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[00:00] THE DUNGEON MASTER: You're listening to WRBB, 104.9 FM Boston. And this... is *The Dark Forest*.

THE VOICE: *THE DARK FOREST. TH-THE DA-DARK FO-FOREST.*

DM: Season *five*... the *final* season... of *The Dark Forest*.

[00:18] SONG 1: underscores - Cops and robbers

[04:45] DM: ...Welcome back — *welcome*. Not *back*. To the *final season* of *The Dark Forest*, with your hosts, the Dungeon Master, *and*...

THE CRYPT KEEPER: The Crypt Keeper. Welcome, everybody. It is *good* to be *back*.

[05:01] CK: I was away for quite some time, but I could still *view* the Forest through the Crystal Ball. But, *now*, the leaves are crunching under my feet; I can see the branches with a newfound clarity — I am *back*. In person.

DM: Does it feel good to be back?

CK: It feels *great* to be back! It also feels quite accursed and haunted; I can feel the vibes of the Forest *permeating* my very soul once more. ...It's, it's fantastic.

DM: Yeah. Probably — I would imagine, quite terrifying.

CK: Yes. It is, it is *awesome*. It inspires *awe* in me, a very twisted awe.

DM: And... so, we're *back*.

CK: We are.

DM: Doing *The Dark Forest*.

CK: It's great!

DM: Season five. The final season. Tonight's *genre*. Is... the *best of 2023*. The best *sounds* delivered to us, from the Whispering Winds.

CK: Exactly. The best *nightmares* that graced our ears and tortured us when we tried to sleep. You're gonna be hearing... a hand-picked selection... of some *fantastic* tunes. Check it out.

[06:03] SONG 2: Geese - 2112

[10:00] SONG 3: Jeff Rosenstock - HEAD

[11:30] SONG 4: 100 geecs - Hollywood Baby

[14:39] CK: So! It's, it's been some time, y'know; uh, Dungeon Master, anything... *new* been happening in the Forest since I've been gone? Anything I couldn't tell from the Crystal Ball?

DM: Yeah, actually, uh... Just recently, um... the, the *void mold* has been spreading quite rapidly, uh.

CK: The void mold?

DM: Yeah, it's actually been starting to take over the, uh...

[15:00] DM: The Forest's ecosystem, um...

CK: [overlapping] *Oh...*

DM: We're looking at, potentially, a whole... ecological, uh, *succession* here. Uh—

CK: That's, that's *fascinating!*

DM: Of the, um... yeah, everything's s-starting to get *consumed*... Uhh, y'know. This happens, but...

CK: Yeah? I never thought I'd see an outbreak of void mold in my lifetime, which, y'know, is *quite long*, of course, but, still.

DM: [overlapping] Here we are—

CK: This, this means—this means *big changes* for the Forest, surely.

DM: Yeah, I mean, it—it seems... at the rate it's going, I, I feel like in a few months, um... the Forest as we once knew it may no longer *be*.

[beat]

CK: ...It's a sobering thought. We'll have to monitor the growth of this void mold closely. And, of course, we'll keep all of *you* updated in case this spells, er... y'know, spells any *disaster*, means any *changes* on the path... We'll, we'll keep you abreast, of course. Don't, don't *worry* about it.

DM: Yeah. We, we will let you know, uh... no matter what, no matter where, any time of day, what is happening.

[16:00] SONG 5: Makeout Palace - New Addiction

[19:45] SONG 6: The Lemon Twigs - Any Time of Day

[22:37] SONG 7: Big Thief - Vampire Empire

[25:34] SONG 8: Slow Pulp - Cramps

[28:27] DM: So... Crypt Keeper, uh... Here we are in the new year.

CK: [overlapping, quietly] Yes, it's amazing.

DM: I know it's the, the twenty-seventh, but it *is* the new year.

CK: Yes.

DM: Um. Do you have any, uh, *resolutions*, or perhaps, uh... uh, *anti-resolutions* for the new year?

CK: Oh, *yes*, stuff that I do *not* want to do. Well, I'll tell you what; I definitely want to *stop* opening every random door I see in the Forest.

DM: Yeah.

CK: Y'know, like, you see, like, a...

DM: Yup.

CK: Such an inviting *frame*, and you see the doorknob and you're like, "Oh, I *gotta* see where this leads!" But then, nope!

DM: [simultaneously] *God*, it's — yep. [sighs]

CK: Blast of wind into, like, the stratosphere—

[29:01] CK: And then, like, you're, you — who *knows* where you're gonna end up after that.

DM: Mm; *right*. Or... or, you open the door and you step through it, and you seem to be... in the same world? *That's* the worst.

CK: [simultaneously] Oh *no*.

DM: Because you *know* it's not.

CK: [overlapping, laughing] It's *mirror dimension*.

DM: You know it's not!!

CK: It's mirror dimension, of course!

DM: *Yeah*; in the same vein, like... I gotta stop, uh, castin' every random spell I find—

CK: [overlapping] Oh no.

DM: —out of any... *dusty* old tome or scroll, in a dank crypt. Uh...

CK: It's a recipe for disaster.

DM: No, yeah, it is... it has, uh... got me in a *number* of situations, uh, including a... *long*, arduous, uh, Council hearing last year.

CK: [overlapping] Oh, no.

DM: No more of that this year.

CK: No more! We gotta be on the straight and narrow, and by that I mean, the very twisted, *winding*, and narrow. But, y'know, we can follow it. We're, we're good at that.

[29:51] SONG 9: Parannoul - 북극성 (Polaris)

[34:13] SONG 10: Oneohtrix Point Never - World Outside

[38:03] SONG 11: Kikuo - 幽体離脱

[43:23] CK: ...You know, so far this has been a... pretty *uneventful* walk through the Forest. It's not, not been that bad.

DM: Yeah, and *despite* the, uh... the, the *void mold* everywhere, um...

CK: Yeah.

DM: There are still creatures around, lurking...

CK: [overlapping] Of course, of course.

DM: ...to look out for. Um...

CK: You gotta watch out for... *Vinegar Tom*. And all his friends, of course.

DM: [overlapping] *Oh*, yes. Around here...

CK: Yeah. They're kinda like... dung beetles, if the beetles were more just, like... actual people, just rolling around on, like, clay *balls* and other such shapes.

DM: With... with *strange*, mutated forms...

CK: Oh, yes. Their *arms* are... un—their, their arms are *twisted*.

[44:01] CK: Their legs are, like, *stumps*. Their faces are contorted into bizarre grins. They're, they look like quite mischievous and *devious* creatures, to be sure.

DM: Yes... All bent out of shape; I mean, you see them, and... you think you're dreaming, but you're *not*!

CK: *No*, it's... it's, it really is quite something, honestly. ...They've got horseshoes in their pockets, *hand grenades* in their spleens; who knows—who *knows* where they get it from? All I can say is, if, if you spot Vinegar Tom... *good luck* to you.

[44:29] **SONG 12: Squid - Swing (In a Dream)**

[48:58] **SONG 13: Frums - 欲**

[53:30] DM: ...Thank you, so much for listening, to *The Dark Forest, best of 2023*.

CK: Thank you so much for listening; it's been *great* to be back. We hope you've enjoyed the *tunes* selected from the Whispering Winds. It's been, it's been real! Thank you.

DM: As always, you can find this show, and all previous shows, on our *newly-updated* website — “darkforestwrbb.com”.

TV: *DARK FOREST. WRBB, DOT COM.*

DM: That's “darkforestwrbb.com”—

[54:00] DM: Go on there *right now*; I'm *COMMANDING* you, go on there *RIGHT NOW*.

CK: [overlapping, Palpatinely] Do it.

DM: I-in five minutes after the show. And check out the new *bestiary* page on there!

CK: It's awesome; check it out.

DM: It's very cool. And, um...

[beat]

DM: I think that's it?

CK: Yeah, that's it!

DM: As always, we have one more song. Um... well, we weren't *gonna* do one, but, uh, y'know, for you, I will.

[54:23] SONG 14: George Clanton - For You, I Will

[58:44] END