silent mode off.

Savreen:

Are there any messages?

DiPA:

Your voice is not authorized for this command. Authorization required.

Savreen:

Kilo 56, sierra eight.

DiPA:

Authorization granted.

Savreen:

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Initiate private mode. Access code, Revelation 20.

DiPA:

Private mode initiated.

Savreen:

Are there any messages?

DiPA:

There is one message, received on Wednesday, at 12:30. Caller identification locked.

Savreen:

Play message.

Unknown:

Dr. Ramsey, the shipment arrived on schedule and I'm happy to say we've nearly distributed everything. We could not have done it without you and we understand the risks you took to make it happen. We are forever in your debt. I know your daughter is coming soon and you will-

Savreen:

DiPA, delete. No archive.

DiPA:

Are you sure? This cannot be undone.

Savreen:

Yes, delete.

DiPA:

Deleting.

Savreen:

Aatma Ko Sadgati Prapt Ho, my friend.

Savreen:

I'm making tea.

DiPA:

This episode featured the voices of Marquita Richardson as Theo Ramsey, James David West as Gabriel Larson, Pamela Paul as Savreen Khanna, Janet Simmons as Jamilla Ramsey, Dani McQuinn as Young Theo, Gary Scales as Eric Ramsey, Bjorn Munson as Mr. Claver, Torres Fontain Jr. as [inaudible 00:28:01], and me, Drea Silvertooth as DiPA. Producer, Amanda Lorraine. Sound Design and Mix, Joshua Suhy. Sound Recordist, Karl Huber. Original Theme, Katharine Seaton. Additional Music provided by

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